

Database search tips for Pathways students

1. Planning your search

This [Search Plan for Pathways courses](#) (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 Pathways courses 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:

Young people AND technology

Marketing AND social media

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. Young people AND technology AND mental health

Marketing AND social media AND innovation.

Experiment with alternative terms - you may find more results, for e.g.

Young people; teenagers; children etc.

Social media; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram

Example search on **Academic Search Complete** database. NB **Business Source Complete** looks exactly the same:

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top left is the EBSCOhost logo. To its right, it says 'Searching: Academic Search Complete | Choose Databases'. Below this are three search boxes. The first box contains 'children' and has a dropdown menu labeled 'Select a Field (optional)'. The second box contains 'AND' in a dropdown menu followed by 'technology' and another 'Select a Field (optional)' dropdown. The third box contains 'AND' in a dropdown menu followed by 'mental health' and a third 'Select a Field (optional)' dropdown. To the right of the search boxes is a pink 'Search' button, a 'Clear ?' button, and '+' and '-' buttons. At the bottom, there 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

intercultural OR cross-cultural
technology OR digital or internet

EBSCOhost Searching: Academic Search Complete | Choose Databases

children Select a Field (optional) Search

AND technology or digital or internet Select a Field (optional) Clear ?

AND mental health 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. “intercultural communication”; “corporate culture”; “human rights”.

Wildcard symbols

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

EBSCOhost Searching: Academic Search Complete | Choose Databases

employ* Select a Field (optional) Search

AND technology Select a Field (optional) Clear ?

AND mental health 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 sources in the English language.
- Narrowing your results by date, if appropriate.
- Focusing on specific kinds of sources e.g. scholarly peer-reviewed articles; market research; country reports.

3. Further help for students doing Pathways courses: Foundation, Pre-Master’s programme and University English

- If you would like further help, please contact the Academic Liaison Librarian for Pathways, Joanna Cooksey by emailing jcooksey@brookes.ac.uk
- Check the **Course resource help for Pathways programmes** at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/pathways-programmes> for links to key-e-resources, guides and much more.