The library catalog is probably the best place to begin research for most assignments. The catalog is fairly easy to use. However, the tips below on creating effective searches will be helpful. Go to the library home page at

http://library.tctc.edu

and find the quick link that says “Get Books”. The library catalog indexes the books on the shelves, plus some of our online titles.

Note that the default search type is “keyword”.

There are other search types:

- Author
- Title
- Subject

Here is a results list for a title search.

Some titles in the library’s catalog are available as electronic books as well as in print. Click on any title for more information.

For entire databases of electronic books, use the search engines on the library’s “Find Books” page—just click the “Find” tab.
There are three “views” for each title. The “item information” view gives you physical information about the book, such as how many pages it has and where it is located. The “look inside” view sometimes contains a book review. The “catalog record” view contains the important subject headings that tell you specifically the topics included in the book.

Search strategies

In any database, there are different methods of narrowing or expanding your search to obtain more or fewer results. Entering a term as a **keyword** search will find all occurrences of the word or words, such as this search below:

```
keyword “capital punishment” search found 66 titles.
```

All of the 66 books on this results list are about capital punishment, and some may contain information about the ethical aspects of the death penalty.

However, if you take care to find a specific **subject** heading, the resulting smaller list will contain only the books that focus on the narrower aspect of your research:

```
"Capital punishment United States Moral and ethical aspects. ^A77796" search found 6 titles.
```