How Library Stuff Works Videos: How to Find and Choose a Database

So, your instructor just gave you guidelines for your final paper and she wants you to have five peer-reviewed articles. Oh, and those five articles have to be in addition to the four you used in your annotated bibliography.

I know what you're thinking: Five? Where the heck am I going to find five more peer reviewed articles? It was hard enough finding four for the annotated bibliography (and those ones weren't even that good). I've done all of the searching I can possibly do on Google already!

Never fear! Library databases to the rescue!

Library databases are your best option for finding scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles on a variety of topics. Seriously, they have every topic imaginable.

You can access these databases a couple of different ways.

First, click the databases tab from the Mac library homepage.

If you know exactly what database you're looking for you can search for it by typing the database name in this box.

This is helpful if you know the key databases in your field, or if your instructor wants you to find articles from a particular database.

If you're not sure which database you want to use, or you want to get a better idea of which databases are relevant to your courses, or essay topic, you can also search by discipline, or academic program.

Once you select one of these options you'll be given a list of databases that are relevant to your discipline, or program.

Sometimes these lists will have a crazy amount of databases to choose from, which can be all sorts of overwhelming. Don't worry, its super easy to figure out which database is right for you.

You can just skim the description of the databases. These descriptions will tell you what type of materials exist in that database such as articles, abstracts, images, books reviews or other materials and— for general and multidisciplinary databases— what other subjects are represented in that database such as psychology, politics, economics, and so forth.

Once you've found a database you like click the title to access it. Now you're ready to begin exploring!

If you ever have problems finding an appropriate database just ask! The library staff are happy to help you out at the front desk, or online!