

Database searching worksheet

Step 1: What is your research question or topic?

Step 2: Identify one database that is relevant to your topic

Step 3: Identify the concepts in your research topic and write each one separately in the columns below.
Then below each concept, write down any related keywords that you can identify.

| | Concept 1: _____ | Concept 2: _____ | Concept 3: _____ | Concept 4: _____ |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Keyword | | | | |
| Keyword | | | | |

Search Statements

Here are commonly used search operators:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AND | AND is used to combine different concepts. Results will include both concepts. Using AND will find fewer results. e.g.: self-esteem AND family |
| OR | OR is used to combine related keywords. Results contain at least one of your keywords. Using OR will find more results. e.g.: self-esteem OR self-worth |
| (nesting) | Nesting search terms tells the database what to do first. You put brackets around a group of synonyms to let the database know they are together. e.g.: (self-esteem OR self-worth) AND (family OR domestic) |
| “phrase searching” | Phrase searching is used when a term contains more than one word. It tells the database to only search for that exact phrase. e.g.: “body image” |
| truncation* | Truncation used at the end of part of a word tells the database that you’re looking for all the words that start with those letters. It’s the same as typing out all the words and placing OR between them. e.g.: educat* instead of (educating OR educator OR education OR educational OR ...) |

Step 4: Now let’s combine your keywords with **search operators** to create a search statement

Example:

(“mobile phone*” **OR** “cell phone*”) **AND** (adolescen* **OR** teen* **OR** “young adult*”) **AND** (“academic performance” **OR** “grade point average” **OR** GPA)

Your turn:

Tips for searching:

- Use narrower terms if there are too many results.
- Use broader terms or more synonyms if there are not enough results.
- Use different terms if your results aren’t relevant.