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Database search tips for Japanese Students

1. Planning your search

This [Search Plan for Japanese Studies](#) (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 Japanese Studies 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:
Japan AND food
Japan AND film
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. Japan AND food AND culture

Experiment with alternative terms - you may find more results e.g.
Japan AND cinema

Example search on **Academic Search Complete** database:

Searching with OR
You can use **OR** to search for alternative terms and broaden your search, e.g.
film OR cinema
teenagers OR young people OR young adults OR children.

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Phrase searching

Put phrases in quotation marks if you want to make sure the words are only found together (and not separately), e.g. "popular culture"; "intercultural communication".

Don't forget differences in American spellings e.g. theatre/theater

Wildcard symbols

- Use the truncation symbol * added to the root of a word to search for alternative endings, e.g. japan* will find Japan and Japanese; 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.

Sorting and refining your results

Databases such as Academic Search Complete and JSTOR allow you to sort results by date or relevance. You will probably find that sorting results by relevance is more helpful.

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

- Limiting your search by language.
- Narrowing your results by date if that's appropriate.
- Focusing on specific kinds of sources e.g. scholarly peer-reviewed articles.

3. Further help

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

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