

ACCESSING ACADEMIC JOURNALS

Academic research is a good place to look for high quality evidence to provide the basis for robust policy, advocacy, programme and project work. The best journals only publish articles after they have been checked by a panel of experts in the field to make sure they are reliable quality, a process called peer review. Whilst abstracts are usually freely available, and may provide enough information for your needs, it can sometimes be hard to access full articles. Here are some ways you can get access.



SEARCHING FOR ACADEMIC JOURNAL ARTICLES

Three free places to start looking for journal articles are [WorldCat](#), [Google Scholar](#) and individual university libraries (which you can use to search even if you aren't a student, e.g. [Open University](#)). You can search for articles and books from a range of different journals and publishers, and choose what dates to look for, or what language. They all list the details of the article including author(s), date, publisher and name of journal. If you're lucky there may even be a link to an accessible copy.



OPEN ACCESS

Increasingly, journal articles are available as 'open access' or free to read, and you'll be able to find a copy through the journal or publisher website e.g. [Sage Publications](#) or [Oxford Journals](#). Use the information from your search to find which publisher site to check to see if it's available. The Open Access logo is the open padlock on the left.



ACADEMIC SOCIAL MEDIA

If you regularly search for articles, try signing up for an account at [academia.edu](#) or [ResearchGate.net](#). Researchers and academics often share or post their articles here.



EMAIL OR MESSAGE THE AUTHOR

Author contact details are usually published with the article – try dropping them an email to see if they can share a copy with you.



UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

You can sometimes use your nearest university library free as a guest, and read paper copies of an article, or access through local computer networks. It's also worth checking public or national libraries to see if they have access*.



JSTOR

[JSTOR](#) is an online library of books and journals, used by universities and schools. If you graduated from a university you may have alumni access. If not you can sign up for a free account, and read three articles a month free of charge.

Produced by the Centre for Excellence in Research, Evidence and Learning
For further advice REL@christian-aid.org | For related topics, see our other [one-page guides](#)

*In the UK [Access to Research](#) is a new scheme in public libraries. The British National Library and National Library of Scotland also have public access.