**ECO 400**

**Self-directed Exercises for Finding the Statistics and Data on a Good Research Topic**

1. **Find a Good Research Topic**
   1. Investigate popular economics topics.

* [National Bureau of Economic Research: Featured Topics; and Topic Areas](https://www.nber.org/research/topics)
* [Economic Policy Institute: Areas of Research](https://www.epi.org/research/)
  1. Explore what interests you.
* Are there any key topics or concepts that you are passionate about to investigate?
* Are there any specific data points or sources from the media you refer to that have piqued your interest in verifying their accuracy or better understanding the issue?
  1. Conduct literature research and see what have been studied on the topic.

1. **Test the Feasibility for a Good Data Analysis**
   1. **Literature Research Test**
      1. Search Library Databases for scholarly peer-reviewed articles. Start with **EconLit** and adding other databases to the EBSCO Host Platform based on your topic areas:

* General/Multidisciplinary – Academic Search Ultimate
* Business – Business Source Complete
* Education – Education Sources
* Health - MEDLINE Complete
* Psychology - APA PsycInfo
* Environment - Environment Complete

Search with your research topic, use the Filter Function to limit to **Scholarly (Peer reviewed)**” articles and assess the number of results.

*Example 1: hockey handedness🡪 adding related databases, (less than 10 results) 🡪broaden the scope 🡪 baseball handedness (about 20 results)🡪 baseball salary (200+ results)*

*Example 2: Poverty and education (EconLit) (20000+)🡪Narrow the scope🡪Search “Select a field (Abstract)” and add keyword “United States or U.S.” in Abstract, filter to Peer-review (70+ results)🡪 identify narrower topics: “race and economic opportunity” or “childhood poverty and education.”*

* + 1. Google Scholar

Setup WCU Library Link

Google Scholar-> Settings (clicking three lines at the upper left corner)-> Library Links-> Search West Chester University-> Check the box -> Save; At the search result page, click find it @ WCU to access full-text article.

After identifying a relevant article, use the Google Scholar **“Cited by”** function and **Related Articles** to expand your search.

* 1. **Data Source Availability Test**
     1. **Statista**

Search Statista (using data variables or broad topic) to see if any data table/chart on your topic is available, if so, identify the **sources**.

1. **Assess your Data Needs:**
2. Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Operationalized Concept: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Potential data variables:
   1. Independent variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. Dependent variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Time period: from Year\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Year\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Frequency: \_\_\_\_ Yearly \_\_\_\_monthly \_\_\_\_\_Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Geographic Level: \_\_\_Country (international) \_\_\_National

\_\_\_State \_\_\_County

\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Granularity: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_Data Tables \_\_\_\_\_ Unit-level microdata
2. Potential Data Collection Methods: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Survey data \_\_\_\_\_ Administrative data

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Ask Who Cares about the Data**

Brainstorm some possible stakeholders that may have the needs to collect the data and share the data with the public. You can also record the potential **data sources** from Statista below:

* 1. Government Agency (Google site:.gov)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  2. Trade/Industry Association (Google site:.org) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  3. Nonprofit Organization (Google site:.org) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  4. Universities/Research institute (Google site:.edu) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  5. Data Archive/Repository\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  6. International organization\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  7. Private data vendor\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Search through Different Paths**
   1. Literature Search (Library databases and Google Scholar) and use the backward citation (the article’s references) and forward citations (Google Scholar “Cited by”) to expand your search.
   2. Search Data Aggregators: search **Statista** and find the **sources** of the data.
   3. Search to see if there are Library guides on the data topic (better if search broad topic + statistics/data library guide) (*e.g., Google Search: “hockey statistics library guide”; “poverty statistics library guide” instead of “childhood poverty library guide”*)
   4. Online Search: Advanced Google Search (site:.gov, .edu, .org) to find potentially different data sources from regular Google Search (*e.g., hockey salary data site:.gov; childhood poverty data site:.edu*)
   5. Ask for Help.