What is Google Scholar?
Google Scholar is a beta test product for academic researchers. “It provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities, and other scholarly organizations. Google Scholar helps you identify the most relevant research across the world of scholarly research.” Researching your topic through Google Scholar allows you to utilize the features of Google search technology with which you are already familiar.

More information about Google Scholar can be found at http://scholar.google.com/scholar/about.html.

Getting Started with Google Scholar
Since Google Scholar is an index to scholarly literature, it may or may not provide the full-text for the secondary data sources it cites. Never purchase information from Google Scholar as you will be able to search Our Journal List (http://qw8yt4sn4g.search.serialssolutions.com/) or Southcat (http://southcat.usouthal.edu) to locate materials that are available at the University of south Alabama Libraries.

Using Our Journal List with Google Scholar
To integrate the features of Our Journal List, you will want to set Scholar Preferences in Google Scholar. There are many preferences that may be changed to improve the quality of your search results. Remember to always check that your Preferences are set the way you want them before starting a research project.

Setting Google Scholar Preferences
Step 1: Go to Google Scholar and select Scholar Preferences in upper right hand corner of your browser window.
Step II: Check each field to ensure that the settings you want are selected so that you will receive the best results. The different fields are:

1. **Interface Language** – Make sure that the language you are using to communicate with Google Scholar is the language that you best understand.
2. **Search Language** – This controls what language(s) that your results will be in, if you would like to only read articles in English, you can, or you could choose French, German or any other language.
3. **Collections** – You can control here what types of articles Google finds for you, with legal documents kept separate from regular articles and patents treated as a sub-category of the regular articles.
4. **Library Links** – This is where you can control what libraries Google Scholar searches through for you. If you are working from an off-campus computer, you can use this function to search our University’s library by inputting “University of South Alabama” in the text box, clicking on “Find Library” and making sure to check the box for our library once it is available. Many other libraries can be chosen as well, but anything more than the USA library is just extra.
5. **Number of Results** – You can choose how many results you see at a time.
6. **Results Window** – You can elect to have your results opened in a new window.
7. **Bibliography Manager** – If you use a program to help you write your bibliography you can set Google Scholar to show you when there are links to import citations into your program.

Step III: Click on “Save Preferences” to save your preferences.

More information about how to set up preferences in Google Scholar can be found at [http://scholar.google.com/scholar/librarylinks.html](http://scholar.google.com/scholar/librarylinks.html).
Step IV: To return to the main Google Scholar page click on the Google Scholar logo in the upper left hand corner of your browser window.

Step V: Conduct a search in Google Scholar remembering to use + signs before each of your terms and quotes around any phrases.

Step VI: On the results list, anytime you see a citation with Full Text @ USA (#1) beside it, click on the link and it will search Our Journal List to see if the citation is available in full-text. Off-campus, you will be asked to sign in and provide your last name plus the first two letters of your first name and either your J Number, SSN, or library barcode. If the Full Text @ USA link is not listed, try to click on the link to the title and it may be available as a separate publication from another source (#2).
**Step VII:** Follow the database links to locate the full-text of the article (#1). Some databases will only provide abstracts or specific years, so you may need to look at more than one. If none of the databases have the full text you can try Library Catalog link (#2) to look in the University Library System catalog, called SouthCat, for print holdings.

![University of South Alabama Libraries search interface](image)

**Step VIII:** If the Journal is not available electronically or in print from the University of South Alabama Library, remember that the researcher can request it from Interlibrary Loan at [http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/illforms.htm](http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/illforms.htm).