

# Searching vs. Researching:

## Search Strategy


Grimsby Learning Commons 2021

### Step 1. Define your Topic.

What do you want to discover?

### Step 2. Background Knowledge & Mind Map.

What do you know about your topic? Break it down into individual topics (sub-topics). Try a Mind Map.



### Step 3. Expanding Background Knowledge.

Can you answer these questions? Use google and wikipedia to familiarize yourself with the topic. Record preliminary information. Can you add anything new to your mindmap?

Who	
What	
Where	
When	
Why	
How	

Step 4. Subtopics & Definitions.

Record your strongest subtopics below

Record definition below (use dictionary.com)

Subtopic 1:	
Subtopic 2:	
Subtopic 3:	
Main Topic:	

Step 5. Keywords/Synonyms.

Based on subtopics from step 4, choose phrases, keywords or ideas which describe the subtopics..  
**BROADEN** or **EXPAND** your vocabulary.

Subtopic 1 Synonyms	Subtopic 2 Synonyms	Subtopic 3 Synonyms

Step 6. Combining Boolean Operators.

Using Boolean operators. Combine different ideas/concepts with AND. Combine synonyms with OR/NOT.

**AND** Includes both keywords together      **OR** Includes either keyword      **NOT** Excludes that keyword

Main Topic (*****)	Subtopic 1 Synonyms		Subtopic 2 Synonyms		Subtopic 3 Synonyms
		AND OR NOT		AND OR NOT	
		AND OR NOT		AND OR NOT	
		AND OR NOT		AND OR NOT	

Step 7. Try the Search.

Record any great sites, number of hits or anything you think is relevant.

Result 1	
Result 2	
Result 3	

Step 8. Results: Refining and Identifying Gaps.

Analyze your results. Did you get too many hits? Too few? Did new keywords or phrases emerge? You may need to broaden or narrow your results. Refer to your original “What do you want to learn”

Does the search require Refining? Yes / No

Select all that apply.

Too many results	Sources fail CRAAP test	Found the perfect source
Results not relevant	Too few results	Need to eliminate some terms

Did you find any specific vocabulary terms, words or phrases?

Keep track of any specific words or related terms that occurred in your search. This **specific vocabulary** can improve results. Sometimes your original keywords are still the best terms.


Step 9. Customizing the Search.

Create a search string using specific vocabulary. Add in Truncation or google operators as needed. Write it out below.

“ ” Exact Phrase      ( ) Search this first      \* Variations      ? Spelling      Site:\_\_\_\_\_

Search 1	
Search 2	
Search 3	
Search 4	

Step 10. Try the Search.

Did you discover what you were looking for? Do you need to refine the search?

Result 1	
Result 2	
Result 3	
Result 4	

Step 11. Searching Tips.

1.

Did you read a result and find new vocabulary, phrases or keywords?
2.

Try an intext search. Press the control key and then F. This opens a search box.
3.

Try limiting your research by date or other google operators
4.

Reread your topic and what you wanted to discover. Did your research lead you in another direction? Follow that lead.

Step 12: Record the Results.

Bibliography/Citations/Works Cited/Works Referenced

Online Source

Title of Source		
Title of Article (if applicable)		
Author(s) of Article (if applicable)		Page Number(s) (if applicable)
Organization or Publisher		Date of Creation
Version/Volume		Date you accessed
http://		

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