

2G Student Handout

Activity name and title: **2G – Information Literacy**
Conducted in sections of: **E822 Microeconomics**

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Instructions:

All Philadelphia University students are participating in an institutional Information Literacy Initiative. The program goal is to help students develop effective research skills that will enable them to become proficient at using electronic information resources, both those supported by Gutman Library and those available on the Internet, and those found at other libraries. An information literate student is a "wise information consumer" and a lifelong learner who has the ability to find, evaluate and apply information to a task. SBA courses, in particular, are educating students about business information resources and business research skills. For more information visit the Philadelphia University Information Literacy Web Site at <http://www.philau.edu/infolit>

In this exercise you will develop the following skills:

- Gain familiarity with business literature electronic databases through an economic research problem.
- Understand how these databases are differentiated from "free" Internet resources.
- Locate journals in the library using PhilaFind (library catalog) and JournalList.
- Gain the ability to articulate a search question and then transform that question into a search statement appropriate for electronic database research.
- Construct a higher level search strategy.
- Evaluate the quality of literature when making choices for articles to select for review and analysis.
- Demonstrate the ability to properly cite articles located in electronic databases.
- For examples of citation formats go to the home page of the Learning and Advising Center at <http://www.philau.edu/learning> and go to "documentation of sources" in the left margin. This leads to examples of citation formats for both MLA and APA styles.

Part One – Search Preparation

Step A – Articulate the Search Question

Use this topic as an example: **"Economic impact of government-sanctioned gambling"**. Do these programs benefit states and cities economically, or are there harmful effects that outweigh the possible gains. In the box below, articulate or describe the research question. We will use this research question in this exercise.

Some Additional Topics for this Research Assignment

Price Controls:	Minimum Wage debate
Market Concentration:	Does Media Merger Imperil Democracy (reference recent FCC ruling)
Monopoly and Antitrust:	The Microsoft Case and its Settlement
Market failure and role of government:	Global Warming/Environmental Pollution
Oligopoly and Cartels:	OPEC and its impact on world oil prices
International Trade:	Globalization and its impact on US job market

Step B – Identify the Search Concepts or “Keywords”

For example, if the search topic was “Do tax cuts help to stimulate the economy?”, the main concepts are “tax cuts” and “economy” and possibly “stimulation”. You can use synonymous terms such “tax reduction” or “tax rebate” to widen your search. For the articulated search question in (A), identify the concepts or keywords that will become part of the search strategy.

Step C – Develop a Search Strategy

Lets start with a Basic Search strategy or “Boolean” search. This involves using **OR** and **AND** operators to combine the search terms in such a way as to retrieve information about the topic. Here is a simple guideline:

- Use the OR connector to combine synonymous or similar terms/phrases (e.g., lottery OR legal gambling)
- Use the AND connector to combine unique concepts (e.g., lottery AND economy)

Whenever you develop a search strategy it is important to think of synonymous terms for each concept being searched. It will always help you to avoid missing useful information. If you can’t think of any synonymous terms ask your instructor or a librarian for assistance, or do some general database searching and review the articles to see what terms the authors are using.

Here is an example:

tax cut or tax reduction
AND
economic development or economic growth

Now, in the box below, develop a search strategy for the gambling topic.

Part Two – Searching Databases for Microeconomics Research Exercise

Gutman Library offers many different business information databases. Just a few, those covering articles from business publications, would be appropriate for an economics research project. To answer some of the questions about the business databases you can explore: <http://www.philau.edu/library/businessdbinfo.html> This page contains descriptions of the different business databases and you can connect to the databases from this page.

For this exercise you will use:

- ABI/Inform Global
- LexisNexis Universe
- Wilson Business Database

Now that you have (a) articulated the search question, (b) identified your search keywords or concepts and (c) developed your search strategy, you are ready to access a business database and conduct the search for literature.

(A) Searching ABI/Inform Global

Note: you can access any of the library databases from the Gutman Library Home Page (<http://www.philau.edu/library>). Select the database by name from the dropbox (article search).

- 1) Use your keywords to conduct a search using ABI's default **Basic Search**. This search offers few search techniques. If you have OR/AND combinations, they are difficult to enter using this search interface. Enter the search terms in whatever way you think they will best work.
- 2) How many articles did your search retrieve? _____. The number of articles you found that were related to your research topic were too many/ too few.
_____.
- 3) Now use **Advanced Search (click its tab)** to refine your search. Advanced search provides the OR and AND operators for you. All you need to do is enter your search strategy terms in each of the search boxes.
 - (a) Enter your synonymous terms in one search box : **example:** tax cuts or tax reduction
 - (b) Then, in the next search box enter the other part of your search strategy:
example: economic development or economic growth

Search Tip: A word like economy can have a number of variants, such as economic, economical, economies, etc. Use **truncation** to find all the variants on a root word. In ABI, you would search **econom*** to find all the possible variants. In ABI the asterisk (*) is the truncation symbol, but it differs from database to database. In LexisNexis the exclamation point (!) is the truncation symbol. Check

- 4) Now, how many articles did you retrieve? _____. How many of these articles were relevant to your search topic. _____
- 5) You can improve your ABI search if you can find appropriate **subject** terms used by this database system to accurately link articles to the topics they are most centrally about. For example, if you searched with the terms lottery or gambling, examining some of the retrieved articles will show that the official ABI subject term for this concept is **lotteries**. Using the database's official subject terms can help to increase the relevancy of the articles retrieved. This example shows where the **Subject Field** is located in an ABI article – and where you can find the subject terms. The article doesn't have to be completely "on topic". As you can see, even if it just mentions one of your main concepts it can help you identify a good subject term.

Revival of Mass. Lottery account stirs up local shops

Kristen Rountree, David Gianatasio. Adweek. New York: Jul 28, 2003. Vol. 44, Iss. 30; pg. 13

» [Jump to full text](#) 



Subjects: [Lotteries](#), [Account reviews](#), [Advertising agencies](#), [Competition](#)
 Classification Codes: [8307 Arts, entertainment & recreation](#), [7200 Advertising](#), [8301 Advertising agencies](#), [9190 United States](#), [9000 Short article](#)
 Locations: [United States](#), [US](#), [Boston Massachusetts](#)
 Companies: [Lottery Commission-Massachusetts](#) (NAICS: [713290](#), Sic: [7999, 9311](#))
 Author(s): [Kristen Rountree](#), [David Gianatasio](#)

- 6) The next step is to return to the **Advanced search** screen and revise your search. Search revision is perhaps more critical to achieving good results than anything you do in the initial search. Many students do a search, examine the results, and stop there. Your goal should always be to revise the search in order to achieve the best results possible – using new information gather from your initial efforts to re-engineer the search strategy. Below list the subject terms you discovered that you used to revise your search strategy:

- 7) Now, how many articles did your search retrieve? _____. The number of articles you found that were related to your research topic were too many/ too few. _____ . Consider how your revised search differed from your initial search (jot down some thoughts on the reverse side of this sheet).

List 3 articles from your **revised** search that are most relevant to your research topic. Provide complete citations in the box below:

1)	_____

2)	_____

3)	_____

(B) Searching Lexis/Nexis (LN) Universe

- 1) Choose **Guided News Search** to search in Lexis/Nexis. Guided search allows you to choose the following:

News category: select **Business News**

News source: select **Business and Finance**

Search terms – use the default **Headline, Lead Paragraph(s), Terms**

Date range: click the **FROM** button and add to the boxes **From:** 1990 and

To: enter the current year

Publication title: enter: **new york times or economist or business week**

Using your search terms identified in **Part A/Step B**, enter the search strategy in the Search Terms box, using your strategy from **Part A/Step C**. **NOTE:** LN **doesn't** use subject terms the way ABI does. You might want to include any new subject terms you discovered in ABI, but don't use **ONLY** the ABI subjects. **In LN it is critical to use synonymous terms.**

In this example we are also limiting our search to just three specific publications included in LN. If you need to know if LN does cover a specific publication use LN's own **Source Guide** or Gutman Library's **JournalList**

- 1) **Search Tip: How would you revise a LN search** when there are no subject terms? Here are some ideas:
Use the **Focus** feature to add additional terms to your search.
- 2) Use the **atleast#** command to specify a search term that must appear a specific number of times in an article. (e.g. **atleast5(lottery)**)
- 3) Use **length>#** to specify how many words an article must have in order to be retrieved. (ex: **length>900**)
Note: you can use the **atleast** or **length** commands in the Focus box to quickly revise the search. Use these techniques primarily to improve search results by eliminating less relevant or less substantive articles on your topic.
- 4) Did you remember to truncate your search terms (e.g., lotter!, econom!, legal!). In LexisNexis the exclamation

- 2) List 2 articles each from at least 2 publication sources that are most relevant to your topic of research. Provide complete citations.

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) Use the box below to discuss how the articles retrieved in your LN search differ from those retrieved in your ABI search:

(C) Searching Wilson Business Full Text

- 1) From the WilsonWeb main search screen, check the box for **Business Full Text**. WilsonWeb is a multi-file database system, similar to ProQuest, so you need to choose the business database (and any others that might be applicable). The default search is **Advanced**, again, similar to ABI. Once again, begin by entering the search terms – using the search strategy – developed in **Part A/Steps B & C**.
- 2) Review your initial results and then look for Subject terms that you can use to revise your strategy (See Part 2/Step A(5) above for an explanation). Here is where you find the subjects in WilsonWeb:

Source: [Journal of Public Policy & Marketing v. 17 no. 2 \(Fall 1998\)](#) p. 161-72

Publication Year: 1998

Physical Description: Bibliography; Graph; Table

ISSN: 0743-9156

Language of Document: English

Abstract: A longitudinal study was conducted to examine income-based tax regressivity of *state*-sponsored *lotteries*. Sales data were drawn from six *state lottery* commissions—California, Florida, Indiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Oregon—and annual per capita income and population data for each county in the *states* were obtained from a variety of sources. The results reveal that *lotteries* become less regressive as they progress through their individual life cycles and as new marketing initiatives, such as anonymous methods of play, become more prevalent.



Subject(s): [State taxation](#); [Gambling/Economic aspects](#); [Tax burden](#); [Lotteries/Taxation](#)

SIC Code(s): [Amusement and recreation, nec \(7999\)](#); [Finance, taxation, & monetary policy \(9311\)](#)

- 3) List 3 articles from your initial or revised search results that are most relevant to your research topic. Provide complete citations.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

You Have Completed This Exercise. Please Use the Next Page to Provide Your Feedback and Comments On This Activity.

Please provide feedback on this exercise:

1. The exercise is well explained and easy to follow:
2. This exercise was helpful in my research for the Microeconomics class project:
3. Overall this exercise provides me with useful tools and know-how needed for gathering information for any future research:
4. Do this exercise improve your understanding of the differences between ABI, LN and Wilson? Did you learn some new search techniques you were not aware of before that you would likely use again?
5. Suggestions for improving the exercise:

Revised 8/28/03