Bibliographical databases are the best tools for locating journal articles, book reviews, collections of essays and conference proceedings even if you don’t know the authors or article title. The EBSCO service hosts a number of key bibliographic databases in the Humanities including:

- America History & Life (American history)
- Art Full Text (including Art Abstracts)
- ATLA (theology and religion)
- Historical Abstracts
- Old & New Testament Abstracts
- Philosopher’s Index
- RILM Music Literature Abstracts

Connecting to EBSCO and choosing database(s)

1. Go to SOLO (http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk) and search for one of the databases above (e.g. ATLA). Once you have found the online version click View Online to connect.
   Alternatively, go to OxLIP+ (http://oxlip-plus.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/) and search for one of the databases above (e.g. ATLA). Follow the link to connect.

2. Note - If you want to search more than one database at once (e.g. ATLA + Philosophers index) you can add the extra database after you have connected to EBSCO by clicking “choose databases” (above the search box)

Searching EBSCO

3. Look at the search terms that you came up with in the “Building a search” exercise earlier and work out how to use the terms you identified in EBSCO. Here is an example on the topic of the ordination of women priests in the Catholic church

- What key concepts did you identify in the “Building a search exercise”? In EBSCO it is easiest to put each distinct concept on a separate line in the search form. e.g. In the example above the key concepts are women, ordination and catholic
- If you identified synonyms or alternatives words for your search terms enter these on the same line in the search form and add OR in between them e.g. ordination OR priest
- To find alternative word endings use * e.g. catholic* finds catholic, catholics, catholicism
- To search for an exact phrase use “quotation marks”. This is suitable for words which have a particular meaning when they are used together e.g. “old testament”, “immaculate conception”, “poor law”, “world war II”, “logical truth” etc
• In EBSCO it is worth considering using the **Select a Field** drop down menus to limit your search to **SU Subjects**. This will search for articles where your keywords are included as part of the subject description. These articles are likely to be relevant to your topic. If you do not choose a field, EBSCO will search all the information that it has about each article (including in some cases the full text). This will return more articles but they are less likely to be relevant to your topic.

• Use the options in the bottom half of the screen to limit your search as appropriate e.g. to peer reviewed journals or by publication date. Some EBSCO databases also have special options for particular subjects e.g. limit by historical period in Historical Abstracts

4. Look through your search results

If you have too many results:

• try adding more keywords to make your search more specific
• limit you search to a particular publication period or to peer reviewed articles only using the options in the bottom half of the screen.

If you have too few results:

• try removing some of your search terms or search for a broader topic
• Instead of choosing **subjects** from the **select a field** drop down menu, leave this option blank (i.e. so it reads **Select a Field**). This will instruct EBSCO to search all the information it has for each article and may return some extra items.

Please feel free to ask one of the staff for help with searching.

**Working with your results**

Once you have found an article that interests you

5. Click on the title to see more information including an abstract (where available) and subjects. It’s worth looking at the subjects as this can help you to identify more keywords to include in your search next time. For example, after viewing the results below we might decide to modify the search to include the word deacon (e.g. ordination OR priest OR deacon). You can also click on the subjects to see all items on the topic in the database. However, it’s often more effective to note down the subject terms and then add them to your own keywords.

6. **Email** the article to yourself or **Export** it to a reference management package such as Endnote or RefWorks using the options on the right.

Note to email or export several items at once: for each item click to add them to a folder. Then choose at the top of the screen.
7. Connect to the full text of the article. In some cases you can do this by clicking [Linked Full Text] or [Find it @ Oxford]. However, in many cases you will need to look for the full text by clicking [Connect to databases holding the full text of the article]. This will display options for linking to the full text through a database (or for finding a hard copy on SOLO).

Using the Thesaurus

8. Many EBSCO databases also include a Thesaurus. Using the Thesaurus is similar to using the “Browse” option in SOLO and can be a useful way of finding items (in particular surfacing items which haven’t used the keywords you expected). Click on [Thesaurus] (top of screen) and enter one of your search concepts into the [Browsing] box part way down the screen (not the search box at the top of the screen).

9. Once you have found a useful subject in the thesaurus tick the check box to the left of the item and click [ADD]. This will not produce a list of items as you might expect! However, it will add your chosen subject to the search box at the top of the page with a [DE] in front of it to tell the database to return items which have this subject or description. At this stage you can click [Search] to find all the items with this subject.

10. Alternatively, you can add another subject to the search. To do this choose an option from the [OR/AND/NOT] drop down. Then search for another subject in the browsing box and tick the check box next an interesting subject. This will add the second subject to the search box at the top of the page with the appropriate AND/OR/NOT in between. When you are ready click [Search] at the top of the screen. (Note – If you want items which include both of the selected subjects use AND, but if you want items which include one or other of the subjects (or both) click OR).
Finding more databases for your subject

1. Find the recommendations for your subject on LibGuides by visiting http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk and choosing your subject area from the Subjects A-Z. Recommended databases are listed under different headings depending on the individual subject. Look out for the following tabs/heading: Databases, Journal Articles, Articles & Working Papers, Secondary materials etc.

11. You can also find databases on OxLIP+.
12. Connect to OxLIP+ at http://oxlip-plus.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
13. Choose the Subject tab and scroll down the list on the left until you see an A-Z of subjects and find your subject area.

14. Once you have chosen a subject (and if appropriate a sub category which will appear on the right) click Go. You will then see a full list of databases in your chosen subject.

15. Click on the info button to see more information, or to see a snippet of information about each database, click Detailed View above the list of databases.