



Why Should We Use Scholarly Databases?

As students, you are very likely familiar with general internet searches, both in your personal lives as well as numerous school assignments over the years. Therefore, it's understandable to wonder why you should bother with scholarly databases to find sources, when there are literally *millions* of articles a few clicks away via search engines like Google... right?

Well, the fact is, scholarly databases are vastly superior for academic research. They provide relevant, peer-reviewed results quickly, all while eliminating the number of questionable, irrelevant, or unprofessional results you often have to wade through when researching on non-academic search engines. Think about it this way: if you were to break your arm, you (hopefully!) wouldn't go to your cousin, a guy who says he knows all about how to treat the wound and make a splint because he watched a video on YouTube one time... you'd go to a doctor-- someone qualified to fix it. Well, it's the same with academic sources. We want trusted information from qualified sources. And that is the problem with using the Internet in general-- yes, there are some great, valid sources out there, but there's *also* a lot of uninformed or misinformed material by unqualified sources as well... and it's not always as easy as you think to tell the difference between the two. Therefore, using scholarly databases for academic work means that you're going to a place that knows how to help you, and the information they provide is more trustworthy and reliable.

Here's a list with more reasons why scholarly databases are both important and useful:

- Most material found in scholarly databases will remain in the database, which means it can be quickly retrieved in the future, and the content in these articles does not change. This is not always the case with websites and articles on the internet, which can be changed or even removed at any moment. Databases are also updated regularly.
- Materials in scholarly databases are *peer-reviewed*, which means that the information is evaluated for accuracy and credibility by fellow academics, subject-matter experts, and publishers.
- Scholarly databases don't have things like paid sponsors, pop-ups, or advertisements. This may sound trivial, but the lack of these things is always a good sign that you are in a scholarly database and don't have to worry about the sources you locate there.
- Databases accessed via GMC Library are paid for by the school, which means you don't have to pay extra for the scholarly sources you find.
- Search capabilities within databases allows you to search for results in a more focused, targeted way.
- Many databases have a 'citation tool' that will generate references/works cited entries for you, in the style you need (MLA, APA, etc). It's a great time-saver!