

## A Glossary of Library Terms

**Abstract:** A brief summary of a journal article or other resource that classifies, evaluates, or describes the important points of the content.

**Article:** An essay which is part of a larger work such as an article in a journal or encyclopedia.

**Bibliography:** A list of resources used or cited when writing a thesis, essay or assignment.

**Book:** A set of written pages bound inside a cover. The library's collection is made up of information books and fiction titles. Today books are available in print and digital format (eBooks). See also Reference Resource.

**Boolean Searching:** A method of searching using the Boolean algebra operators AND, OR, and NOT to establish the logical relationship between the words and to broaden or narrow search results.

**Call Number:** Like a home address is for a house, a call number is a location code for the print books, equipment, and audiovisuals in a library. In addition, a call number is often also an indication of subject matter of the material and serves as a way storing similar items together in the same area of the library. The Doerr Library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification System to organize the book on its shelves and most college and university libraries use the Library of Congress Classification System.

**Citation:** A formal, properly formatted reference to a work. MLA, APA, and Chicago are citation styles used at MUHS.

**Database:** Information or data stored on a computer and organized and indexed for quick and flexible searching and retrieval. Databases are made up of records and records are made up of fields. Examples of databases available from the Doerr Library's Research Portal include EBSCO's *MasterFILE Premier* and Proquest's *SIRS Knowledge Source*. The Doerr Library uses the term database in a very broad sense to mean any online library resource organized by fields.

**Field:** The portion of a database record which contains a specific category of information such as title of a book or the copyright date of book.

**Full-text:** This term applies to databases and indicates that the entire text of a journal article or book is available to be read online.

**Hold:** When an item is currently checked out of the library, patrons are able to use a link within the catalog record to request that the book be held aside for them when returned.

**Index:** A organized listing of the contents of a single document (e.g., index at the back of a book), of a collection (e.g., index to archival manuscripts in a museum), or of a vast body of documents (e.g., index of journal articles about the Bible). (See also Database)

**Information Desk:** The space within a library that is used to check out and check in library materials, request an item from the reserve area, and speak with a reference librarian about an information or research need.

**Journal:** A periodical containing articles written by scholars for other scholars. (See also Magazine)

**Keyword:** A searchable word used to locate information in a database or search engine. It can be almost any word in any indexed field of a record. (See also Subject Heading)

**Library Catalog:** A list of books, journals, maps, or other items in a collection, a library, or a group of libraries. It is cross-referenced for easy searching. Also called an OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog)

**Login:** The username and passwords used to access fee-based databases. All of the Doerr Library's databases require a login for off-campus use. A list of logins is available at the library's information desk and from the student portal.

**Magazine:** A periodical containing a collection of articles, stories, pictures, or other features written by journalists for the general public. (See also Journal)

**Newspaper:** A periodical published daily or weekly and consisting of folded unstapled sheets that contain news, feature articles, advertisements, and correspondence.

**Periodical:** A publication published at regular intervals (periodically) and more frequently than once per year. It includes articles by several writers. Included in this category are newspapers, magazines, and journals. (See also Serial)

**Primary Source:** In historical research, a primary source is typically an eyewitness account recorded at or about the time of the event, an original document composed near the time of the event that tells us about the time, or physical evidence from the time (like an archaeological artifact or a photo of the event). In scientific research, the first recorded measurements and observations for a given experiment are primary source material. See also Secondary source.

**Plagiarism:** In a narrow legal sense, plagiarism is stealing words without giving credit to the true source/author. In a broader ethical sense, it is stealing ideas and putting forth ideas as one's own without giving credit to the true source/person. Consult the *Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook* or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Society (APA)* for information on citing your sources.

**Popular Sources:** Books and magazine articles written for the general public. This type of resource is often meant as entertainment. (See also Scholarly Source)

**Primary Source:** This type of source allows researchers to get as close as possible to original ideas, events, and empirical research as possible. Such sources may include creative works, first hand or contemporary accounts of events, and the publication of the results of empirical observations or research. (See also Secondary Source)

**Record:** A database record consists of one or more fields. Each record is about one "thing" (entity), and each field is about one specific aspect of the thing. For example, a record might be about one book and might include fields for author, title, publisher, subject, etc. Today it is not uncommon for a record to also include the full-text of the document.

**Reference Resource:** A reference resource is used to located factual information. Common reference books include dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and handbooks. Reference books come in two forms: general and subject specific. The first column of each of the subject tabs of the Doerr Library's Research Portal is comprised of digitized reference works. (See also Book)

**Research:** Research in the most general sense is simply a search for knowledge or truth. The search process itself may be as simple as informally consulting a friend or as complex as designing and implementing a formal billion dollar scientific study. Formal research is always characterized by careful attention to method. In the Doerr Library we use the Big 6 model to guide our research work. It is comprised of six steps including: task definition, information seeking strategies, location and access, use of information, synthesis, and evaluation.

**Reserve:** An item held in a special location due to high demand. These items often circulate for a shorter loan period.

**Scholarly Sources:** Works written by subject experts for other researchers in the discipline. Scholarly sources include most journals but not the other types of periodicals (magazines and newspapers). Scholarly sources are often peer-reviewed or refereed, and generally include a bibliography. (See also Popular Source)

**Search Statement:** The combination of keywords and operators combined to locate information in a research database or on the free web. For example "Greece AND Ancient AND Olympics is a search statement.

**Secondary Source:** A resource that analyzes, reviews, or summarizes information in primary resources or other secondary resources. Even sources presenting facts or descriptions about events are secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation.

**Serial:** A publication issued in parts over many years and generally intended to be continued indefinitely. A periodical is a serial that is issued in successive consecutive parts on a regular schedule (e.g., monthly or quarterly).

**Stacks:** The area of the library where books are stored on shelves.

**Subject Heading:** A terms (words and phrases) assigned to documents to indicate the subject/topic. Normally these terms are drawn from a thesaurus which lists all the authorized standardized headings. (See also Keyword)

**Tertiary Source:** A resource that provides an overview of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources. An encyclopedia is an example of this type of source.