

MASTER LITERATURE REVIEW PROCESS

in Public Administration



WHERE TO SEARCH

01 Start with

Databases with widest coverage of **high-impact journals*** in the area.

- Business Source Complete (BSC)
- Political Science Complete
- Web of Science (index only)

02 Followed by

Publisher databases to get most recent full-text content of high-impact journals.

- Sage Journals
- Wiley online library
- SpringerNature Journals
- Taylor & Francis online

03 For multidisciplinary topic

- Identify databases for other subjects (filter library databases by subject)
- Use multidisciplinary database (e.g. Academic Search Ultimate)
- Use EBSCO A-Z List - Select Databases

04 Fill the gap with

Other index (a), grey literature and recent publications (b), historical content (c), dissertation (d), and books (e).

- Public Administration Abstracts (PAA)*, SocINDEX;
- Google Scholar (WCU library link to full-text)
- JSTOR
- EBSCO Open Dissertations
- Library Catalog



HOW TO SEARCH

- Clarify including and excluding rules, and select proper limiters (year, source type, etc.).
- Design search terms, consider synonyms, broader, narrower, related terms, variant spellings, abbreviations, acronyms. Be aware of default expanders applied (i.e. EBSCO- Apply equivalent subjects).
- Understand **basic advanced search options*** and consult database Search Help page for more.
- Understand default search. EBSCO often default search index; publisher databases often default search full-text.
- Use backward citation (reference) and forward citation tracking (e.g. Google Scholar "cited by" function) to find more related articles.



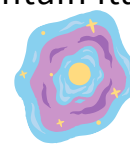
MORE ABOUT PRODUCTIVITY

- Always download the full-text of referenced articles.
- Use citation to name the article title (delete the colon : in the title), so the article list in your folder follows the reference list.
- Use library database "Cite" function, Google Scholar " symbol to create citations or send citations to citation management software.
- Use library database "Folder" function to batch download citations or Google Scholar "my library" to send citation to EndNote etc.
- Avoid reference link rot with website Perma.cc



ORGANIZE THE PROCESS

- Searching is iterative, so use a **search log*** to keep it on track; use **synthesis matrix*** to organize the findings. Quote copied sentences with page# to avoid chaotic note-taking and plagiarism.
- For systematic review, follow **protocols*** or register your protocol; ensure the searches are extensive, transparent, and reproducible.
- It can take months from initial search to article completion. So, set up search alerts to track updates.
- Use software (e.g. EndNote) to manage citations; install plugin to generate website citations; or
- Manage citations via Excel, sort reference list with Data->Sort A-Z; paste to Word document with "destination style," select the table-> click table layout-> data-> convert to text to maintain italicized style.



EVALUATE, SYNTHESIZE, REFLECT

- Follow the 4-step Source Assessment Strategy to evaluate online sources.
- Use **Critical Appraisal Checklist*** or **Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool*** to evaluate the methodological quality of a scholarly research.
- Synthesize for trends, patterns, themes, theories, and organize the synthesis chronologically, thematically, methodologically, or theoretically.
- Reflect the process and learn to be better.

WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO. EXCELLENCE, THEN, IS NOT AN ACT BUT A HABIT.


- ARISTOTLE AND WILL DURANT





LITERATURE REVIEW
More explanations

Find **high-impact journal** list via [Scientific Journal Ranking \(SJR\)](#) or Scopus [CiteScore](#).



The **PAA** doesn't provide full bibliographic records for some high-impact journals and the records for *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Administrative Science Quarterly* end as early as 2006 and 2007. The database should not be used as a primary research tool for public administration research.

Basic Advanced Search Options

Each database/search engine has specific search operators.

EBSCO Database:

Boolean Logic: AND (contains all search terms), OR (contains at least one search term), NOT (do not contain the specified terms);

Stop words: for, of, the, an, so, etc. are ignored by search engine, even if they are enclosed in quotation marks; "what", "when", "how" are not stop words.

Quotation marks (" "): used to search phrase.

Truncation asterisk (*): used to find word endings. If used, the plural and synonyms for the word will not automatically be searched.

Proximity Search: Near Operator (N) N#- maximum # of words apart, regardless of the order; Within Operator (W) W# - within # of words of one another, following the order.

See [more](#) examples and explanations.



Google Scholar Advanced Search (Tiered Approach)

Expand three lines on the upper left corner->advanced search.

a. Exhaust "allintitle" advanced search options

It will retrieve manageable amount of articles with all the search terms appear in the title of the article, but the search is verbatim, so carefully consider all possible keywords, plurals, synonyms, etc. For example: (search term, # of results; no duplication)

allintitle: food insecurity public administration (1)

allintitle: food insecurity public policy (27)

allintitle: food insecurity public policies (4)


allintitle: food security public policy (79)

allintitle: food security public policies (51)

b. Use Date Range to narrow search results

c. Use "my library"

It can help organize the results from multiple searches; use folder labels to manage articles by relevancy and topic. Download citations to EndNote or Copy them to Excel.



Search Log metadata can include: database searched; date of search, search queries, limiters or expanders used; # of results, duplication removed, notes, etc.

Synthesis Matrix metadata examples for identifying

themes: author/date, citation, purpose/research question, theory/framework, research methods, major findings, limitations, implications, notes on emerging themes (compare and identify similarities and differences), relation to other articles.

opinions related to a key concept: main topic/idea, sources #1, #2, #3 (quotes/paraphrase, page number, citation).

methods: Author, year, citation, sample, design, test, statistics, results, notes, etc.

Systematic Review Protocols examples:

[Evidence Synthesis Protocol Template](#) (Cornell University)

[PRISMA](#) for Meta-Analysis Systematic Review

[RAMESES](#) for Meta-narrative Evidence Syntheses

Campbell Collaboration to register protocol



Evaluation/Appraisal Tools

[CASP: Critical Appraisal Skills Program](#)

[Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool](#) (McGill University)

