Finding Research Articles Using PsycINFO

PsycINFO Overview
PsycINFO is a database from the American Psychological Association. The database indexes and provides access to articles from many journals in the psychological and behavioural sciences, as well as relevant journals from health and social sciences. The literature in the database also includes dissertations and books, and goes back as far as 1806. Many of the articles in the database are full-text online.

Accessing the Database
Get started on the PsycINFO database from the Psychology subject guide or the Databases A-Z list on the Libraries’ main web page.

Topic, Concepts, Keywords
Before searching for articles, consider the research topic or question that you are investigating. Most searches involve at least 2 concepts, sometimes more. Example,

Self-esteem, social media, teenagers
Executive functioning, autism
Sport, motivation, performance

Spend a few minutes thinking about possible keywords that might be used to search for each concept. Example,

Teenagers: teens, adolescents, adolescence, youths
All of the above keywords would be useful for finding literature on teenagers.

Boolean Operators
Consider which Boolean operators you will to combine keywords for each concept in your search.

Example,

Teenagers OR teens OR adolescents OR adolescence OR youths
[OR is used between keywords when you want to find any or all of the keywords in the database. Using OR broadens the search and provides more results.]

Teenagers AND self-esteem AND social media
[AND is used between keywords when you want to find the records that must have all of the keywords present. Using AND narrows the search and provides fewer results.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept: self-esteem</th>
<th>Concept: social media</th>
<th>Concept: teenagers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keywords:</strong> self-esteem</td>
<td><strong>Keywords:</strong> social media</td>
<td><strong>Keywords:</strong> teens OR teenagers OR adolescents OR adolescence OR youths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AND

AND
Performing a Search in PsycINFO

A useful approach to searching in a database is to search for the keywords related to each concept, and then combine the concept searches at the end.

1. PsycINFO will open in Advanced mode. Deselect ‘Map term to subject heading’ option.

2. Enter keywords for your first concept. Example, self-esteem. Select ‘Search’.

3. Enter keywords for your second concept. Example, social media. Select ‘Search’.

4. Enter keywords for your third concept (if applicable). Example, teen* OR adolescen* OR youth*. Select ‘Search’.
   [A truncation symbol (asterisk) can be used in many databases to have the database search on different endings for a word. Example, teen* will return teen, teens, teenager, teenagers.]

5. In the Search History at the top of the screen, select the individual searches, then select **Combine with AND**. This will return a smaller set of results that contain records that must have keywords from each of the concepts searched.

6. Apply limits to the search by selecting ‘Additional Limits’. Choose:
   a. Peer reviewed journal
   b. English language
   c. Publication year if applicable
   d. Methodology – Empirical Study

   Select ‘Limit a Search’ to apply the limits.

7. The resulting set of records should all be for articles reporting empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Change the display view to include Abstract so that you can review the titles and abstracts of the records.

8. Use the ‘Check Library Access’ link to get to the full-text of the article if available or look for a ‘Article as PDF’ found in some records.

9. Save selected records by selecting the check-box to the left of the record and select ‘Keep Selected’. The records will become part of the Search History. You can then modify your search without losing these records. Select ‘Display Results’ for the saved records to view them again or print, email, or export.

10. Retrieve a formatted citation for articles of interest by selecting the check-box to the left of the record and then choose:
    a. Print – select citation, APA, and Print Preview, or,
    b. Email – enter address, select citation, APA, or,
    c. Export – select Microsoft Word, Citation, APA.

    Remember to carefully check the resulting citation before using.

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