

Storing information and keeping good records – a Reading Journal

Reading journals can help you keep track of your searches and your actions on located sources and materials.

Choose a format that suits you e.g.

- plain notebook – so you can do a page per day



- combined plain notebook with a-z section so you can organise useful resources in alphabetical order (to help build your bibliography/reference list)



- small notebook so it is portable



Process of searching: make a note of...

1. Date of your search(es) – at the top of the page is best
2. Keywords used
3. Locations searched (e.g. databases) – NuSearch? It may be a specific database (e.g. PubMed) or it may be a general search location (e.g. Web of Science)

You may find that different databases and locations for searching have different bits of information (boxes to complete) to produce an effective search. You may need to keep a separate record – maybe at the back of your notebook - as to how each search system works.

Do think about printing out a screenshot of how the screen is laid out to help you recall where information needs to be entered.

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4. Once you have done your search - how many records are found? – this may be 0 (zero) or 235649 (lots!)
5. Keywords or terms used to narrow/expand the search (e.g. date published, additional keywords, language of publication)
6. How many records do you find now?
7. Which ones followed up? – you may want to print out the list of how many found (once reasonable length, or just the first 20 records?)
 - ❖ abstract - read/printed/saved
 - ❖ useful/not useful? – why not helpful??? (so you avoid it next time, or if it becomes helpful for something different)
 - ❖ full text - read/printed/saved
 - ❖ notes taken or copy printed off [where stored?] – system for collected or filing notes

What to do to help find information within notes or printed articles

This may be where your 'a-z notes' of sources could be supplemented by an 'a-z of topics'.

Think about developing a 'dictionary' or glossary of terms and concepts for your subject area. In the appropriate alphabetical section, you could add a note of the source and where it can be found. Making your own notes can reinforce knowledge more effectively than only looking in an online or published dictionary/encyclopaedia.