Library Database Guide

When researching a topic for a class, make sure to exhaust all possible avenues of research: print and electronic sources. Although you might first consult Google or Wikipedia, you should primarily search for library sources, including electronic sources through the online databases available to Fordham students on the university library’s website.

Searching Fordham’s Online Databases

1. How to Search for an online database:

Familiarize yourself with the library’s website. Go to the homepage of Fordham University’s library website (www.library.fordham.edu), and find “Library Resources.” Under this heading, click “Databases and Indexes.” Choosing “databases and indexes” will lead you to a subject list (organized alphabetically) that will help you narrow your search of the databases you may want to use.

For instance, if you are looking for newspaper coverage of the 2011 Grammy Awards, you may want to choose “Newspapers Online” from the subject list. “Newspapers Online” will lead you to the list of databases that Fordham subscribes to where you can access recent newspaper and magazine articles. For newspaper coverage of the 2011 Grammy Awards, consider choosing the databases “Lexis-Nexis Academic”; “ProQuest National Newspapers” and/or “New York Times.”

2. How to Search within an online database:

Once you have chosen a specific database, such as “ProQuest National Newspapers,” you’re ready to search within the database for sources—in this case, newspaper articles.

To search for articles on the 2011 Grammy Awards, begin with a keyword search. You may have to change your keyword(s) if you get too few or too many matches. Use command terms such as “AND” to connect keywords, and “NOT” / “OR” to narrow your search.

For instance, entering the keyword “2011 Grammy Awards” into the database ProQuest National Newspapers resulted in 487 matches; however, modifying the search by connecting keywords “2011 Grammy Awards” AND “Eminem” resulted in 89 matches.
Finally, familiarize yourself with **Wild Cards**, which allow you to expand your search to include variant terms. The symbol “*” often functions as a Wild Card—i.e. “music*” would locate results for “music” and “musical.”

## Citing Online Sources

Now that you know how to use Fordham’s online databases, you must be able to cite these sources—and databases—in a Works Cited page. It is necessary to attend carefully to which **database** you are using, as well as the **date of access**. Although you probably have cited sources using the MLA style in your English classes, different disciplines use different citation styles.

### MLA style (7th ed.):

For **articles which also have print versions**, follow the same guidelines as you would for the print publications, but add the italicized title of the database in which the source appears, the new medium of publication (i.e. “Web”), and the date you accessed the online source. For journal items, this will appear as follows:


Note that in general, it is not necessary to include the URL; if required, however, you may add it after the entry, enclosed in triangle brackets (“<URL>.”).

### APA (6th ed.):

In APA, you don’t need to cite a date of access unless the online source is likely to change. Basically, the same rules apply for any online item: if the online book or article includes a **DOI (digital object identifier)**, add that number to the end of the regular publication information. If there is no DOI, add the URL, preceded by “Retrieved from,” to the regular print citation.


### Chicago:

Simply cite the URL for the database after the regular publication information, both in the footnote entry and in the Works Cited. As with APA, you only need to include the date of access if the source is likely to change.


## Where in the *Bedford Handbook*?

Sections 46b-e: Using Online Sources; Sections 53b, 56d, 57d: Citing Online Sources.