



Introduction

BIOSIS, a not-for-profit organization, has served as a link between the life science community and worldwide biological research for over 70 years by providing access to complete and accurate research information. It is the world's largest abstracting and indexing service for life sciences. *Biological Abstracts* includes bibliographic references (records) with abstracts derived from life sciences research journals published worldwide.

Accessing the Database

From the Library Homepage select “Books, Articles & More”, then select “Articles in journals, magazines & newspapers”. From there you can get to your database in one of three ways:

1. Databases by Discipline (also shows you other databases specific to your major)
2. Databases by Subject (also shows you databases in related areas of study)
3. A-Z list of all databases (gives you a brief description of the database)


You will find Biological Abstracts under Biology as a discipline and under “Biological and Health Sciences” and “Science and Engineering” as a subject.

Beginning a Search

To search for records

Type a term or phrase you want to search for in the database you are currently using.

Note: If you enter more than one term, WebSPIRS (the information retrieval system used by Biological Abstracts) treats the terms as a phrase.

Click  (or hit enter on keyboard).


Advanced Search

Advanced Search, found on a tab at the top of the search screen, lets you focus your search by:

- searching in specific database fields
- combining multiple terms and search criteria

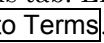
The screenshot shows the search interface with the 'Advanced' tab selected. It features three search input boxes. The first box contains 'feline leukemia' and is set to search 'in (Terms anywhere)'. The second box contains 'vobis' and is set to search 'in Author, Editor, Inventor(AU)'. The third box is empty and set to search 'in (Terms anywhere)'. Between the boxes are 'Combine Using' options for AND, OR, and NOT. A 'Search' button is located at the bottom left of the search area.

Start your search:

1. Type a search term in the first input box.
2. In the next input box select the fields you want to search. The default (**Terms anywhere**) will search all fields. For descriptions of the other fields, click *Database Guide* on the top right of the screen.
3. If you are searching for multiple terms, type another search term in the input box on the next line, and select the field you want to search.
4. Select **and**, **or** or **not** to combine your terms:
 - and** retrieves records that contain both search terms.
 - or** retrieves records that contain either or both search terms.
 - not** retrieves records that contain the first search term, but not the second.
5. Click 

Finding the best search terms

The thesaurus is a good tool to find further related terms for searching. It is a list of standardized words and phrases (called descriptors) used in Biological Abstracts. Descriptors are assigned to each record in the database to describe the content of the document. Using the thesaurus in searching reduces the need for you to consider all the varied synonyms and phraseology that different authors might use, and it often aids in reducing the number of irrelevant results.

To search for a concept in the thesaurus, click the Thesaurus tab. Enter a term in the subject box and click . Click on a desired term from the resulting list to retrieve details about how the term is used. Term details may contain More Specific

(narrower) terms, Related terms, or Less Specific (broader) terms.

Search for narrower terms to make your search more precise; to expand your search, consider descriptors listed as Broader terms or Related terms.

Click the check box(es) for the term(s) you want to search, and click **Search Marked**.

Click **Explode Marked** to search for the displayed descriptor as well as all its narrower (more specific) descriptors.

Limiting your search _____

You can limit your search to retrieve only items that meet certain criteria. For example, you can specify language, publication type (case study, clinical trial, empirical study, etc.), date range, document type (journal article, book chapter, etc.), special feature (assessment instrument, peer reviewed, test bank, study guide, etc.), population and more. To do so, click **Change** in the upper right corner of the search screen.

Combining Searches _____

To narrow or broaden your search retrieval by combining results of previous searches, click the Search History tab to get a numbered list of your previous searches.

To find those records that Search #1 and Search #2 have in common (thereby narrowing your results), click the check boxes for searches #1 and #2. Click on **Combine and search using and**.

To find records that appear in either Search #1 or Search #2 (thereby increasing your results), click on **Combine and search using or**.

Search Tips _____

Use the **Advanced Search** tab to search in specific fields for more precise results.

Some commonly used fields are:

- **TITLE (TI):** searches title of article or book chapter
- **SOURCE (SO):** searches title of journal or book
- **SUBJECT (SU):** searches Key Concepts (KC) used by the author, and Descriptors (DE), descriptive terms assigned by indexers.

Use truncation or wildcards to variations of a search term.

- The **truncation** symbol (*) substitutes for a string of zero or more characters. For example, **child*** retrieves children, childhood, childless, etc.
- The **wildcard** symbol (?) substitutes for one character or none. For example, the search **m?cdonald** retrieves both mcdonald and macdonald.

Working with Results _____

Your results include citation information (such as author name, article title, journal, book title, publication information, date, page numbers, etc.). You may also get an abstract or summary of the work, as well as a list of the descriptors (subject terms) assigned to the work. For more information about each work, click on the **Complete Record** link at the end of each record. To view, print, save, e-mail, or save to your H: drive these records; use the icons on the right side of the screen:



Locating materials in the library

When viewing a record in Biological Abstracts, the DT (document type) field indicates whether the work is a journal article, book chapter, dissertation, etc. Your next step is to determine if McIntyre Library owns the item.

Books

If the item is a book or book chapter, you will have to search the McIntyre Library Catalog (www.uwec.edu/library, use the Library Catalog Quick Search). Be sure to search the catalog for the title or author/editor of the entire book rather than the title or author of the chapter.

Journal articles

For journal articles, you will find location information at the end of each Biological Abstracts record in fields labeled LHM (library holdings message) and WEBHL. Click on **Link to Holdings** in the WEBHL field to search for your journal in the McIntyre Library Periodicals List. If the journal is available electronically, the Periodicals List will provide a link to the databases in which it can be found.