

Pathfinder for Terrorism

Purpose and Scope

This pathfinder is intended to help locate information related to terrorism. Its purpose is to help the student researcher examine a broad subject that is often discussed but less often understood, and to help identify and further investigate narrower areas within terrorism research in order to enhance the student's critical understanding of current history.

Because this subject is extremely broad and has infinite narrower areas of investigation, it is highly recommended the student choose a smaller area of focus (examples: suicide bombings, Islamic terrorism, the Irish Republican Army) rather than simply "terrorism".

1. Start by **locating general resources** about terrorism, especially those that help define terrorism and provide information about types of terrorism. Use these to decide what type of terrorism you want to investigate. These books will also have bibliographic references that may be useful.

Terrorism: a very short introduction by Charles Townshend is, as it purports, a very short introduction to terrorism published by Oxford University Press. [HV6431 .T68 2002]

Terrorism and global power systems by Shahwar Junaid. Published by Oxford University Press. [HV6431 .J86 2005]

Historical dictionaries of countries, such as the *Historical Dictionary of Lybia* [DT214 .H34] or the *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* [DS356 .A27 2003]

2. **Search the catalog** for books that will help you further define the scope of your research.

- A subject-heading search must be done using predefined subject headings. Some relevant subject headings are:

Terrorism--Religious aspects

War on Terrorism, 2001-

Terrorism--[insert country name here]

Terrorism--Prevention

Terrorism--Government policy--United States

Terrorism--Press coverage

Political violence--[insert country name]

Bombings

Insurgency

International trade--Effect of terrorism on

Business--Effect of terrorism on

You can search for "terrorism" also, but bear in mind it will return many results on many different aspects of terrorism.

- A keyword search will allow you to use your own terms to search. Remember this will only work if your own terms match words located in the book's title or the subjects, and you may need to search several different terms before you find enough resources. Do not get discouraged if your first search does not return all you are looking for.

3. You may also **browse the stacks** for books by choosing a call number range you see appear often in your catalog search results, or by going to one of the call number ranges listed below. These call numbers help group similar items together, and looking at the books that are on the shelves near a book you found in the catalog is a good way to find more resources.

- Call numbers:

HV6430-HV6433 covers books about terrorists and terrorist groups. The HV classification holds criminology resources, and this is the best place to start.

E800s and E900s cover the United States, George W. Bush, and the War on Terrorism. (E is history of the United States, while F covers the rest of the Americas.)

D will have history resources, arranged by country and not including the Americas. Most of the Ds are for Europe; DS is Asia (including the Middle East) and DT is Africa.

4. Look in databases for articles related to your topic. There are many different types of databases, from general social science to subject specific to news. Begin with a few general databases, especially if you have not yet defined your research area. This can help you decide what aspects of terrorism you want to study.

- General databases

Academic Search Premiere, Expanded Academic ASAP, Social Sciences Abstracts and the Social Sciences Citation Index are good general databases to begin with. Sociofile is also a good resource. Try using some of the keywords you found successful in your keyword searches.

Library of Congress Subject Headings are usually not as helpful in database searches.

When you have decided what perspective you want to use to look at terrorism (examples: anti-terror legislation, terrorism's impact on schools, the English government's response to Irish terrorism), a subject-specific database can help you locate this narrower information.

- Subject-specific databases

Political Science: Columbia International Affairs Online, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts, PAIS International and CQ Researcher

Government documents and military: The LexisNexis Government Periodicals Index, Index to Military Periodicals, Military and Government Collection

Education: ERIC and Education Full Text

Psychology: PsychInfo

Newspapers and journalism: LexisNexis Academic, Communication and Mass Media Complete, National Newspaper Index, Ethnic Newswatch, ComAbstracts

5. Look at current issues of relevant periodicals. You may notice when you search the databases that a few journals and periodicals have lots of useful articles. This is a good way to start a list of journals you want to browse. Some databases do not include citations for the most recent journal articles, and you might miss current information if you rely solely on databases.

Good journals regarding terrorism include:

American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Politics and Society, Society, International Relations, Political Psychology, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, American Foreign Policy Interests, Cambridge Review of International Affairs.

For regional research, try journals dedicated to specific areas. Comparative European Politics, Contemporary Southeast Asia, Asia-Pacific Review

6. Other internet resources besides databases might be helpful, but it is important to note the author or provider of websites. Government websites, major newspapers and other "official" websites are good places to begin. Be careful with "think tanks" -- they can be helpful, but many of them have political positions and are not always objective or neutral. The same applies to blogs, with the additional warning to make sure the blog comes from a reputable source. CSA's Worldwide Political Science Abstracts searches websites as well as journals; this is a good way to find websites. *Make sure you check with your professor and find out if websites are allowed.*

US Department of Defense: www.dod.gov

US Department of State: www.state.gov

Rand Corporation (think tank): www.rand.org

Center for Strategic and International Studies (think tank): www.csis.org

Council on Foreign Relations (think tank): www.cfr.org

Juan Cole's blog (Cole is a University of Michigan professor): <http://www.juancole.com/>