Finding Secondary Sources

Research tools to consider: QCAT, Article Indexes & Databases, and Summon.

1. Books

Subject Heading vs Keyword Searching

Subject headings allow you to search QCAT, the library catalogue, for resources on a particular author or topic and often are more productive than keyword searches.

Keyword searches work best if you have multiple concepts or topics. Think of the words that best describe your topic and then connect with the Boolean operators AND OR NOT. Use the results to find relevant titles and identify assigned subject headings for your topic in order to find similar books.

Historical context refers to the moods, attitudes and conditions that existed in a certain time.

Library of Congress Subject headings use standard subdivisions under place names to classify works.

Here are some for history which can be further subdivided by time period.

- History
- Civilization
- Economic conditions
- Intellectual life
- Personal narratives
- Politics and government
- Social conditions
- Social life and customs

For an overview of the historical period, try searching these subject headings.

Canada Description and travel  
Canada Economic conditions 1918-1945  
Canada History 1867-1914  
Canada History 1914-1945  
Canada Politics and government 1896-1911  
Canada Politics and government 1911-1921  
Canada Politics and government 1914-1945  
Canada Religious life and customs  
Canada Social conditions 1867-1918  
Canada Social conditions 20th century  
Canada Social life and customs 1867-1918  
Canada Social life and customs 1918-1945
Check out the series: Canadian Social History and Canadian Papers in Rural History.

2. Articles

Search the following electronic journal database to find scholarly articles:

- America History and Life
- CBCA

To search indexes, click the tab Databases and enter the title of the database, e.g. America ...

women and farm* and Ontario

Revise search:
(women or ) AND (farm* or ) and (Ontario or )

To find out if Queen’s subscribes to the journal, click Get It! @ Queen’s if full text not readily available.

3. Summon

With Summon, you can search, discover and access information on any topic from the Queen’s Library collections - print and electronic books, single articles to entire e-journals, newspapers, theses and more. You can limit your results to peer-reviewed materials, filter by year and format, narrow by additional subject terms and then save, print or email references.

Summon is a good starting point to find material for your research but if you are doing higher level research, you will want to search relevant subject specific databases.

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