

bigchalk Library

Quick Start Guide

About bigchalk Library

bigchalk Library, the ultimate reference resource, delivers the largest collection of periodical and digital media content designed specifically for K–12 schools. Students use the powerful, yet easy-to-use search interface to find the answers they need from more than 1,200 magazines, newspapers, books, transcripts, maps, images, web links, and audio/video titles. Natural language, Boolean (keyword), topic, and publication searches are available. Everything for today’s generation of students!

Part 1: Submit a Search Query

All bigchalk Library research begins at the main search page. You can search the database using a simple word search, by asking a question, or you can use advanced search features to locate information by specific search field like Title, Source Title, or Subject.

simple search section

A

advanced search features

search method navigation menu

main search page

To submit a simple search query

1. In the main search page, type a search query in the search text box (A). You can format your search query as a natural language question or as a Boolean search string comprised of keywords connected by Boolean operators (i.e., AND, NOT, OR, etc.).
 - o Natural language search query example: *What causes red tides?*

Natural language searching is a good choice for gathering general information. Phrasing your query as a question will generally provide better results than just using keywords.

- o Boolean search query example: *red tide AND causes*

Boolean searching is best used for more specific searches.

A keyword can consist of a single word (examples: asteroid, Enron) or a phrase. For best results, enclose phrases in quotation marks (examples: "martial arts," "Martin Luther King").

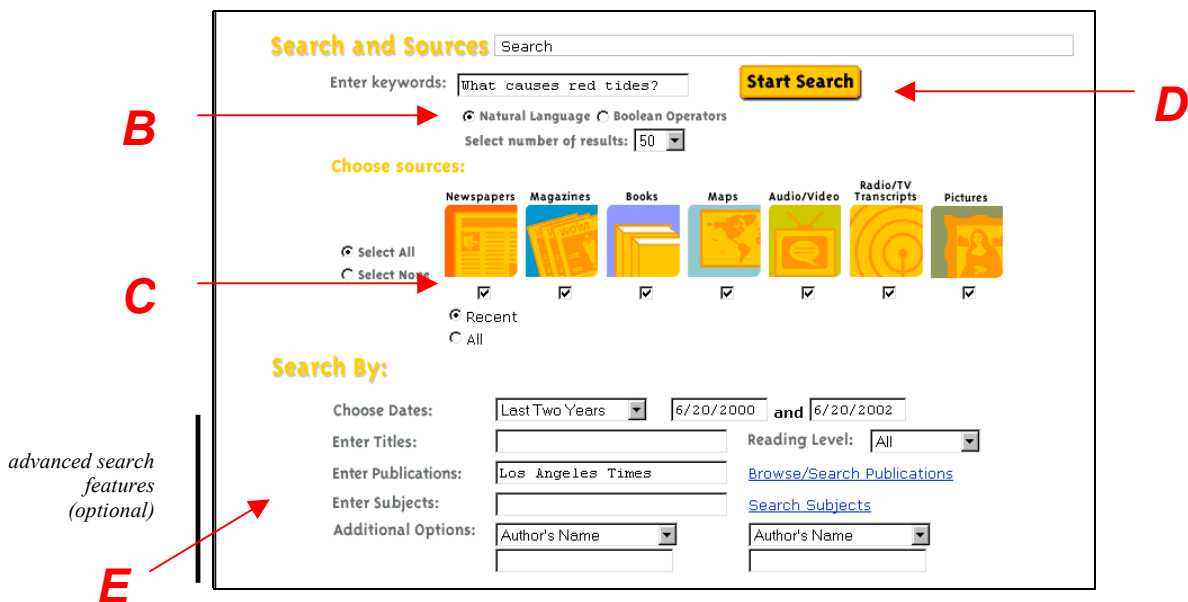
AND retrieves documents that include both keywords connected by the AND operator; OR retrieves documents that contain at least one of the keywords connected by the OR operator; NOT excludes documents that contain the keyword that follows the NOT operator.

2. Tell bigchalk Library which search query format you used by selecting either the **Natural Language** or **Boolean Operators** radio button (**B**). Natural language is the default.
3. Check the types of media you want to search (**C**). All media types are checked by default. Choices include newspapers, magazines, books, maps, audio/video, radio/tv transcripts, and pictures.
4. Click the **start search** button (**D**). bigchalk Library searches the database for documents matching your search query and displays a list of matching documents in the form of a results list (as discussed in Part 2).

Optional advanced search features

The advanced search section (**E**) offers additional search fields that enable you to limit your search results to a particular Date Range, Document Title, Publication Title, Subject, and a list of additional options.

In the example below, advanced features advise bigchalk Library to limit results to documents published in the last two years by the *Los Angeles Times*.



Part 2: Review Your Results List

After clicking the start search button, a results list page appears, summarizing your search success and listing those documents that match your search query.

The screenshot shows the 'bigchalk library' search results page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Search', 'Browse Topics', 'Reference Desk', 'mylist', 'bookcart', 'exit', and 'help'. Below the navigation bar, the search results are displayed for the query 'are salmon endangered?'. The 'Results' section shows 'Total Results: 3'. A 'Sort by' dropdown menu is set to 'Relevancy'. Below the summary, there are three document entries, each with a 'Relevance', 'Date', 'Reading Level', and 'Size' listed. The first entry has a relevance of 100, the second 90, and the third 90. Each entry has a title link and an 'Add to my list' button. Red arrows labeled A, B, and C point to the summary section, the results list, and the sort dropdown menu, respectively.

typical results list page

Parts of the results page

A - The results summary shows you the number of documents found for each media type and provides an option to resort the results list by media type. (Click a media type icon to bring corresponding results to the top of the results list).

B - The results list identifies each document that matches your search query.

C - This drop-down list provides options for resorting the results list. You can sort by relevancy to your search query, publication date, document size, document reading level, alphabetical by document title, and alphabetical by publication name.

To view a document listed on the results page

1. Review your results list. If you do not see a listing of interest right away, you may want to resort the list, refine your search, or start a new search.
2. When you see a promising result listing, click the title (**B**) to view the full document.

User Manual Available: A comprehensive User Manual is available for printing, downloading, or viewing at www.bigchalk.com/bc/pic.

Part 3: Work With the Full Document

After clicking a document title in the results list, the full-text of that document appears. Scroll through the document or click the **to best part** button (A) to jump to the text that most closely matches your search query. To print or email this document, click the appropriate button (B).

A → To Best Part

B → Document Info., Print, Email, My List

bibliographic information

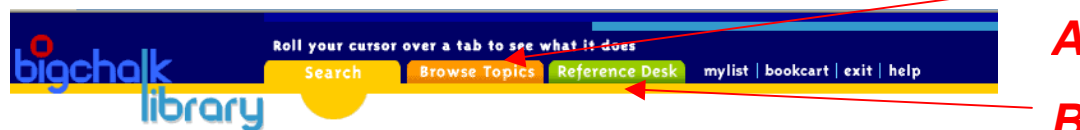
full text

HINT: Highlight any word or phrase, then click either **Search**, **Browse Topics**, or **Reference Desk** to locate relevant information.

typical documents page

Part 4: Additional Searching Methods

In addition to a simple search, bigchalk Library offers two additional easy-to-use searching methods for information retrieval. These search methods include **Browse Topics** (A) and **Reference Desk** (B). Click a search method tab on the navigation bar to begin a new search.



Browse Topics—categorizes bigchalk Library documents by topic heading (example: Arts, Business, Regional Studies) and provides easy information retrieval with “point-and-click” navigation or keyword searching. Enter your subject in the text box and click the **search** button, or explore the topic tree by clicking a main topic heading and reviewing the corresponding subheadings for a narrower focus.

Reference Desk—performs keyword searches against multiple reference publications. Enter your subject in the text box and check the types of reference resources you want to search. All reference resources are checked by default. Choices include dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, almanac, atlas, and other. When ready, click the **start search** button.

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