

# General Reference Center

## Use this database to:

- Locate articles in periodicals from 1980-present
- Find articles by subject or by specific words
- View the entire text for more than one half of the articles
- Locate literary, biographical and general reference information from a variety of reference books

## About this database

General Reference Center indexes almost 4000 magazines and journals. Of these, about 3000 are full-text (i.e. the entire article is readable). Newspaper sources include the NY Times, Chicago Tribune, Philadelphia Inquirer and several dozen smaller papers from around the country. Network and cable news shows are available as videos or transcripts. Many reference books are included as well. The database allows for searching a particular periodical, specific dates or full-text articles only. Search for author, title, subject, keyword or words in the text.

## Searching the database

[General Reference Center](#) offers a range of search options. For the default search, simply enter your key words into the search box. The search engine will show you all the articles that contain those words in the subject, title, citation or author's name. You may also search the entire article for specific words, by clicking on the *Entire Document* button under the search box. The results will appear with latest articles first. Choose a tab for *Magazines*, *Journals*, *Books*, *News* or *Multimedia* to specify a specific type of publication. In addition to the default keyword search, the database provides subject search and an advanced search.

## Searching Tips

- It's often useful to look for articles in a particular subcategory (e.g. *Germany—Environmental Policy* or *Clinton, Hillary—Humor and Anecdotes*). Use the *Browse Subjects* search and click on the "*plus*" sign to see the subdivisions.
- Not all articles on a particular subject are assigned a subdivision. When browsing articles in those subcategories, remember that you are not seeing all articles on the larger subject.
- If you need full text, remember the button that limits results to full text only.
- Save on printing costs by emailing the articles.
- When you find an article that's appropriate to your search, check the *Related Subjects* at the left of the article for more choices.
- You can have a robot read the article to you by using the audio strip under the *Tools* box.

--The *Advanced Search* lets you limit results to a particular date or date range, specify a type of article or a particular publication, and combine results. Taking full advantage of the *Advanced Search* may require some help from a Reference Librarian—ask us!

**Sample Searches** (These searches were done in October 2009—results will change over time)

Question: My class is doing a project on Belgium. I'm doing politics. Are there any articles on recent elections?

Search Procedure: Use the *Browse Subjects* search to find relevant subdivisions of the subject *Belgium*. First click on *Browse Subjects* at the top of the page. Type *Belgium* and then, when you see the results, click on the "plus" sign (+) next to Belgium, to see the subcategories. Try *Elections* and then you might also want *Political Activity* or *Political Aspects*.

Question: I'd like to read about Matt Groening, the creator of The Simpsons.

Search Procedure: Start off by typing *Matt Groening* in the search (or *Find*) box. The nearly five hundred articles resulting from the search are divided among the different types of publications; most are magazine or news articles. There are several options now, depending on what you're really after. To see everything, simply begin scrolling and click on anything that looks interesting. Alternatively, you could limit to full-text articles by clicking in the *Full-text* box at the left. Another option is to eliminate the less relevant articles by limiting to those which list Groening as a subject. Bring down the *Limit by* menu at the left, select *Subject* and *Matt Groening*.

Question: My book discussion group is doing *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi. I'd like to find some book reviews.

Search Procedure: Click on *Advanced Search* at the top of the screen. This search allows you to combine several search criteria into one search. In this case, we'd like to specify the author, the book title, type of article (book review), and full text. Type *Azar Nafisi* into the first box and *Reading Lolita* into the second. Limit the results to full-text and then limit the *Document type* to *Book Review*. There are 37 book reviews to choose from.

Question: I'd like to buy a scanner and I'm considering the Canoscan 5600. Can I find any reviews?

Search Procedure: Type *Canoscan 5600* in the search box and click on the *Entire Document* button to find all mentions of that particular scanner within the texts of the articles. Note, because the search engine is looking through millions of articles, the *Entire Document* search is most appropriate when you have a very specific word or name or phrase to find.

Please note: If your search is not successful, it's possible that a new search with different terms or a different database will yield better results. Please ask a Reference Librarian for help.
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## Similar databases

Gale, the company that brings you General Reference Center, also provides the following periodical databases to Massachusetts libraries and library-card holders at home. Full text availability ranges from about 60-90% among the databases. Each includes some reference material in addition to the periodicals indexed.

[Health Reference Center Academic](#) indexes health magazines and bulletins, medical journals and health-related stories from general publications

[General BusinessFile](#) indexes business and trade journals

[Expanded Academic ASAP](#) indexes indexes magazines and journals of academic interest

[Kids InfoBits](#) (oriented toward elementary school children)

[Infotrac Junior Edition](#) (for middle school students)

[Infotrac Student Edition](#) (for high school students)

[Educator's Reference Complete](#)--journals for educators

To access General Reference Center or any of Wellesley Free Library's databases, go to [mln.lib.ma.us](http://mln.lib.ma.us), click on [databases](#) and type in your library card number.

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