Step 6

How do I find and use journals?

What are journals?

Journals like magazines, newspapers, newsletters and annual reports are in a group of publications known as serials or periodicals. This is a term to describe publications that are issued at regular intervals, either daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.

Why should I use journals?

By reading and referring to journal articles in your assignment, you will add substance and quality to your work. You are likely to be awarded higher marks as a result.

Journals provide information that is:

- Timely – journals are published more often than books, as a result you will find up-to-date information in recent journals
- Concise – articles in journals are shorter to read than books
- Authoritative – articles are written by experts (either academics or professionals). Peer reviewed journals contain articles which have been examined and reviewed by the editorial board of the journal to ensure the research is sound, accurate and robust before the article is published.

Does it matter which journal I use?

Journals can be divided into three main types:

1. **Scholarly**
   - written reports on some research
   - articles are written by researchers or subject experts
   - articles are written in a technical style and usually require some knowledge of the subject to understand the content
   - Before publication articles are peer reviewed, this means that they are read by other experts before they are published.
   - Articles include references and bibliographies

2. **Trade and professional**
   - Articles relate to an industry or profession
   - Articles contain information about products or services
   - Articles cover current issues affecting an industry or profession

   Example: Nursing Times, Community Care

3. **Popular magazines**
   - Written to entertain as well as inform
   - Often contain more illustrations and photographs
   - Information is reported second or third hand by freelance reporters

   Example: New Scientist

How do I find journals?

Some journals are only available in print, but most are only available online. *iFind* will indicate the availability of Swansea’s subscribed journals.

**Finding a journal**

If you know the journal you want, search for the journal title in *iFind*. When searching for a journal use either the *Books & more* or *Everything* search options.

To find out if we provide access to a journal title:

- Search for the journal title e.g. History today.
- If it does not appear towards the top of your results use the *Resource Type* filter to limit your results to *Journals*.
- Click *Online* to view the e-journal or *Library* to find out about our print holdings.
If you are accessing the online journal, you may need to log in with your Swansea University username and password.

How do I find articles?

There are three main types of tool you can use to find articles on a topic:

1. **iFind** which can be used to find articles quickly.
2. **Library Guides** which can be used to identify major information sources for your subject such as bibliographic databases.
3. **Bibliographic databases** that index the literature of a particular subject area e.g *PsychInfo* (psychology) or *Inspec* (engineering) or *Web of Science* (all subject areas). These are the best tools for doing a comprehensive literature search for an extended essay or dissertation.

**iFind** searches the vast majority about articles provided by the library. You can search for a specific article or articles on a subject. When searching for articles use either the **Articles & more** or **Everything** search options. To find a specific article:

- Search for the title of the article

![Article](image)

- To view the full article click on **Online**. You might need to log in with your Swansea University username and password.
- Clicking on **Details** takes you to more information, which often includes a description or abstract.
- Select **Recommendations** to see other articles accessed by people that have viewed the article you have found.

**Library Guides** is a gateway to key resources in your subject area. Select your school/subject from the menu to see recommended resources including databases and e-journal collections.

**Bibliographic databases** provide the user with the ability to search across most of the scholarly journal literature of a subject area, including journals to which we don’t have a subscription. Bibliographic databases are usually international in scope and
some index journals written in languages other than English. The databases themselves only provide references with abstracts (summaries). The user needs to follow “Get it @ Swansea” links to find out if the full-text is available. You need to be prepared to allocate plenty of time when searching bibliographic databases.

How do I get article that Swansea University do not have?

If you cannot find the article in the print or electronic collections, you can make a request through the Document Delivery Service. There is more information about Document Delivery at http://www.swansea.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/documentsupply/.

Newspapers

Newspapers are often divided into broadsheets and tabloids. **Broadsheet newspapers** contain considered arguments, longer articles. Their style is challenging and they contain useful information on current affairs. **Tabloid newspapers** are characterised by simple language and their content is sometimes trivial and sensationalist.

**News magazines** are published weekly rather than daily and review topical issues. Examples include New Statesman and Economist.

Finding newspapers: print and online

You can find recent (last 6 months) paper copies of some of the most popular newspapers in the Library and Information Centre at Singleton Park and the Bay Library. Alternatively use one of the 3 online newspaper databases to which we subscribe. These will enable you to:

- Search a large range of newspaper titles from the UK or from the world
- Search newspapers in different languages
- Access the full-text online, on or off campus
- Search over many years –for example back to the 1990s in many cases or even back to 1785 for the *Times*. 
Go to the Library Guide for your subject to find further information about accessing newspaper databases such as Newsstand, Nexis and the Times Digital Archive 1785-1985.

How can I get help finding journals?

For more information about finding journals, you can contact your subject support team. There is a list of subject areas and contact names on the online Library Guides: libguides.swansea.ac.uk.

Effective reading and taking notes.

You may have already scanned through some of your material when you selected it but now you will want to read it in more depth, to take notes or even discard it from your research if you realise it is not as useful as you originally thought.

This stage can seem long and sometimes frustrating and demotivating, but there are techniques which will help you to do this effectively.

Effective reading

To read effectively you will need to concentrate and develop your understanding of the material. It may help if you ask yourself the following questions.

- What do I already know?
- How will I apply this to my assignment?
- What new things do I want to learn?
- Who has written this, what are they trying to say and to whom?

Effective reading will also help with effective note taking. Try the following process:

- survey the chapter or article, note the title and subheadings, this will give you some idea of what it is about
- question the author's main points
- read, with the intention of answering your question
- repeat in your own words every couple of pages what you have read
- go back and review a chapter once you have read it
This process will also help you to select appropriate material, so do not be afraid to discard any material that you think is irrelevant.

**Note Taking**

Note taking is a way of recording what you have read and should help you to remember the content. Your notes should be accurate and detailed and should help you to structure your assignment. Use your plan to guide you with your note taking, identify and record the main points and check your understanding of any words or concepts that you are unfamiliar with. Try to structure your notes in a way that will assist you with writing your assignment. The most common types of note taking are:

- **Linear**: where you use key words and phrases, for example, a heading is a key word or phrase and this is followed by bullet points or numbered points which give more detail.

- **Patterns**: where arrows/circles/lines connect key words and phrases, making a spreading pattern e.g. mind mapping, diagrams.

- **Visual information**: where it is difficult to record visual information in words, you may choose to make a sketch, copy the image or use an accurate reference so you can go back to it.

There are no set rules on how to structure your notes, and finding a method that best suits you is important, you may even choose to use a combination of the methods listed above.

Selecting what to note can be the most difficult task, your effective reading skills should help you with this, but also look at how you want to structure your assignment and try to answer the following:

- What is the argument I am trying to make?
- What evidence do I need to support my argument?
- What facts do I need to include and what is irrelevant?
As you read, make sure you note the source of your information, this is especially important if plan to include quotes in your assignment. Keep a record of the following:

**Journal**: page number, theorist, article title, author and journal title, volume, number date

**Book**: theorist, page number, chapter title, author and book title and author/editor, publisher location and date

Doing this whilst note taking will be far easier than trying to relocate references once you start writing your assignment. Detailed guidance on different types of referencing is included in Step 8 of the Assignment Survival Kit or in your Library Guide.

How can I get help reading and taking notes?

The Centre for Academic Success offer workshops and appointments on academic and study skills including reading and note taking.