

JSTOR: Advanced Search Tips

JSTOR is a large online archive of several thousand core academic journals. Subject coverage is particularly good in the humanities and social sciences, but also includes business and sciences. Journal contents are available in pdf from the first issue of each journal up to several years ago (the “moving wall” publisher embargo on current content is typically 4-6 years back from the current year).

From the library’s home page, click “[Databases A-Z](#)”, then select JSTOR. When off campus, log in using your S-Number to access full-text content. You will be taken directly to JSTOR’s advanced search. You should see the access notice at the top of the page.

Access provided by **Saint Mary’s University**

Starting a Search

Under “Select an access type”, choose “Content I can access” to search for full-text articles. Searching “All content” will also retrieve items that are not part of SMU subscriptions, but which you can request via the library’s document delivery service.

JSTOR supports full-text, author and title field searching. It also supports abstract searches, but only about 10% of JSTOR articles have an abstract, so this is not a good way to search.

Item Type
<input type="checkbox"/> Articles
<input type="checkbox"/> Reviews
<input type="checkbox"/> Books
<input type="checkbox"/> Research Reports
<input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets
<input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous

If you have too many results, consider searching some of your key words in the “title” field to reduce the number of search results. You may need to consider synonyms and alternate words to describe your topic to capture all possible title variants. You can also limit your searches to different types of resources.

>	<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology(87 titles)
>	<input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Sciences(15 titles)
>	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology(109 titles)

The advanced search page includes a subject and journal list. You can select a subject area, to run your search in all journals for that subject. You can also filter your results using subjects and individual journals.

Advanced Search Techniques

JSTOR’s help documents provide useful searching tips. These can be accessed by clicking “Search Help” on the advanced search page, or by clicking “Support” (found at the top and the bottom of the page), and then selecting “Students.”

JSTOR supports a number of advanced search techniques that can greatly improve the accuracy and relevancy of your JSTOR search results:

- **Boolean operators** (AND, OR, NOT): Used to combine words to narrow or broaden searches. Operators do not need to be capitalized – *dogs AND behavior* will return the same results as *dogs and behavior*.

- **Exact search:** Place words inside quotation marks (“ ”) to search for an exact phrase. E.g., “*the handmaid’s tale*” will find results about the novel and its adaptations.
- **Wildcards:** The question mark (?) replaces one character; the asterisk (*) replaces zero or multiple characters. E.g., *hono*r* will retrieve both honor and honour. You can combine search terms containing wildcards (e.g., *organi?ation and “transformational leadership”*), but wildcards cannot be used within a phrase search or at the start of a word, and they can only be used after a root word of at least three letters.
- **Truncation:** A tilde (~) at the end of a word will find variant spellings of the word. E.g., to find articles about the Russian composer Tchaikovsky, whose name has been translated into multiple spellings (e.g., Tschaikowsky, Tchaikovski) you can use *Tchaikovsky~*.
- **Proximity Search:** You can search for two words appearing close together by using a tilde (~) and a number to indicate the desired proximity range (e.g., *Shakespeare revised ~ 10*). Also note: on the Advanced Search page, the drop down box for AND/OR/NOT includes several proximity search options: NEAR 5/10/25. NEAR will only work with searches of two words (e.g., *dogs NEAR 5 heartworm* will work, but *dogs NEAR 5 heart attack* won’t).
- **Relevance boosting:** Placing a caret (^) followed by a number after a word will give the term that much more weight when sorting your results. E.g., *beat^5 poets* means that the use of beat is 5 times more important than the word poets.

Working with your Results

JOURNAL ARTICLE
[Lost in Space: The Misguided Drive toward Antisatellite Weapons](#)
 Michael Krepon
Foreign Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 3 (May - Jun., 2001), pp. 2-8

Topics: [Weapons](#), [Missile defense](#), [Treaties](#), [Military strategy](#), [Arms races](#), [Soviet satellites](#), [Cold wars](#), [National security](#), [United States history](#)

Item type: “Journal article” can be misleading. This category can include book reviews, editorials, etc., not just peer-reviewed articles.

Click the title to see the individual article. From your search results, you can download the PDF, create a citation for the item in several major styles, or export the citation to RefWorks.

Topics: You can use the topic links to find more articles on similar topics. Clicking a topic will start a new search.

Topics group other articles on similar topics. Topics are generated when terms are used multiple times in an item. Relevance is determined by how frequently terms are used. An item can have up to 10 topics, but very short articles may not be assigned any. You can also search within a topic.

JSTOR gives you a stable URL for each item, which you can use to permanently link to that item.

See the support pages in JSTOR for more information on how to get the best results when searching JSTOR.