

Search and evaluate sources

Research skills in economics and business studies (10/2024)

ECONBIZ

Find Economic Literature.

Which sources should I use? What are criteria for the quality of scholarly sources?

When selecting sources, make sure they are worth citing. To build a convincing paper, you should only use sources that meet all of the following criteria:

- ✓ Currency: Is the source up-to-date?
- ✓ Reliability: Does the source have citations and a reference list?
- ✓ Authority: Do the authors have a background in academia? Are they experts in the field?
- ✓ Audience: Is the source intended for scholars? Does it use subject-specific terminology?
- ✓ Purpose: Are the authors only interested in the research results?

Check how often an article has been cited. You can find information on citation frequency in the [Social Sciences Citation Index SSCI](#), [Google Scholar](#) or [CitEc](#).



Consider that recent articles and articles in small, specialized fields often have fewer citations. Citation frequency is not very useful in this context.

Try to use articles from highly ranked peer-reviewed journals. Rankings help identify credible journals. Journal rankings for economics and business studies include [Journal Citation Reports JCR](#), [VHB-Rating](#), [Scimago Journal Ranking](#), [Scopus Journal Metrics](#) or [IDEAS/RePEc Simple Impact Factors](#).

You can also use current working papers for your assignment. These are published directly and quickly by universities and research institutes. If a working paper is later published in a journal, it is preferable to cite the reviewed article from the journal instead of the working paper.

How do I search business and economics databases?

You can find journal articles in economics and business databases such as [EBSCO Business Source](#), [ABI/INFORM](#), [EconLit](#), [JSTOR](#), or [EconBiz](#). For an additional (not exclusive) search, use [Google Scholar](#). Working papers can be found in [RePEc](#) (economics), [SSRN](#) (business studies) and [EconBiz](#).

Try these tips to improve the completeness and relevance of your search results:

- Search mostly with English terms, as most publications are in English. Use terms from your first language additionally.
- Use the [STW Thesaurus for Economics](#) to find translations, synonyms, narrower and broader terms.
- Include all word endings with *. Europ* finds e.g. Europe / European / ...
- Use quotation marks to find compound words, e.g. "family business".
- Include singular and plural forms in your search, e.g. "Family firm" and "Family firms".
- Combine search terms with AND / OR / NOT and parentheses () to create a search string.

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("Family business" OR "Family firm" OR "Family firms") AND ("Eastern Europe") NOT "EU countries"
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How do I access the full text?

Scholarly literature is usually available online or in print from your university library. Use remote access (VPN) to access licensed online publications and databases from home. Ask your library.

Many academic publications are now open access. However, you should not base your choice of literature on open access alone. Ask the library if you find references to a relevant publication but do not have access to the full text.

Where can I get support?

- If you get stuck, the first person to contact is your supervisor.
- Ask your library to help you with your literature search and access to full texts.
- Or you can ask us! The [Research Guide EconDesk](#) team supports you with your literature and data search in economics and business studies.



More information: More economic databases can be found in the [Database Information System DBIS](#) and additional resources about research skills on [EconBiz](#).