## **Library Research Tips**

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Tips for searching in <u>Worldcat</u> (for books) and databases such as the <u>MLA International</u> Bibliography (for articles)

- > Start with a known book, book article, or journal article and use its bibliography to identify other sources that are relevant to your topic.
- Once you find a good call number for a print book, browse the stacks in McKeldin Library to find similar books.
- ➤ Use Google Scholar to locate a known book or article and use the "cited by" and "related articles" to identify additional resources. Example:



- > Type known titles of books and other resources into Worldcat to determine if they are available through the UMD Libraries. If not available, request the item on interlibrary loan using the Request Item in the Worldcat record.
- ➤ Brainstorm and make use of alternate key terms (*EX: rhetoric* consider using the following terms in your searches: *rhetorical, discourse, persuasion etc.*)
- Use Google Books to preview books and to do keyword searching inside a book.
- Use tagged "official" subject terms to identify additional helpful terminology to use in searches. Worldcat Example: When you find a book on your topic click on the title to get the full record, then click on the View Description to see additional metadata about the book (table of contents, subjects, etc.)



Click on relevant *subjects* to locate additional books about your topic.

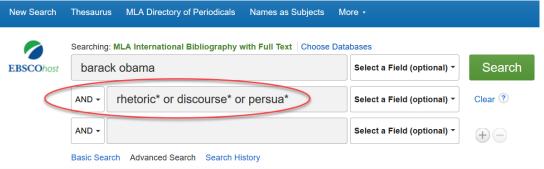


## TOO MANY RESULTS?

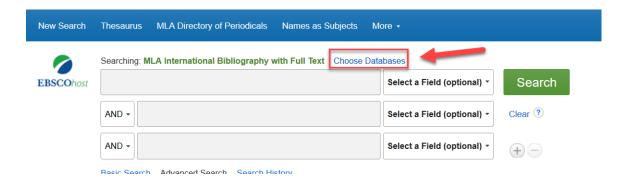
- Use Worldcat <u>Index Labels</u> for more precise search results.
  - **EXAMPLE:** for a list of books *about* Jane Austen (where she is your subject), *published by* Oxford University Press try the following search: *su:jane austen* **AND** *pb:oxford university*
  - **EXAMPLE**: for a list of all books with *Sense and Sensibility* in the *title* and *authored* by *Jane Austen* try the following search: *au:jane austen* AND *ti: sense and sensibility*
- Narrow your topic by using the *AND* operator to add another concept. *EX: barack obama AND rhetoric*. Add yet another concept to narrow even further *EX: barack obama AND rhetoric AND race*. Often the "AND" operator is implied. When in doubt add it to your search.
- In *Worldcat*, use the facets on the left hand side to limit your results by format (book, article, etc.) publication year (or range of years), language, etc.
- In Worldcat, after you run a search and have a list of titles, use the "Sorted by" option in the upper right hand corner to resort the list by best match or recency.

## NOT ENOUGH RESULTS?

- ➤ Use quotes to search for exact phrases. *EX:* "*rhetorical criticism*" retrieves the exact phrase, whereas *rhetorical criticism* retrieves anything with both words in it, but not necessarily next to each other.
- ➤ Use the wildcard symbol (\*) to retrieve plurals and alternate spelling *EX:* rhetoric\* will retrieve rhetoric, rhetorical, rhetorician, etc.
- Make use of the *OR* operator to include synonyms, spelling variations, etc. in your search results. *EX: rhetoric\* OR discourse\* or presua\**. See search example below in the *MLA International Bibliography* database.



➤ Broaden your results by adding additional databases. Once you are logged into an EBSCO database, such as the *MLA International Bibliography*, you can select to search additional databases that are part of the EBSCO platform. Click on "Choose Databases."



Then check all the databases you want to search and click on OK. For example if you are working on the rhetoric of Barack Obama, you might want to add Academic Search Ultimate, Communication & Mass Media, and International Political Science Abstracts databases to the MLA International Bibliography database,

