Finding academic sources

Tips on better use of "Search" and databases to find sources for essays

**Step 1**
Preliminary reading on your topic; essential to understand the contextual background of your topic as you commence building your bibliography. Include **Oxford Music Online** to check definitions (SLV). For example if you are using a term such as **Samba** or **Bossa Nova** define it using an authorised source.

**Step 2**
Read and research current journal articles and/or books on the topic. Evaluate the resources, comparing data, and synthesizing the perspectives of the various authors.

- **Search on the Library Homepage**
  - Finds Library books (online/print), dvds/videos, and some journal articles
  - "Google like" - it allows you to put in relevant terms and refine your list of results
  - Automatically places AND between key terms
  - Requires quotation marks for **phrase searching**
  - **Phrase search**: "world music" or "protest music"
  - Sign in and use Search Help for tips:
    - **Truncation**: music* to search for records that contain strings, such as music, musical, and musician.
    - Use improvis* for records that contain improvisation, improvising etc.
    - Use orchestra* for records that contain orchestral, orchestrate, orchestrating etc.

- Look at the sources that authors of the readings have used: bibliographies, Cited works etc.
- Look at the books in ‘Search’ and see what subject headings are used, then look at other books on the same subject along with relevant keywords (**see below**)

Search terms: "protest music"
Refine by selecting the **Resource type**: Books or Peer Reviewed Journals

Notice keywords are highlighted. How many books have this subject heading? The subject heading will take you to more books on the same subject. You also can use this technique when searching library databases.

**NB:**
**popular music 1961-1970** would retrieve more results

**Other Useful Subject Headings by decade:**
Popular music 1971-1980 ....
To find a particular article in a journal such as *Ethnomusicology* use Advanced Search e.g.:

**Select journal as the material type**

Not all journals are available online:

**Step 3** Once you have more key terms, you can also look beyond Search.

**Library guides by subject** also contain a Databases tab with subject-specific databases: [http://guides.lib.monash.edu](http://guides.lib.monash.edu)

**Try Music Periodicals Database (Proquest)**

Some links will take you to a journal page where you need to navigate to the year, volume and pages of the journal article to find the pdf. Other links go directly to the journal article:

**Why would you use databases?**
Greater precision in entering key words
Search limits e.g. limit to Scholarly journals or Peer Reviewed
Previews allow quick scanning of abstracts to evaluate content