



An Introduction to
LIBRARY SEARCH

Guide for Users
Vassar College Libraries



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Quick Links

Online version of this guide, go.vassar.edu/LibrarySearchGuide
Vassar College Libraries, library.vassar.edu
Ask a Librarian, go.vassar.edu/AskVCL
Liaison Librarians, library.vassar.edu/subjectlibrarians
Digital Library, digitallibrary.vassar.edu
ILLiad, library.vassar.edu/interlibraryloan
Overdrive, vassar.overdrive.com



WHAT IS LIBRARY SEARCH?

The Library Search tool is the primary gateway to our physical and digital collections. Library Search is our library catalog, but it is also a discovery system that searches a large number of our resource databases, and can even connect you with items from other libraries.

Library Search is a platform for locating physical and electronic library collections, including books and ebooks, audiovisual materials, government documents, scores, print and electronic journals, news sources, journal articles, and more.

To begin using Library Search, enter your search terms in the large search box on the library homepage.

Books, Articles, & More

Advanced Search Starts With/Browse Get Started with Library Search

Library Search also provides a number of features that can support your research process, such as the ability to save a search or a list of items to your account, and a citation tool that automatically formats a bibliography entry in your preferred citation style.





SEARCH SCOPES

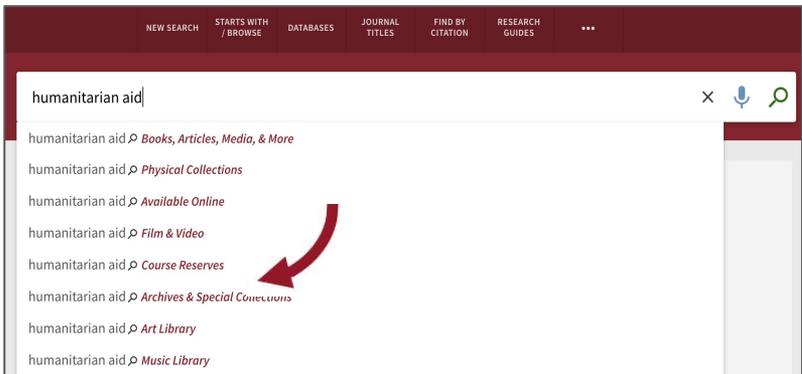
The default search is for “Books, Articles, and More.” This is the broadest search scope option and will return results that include items physically on the shelves in Vassar’s libraries, as well as online materials, including journal articles, ebook chapters, and book reviews.

- Limiting a search to “Physical Collections” will narrow results to items available in the Vassar libraries (including books, microfilm, government documents, scores, etc.)

From the VCL homepage, you can limit your search from the outset by selecting one of these “scopes.”



This is how the scopes appear within the Library Search interface.





REFINING RESULTS

After you've entered your search terms, use the options on the left side of the results to limit your search. If you haven't already chosen a "scope" (Physical Collections, Available Online, etc.), you can do so here, or select a resource type, library location, creation/publication date, etc.

The screenshot displays a search results interface. On the left is a sidebar titled "Refine your results" with a search icon and a checkbox for "0 selected". The sidebar includes a "PAGE 1 66,773 Results" indicator. The sidebar options are: "Expand My Results" (toggle), "Sort by Relevance", "Availability" (with sub-options: Available online, Peer-reviewed Journals, Open Access, Physical Collections), "Resource Type", "Subject", "Author/Creator", "Library", "Location", "Creation Date", "Journal Title", and "Language". The main results area shows four items:

- 1. **Letter regarding hun** McKelvey. Place of publication not date of publication not id. [Available Online](#)
- 2. **Humanitarian aid wo** Martin Beristain, Carlos. ©2006. [Available at Main Lib](#)
- 3. **Humanitarian aid in Duault ; translated b** Atlani-Duault, Laëtitia. / 2007. [Available at Main Lib](#)
- 4. **Dangerous sanctuari** Sarah Kenyon Lische Lischer, Sarah Kenyon, 1

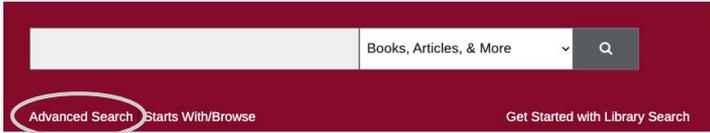
The Expand My Results toggle will show items held by other libraries in your results list. These items can be requested through Interlibrary Loan (ILL.) You may need to sign in to Library Search to access ILL request options.





ADVANCED SEARCH

There is an advanced search option as well, accessible from the VCL homepage (in the burgundy search box) and the Library Search interface.



An advanced search is quite similar to using the options in the left sidebar of your search results: the major difference is that you're making choices about how to structure your search *before* you see the results (advanced search) or *after* (sidebar).

Search Criteria ^

Search in:

Books, Articles, Media, & More Physical Collections Available Online Film & Video Course Reserves

Archives & Special Collections Art Library Music Library Physical Collections.

Search filters

Any field ▾ contains ▾ Enter a search term

AND ▾ Any field ▾ contains ▾ Enter a search term

+ ADD A NEW LINE CLEAR

Material Type

All items ▾

Language

Any language ▾

Start Date:

Day ▾ Month ▾ Start Year

End Date:

Day ▾ Month ▾ End Year

↔ Any field contains ____ AND Any field contains ____ SEARCH



WHAT IS INCLUDED IN LIBRARY SEARCH?

Physical and digital collections, such as books, archival materials, journals, and other materials are accessible through Library Search.

Library Search is the best tool for finding print books, ebooks, book chapters, journal titles, and items in the Libraries' physical collections. In addition, Library Search contains journal and newspaper articles, primary sources, government documents, special collection materials, and much more.

The Library also has non-academic materials, such as newly released fiction and nonfiction. These items are typically found in the Browsing Collection, located in the Main Library Lobby. In Library Search, use the Location filter to locate these books.

You can also use Library Search to connect with other resources and tools provided by Vassar College Libraries. Use the bar at the top of the Library Search interface for specialized searches or to reach resources beyond Library Search.



Starts With/Browse: Search by author, title, subject or call numbers to retrieve an alphabetical listing of materials.

Databases: Access all library databases (by subject area, type of materials, or title/keyword.)

Journal Titles: Does Vassar have access to this journal?

Find by Citation: You have a citation; does Vassar have access to this article?

Research Guides: Suggestions for beginning your research in particular subject areas/departments/programs.

Find more options under the “...” icon, including librarian curated “Featured Content” collections, like online book exhibits.





WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN LIBRARY SEARCH

Library Search does not include all of the resources that the Vassar Libraries have to offer.

Vassar subscribes to specialized databases, which allow you to access a collection of resources that are related to a specific subject. Some, but not all, of these items are also accessible through Library Search.

- For example, while many of the journals found in the database America: History & Life can be found through Library Search, particular features within AH&L remain useful, including high-quality indexing/abstracting and the ability to narrow a search by historical time period.

If your project requires a thorough search, we recommend using Library Search as a starting point, followed by using additional subject-specific or specialized databases. Not only can this give you a clearer sense of the sources that are available to you; these databases also allow for more targeted, powerful searching within a discipline or subject area.

Some Vassar-created resources, like the Finding Aids Collection, Digital Library, and the full-text archive of The Miscellany News, are not currently available through Library Search.

- Those who are interested in digging into finding aids from Vassar's Archives & Special Collections Library, or consulting collections digitized at Vassar (e.g. the Albert Einstein Digital Collection, the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, the Vassar Herbarium, Student Diaries, etc.), should use these other online tools.

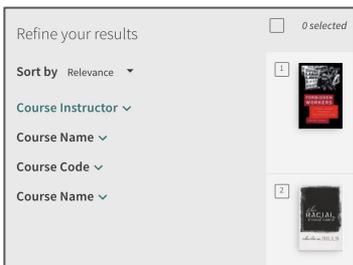
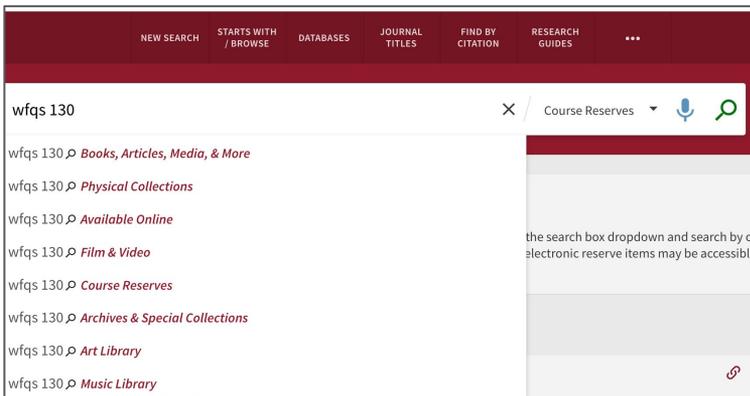
Additionally, the libraries also have ebooks and audiobooks on the platform Overdrive, and not all of them are searchable through Library Search. If you're looking for something to read for fun, we recommend checking out Overdrive!



Library Search includes items on reserve in the libraries.

Instructors can choose to have course materials placed on reserve in the library for their students. If your professor has done this, you can check out the books or other materials that you need for the class from the circulation desk for a limited period of time—usually either 4 hours or 2 weeks.

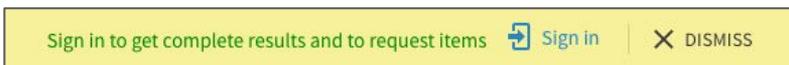
In Library Search, use the Course Reserves scope and search by instructor's name, the course number or ID, or the name of the course, and then view a list of all items that are on reserve. These options are also available through the advanced search screen.





SIGN IN TO ACCESS ILL AND OTHER SERVICES

There are many notices throughout Library Search encouraging you to sign in:



Once you've signed in with your Vassar username and password, you will be recognized as a Vassar borrower. This will allow you to access additional search results and request materials. You will also be able to view your library account, check due dates, and renew materials.

If you're off campus, we recommend signing in first for off-campus access, library.vassar.edu/using-the-libraries/off-campus, so that you will be able to seamlessly connect to electronic resources.

Requesting Materials through Interlibrary Loan

If you are looking for an item that the Vassar Libraries doesn't have, you have the option to request it from another library through Interlibrary Loan (ILL.) You can request ILL items by using ILLiad or the Request from SUNY Libraries option.



NB: If you're unable to make an interlibrary loan request through Library Search, go directly to the ILLiad ILL platform to make your request.



ANNEX REQUESTS AND RECALLS

Requesting from the Annex

Some of our materials are located in an off-site storage facility called the Annex because we have more books than we can fit in the library! However, these resources are still available to you. If an item is labeled as “Annex,” you can request it using the Recall option under a Library Search record. This means that it will be brought to the Main Library for you, usually by the next day.

Get It

REQUEST: [Recall \(from Annex or Patron\)](#) [Place an ILLiad request](#) 

[← BACK TO LOCATIONS](#)

LOCATION ITEMS

Main Library
Available, Annex ; PQ1345 .A2 1925
(1 copy, 1 available, 0 requests)

Recalling from a Patron

If an item has been checked out by another patron, you can also use the Recall option. This lets us know that someone is waiting, and it will prompt us to move up the due date for the person who currently has it so it gets to you sooner.

These options, along with Interlibrary Loan, are only available if you've signed in.



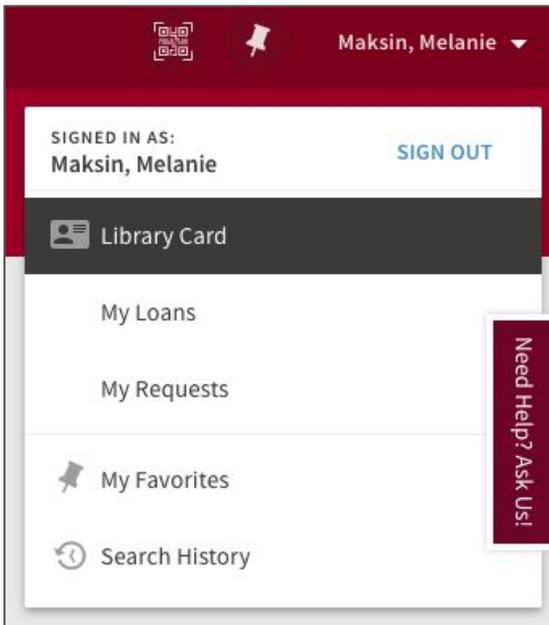


ADDITIONAL FEATURES

You may want to save your search history or add items to your “favorites.” This can be especially useful if you’re working on a big project, such as a thesis, that requires in-depth searching and consulting many resources. Use the thumbtack icon to save a search or add to your favorites.



Other methods of saving items include permalinks, QR codes, exporting to Zotero, copying the citation, and sending by email. These options do not require users to save searches or items in their Vassar library accounts.





CAN'T FIND WHAT YOU NEED? ASK A LIBRARIAN

This is always true, not just with Library Search. **We take a “no question is too big or too small” approach, and can work with you at any stage of the research process.** Librarians can help you with developing your topic, finding relevant materials, conducting effective searches in databases, creating an annotated bibliography, citing your sources, and more.

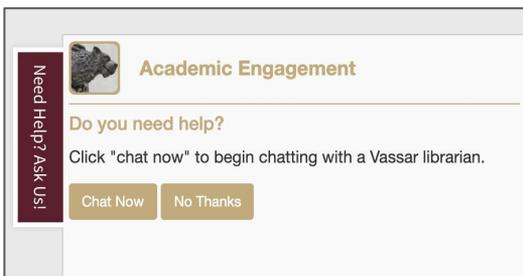
Our Ask a Librarian page highlights ways to get help. You can use any or all of these methods!

- Email researchhelp@vassar.edu
- Contact the liaison librarian for your subject area
- Use the form to schedule a research consultation in person or over Zoom
- Text us at 845-412-8926
- Chat online with a librarian (Monday-Friday, 10 AM-4 PM)

Yes, there actually *is* a Vassar librarian on the other side of the chat window!

Chatting with a librarian is especially good for questions about Library Search; we can provide help right when researchers are feeling stuck or are having trouble interpreting search results.

Look for the “Need Help? Ask Us!” button in Library Search. The chat box is also available on the Library homepage and the Ask a Librarian page.





QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

We welcome your questions and comments!

Visit the **Ask a Librarian** page, at this QR code or at go.vassar.edu/AskVCL, to connect with us!



Do you have specific **questions about using Library Search** for research projects or teaching?

- Contact your liaison librarian, library.vassar.edu/subjectlibrarians

Faculty: would you like to **schedule a library workshop** for your students?

- Visit our Instruction page, library.vassar.edu/research/instruction

Would you like to **share recommendations for improving this guide?**

Contact Melanie Maksin, mmaksin@vassar.edu
Head of Academic Engagement, Vassar College Libraries

