

Information Search Using Keywords

Use this search planner to think about search terms before your research.

Step 1: Your research topic. Choose a brief research statement or question.

Write your topic here:

Then circle the important words and cross out the other words.

Example: Do most Americans have health problems due to overweight?

Circle important words or phrases that best describes your topic

Avoid using vague or non-descriptive words like have, the, most, due, to.

Step 2: List the important words or keywords for your topic. Write down each important word or phrase that you circled in a separate box below.

Step 2: Important Keywords	Step 3: Related Words or Synonyms

Step 3: Synonyms and Related words. For each important word or phrase, write down other related keywords or synonyms in the box above.

Step 4: Do a search in the databases Academic Search Premier (for magazine articles) or Lexis Nexis (for newspaper articles) --try different combinations of the important keywords from your list.