

Biology 210A 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 Fullerton - <http://www.library.fullerton.edu/guides/biology/Articles.php> - 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.

Eureka!ert - <http://www.eureka!ert.org/links.php?jrnl=A> - has a list of peer-reviewed journals. You can check it to see titles of journals, and can also find new

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

Changes in EBSCOhost database family.

1. The Default database is *Academic Search Premier*, which is more scholarly than *MasterFile Premier*.
2. On Search screen choose Full Text.
3. To get the best results try a combination of narrowing your subject (for example, from Genome to Human Genome) and refining your search by date (on the left). EBSCO does not do a good job of showing Primary Research documents, so here are some tips for finding them.
 - a. Most of them will be PDF, due to graphs, tables, etc
 - b. Most will have more than one or two authors
 - c. If you open the document, it will have a Summary of the research (Abstract), an introduction, methodology, results, discussion and a good bibliography. Look for articles that are more than a few pages long.

Internet resources for scholarly full text articles:

Learn buzzwords used by search engines:

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

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 online.

Here are some useful web pages for biology research:

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/> peer-reviewed open access. Each research article is labeled as such. Recent and full text.

<http://www.plosbiology.org/home.action> the Public Library of Science. This page sorts by article type (research). Terrific! Full text.

<http://www.dovepress.com/international-journal-of-wine-research-journal>. Wine research. Labels research articles.

[National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) 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://www.genetics.org/) (<http://www.genetics.org/>) Journal or [Journal of Biology](http://jbiol.com/) (<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).

Use Cal Poly for a larger selection of science articles. Use their databases in the Kennedy library to print or email articles. Also, you can check books out with Cuesta current registration or picture ASCC card.