Finding and Choosing Library Databases

Choosing a Database:

When choosing a database, you should consider 3 things:

(1) Interdisciplinary vs. subject-specific databases.
   a. Interdisciplinary: databases like JSTOR or Academic Search Complete includes articles from across many disciplines. BUT because it covers such a wide area, it only scratches the surface of what is available for one discipline.
   b. Subject-specific: these databases cover one subject area, so they go more in-depth in a search and provide many more articles on a particular topic.

(2) Read the database description.
   a. This will tell you what content is included (what subject areas) in the database and what periods of time it will cover. Some only offer older content, while others may include the full range of dates items were published in that subject area.

(3) Think about interdisciplinary topics.
   a. Sometimes a subject area may be included across multiple disciplines – the topic of the gender of children and how they play together might be included in Psychology, Education, and Sociology databases.

Finding a Database:

If you already know which database you need:

After selecting the “Databases” tab on the main search box on UC San Diego Library’s homepage (https://library.ucsd.edu/), type the name in the search, and click “Enter” on your keyboard or the orange button to the right of the search box.
To see what options we have available for your subject area:

(1) Starting on the UC San Diego Library’s homepage, in the main search box, choose the “Databases” tab. Then, click on the “Databases by Name” option under the search.

(2) Select your subject area from the first dropdown option. The available list of databases have been tagged by your librarian either as relating to your area in general or as the best databases to start your research (Best Bets!).