

Search Strategy Worksheet

The purpose of this exercise is to help you think out your research topic and search strategy. Each topic is different. Some topics are so specific that the search statement might be a single term. Other topics may require more complex strategies. Most databases are so large that an understanding and use of **Boolean** operators (and, or) and truncating will provide better – more precise -- results.

1. In one sentence, describe your topic.
2. Go back to #1 and underline the main concepts in your search statement.
3. List the main concepts in the section below, then list synonyms – or concepts where you want either one word or the other -- below each term. A concept could be a single word or a phrase.

	KEYWORDS FOR CONCEPT ONE	AND	KEYWORDS FOR CONCEP TWO	AND	KEYWORDS FOR CONCEPT THREE
OR {	_____		_____		_____
	_____		_____		_____
	_____		_____		_____
	_____		_____		_____

4. Go back to Step 3 and insert truncation where appropriate. Truncation (sometimes called stemming or wildcards) means to identify the root of the word and add a truncation symbol appropriate for the database. The truncation symbol for InfoTrac, ProQuest and the Cannell Library Catalog is an asterisk *
Example: genetic* = genetic, genetics, genetically...

5. Connect the keywords for each concept (from Step 3) with Boolean operator OR. Words connected with OR must be enclosed in parenthesis.

6. Connect the OR sets with Boolean operator AND. This is your complete search strategy.