

Chapter Four

Finding Journals, Magazines, Newspapers and Using Indexes

What are Periodicals (or Journals or Magazines)?

We have just discussed books as a one type of secondary source. Periodicals are another. Periodicals are materials that are issued periodically, that is more than once, usually, but not necessarily, at regular intervals. In this category are journals, magazines, newspapers, and annual reviews. Relative to full length books, periodicals include short articles that focus on a smaller subject. Because they are published frequently, periodical articles contain cutting edge, timely research. Each type of periodical has a very specific intent.

Journals. The audience for journals is academics and researchers in the field on which the journal focuses. Often this is a very narrow audience. Some sample titles include: Oral History Review, Early American Review and Nineteenth Century Feminisms. This is the way researchers talk to one another. The language that researchers use is specialized and sometimes difficult for general readers. The frequency of publication is usually quarterly or less.

Magazines. Magazines are read by the general public and usually reflect culture, thought and politics of the day. The language used is more accessible to all levels of readers. These publications usually contain lots of images. Magazines are generally published more frequently than journals, either monthly, weekly or bi-weekly.

Newspapers. The frequency of newspapers is generally daily and the intent is to report the happenings of the city, town, nation, and world. Many times the newspapers will also do in-depth reporting. Newspapers are usually more suited for primary source research. However, some major newspapers will provide

background information for historical events and places that may prove useful.

Annual Reviews. Published once a year, annual reviews attempt to survey the evolution of scholarship for that particular year in a discipline. Annual reviews are more prevalent in the sciences and the harder social sciences, psychology and education for instance, than in the humanities and history.

For the purposes of this chapter, most of our discussion will evolve around journals and magazines, the resources that index them, and when each are appropriate for historical research.

Journals Vs. Magazines

As you know from the above definitions, journals are the medium that scholars use to communicate new research findings and ideas. Magazines are for a more general reader and have a more reporting and explaining function. Knowing a bit more about each and how to use each for your history research makes you an Information Literate historian.

Understanding the publishing process of both journals and magazines will give you further insight on the uses of each of them. Magazines have articles written by journalists who are trained in research techniques. They interview professional researchers and practitioners, research and read some of the scholarly journal articles you would read for your own research. Some even have advanced degrees in other subject fields. Upon completion, their article, a synthesis and explanation of their investigation, is passed before an editor

who makes corrections and decides whether or not to publish the article.

While the journalists and editors at such magazines as *American Heritage* and *History Today* are educated and informed, they may not be scholars who have spent their lives building arguments out of collections of primary sources and teaching their findings to graduate students.

The physical appearance of magazines and their articles are also distinctive. Glossy photographs adorn the front of the cover as well as internally. They contain advertisements. The articles themselves often lack the author's credentials, footnotes and simple charts or graphs. Titles of the articles are usually simpler and sometimes more sensationalized. For instance an articles on mummies are alternately titled, "The Well Dressed Dead", in a magazine *Archaeology*, and Application of ARMS in Screening for Sicklemia in Ancient Egyptian Mummies, in a journal, *Ancient Biomolecules*.

As we have discussed, journal articles have a very different purpose and consequently have different identifying qualities. The publishing process is structured so that scholars review, or referee, other scholars' work. Scholars submit articles to a journal. The articles are then sent to several other researchers in the field to read and judge the accuracy of the scholarship. These readers or referees will often suggest changes or point out flaws in the authors reasoning. The editor of the journal then decides whether to send the article back to the scholar for revision or not to publish the article at all. Unlike the magazine article, experts, who are practicing similar research, have reviewed the article and judged the quality of its research. If you would like

an example, which did not turn out very well in practice, see the March 1997 issue of the *Journal of American History*.¹

Physically, journal articles have notes included in them, either at bottom of each page or at the back of the article. Often included in the journal article are charts or diagrams, or tables of statistics. This data, along with the other cited primary source materials are the components of the scholars research, laid out for other scholars, such as yourself, to look at use and even try to replicate the original researchers findings. This is the way checks and balances work in scholarly research as researchers build on others' research. This is not something that is possible with the lack of evidence in a magazine article. Nor, is it the intention of a magazine article. This is also why your professor will request that you use refereed or scholarly journal articles in your own research. When you are doing research, even if you are a beginner, you are participating in that scholarly exchange. So you need to use your information literacy skills and build upon and contribute to the body of historical research.

¹ Some flaws are quite evident in the American Historical Association's experiment. The article itself was not a typical journal article. The nature of the article led some of the reviewers to guess who the writer was, destroying the usual anonymity of the article author. If you want to follow the debate, you can also see an article in *Lingua Franca* March 1997 83 (4):1221+. Still, the exercise is useful to understand how the review process works.

Search Tips: Identifying Journals and Magazines: Characteristics

The chart below outlines the differences between journals and magazines.

Journals	Magazines
Signed article by author. Author is usually scholar in the field who is an expert.	Often unsigned articles. Articles often written by journalists
Language is technical and aimed at a special audience, usually those who also study in the field. Uses the jargon of the discipline.	Language is simpler and aimed at a general audience. Anyone who is interested could read the article
Documentation in the form of notes footnotes and bibliography	Has no documentation, but often sources are mentioned in the article.
Complicated charts and graphs	Glossy photographs and simple charts or graphs.
Articles have been through the referee process	Articles have been approved by an editor.

A third type of periodical, relevant to historical research, exists that falls between the two categories and sometimes can be considered a journal even though it has the characteristics of a magazine. Sometimes called commentary magazines, they contain political and social commentary that often offers insightful analysis of events and issues. Usually these types of articles are opinion based on learned analysis of primary and secondary source material. However, because they are opinion and usually contain few footnotes charts and other such evidence that are the foundation of journal articles, they may not be considered scholarly journal articles. In contrast, they are not the glossy reporting type articles written by journalists that are the staple of magazines because the articles are written by political

commentators. It's not exactly true to say that they are magazines either. However, they are excellent sources to help you in your research in several ways. You can use them to help you formulate your own opinion, as well as, see other points of view, and other approaches to your research topic. Many times these commentaries are written to counter arguments, so they present several sides of an issue. You can then begin to find your primary evidence to support or disprove some of their theories. Another use for these commentary articles is as primary sources. They reflect the conservative, liberal, and moderate political and social opinions of the time in which they were written. Many of them have been published since the early part of the 20th century and provide an interesting intellectual history of modern America. Some titles of the commentary journals are:

Title	Date Began	Political Point of View
New Republic	1914	Liberal
American Spectator	1932	Conservative
National Review	1955	Conservative
Nation	1865	Liberal
Progressive	1936?	Liberal

Role of Newspapers in Historical Research

Generally, newspapers as secondary sources are not very useful in historical research. However, they are most useful as primary sources, reporting events and other primary source data. See Chapter 7 for more information on using newspapers as primary sources. In the rare occasion that

newspapers are useful in secondary historical research, it is usually major newspapers such as the New York Times and the Times (London), etc. that will do a story on a historical site or anniversary of an historical event or new archaeological discovery and provide background information. Often they will mention other historians' works and other reports. However, in this case, the newspaper functions much like a magazine and not a journal.

How to find Articles—Using an Index

The best method for finding journal articles is to use a periodical index. If you have mastered using your college or university's online catalog, learning to use a print or online index is just an expansion of that knowledge. We'll first talk about how to thoughtfully organize your search and then use an index, both online and in print. In the section below, we'll discuss finding the right index for your topic. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of history, a wide variety of indexes are available for your research.

Before using a periodical index, it's best to make sure your topic is organized and that you understand the relationship of the components or concepts of your topic. As you know, journal articles are more specific than books, so the terminology that you use to search for those articles must be more specific. Divide your topic up into its essential ideas or concepts and play word association with those ideas. For instance, if your topic was the history of the drug trade in the central Asian area of Turkey and Afghanistan, you would begin by dividing your topic like so:

Concept I	Concept II	Concept III
Turkey Afghanistan	Drug	Trade

Remember that the way you may think of your topic is not the way others may describe your topic. You will want to think of synonyms, or other words that are close in meaning that also reflect your topic. You may also want to list similar concepts together. For instance in this example:

Concept I	Concept II	Concept III
Turkey Turkish Afghanistan Afghani Central Asia Central Asian	Drug Drugs Narcotics Poppy Poppies Heroin	Trade Economy

Once you have made your list, think about the association of concepts, one to another. Must the list of journal articles you are seeking have to have all of the concepts or just two of the concepts. You are beginning to use Boolean logic, creating sets and linking them with the Boolean operators, either "and" or "or". For example:

Boolean diagram insert

Use parentheses to group your concepts together. This tells the database how to search for your topic, considering first the words in the parentheses and then the concepts as whole. You would enter this search (called your search statement) as a keyword search in a database like this:

(turk* OR afghani*) and (drug* or popp* or heroin or narcotic*)

The * (sometimes \$ or ! in some databases) is truncation or a wild card as discussed in Chapter 3. When doing a word or keyword search, you must account for variations of your words. So, turk* will find Turkish as well as Turkey. Your search statement has asked for some form of the word Turkey or Afghanistan to appear in the database record with some form of the word drug, poppy, heroin, or narcotic. The better your search statement is, the better quality your list of journal articles will be.

Search Tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Divide your topic into concepts.2. List synonyms and associated terms3. Decide relationships of terms using the Boolean operators, "and" or "or".4. Use parentheses to make associations in your search statement
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Using an Online Database: Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life

The two major periodical indexes for history are *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*. They cover modern history, roughly 1450 to the present, but would include articles that include background information prior to this period. *America: History and Life* indexes United States and Canadian history while *Historical Abstracts* covers the rest of the world. Both are multilingual, but with a heavy preponderance of articles in English. They index over 1,800 scholarly journals of interest to historians and have been issued both in electronic/online format as well as paper. The focus of this discussion will be on the electronic version. However, the print versions are

also very useful. Don't ignore these indexes at your library just because they are not electronic! Print or electronic, they are the best way to connect to scholarly, historical journal literature.

Like most indexes and catalogs they have both keyword access as well as subject access. The subject access is not as useful as in many other indexes as subject assignment is imprecise and somewhat irregular. As a novice searcher, it is best to use the keyword search and use your newfound Boolean searching skills. Both of these indexes also have extra features that will help you refine your search even more.

Entering a Keyword Search in Historical Abstracts

A number of interfaces are available for Historical Abstracts, so providing a description here would be misleading for a number of users. As you begin your search look for the search box that indicates a keyword search. You will also need to check for an instructions section to see what symbols are used for truncation or wild cards in your particular interface (usually * or \$). Using our example of the cult of motherhood in World War II era Germany, one keyword search could look like:

(Nazi* or german*) and (women* or woman*)

Understanding the explicit and general nature of your search makes you an information literate historian. Your search is asking for articles on some form of the word Nazi (including Nazis, Nazism, etc.) and women (including women's

woman, womanhood, womanhood). However, your search is also asking for the more general concept of german (as well as german's or germany) and some concept of women. Articles may have this broader view of women's history in Germany without specifically including some form of the word Nazi. Remember, if this doesn't produce good results, you must rethink your topic and approach it from a different viewpoint and perhaps look at German views of the family. Always have at least another way to think about your topic. However, *Historical Abstracts* has a unique feature to further limit this general search by date.

Because part of your search may yield articles outside of your desired time period, german* and women* could place you in the 19c, and you desire roughly 1930's and 1940's, you may want to use the special date limiting feature in Historical Abstracts. Depending on your interface, you can limit your results by decade or by century (or even by exact date, although that is not usually a very efficient search as it is too limiting). In this example, you would select the decades of 1930's and 1940's. Selecting the entire 20th century would be too broad, as you would retrieve results that would examine German women early in the century, before the rise of the Nazi's.

What you will get. Looking at your Results.

The results of your search will be a list of citations, a bibliography customized to your search criteria. In the case of *Historical Abstracts*, the results are posted, or listed with the most recently published articles at the

beginning of the list and the oldest at the end. Your citation consists of the basic information needed for you to locate the article as well as an abstract, or summary, telling you what the article discusses, a list of the descriptors or subject headings assigned to that article, the time period covered by that article, and the primary sources used to write the article. An example is below. If your institution subscribes to these journals in electronic format, there may be full text attached. However, in most cases, Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life will only provide the citation and you must locate the article.

Author: Stibbe, Matthew.

Title: ANTI-FEMINISM, NATIONALISM AND THE **GERMAN** RIGHT, 1914-1920: A REAPPRAISAL.

Appears In: German History [Great Britain] 2002 20(2): 185-210. 2002

Abstract: An examination of **women's** patriotic, conservative, and antifeminist organizations and the participation of **women** in conservative-nationalist associations in the World War I era suggests not only the increasingly important role of **women** on the right, but that the growing participation of **women** in the public and political spheres was generated just as much on the national right, often in **women's** protest against feminism, as on the political left. (Abstracter: D. Prowe.)

Subjects: **Germany.** World War I. Conservatism. Nationalism. Political Participation. **Women.**

Note Based on material in **German** federal and state (Lower Saxony, Berlin-Brandenburg) archives; 101 notes.

Time Period 1910D 1920D 1900H

Date Range 1914-20.

<u>Language</u>	English.
<u>Article Type</u>	Article
<u>ISSN</u>	0266-3554
<u>HA</u> Accession Number	54-4227

Part of being an information literate historian is knowing when your results are good. Good results fit your topic, are not too general and are not too many in number. Too many devoted students are willing to sort through hundreds of bibliographic citations to find those citations that reflect their needs. Performing a good search that yields a manageable number of results is part of being a good researcher. As a general rule, a list of citations between 25 and 50 is a nice list. Any larger yield requires you to add additional search terms or limits to your search statement or query. In the case of *Historical Abstracts* or *America: History and Life*, if you have too many citations, you can restrict your historical time period even further, add additional keywords to your search, limit your results to those that are written in English, or those articles written in the last five years. If you have too few results, you need to either expand your search by adding other search terms and linking them with "or"s or rethinking your choice of terms. Perhaps there are better, more common or more descriptive words that reflect your topic. Going back to your word lists when you divided your topic into concepts may help you think of other words to use. If you have tried to expand your search several ways, using new terms each time, it is possible that you have a unique topic on which little has been written. Be sure to check other periodical indexes as your topic may

be of more interest to other disciplines. In historical research or in fact any research, ignorance and poor research is no excuse for not discovering those other scholars writing on your topic. Look at the section below on Selecting Other Indexes, to look for other periodical indexes other than Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life.

Other Ways to Use an Online Index

Online indexes and databases have other features that may also be helpful in performing your search. Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life both allow you to browse through their author, article title, journal title and subject. If you are unsure about the spelling of an author's name, or if they use initials or a first name, or if you have selected the right subject heading, this feature allows you to select your search words from a list. Sometimes this helps you to find words and terms of which you would not have previously thought. Indexes other than these two main history indexes have more elaborate subject indexing systems, very similar to the Library of Congress Subject Headings. This browse function is often more useful in those indexes.

Search Tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use the keyword search2. Use truncation and Boolean search techniques3. Limit your search by time period4. Check the number of your results and expand or limit them to an acceptable number5. Use other indexes as appropriate (author or title index or browse by author or title.)
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Selecting Other Indexes

Because history is such an interdisciplinary subject, you will often find periodical indexes aimed at other disciplines very useful for certain topics. For instance, a topic that looks at the history of education would also find articles in education journals and would find the two main indexes for education journals, ERIC and Education Index (Education Abstracts is the online title) useful. A very basic list of other disciplines major indexes is at the end of this chapter. However, you can also look in your institution's online catalog to find out what is available, both in print and possibly online. Generally these indexes are listed in the catalog by very broad subject. In the education example above, the subject heading is education - periodicals -indexes. So if your topic is in social history, you might want to do a search in your online catalog under sociology - periodicals -indexes. The subheading bibliography is also sometimes used, for example, education - bibliography - periodicals. Technically, these indexes are also periodicals as they are published more than once; sometimes monthly, quarterly, etc.

Generally for your scholarly research you will want to stay with the types of indexes mentioned above. As a group they are referred to as specialized indexes as they index the literature of a special or focused group. As a researcher you belong to that group. However, another set of indexes, general indexes, attempt to index a wide variety of magazines as well as scholarly journals. They can be both overwhelming and useful. Some titles of these general indexes include: Academic Search Premier, Periodical Abstracts and Infotrac. It is recommended that you begin with one of the specialized

indexes, either America History and Life or Historical Abstracts or with one of the specialized indexes found either at the end of this chapter or through your institution's catalog.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Your topic to investigate is lynching of African Americans in the American South after the Civil War.

1. Divide your topic into concepts.

Concept I	Concept II	Concept III
Lynching	African Americans	South

2. Think of other related words

Concept I	Concept II	Concept III
Lynching Lynch Hang Hanging	African Americans Blacks Slaves	South Southern Georgia, etc.

3. Select **America: History and Life** and perform a keyword search. Enter your search as:

lynch\$ and south\$

Remember \$ or * or ! is truncation and will give you any number of characters after the root word. Because most (but not all) lynchings in the South involved African Americans, it's unnecessary to add that concept in your search. If you did not wish to limit your topic regionally, then you would want to include some aspect of African American in your search as immigrants, Jews, western outlaws and criminals were also lynched.

4. Your results are probably over 100. At this point, select a limit of the decades of the 1920s or 1930s. There will probably be a box from which to select these dates from. Depending on your results you can expand your dates and perhaps include the 1910s or be more restrictive by adding some specific states. You can also select the article type and limit your results to journal articles and eliminate book reviews, media reviews, and dissertations.
5. Aim for a list of results of not more than 50.

Selected Bibliography of Periodical Indexes of Use to Historians

Annual Bibliography of British and Irish History <http://www.rhs.ac.uk/bibl/>

Applied Science and Technology Index (Applied sciences, such as inventions, mechanical technology, industrialization, etc.)

Art Abstracts (Art history, painting, sculpture)

Arts and Humanities Citation Index (All humanities, including history)

ATLA Religion Index

Business Abstracts

Film Literature Index

Economics Literature

Geobase

Humanities Abstracts

Lexis-Nexis

Medline

MLA International Bibliography

Music Index

PAIS

Philosopher's Index

PsychInfo | Psych Abstracts

World Wide Political Science Abstracts

Women's Resources International

Writings on American History