Searching PsycINFO: Basic and Advanced Search

BASIC SEARCH

Basic Search is the default PsycINFO search. Enter a complete topic or question, and if you are interested in journal articles only, check the “Peer Reviewed Journal” and “English Language” boxes. Basic Search is PsycINFO’s version of a Google search; it ranks your results by relevance, or the number of times your search terms are found in the description of a publication.

ADVANCED SEARCH

Advanced Search guides you through a systematic approach to searching. The "Map Term" feature matches your keywords to PsycINFO Subject Headings. Subject Headings are standardized words assigned to a concept. Searching Subject Headings retrieves more relevant results. In Advanced Search, first analyze your topic, and then search each concept individually. Once all concepts are searched, individual searches (concepts) are combined to provide results on your topic.
SAMPLE ADVANCED SEARCH

If your topic is on how anxiety affects performance, begin by searching the concept of anxiety. Type *anxiety* in the Search Box and click Search. Advanced Search retrieves Subject Headings from which you choose the most relevant to your search term. If there is an exact match, that Subject Heading will be selected automatically. Click Continue to search for publications on a selected Subject Heading (or click on any Subject Heading word to view broader, narrower, or related subjects). Repeat this process searching the term *performance*. All individual searches are saved in the Search History.

In the **Search History** (shown at the top of every search screen) select searches using the check boxes, and then click **AND** to find publications that encompass all selected concepts. You can combine searches with **AND** or **OR** only with Advanced Search results (the Search Type is indicated in the Search History box at right). In other words, **you cannot combine Basic searches using AND or OR**.

After you have combined your searches in Advanced Search, click **Additional Limits** (look beneath the search box) to access options to further refine your search results.
On the Additional Limits screen the most recent search is selected by default. There are check boxes to limit to Peer-Reviewed Journal and English Language. You may also choose to limit to Empirical Study or Literature Review (under “Methodology”). “Age Groups” is another useful limit category (not pictured). When you have selected all your limits, click on Limit A Search.

Check the box next to references that you would like to print, email, export, or save to a PsycINFO online account (“Add to My Projects”). To create an online PsycINFO account, click the My Account link at the top of the screen (not pictured). If there is no PDF icon indicating that an article is available full text in PsycINFO, click the blue “Find It@NEIU” button to search for the full text in other library resources, or to order the article via ILLiad Interlibrary Loan.
Step-by-Step Instructions for PsycINFO Advanced Search

A. Find and Search PsycINFO "Subject Headings"

1. Click the Advanced Search tab and note that Map Term to Subject Heading is selected by default (look just below the search box).

2. Analyze your topic so that you can search each aspect of your topic separately. Enter your first search term (e.g., Anxiety) in the search box and click Search to find matching PsycINFO Subject Headings.

3. Check the box next to the most relevant Subject Heading (if there is only one box, it will be selected automatically). Then click Continue to search.\(^1\)

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 as needed until you have searched terms that describe each aspect of your topic.

B. Combine Your Subject Searches with And/Or

5. All searches for a given PsycINFO session are saved and will appear under Search History at the top of the Search page.

6. Select individual searches by checking the appropriate boxes, and then click on And or Or as needed (And to narrow results, Or to broaden results). This feature works only with Advanced Search results (the search type – Basic or Advanced – is indicated for each search in the Search History).

C. Limit Your Results by Peer Reviewed Journal, Empirical Study, Age Group, and More

7. Look beneath the Search Box and click Additional Limits.

8. Note that your last search is selected by default.

9. Select your limits (e.g., Peer Reviewed Journal, Empirical Study, Adolescence). Select as many limits as you wish by clicking in checkboxes or choosing from pull-down menus.

10. Click on Limit A Search at the top or bottom of the page.

\(^1\) Click on a Subject Heading to view broader subjects, narrower subjects, and related subjects.