

The General search tab on the Library homepage uses a database called Summon to search through the majority of materials that the Library licenses and owns, including print *and* e-books, streaming videos, articles, government documents and more. You can search here by author, title or keywords, for example: let's try homelessness and Vancouver

This search brought back a lot of results, but fortunately you can narrow them down quite easily.

One way to narrow the results is to add another element to the topic - for example, mental illness. Notice the quotations around these search terms. This tells the computer to search for these words as a phrase - which will bring up results that are more relevant than if you just search for them as keywords.

As you can see, adding a third element to this search has reduced the results considerably, though there are still too many for you to look at them all.

On the left of the results page are a number of different limiters that you can use to narrow your results even further. For example, you can select “Full Text Online” to see only results that are available online. Note: choosing this limiter will eliminate print books, dvds and other useful physical content from your results. You also have the option to limit to scholarly articles - by clicking here or here. Of course, doing so will eliminate everything that isn’t an article from a scholarly or peer-reviewed journal, so if you need to look for other kinds of research material, you’ll have to uncheck these limiters and do the search again.

If you scroll down slightly, you’ll see that you can also narrow to specific content types such as Books, Journal Articles, Dissertations and more.

Once you’ve identified an item that looks useful, getting it depends on what kind of resource it is. For example, you can open an ebook by clicking the link at the bottom of the description, but if it’s a print book, you’ll need to click the call number to see which branches have it and whether it’s available or out on loan.

If the item you want is a journal article, look for a “full-text online” link like this one here and click it. If it says “citation online” instead, click it and be sure to click the “try UBC eLink” button to see if it’s available from another source that UBC has access to.

If you have any trouble finding books, articles, or other resources, you can get help in the Library. Drop by or click the Ask an Expert link on the Library homepage to find our chat reference service, our branch hours and contact information.