A Guide to Using Journals

► What are journals and why are they useful?
Journals (also known as serials or periodicals) include trade & professional magazines and academic journals. They are published at regular intervals - usually weekly, monthly or quarterly - and can be published in print, both in print and online, or online only. Newspapers are a type of journal.

Journals usually have a distinct subject focus and contain articles written by subject experts, practitioners, academics and researchers. Examples of journals include British Journal of Educational Studies (online only), English (print and online) and The Psychologist (print only). They often also contain news stories, book reviews and professional development opportunities.

Journals are particularly useful because they focus on developments, issues and debates in particular industries, professions and fields of study, and because the content is very current and up-to-date.

► How do academic journals differ from other journals?
Academic journals are also called scholarly, peer-reviewed or refereed journals and usually focus on studies and research in a particular discipline. Prior to publication the articles published in academic journals are scrutinised by a small number of subject-experts to ensure their integrity and validity. This process is called peer review and is essentially a form of quality control to ensure that the content of an academic journal is authoritative and trustworthy.

This three minute video, entitled What Is A Scholarly Journal? and produced by librarians at La Trobe University in Australia, provides an informative and entertaining explanation of scholarly journals.

► Which journals does the Library provide access to?
The Library subscribes to a selection of individual journals and journal collections¹ considered to be the most relevant and appropriate to the university curriculum. At present this provides the BGU community with access, via WorldCat and/or the Library’s A-Z Databases page, to approximately 30,000 journal titles. A small number are print only², and are therefore only available to view in the Library. To see a selection of the journals available for your subject visit your subject LibGuide and click on the Journals tab.

► What are open access journals?
In contrast to the many journals that the University pays subscription fees for, some publishers choose to make their journals ‘open access’. This means that a journal is freely available with no subscription fees for anyone to pay. An example of an open access journal is the London Review of Education. The (international) Directory of Open Access Journals provides a gateway to the many open access, peer-reviewed journals currently available. In addition, some subscription journals make a selection of their articles open access. The orange logo above is widely used to denote open access content.

► How do I find a specific journal?
To find a specific journal you need to use WorldCat.

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¹ Several journals published by the same publisher, or several journals from different publishers made available via a journal database like ProQuest Central.
² The latest issues of the Library’s print journals are displayed on shelves on the ground floor; back issues must be requested from the Service Desk. Print journals are for reference only and must not be removed from the Library.
Perform a basic WorldCat search for the title of the journal you are looking for: for best results enclose it in speech marks, e.g. “British Educational Research Journal”.

Next, under the Format filter on the left of the screen, select Journal, magazine (it may be necessary to ‘Show More’ at the bottom of the filter list). This will refine your results to journals. You can then choose to refine your results further, for example by selecting the Peer-reviewed and/or eJournal filters. A journal with full text access will display a blue Access Journal link. Click on it and you will see listed the means by which you can access the journal. In the example below the British Educational Research Journal is available via five different databases (look under Database/Coverage to see which dates are covered by which database and therefore which one might best suit your needs); to access any of them click on Access Journal. NB. If you are off-campus you will be prompted to login with your BGU credentials.

If there is no Access Journal button it means that the Library doesn’t provide online access to the journal. It may however provide print access; click on the journal title to open the record and look under Check Availability for information on available print holdings. For example, perform a search for the journal Lincolnshire Past & Present and you will see the information in the screenshot on the left.

► How do I search for journal articles on a particular subject?

To find articles in journals, newspapers, and magazines on a particular subject you need to use WorldCat.

Perform a basic keyword search (click here for guidance on constructing searches) and then, on the left of the screen, click on both the Article and Full text filters (see the screenshot below). You can also choose to refine your results further, for example by selecting the Peer-reviewed filter. Articles with full text access will display a blue View full text link. Click on View full text to view the content. NB. If you are off-campus you will be prompted to login with your BGU credentials.
How do I find a specific article?

There may be instances where you know the full citation of a journal article, for example:


To find this article you would perform a basic [WorldCat](http://bishopg.worldcat.org/oclc/496119742) search for the article title; for the best results enclose it in speech marks: “The development and consequences of national curriculum assessment for primary education in England”.

Next, select the **Full text** filter (you can also select the **Article** filter if you need to). This will refine your results to full text; full text articles display a blue [View full text](http://bishopg.worldcat.org/oclc/496119742) link. Click on the title of the article to open the record and it will display details of the database the article is available through. In the example below the article is available via Taylor & Francis Social Science and Humanities Library. To open the article you would click on the [View full text](http://bishopg.worldcat.org/oclc/496119742) link. NB. If you are off-campus you will be prompted to login with your BGU credentials.

If there is no [View full text](http://bishopg.worldcat.org/oclc/496119742) button the Library may provide access to a printed ‘copyright-cleared’ version of the article, as in the example below (copyright-cleared articles are kept at the Service Desk and cannot be taken out of the Library). Alternatively, we may provide access to printed copies of the journal issue: to find out, perform a WorldCat search for the journal title (see the section above on How to find a specific journal).

Alternative ways of finding online journals and articles

There are two alternative ways to find journals and electronic journals online.

The first is to use WorldCat’s [eJournal & eBook Search](http://bishopg.worldcat.org/oclc/496119742) functionality. This can be accessed from the bottom of the WorldCat homepage, or via the **Library Links** button in the top-right of the screen.
The second is to search individual journal databases via the Library’s A-Z Databases page: go to the homepage and select Journals from the All Database Types drop-down menu. (Click here for guidance on constructing searches.)

Do I need to pay to access journal content?

Whilst the Library subscribes to around 30,000 journals, WorldCat may sometimes direct you to journals the Library doesn’t subscribe to (especially if you perform a ‘Libraries Worldwide’ search). You may also find you can only access certain years. For example, for a journal first published in 1990, online access may only be available for the period 1997 to the present. Furthermore, publishers sometimes apply embargoes on recent online content, meaning that the last 12 or 18 months’ worth of issues may not be accessible. In these instances you will not be able to access an article for free, but you could choose to request it using the Library’s inter-library loan service (see question below). The date range covered by each subscription is described in the Check Availability section of a journal’s WorldCat record under Database/Coverage.

Importantly, if you look for articles using a search engine like Google you may be asked to pay for things that would otherwise be free. This is because search engines don’t know that you are BGU student and treat you as any other member of the public, i.e. they may prompt you to pay for some articles. However, if you use WorldCat or the A-Z Databases page to perform searches you are immediately identifiable as a BGU student and will have access to all the content subscribed to by the Library.

If you aren’t sure if the Library provides free access to a particular journal or article, please get in touch at library@bishopg.ac.uk.

What can I do if the Library doesn’t provide access to the article I need?

If there’s an article the Library doesn’t provide access to you can choose to request a copy via inter-library loan. The Library team will then try to acquire a copy for you from another library. A small administration charge applies, but the article will be yours to keep.