



# How to Use Library Databases

Source: www.Hoover.mcdaniel.edu

## Identify & Develop Your Topic

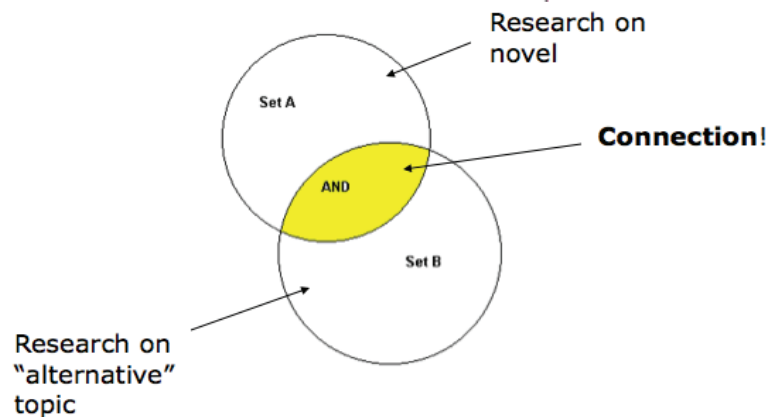
Identify main concepts or keywords. Ask the following questions:

- Who? - Where? Geographic Location? - Why? - When? Historical Aspects?

## Searching Multiple Topics

Research often spans multiple topics and disciplines. For example when conducting research on a novel you might approach your research this way :

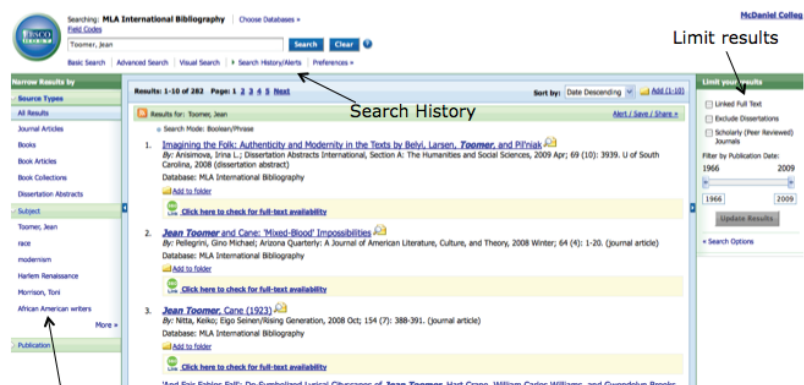
1. Search for information on the novel
2. Search for information on the alternative topic
3. Search for information on the alternative topic & the novel



## Refining Your Topic

Based on your initial exploration, how might you broaden or narrow your topic?

- Try alternative search terms
- Use the built-in tools provided
- Ask your professor or librarian
- Use tools within the tools: subject terms, search history, dates, and thesauri in databases to limit or expand your results



## Don't forget to...

- Take notes
- Remember to cite where you found the information
- Write down what terms you used when a search was successful

## Evaluate Relevancy of Material

*Initial Appraisal:* First, appraise a source by examining the description of the source.

- Author: Who is the author? What are their credentials? Is this their area of expertise?
- Date of Publication: Is the information up-to-date?
- Edition or Revision: Is this a first edition? Further editions indicate a source has been revised. Many printings can mean it's become a standard source.
- Publisher—Who is the press publishing the work? A University Press is more likely to be scholarly.
- Title of Journal: Is it scholarly or popular? This is important because it indicates the level of complexity of the information.

*Content Analysis:* After initial appraisal, examine the actual source. For journals, look at the designated subjects.

- Intended Audience: Is it too elementary or too technical?
- Objectivity: Does it seem well researched? Notes or citations? Biased?
- Coverage: What is the scope? Is it updating other sources, substantiating other materials you've read, or adding new information? Does it extensively cover the topic or only marginally?
- Writing Style: Is it logically organized? Are the main points clearly presented?

## Hoover Library Online Resources

*A-Z Database List:* This is a list of all databases in alphabetical order.

<http://libguides.hoover.mcdaniel.edu/a-z>

*Ask a Librarian:* Contact research librarians via email, phone, or SMS with your questions, or take a look at previously answered questions from other students.

<http://ask.hoover.mcdaniel.edu/>

*Research Subject Guides:* Hoover librarians have developed these resource guides about various academic subjects.

<http://libguides.hoover.mcdaniel.edu/>

*Off-Campus Log-in:* To access Hoover databases from outside campus, go to [www.hoover.mcdaniel.edu](http://www.hoover.mcdaniel.edu) and click "Off-Campus Log-in." You must log in with your McDaniel username and password.

### Hoover Library Hours

Mon-Thur 8:00 a.m.-12:00 a.m.

Fri 8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

Sat 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

Sun 12:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m.

Hours subject to change. Visit [www.Hoover.mcdaniel.edu](http://www.Hoover.mcdaniel.edu) for updated hours.