



Finding Original Research Articles in Psychology

http://library.lsc.edu/04_GetHelp/documents/psycguide.pdf

What is a research article? A research article is a complete report of a study. A typical research article is will begin with a review of the scholarly literature related to the proposed research topic, then a discussion of what they tried to find out, explaining why it is important. Then under the heading "**METHODS**" there is a description of the subjects of the study (people, animals, etc.), and how they did the study. Next under the heading "**RESULTS**" is a discussion of the results, usually with lots of statistics, The results will usually be shown in **tables or graphs**. It ends with the heading "**CONCLUSIONS**" and a long list of **references** at the end, corresponding to the references cited in the text.

Where are these articles? Original research articles are published in scholarly psychology journals that have been made available online in four of our periodical databases:

- **PsycArticles** (by Ebsco) A scholarly journal collection, all of which are published by the American Psychological Association (APA). The full articles are available in both html full-text and PDF full-page-image format. Choose PDF to see the articles exactly as they appeared in the original print publications. Use PDF versions of articles whenever it is available.
- **Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection** (by Ebsco) A collection of over 500 scholarly journals and professional magazines from many publishers. Before doing your search, check the check box to **limit searches to scholarly journals** (labeled Scholarly "peer reviewed" journals). Also check the box to limit results to full-text only because in this database some results provide only the article information (the citation).
- **Sage Journals Online** (by Sage) A scholarly journal collection, many or which are from the fields of psychology and social science. You might use the browse journals function to look for a journal that on your area of interest by the journal name (for example, *Child Maltreatment*). Open it and browse for a research study. You might also look at the most read articles for a particular journal in this database. Or just type search terms in the search box.
- **Science Direct** (by Elsevier) Another scholarly journal collection from a publisher of many journals in the fields of psychology and social science. Before searching, limit the search to psychology journals.

Where are these databases?

- Go to the library home page at library.lsc.edu
- Under **Articles and Reference Information** in the middle column, click **Databases by Subject**
- Click **Social Sciences and Psychology**
- Click to select one of these databases: **PsycArticles, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Sage Journal Collection** or **Science Direct**.

How do I search in these databases for a research article?

First check the boxes to limit to full-text and scholarly journals (if necessary) or to select only psychology journals as described above for each database. Then type a word or short phrase in the search box. Press enter or click Search. In addition to typing a word or phrase, you should know how to combine two or more words or phrases using search connecting words **AND, OR and NOT**.

In addition, when a word has several forms, use an asterisk (*) after the root word to ask for any form of the word. For example: **Child*** finds child, children or childhood.

If you need more than one idea or concept, connect the two search terms with "**AND**" between the terms. **Using "AND"** to connect search terms results in articles where both (or all) terms are present.

Don't search for more than three search terms in one search as it will usually result in too few articles. It is best to start with one or two search terms, then add a third to narrow the results if there are too many.

For example: **child* and abuse and neglect** Search results are articles with **all** three words.

Many times it is also necessary to create a search where **EITHER** of two terms would be acceptable. Connect these words with **OR**. For example: **abuse or neglect** Search results are articles with either abuse or neglect. In this example, because the two words are similar in meaning, we would like either word to appear.

Usually we need to combine a search with two words similar in meaning with another term. In this example, we need to include a word for child or children, (to eliminate articles about abuse or neglect of other age groups). We must put **parentheses around the two words connected with OR** when combining with **AND**. **Parentheses indicate the order of the combination needed.**

For example, if you type: **child* and (abuse or neglect)** Results are articles with either of two search combinations: **child* (as child, children or childhood) and abuse OR child* and neglect**

Use the word **NOT** to eliminate a word from the results, place the NOT search phrase at the end of the other search terms. For example: **NOT case study** eliminates articles that say "case study"

What to avoid: The studies should be fairly recent, nothing older than 2004.

Do not select an article that is ONLY a review or survey of the literature on a subject.

Do not select a case study, an article that examines one person or a small group in depth.

Do not select a meta-analysis, an article that looks at patterns or research results for a large number of studies that were done in many locations.

Do not select an article that is simply a description of a mental condition or illness describing treatment.

Citing the articles in APA style:

Information used for college research papers, speeches and presentations should be cited in the correct citation style used in that discipline. Social and Behavioral Sciences including Psychology use APA style. APA stands for American Psychological Association. When you need to cite in APA style, please read our handout of rules and examples for citing in APA style. Since you will be using an online database for printing an article, you must include the **database name and date of access (the date you printed the article)**. Your citations should include a statement after the main part of the citation as follows: Retrieved June 8, 2008 from PsycArticles (or other) database. The database address is not required.

In the following two examples, 2005 is the year the article was published. 10 is the volume number, which should be italicized. (4) is the issue number. Include both if given. 223-245 are start and end page numbers. Database name PsycArticles is the first example. Database name Sage Journals Online is used in the second example.

AuthorLastname, Initials. (2005). Title: Subtitle of the article goes here. *Name of the journal goes here, italicized*. 10(4), 223-245. Retrieved September 15, 2009 from the PsycArticles database.

If you have more than one author, as is often the case, cite all authors **up to 6** the same way as the first. AuthorLastname, Initials. Place commas between the names and place an & (ampersand) before the last author. If more than 6 authors, cite the first author followed by et al. (Latin for "and others").

AuthorLastname, Initials, et al. (2005). Title: Subtitle of the article goes here. *Name of the journal goes here, italicized*. 10(4), 223-245. Retrieved September 15, 2009 from the Sage Journals Online database.

Notice that the APA citations must be in the hanging indent format: the first line is at the left margin and the following lines are all indented ½ inch. MSWord users: Highlight your citation. Click the paragraph menu, under Indentation, under Special, highlight Hanging. Click OK.