Finding journal articles for Sociology

1. How do I search for journal articles on a Sociology topic?

A good place to start is LibrarySearch on the Library home page at https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/.

This covers a huge range of sources including books and online journals. Just type in the author, title or topic that you are interested in, for example: ‘social class participation education’

The results screen may show you a mixture of books, articles and other sources. To see just the journal articles, go to the Search Tools box on the left of the screen. Look for the Format option and tick the box next to Article.

Here is an example of an article found on LibrarySearch. Click on the ‘View full text’ button see it.

Log in with your Brookes details when prompted. In this case the article is available on the Sage database:
2. How do I access databases for Sociology?
Note that LibrarySearch does not include the contents of all our databases. Some specialist resources are not covered at all, so you may need to need to also look at subject databases, especially for more in-depth research.
If you already have the name of a specific database you’d like to search, go to the Library home page and click on the Find a database tab. You can look up the name of the database in the alphabetical list. To find out which databases are recommended for Sociology, click on the drop-down menu to ‘Browse our databases by subject’.

This will connect you to the Subject Help page which lists the key databases for Sociology. The direct link is: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/sociology/journal-articles-and-databases-for-sociology/

3. How do I search a database?
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:

Searching with AND
Put 1 idea per box, for example: inequality AND education - 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. inequality AND education AND gender.
Experiment with alternative terms, e.g. inequality AND school - you may find more results.
Tip: Put phrases in quotation marks if you want to make sure the words are only found together (and not separately), e.g. “mixed methods”; “social class”.

Searching with OR
You can use OR to search for alternative terms and broaden your search, e.g. higher education OR university- this will find references containing either or both terms. Don't forget differences in American spellings.

Searching with AND + OR
Put brackets around the ‘or’ part of the search, e.g. gender AND (work OR employment) will find references that contain the terms gender and work; gender and employment; gender and work and employment.

Wildcard symbols
- Use the truncation symbol * added to the root of a word to search for alternative endings, e.g. employ* will find employ, employer, employment, employing etc.
- Use the ? symbol to replace a character in a word e.g. sociali?ation will find socialization and socialisation.

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.

How to read the full text
Some databases give you the full text of most articles, often in the form of PDF files that you can save or print. Other databases will give you an ‘abstract’ or summary of the article. Look for a full text option next to a reference and click on this to connect to the article if it is available:

If the Library doesn’t hold the article…
Databases are guides to what has been published in a subject area and Brookes Library will not hold everything that they list. There are options for obtaining material that we don’t hold:
- You can use the Interlibrary Loans service to request books, articles and other publications which aren’t in stock. If you are a student each request will cost you £3.00. You can make your requests via LibrarySearch.
- Undergraduate students doing dissertation-level research and postgraduate students are eligible to apply for reference access to the Bodleian Library. To apply you will need to get an application form from the Library Help Zone (Level 1) or download it from our web pages. You can search the Bodleian Catalogue SOLO at: http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/

4. How do I check whether the Library holds a specific journal title?
On the Library home page at https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/, click on the Journal titles tab and type in the title of the journal that you want to find. For example, this is a search for the ‘British Journal of Sociology’:
The results screen will show whether Brookes Library has the journal you need and usually the correct journal will come at the top of the list.
NB Click on the blue journal title link (not the Access journal link) to check what years of the journal are available.

1. **The British journal of sociology.**

LibrarySearch shows us that we have online access to the British Journal of Sociology through several databases and gives us details of the coverage of each. Click on the appropriate Access journal link to connect straight through to it.

Log in when prompted with your Brookes username (student/staff number) and password. You should then be able to browse or search through back issues of the e-journal.
If we have print copies of a journal or magazine, you need to make a note of the **Call Number** which tells you where the journal is shelved. Note that print journals in the Headington Library are all shelved in the Library Basement.

For tips on understanding how to read and understand social science research articles, take a look at this book: Harris, S. (2014) *How to critique journal articles in the social sciences*. Los Angeles: SAGE. 808.0663/HAR

### 5. Further help for Sociology students

- Please contact your Academic Liaison Librarian, Joanna Cooksey by emailing jcooksey@brookes.ac.uk if you would like to make a 1-to-1 appointment for further help.
- Check the Subject Help pages for Sociology at: [https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/sociology/](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/sociology/) for links to key-e-resources, downloadable guides and much more.

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