Searching MLA International Bibliography: Advanced

This video will introduce you to advanced searching in the MLA International Bibliography database.

Basic searching sometimes retrieves either too many or irrelevant results.

Advanced searching is more powerful and allows you to focus the search for better results.

The description of each record is divided in to fields, allowing you to perform precise searches and retrieve exactly the information you need. If you click the Field Codes link, you can see a list of the different field codes and what it means to search using a specific code.

The fields can also be selected from menus.

 Make sure you understand the field code before you begin narrowing your search, or you may not get the results you want.

If you wanted to search for articles written about Mark Twain, for instance, you would target the field: ***Author as Subject***.

This is what your search would look like.

The results are disappointing.

You might want to check what form of name this database uses in the ***MLA Personal Names Thesaurus***.

Just click on the Thesaurus link above the search boxes.

The thesaurus is great for searching pseudonyms, or variations of a name, especially when you’re uncertain of spelling.

When you find the name you’re after, just check the box beside the name, and choose how you’d like to add it to your search.

The thesaurus can be helpful for subject searching as well. Use the ***MLA thesaurus (subjects)*** to discover valid subject terms used to describe the content of each document.

For example, if you search for **intercultural communication**, you are told to use **cross-cultural communication** instead.

Again, you can add new terms to your search.

You may also identify valid subject terms in a full document display [demonstrate]. Click the hyperlinks or boxes next to the subject headings to start a new.

There are additional fields you can use to focus your search. If you know the name of the journal you can focus your search to ***Publication title***; if you are searching for a specific article, you can focus your search to ***Document title***; and there are other options, such as: literary theme, literature topic, and place of publication.

You may choose to limit your search results by selecting the Publication date, Language, Subject, or Source Type, such as journal articles only.

For more help searching in the MLA International Bibliographies database, just ask a librarian.