Using filters to refine your results

The left-hand filters can be an easy quick way to narrow down your list of results. However, before doing this I would scan through a few of the results that have come up, just to see whether any of them look interesting, and to see if you are on the right track with your search.

If you’re happy that your search is bringing up some relevant-looking results, you can start to refine. The first option is **Peer reviewed**. This restricts your results to those that are indexed in peer reviewed journals. Peer reviewed journals are a subset of scholarly journals and are defined as journals that undergo a review process where other experts (peers) in the field review the work before it is published in the journal.

You can also choose a **Source type**, e.g. journal article, book, book article (means book chapter), dissertation abstract etc.

**Publication date** is also a good way to refine your results. You might only want to read the latest scholarship on this topic, or the scholarship from a particular period. Use the slider to refine, or enter a date range. The date range graph gives a good visual indicator of how much literature there is to read from certain time periods.
Let’s skip down now and look at the **Subject** field. So far, we have been searching for our keywords in all fields, but there are other ways to search. The terms used in the subject field have been assigned by expert indexers using the MLA Thesaurus, a controlled vocabulary of over 49,000 topical terms and 327,000 names. New subjects and names (descriptors) are regularly added to reflect the state of current scholarship in literature, language, folklore, and linguistics.

Users should note that subject indexing in the bibliography is considerably richer for records from 1981 onwards. Before 1981, MLA bibliographers used a more simplified approach to classification, generally only noting the main concept of each article; for example, ‘American Literature -- 1800–1899 -- Hawthorne, Nathaniel’, or ‘language -- bilingualism’ or ‘ethnomusicology -- musical instruments’. In 1981, a contextual indexing and faceted taxonomic access system (CIFT) was adopted, whereby each item is assigned an order sequence of subject descriptors.

So, if we want to make the most of this subject indexing, we might want to change the way we are entering our search.

When we added a country to the search e.g. France, as we are searching everything at the moment this would also bring up people with the surname ‘France’.

However, if we want to be even more specific, we can use the advanced search fields which allow us to specify where in the record to search for particular terms.

For details on what to enter in the specific search fields, take a look at the LibGuide for the MLA Bibliography: [http://proquest.libguides.com/mla/](http://proquest.libguides.com/mla/) (particularly the tab ‘Searchable fields’).