

# LOCATING OPEN ACCESS RESOURCES

Finding and using free, Open Access resources, statistics and publications



There are thousands and thousands of amazing articles, research, statistics and other resources online that can help you with your research and project work. But how do you know what is a good reliable source of information? And what happens when you hit a paywall and aren't able to access the information you need?

To overcome this first issue, we can use tools that help us search for academic and reputable articles that have been published in places with high levels of quality control. These articles and books are often at the cutting edge of research and feature the latest information and statistics. Websites like Google Scholar are great for taking us directly to this high-quality work but can often present us with the second problem: having to pay for access. Your school or college might have access to some of these articles through a subscription but is unlikely to have all of them.

How do we solve this? Quite simply, we search for Open Access materials. Open Access (OA) refers to free, unrestricted online access to research outputs such as journal articles and books. OA content is open to all, with no access fees. The work is quality controlled and freely available for you to use and adapt in your own work (so long as you acknowledge the source of information).

This worksheet will guide you through trying different Open Access databases and statistical sites.

## KEY RESOURCES

LibGuides. (2021). [Open Access Resources: Introduction](https://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess) (Online)  
From: [libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess](https://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess)

LibGuides. (2021). [Copyright for Researchers: Creative Commons](https://bit.ly/3sQRAAa) (Online)  
From: [bit.ly/3sQRAAa](https://bit.ly/3sQRAAa)

Alliant Libraries (n.d.). [What is a Boolean Operator?](https://bit.ly/3zoUAVv) (Online)  
From: [bit.ly/3zoUAVv](https://bit.ly/3zoUAVv)

Suber, P. (2012). [Open Access](https://bit.ly/3owi2Mp). MIT Press: Cambridge. Available  
From: [bit.ly/3owi2Mp](https://bit.ly/3owi2Mp)

# Open Access Databases

The University of Westminster is pleased to be able to provide you with easy access to a wide range of sources of data and research that will help you with your studies and projects. Below, we will look at how and when you should access each type of database, and in the activities, you can try some specific tasks to help you learn how to use them effectively.

## Open Access academic journal articles

Academic journal articles are reports and research written by academics working at universities in the UK and around the world. They have to go through very thorough processes to be published, so you know the information they contain is of a high quality. Some of them can require a lot of background knowledge to read, but many of them are quite accessible for people of any level of experience. You can access a range of different OA databases by visiting: [libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/journals](http://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/journals)

## Open Access Books

Wow! Free books! That's right, there are many books that are available to download and read for free. Some allow you to download the whole book and others possibly only a chapter. Either way, our range of Open Access books will likely have something to help you on your way with your research. Access the book lists at: [libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/books](http://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/books)

## Statistics

Whether you need some data to make a point in an essay or you are looking for a whole new idea to write about, finding good, reliable statistics can be pretty difficult. A lot of good statistical data is very expensive because it can be used to make a lot of money, but there are some really good sources of free data available. We also list several other sites that make some of their data available for free. Explore a world of data and statistics by heading to: [libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/statistics](http://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/statistics)

## Images and film

Finding images that you are allowed to use freely to illustrate your work and projects can be difficult. There are, though, a wide range of websites that list images that you can use for free. Some of these are also really useful if you are studying images or art. And if you are looking to study, analyse or research film, you will also find multiple databases and websites where you can watch films for free here: [libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/multimedia](http://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/openaccess/multimedia)



## ACTIVITIES

1. Open the link to the Open Access academic journals listed on the left. Select the CORE database. You will see a search bar. Try searching for 'Social Media'.
  - i. How many results do you get?
  - ii. Try adding some other words to help refine the search. Do you get different results?
  - iii. Look at the information about Boolean Operators overleaf. Can you get results with less than 100 entries using these techniques?
  - iv. Try using your own key words and in one of the other databases, such as DOAJ (make sure you choose 'articles' before you click 'search').
  
2. Open the link to Statistics from the list on the left. Head to National Statistics Online.
  - i. Search for your hometown. What kind of data can you access? If nothing comes up, try looking for the closest city.
  - ii. Click the menu bar where it says, 'People, population and community'. Select 'Housing'. Take a look at the reports generated. Are these more helpful than raw data?