



Peabody Library

Search Strategy Worksheet

Define Your Topic

1. State your research topic in one or two sentences. Be specific as possible and underline the key words and phrases.

Example: How does violence in the media affect young children?

Identify Your Concepts

2. Number your underlined keywords from your stated topic. These keywords are now the **concepts** which makeup a unique search topic. Most topics can be broken down into two or three main concepts.

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3

Examples: violence (1)

media (2)

children (3)

Now that you have created your concepts, create a list of synonyms for each concept. Synonyms and related terms help when you are ready to conduct your search in a database.

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3

_____ AND _____ AND _____

OR

OR

OR

_____ AND _____ AND _____

OR

OR

OR

_____ AND _____ AND _____

Example: violence AND media AND children
OR OR OR
aggression AND television AND youth
OR OR OR
aggressive AND movies AND teenagers

Perform Your Search

3. Construct your search using Boolean operators, truncation, and parentheses.

Example:

(violence or aggression or aggressive) AND (media or television or movies)
AND (children or youth or teenagers)

Create your Search:

- “AND” narrows your search by requiring that one of your terms from each
- “OR” broadens your search by gathering items in which one or more of terms appear.
- “NOT” narrows your search further by excluding a particular term
- Use a truncation symbol (* ? !) to search for words that contain a common thread. Right-hand truncation is the most common form of truncation. It allows you to search for the first few letters of a word and retrieve additional letters to the right.

Examples: (violen* OR aggressi*) AND (kid* OR child*)