

Biology 201A Subject Guide: Finding Primary Literature

Reading Primary Literature is **on reserve** in the library.

What is primary source material, primary research, or primary literature? It is different for each discipline.

In science, it is original research, scholarly communication, or the review of that research. It usually has an abstract (summary), an introduction, and a section of Discussion and/or Methodology, as well as References.

The following sites have more information on primary research in biology:

Humboldt College - <http://library.humboldt.edu/~rls/litbiology.htm> the literature of biology

Xavier University - http://www.xavier.edu/library/help/primary_secondary_sources_biology.pdf Primary vs. Secondary Sources, Biology

Cal State University Fullerton - <http://guides.library.fullerton.edu/biology/primary.htm> Biology Articles, Primary Research

Where is primary literature found? In journals, conference reports, testimony. Almost all research articles are now available online. Many can be accessed for no charge.

What is a peer reviewed article? Peer review represents a high level of scholarship. Peer reviewed articles have been evaluated by several researchers or subject specialists in the academic community prior to being accepted for publication. This makes them a good source for quality information

Using EBSCOhost - <http://library.cuesta.edu/journal.htm>

Finding the best keywords is the first thing to consider when using any online source. Check your text and any scholarly article you already have for the words and phrases that best cover your topic. Try different keywords if you aren't getting good results.

MasterFile Premier is the default database in *EBSCO*. Check the **full-text** and **peer review** boxes before selecting **Search**. Once you have a list of articles, you

can hold the cursor arrow over the magnifying glass icon to quickly read the article summary.

Academic Search Elite is the only *EBSCO* database that has “primary source document” as a choice from the basic search page.

You can use the medical-nursing module (CINHAL) to get primary source articles. You can also choose **Research, Case Study**, or other type from **Publication Type** list. Check abstract and references available to further narrow your search.

Internet resources for scholarly full text articles:

Learn buzzwords used by search engines:

“biology open access journals” or “full text biology articles.”

National Center for Biotechnology Information - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/gquery>
main page:

Public Library of Science - <http://www.plos.org/> main page

Highwire - <http://highwire.stanford.edu/lists/freeart.dtl> from Stanford

Directory of Open Access Journals - <http://www.doaj.org/doaj?cpid=67&func=subject> a huge database of thousands of journals in all disciplines

Go to **Genetics** (<http://genetics.org>) journal or **Journal of Biology** (<http://jbiol.com>) for full text on some articles from the journals. Many science journals now have some articles online.

Citing sources

CSE (Council of Science Editors) - <http://ia.juniata.edu/citation/cse/> online help page.

The citation guide for scientific writing is available in the Reference section of the SLO campus library. It is:

Scientific style and format: the CSE manual for authors, editors, and publishers.
Style Manual Committee, Council of Science Editors. 7th edition (T11 S386 2006).

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