TIP: Review the General “Tips and Tricks” for Searching on the back side/second page of this handout FIRST.

1. Write your research topic or question:

2. From your research topic or question, write the major concepts (either single words or short phrases) below.

   Major concept #1: __________________________________________________________

   Major concept #2: __________________________________________________________

   Major concept #3 (if applicable): ____________________________________________

   Major concept #4 (if applicable): ____________________________________________

3. For each of your major concepts, write several synonyms or other alternate terms that might be useful for searching. This is a beginning list – you may add to it later.
   a. HINT: Use Wikipedia or do a Google Search to come up with synonyms/alternate terms.

   Synonyms for major concept #1:

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #2:

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #3 (if applicable):

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #4 (if applicable):

   __________________________________________________________
4. Using your major concepts and synonyms, write several search statements that you will use to search.

a. ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________
   Major concept #1  Major concept #2  Major concept #3  Major concept #4
   (if applies)     (if applies)     (if applies)     (if applies)

b. ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________
   Synonym for    Synonym for    Synonym for    Synonym for
   Major concept #1  Major concept #2  Major concept #3  Major concept #4
   (if applies)     (if applies)     (if applies)     (if applies)

c. Another search I may try (HINT: Mix and match your major concepts and synonyms):
   ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________
   (if applies)     (if applies)

   (if applies)

d. Another search I may try (HINT: Mix and match your major concepts and synonyms):
   ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________
   (if applies)     (if applies)

   (if applies)

General “Tips and Tricks” for Searching

- When searching, keeping it simple and taking time to think about your search terms will give you better results!

EXAMPLE:

Research Topic: Health education programs on smoking cessation for teenagers

Concept #1: health education programs  Concept #2: smoking cessation  Concept #3: teenagers

Search statement: health education programs AND smoking cessation AND teenagers

Synonyms: health education, health promotion, community health, patient education, program evaluation, tobacco, smoking, adolescents, youth

Other search statements: health education programs AND smoking AND adolescents

   health education AND tobacco AND youth

Key Points:

- Databases only search the identifying information of an article [title, author, journal, etc.] and the abstract [short description/summary], not the entire article.
  - Avoid entering your research topic or question word-for-word. You should also not enter a string of words, like ‘smoking cessation in teenagers.’
  - Leave off words that are implied or that do not add meaning, such as a, an, the, on, for.
- Brainstorm synonyms/alternate search terms.
  - In the example above, for instance, note the synonyms for teenagers: adolescents, youth
- You may need to think broader.
  - If you are not finding articles using health education programs, try searching health education or health promotion. It is possible that articles may discuss programs but not mention the word ‘programs’ in the title or abstract of the article.
  - Likewise, if you are not finding enough articles by using smoking cessation, try searching smoking.
- There may not be articles written specifically on health education / health promotion programs in Arkansas.
  - You can try adding Arkansas or (south AND state) [including the parentheses], but re-do your search if you do not find results.
    - EXAMPLES: health education AND smoking AND teenagers AND Arkansas
      health education AND tobacco AND adolescents AND (south AND state)