

Database search tips for International Relations & Politics

1. Planning your search

This [Search Plan for IR and Politics \(Google doc\)](#) can help you develop a list of keywords to use when searching online. Click on File - Make a copy - to save your own copy and then add your own notes to it.

2. How do I search a database?

[Browse a list of key databases for IR & Politics students here](#)

Searching with AND

Databases work in a different way to Google and the LibrarySearch. You'll often see on databases that they have several search boxes linked by **AND**.

You need to type separate keywords or phrases into each search box, for example:

Russia AND elections

Politics AND young people

This will find references containing both terms.

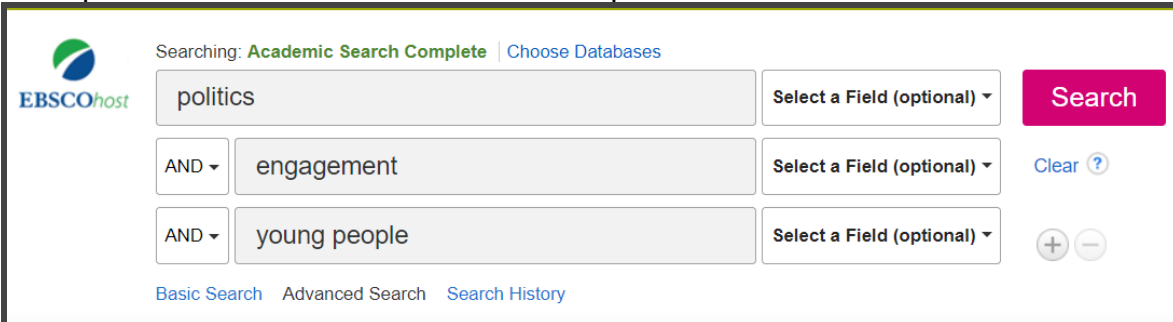
Add in additional keywords to focus your search – each new word/phrase will narrow down your search

e.g. Russia AND elections AND media

Politics AND young people AND participation.

Experiment with alternative terms - you may find more results.

Example search on Academic Search Complete database:



The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top left is the EBSCOhost logo. The search bar contains the text 'politics'. To the right of the search bar is a dropdown menu labeled 'Select a Field (optional)'. To the right of the search bar is a pink 'Search' button. Below the search bar is a dropdown menu labeled 'AND' with a downward arrow. To the right of this dropdown is a search box containing the text 'engagement'. To the right of this search box is another dropdown menu labeled 'Select a Field (optional)'. Below this search box is another dropdown menu labeled 'AND' with a downward arrow. To the right of this dropdown is a search box containing the text 'young people'. To the right of this search box is a third dropdown menu labeled 'Select a Field (optional)'. To the right of the third search box is a 'Clear ?' button and a '+' and '-' button. At the bottom of the search bar area are links for 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', and 'Search History'.

Searching with OR

You can use **OR** to search for alternative terms and broaden your search, e.g.

global OR international

law OR legislation

engagement OR participation OR activism

teenagers OR young people OR young adults OR children. Don't forget differences in American spellings e.g. defence/defense

WWW.BROOKES.AC.UK/LIBRARY

Searching: Academic Search Complete | Choose Databases

Engagement OR participation OR activism Select a Field (optional) Search

AND teenagers or young people Select a Field (optional) Clear ?

AND Select a Field (optional) + -

Basic Search Advanced Search Search History

Phrase searching

Put phrases in quotation marks if you want to make sure the words are only found together (and not separately), e.g. “international development”; “responsibility to protect”; “political engagement”; “corporate social responsibility”.

Wildcard symbols

- Use the truncation symbol * added to the root of a word to search for alternative endings, e.g. national* will find national, nationalist, nationalism, nationalization etc.
- Use the ? symbol to replace a character in a word e.g. globali?ation will find globalization and globalisation.

Searching: Academic Search Complete | Choose Databases

"political engagement" Select a Field (optional) Search

AND young people Select a Field (optional) Clear ?

AND europe* Select a Field (optional) + -

Basic Search Advanced Search Search History

Refining your results

Look for options to focus your search. These can include:

- Limiting your search to material published in English.
- Narrowing your results by date.
- Focusing on scholarly peer-reviewed articles.

3. Further help

- If you would like further help, please contact the Academic Liaison Librarian for IR and Politics, Joanna Cooksey by emailing jcooksey@brookes.ac.uk
- Check the Course resource help for International Relations and Politics at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/international-relations-and-politics> for links to key-e-resources, downloadable guides and much more.