

Course Notes prepared by
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LIBRARY GLOSSARY

ABSTRACT

An abstract is a short summary describing the main idea or content of a work such as an article, book or dissertation.

ARTICLE

Sometimes referred to as a paper, an article is a brief composition on a subject, usually appearing in a magazine, journal, periodical or newspaper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography is a list of works cited by an author which appear at the end of a paper, article, chapter or book. There are also books entirely made up of bibliographies. These are usually a compilation of citations on a particular subject or by a particular author.

BOOLEAN OPERATORS

A common search strategy involves using Boolean operators (sometimes known as advanced search operators) to combine words in a variety of ways to bring you relevant search results when using a database, or catalogue, or search engine. There are three terms commonly used to combine words: AND, OR and NOT.

CALL NUMBER

A unique identifying number, made up of numbers and letters, given to each item acquired by a library. The call number groups items together according to subject in an organisational scheme. Macquarie University Library uses the Library of Congress Classification system.

CATALOGUE

A database of materials or items held or accessible through a library. These items may be physical materials such as books, journals, kits, videorecordings, audiocassettes, CDROMs, maps, photocopied articles, models or realia. The library catalogue also lists and provides access to electronic resources such as other electronic databases or Internet sites.

CITATION

The information which identifies a book or journal article. When you look at a bibliography or search an index, you retrieve citations. They provide the author, title, publication place, and year of a work. Often many other pieces of information, such as journal title and page number, are added in order to make it easier to locate the work.

CRITICAL REVIEWS

A critical review of a journal article is an evaluation of an article's strengths, weaknesses and validity. It is used to inform readers of an article's value through explanation, interpretation and analysis.

DATABASE

For the purposes of scholarly research, a database is a listing of documents including journal articles, reports, conference papers, books, chapters of books, and published and unpublished papers. Such databases are normally searchable by keyword, subject, title, author, date and publication. Examples of databases at Macquarie University Library include, Expanded Academic ASAP, Proquest; ERIC, PsycInfo etc.

DICTIONARY

A reference source that provides meanings of words and other information. Specialised dictionaries are available for many subject areas.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Includes computer software (floppy discs, CDRoms, videodiscs) and Full-text online resources via the Internet.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA

A reference source containing information on a variety of topics. This information may be supplied in short paragraphs or in lengthy articles that include citations (references) to other works on the same topic. Encyclopedias can be general - covering all topics, or specialised - focusing on a particular discipline such as education or psychology.

FULL TEXT

Usually refers to a newspaper or journal article where the actual article (rather than just a reference to it) can be viewed and printed from a computer. The complete work in either print, electronic, or microfilm format.

HANDBOOK

A concise ready reference source of information for a particular field of knowledge. (A Handbook for Librarians.)

INDEX

A list of citations (references) to journal articles and/or books arranged by subject, author, or title. Indexes may be in print format, electronic format, or both. Also, a list of subjects covered in a book, usually published at the end of the book.

INDEXING AND ABSTRACTING SERVICE

An index that includes summaries or descriptions of the items in addition to the complete bibliographic citations for the items that are listed.

JOURNALS

Also known as serials, magazines or periodicals. Issued on a regular basis with no foreseeable end, these publications are a source of current information.

KEYWORD

A significant or descriptive term used as a reference point for finding other words or information.

KEYWORD SEARCHING

A form of searching which allows a combination of terms (author, title, subject) to be used. In an advanced keyword search, search terms are combined with Boolean operators (“and”, “or”, “not”, “with”, “near”). Keyword searching can be used to search the Library catalogue, databases, online indexes and search engines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A survey of scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory. The purpose is to offer an overview of significant literature published on a topic.

LITERATURE SEARCH

A systematic search, in both print and electronic sources, for published materials on a specific subject.

PDF/PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT

A file format that captures all the elements of a printed document as an electronic image that you can view, navigate, print, or forward to someone else. PDF files are created using Adobe Acrobat, Acrobat Capture, or similar products.

PEER REVIEWED

The assessment of a work by one's peer group, or by others of similar standing and qualifications. Journals contain articles which are often peer reviewed, a feature which distinguished them from magazines.

PERIODICAL INDEX

An index to articles that appear in journals and magazines, usually arranged alphabetically by subject and author. Periodical indexes list only a specific group of periodicals. Often the periodicals are oriented to specific or related disciplines.

PLAGIARISM

Taking ideas from another source without acknowledging or documenting it or presenting another person's ideas falsely as one's own.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Original manuscripts and contemporary documents used in the preparation of a later work i.e. government documents, diaries, speeches

REFEREED JOURNAL

A publication, usually scholarly, in which articles are reviewed by a panel before being accepted for publication.

RESERVE

A selection of materials (books, articles, etc.) which academic staff have indicated that students must use for particular courses. These materials are usually kept together in one area of the library and only circulate for short periods of time.

SCHOLARLY SOURCE

Information, especially journal articles, written by and for experts in a particular field of study.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Works that are not original manuscripts or contemporary records or documents associated with an event, but which critique, comment on, or build upon these primary sources, e.g. bibliographies (*Bibliography of education theses in Australia*).

SUBJECT DICTIONARY

A reference source that provides meanings of words and other information in a specific subject area e.g.: *Dictionary of Education*.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Terms assigned by the library to describe material in the collection.

SYNONYMOUS TERMS

Words that have the same or similar meaning e.g. teenagers and adolescents

TERTIARY SOURCES

Works which index, organize and compile citations to, and show you how to use, secondary (and sometimes primary) sources e.g. almanacs, handbooks etc.

THESIS/THESES

A written work resulting from original research usually submitted by a candidate for a higher degree.

THESAURUS

A list of words that are applicable to a specific subject area; a controlled vocabulary list e.g. *Australian Thesaurus of Education Descriptors*.