Searching for a Thesaurus/Subject Word

(Last Updated: January 14, 2011 at 1:19 p.m.)

Step 1
1. A thesaurus and subject search allows you to look for the formal terminology that the database uses to describe your topic(s) and can help narrow or broaden your search.
2. In most databases you will be able to search for thesaurus or subject terms. The thesaurus or subject terms tab will be located at the top of the screen in a tool bar.
3. Locate the thesaurus or subject tab and select it.

Step 2
1. In this example, if you are searching for the causes of severe depression you may want to find out how depression is defined. In the Browsing search box, enter your keyword or phrase (in this case Depression) and select Browse.
Step 3
1. Depression *WAS NOT* found as a thesaurus/subject term. Instead, the database uses *Depression (Emotion)*.

2. To view how the databases defines this term, select (or click on) the term (in blue).

![Image of thesaurus interface]

Step 4
1. The definition (or Scope Note) for *Depression (Emotion)* is not appropriate for this search since it relates only to mild depression.

2. If your focus is on severe depression, the recommended thesaurus/subject term would be *Major Depression*.

![Image of thesaurus interface with scope note information]
Step 5
1. To search for the term **Major Depression**, select **Back to List**.

![Back to List](image1.png)

Step 6
1. Select (or click on) **Major Depression**.

![Major Depression](image2.png)

Step 7
1. Major Depression now appears as a formal thesaurus/subject heading. Select (or click on) the heading to view its scope note.

![Major Depression](image3.png)
Step 8
1. Reading the scope note for **Major Depression** will allow you to see how the database defines the term. Each database may define a term differently.

2. If the term is still too broad, review and select from the **Narrower Terms** listed.

Step 9
1. To use **Major Depression** as a thesaurus/subject word, select the box next to the term (a check mark will appear).

2. Select **Add**. The term will automatically be added to the top search box. Terms added to this box will allow you to search for the subject terms within the database.

3. Select (or click on) **Search**.
Step 10
1. After you select **Search**, the results that include any thesaurus/subject terms will appear.
2. To narrow your results, you can add in additional keywords, select scholarly/peer reviewed, and change the time frame.

![Image of search results]

Step 11
1. Below is an example of a search that has been narrowed through the use of keywords, selecting scholarly/peer reviewed, and changing the time frame.

![Image of search results example]