GENERATE KEYWORDS (SEARCH TERMS) ABOUT YOUR TOPIC

Brainstorm synonyms, broader terms, narrower terms, and related terms.

You try! Write down keywords for your topic:

SEARCH USING KEYWORDS, BOOLEAN OPERATORS, AND FILTERS

Use keywords in library databases instead of sentences and questions. Use quotation marks for phrases.
Combine keywords effectively with Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT)

Use Filters to refine your results by subject terms/topics, date, type of publication, language, peer-reviewed, etc.

USE THE BEST DATABASES FOR YOUR TOPIC

Step 1: Start with OneSearch
Search with Keywords
Filter (refine results)

Step 2: Try Subject Databases
Databases – Browse by Subject: what subjects would apply to your topic?
General, Multi-Subject Databases:
  o Academic Search Premier
  o Google Scholar
  o EBook Central (formerly, Ebrary)
  o Very Short Introductions (book-length topic overviews, e.g. “feminism,” published by Oxford Univ. Press)
  o CQ Researcher (lengthy reports about controversial topics; think, “Wikipedia articles on steroids”)

IDENTIFY CREDIBLE AND RELEVANT SOURCES

Apply the RADAR Framework to evaluate information sources for credibility and relevance. (See separate handout.)
Learn to distinguish types of sources: e.g., substantive news, trade publications, scholarly journal articles, etc.
TYPES OF ARTICLES

SCHOLARLY PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

**Purpose:** Inform other scholars and students in higher education of new research and findings (research articles), reviews of research (review articles), and reviews of scholarly books (book reviews).

**Authorship:** Experts in their fields: researchers conducting original research, practitioners, professors and scholars. Scholarly/Academic Journals are produced and published by university presses and scholarly groups.

**Accuracy:** Many, but not all, scholarly articles are peer reviewed, a process where experts review the article before it is published.

**Look for:**
- long, in-depth articles
- data and evidence, e.g. tables, charts, graphs, images (but no advertisements)
- specialized or discipline-specific language and jargon
- reference lists and in-text citations
- abstract or summary
- author affiliations
- peer review information: dates of article submission and acceptance (provided in some journals)

SUBSTANTIVE NEWS SOURCES (MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS)

**Purpose:** Inform the general public about current events and issues

**Authorship:** Staff writers, journalists, or freelancers.

**Accuracy:** Editors working for the publication review the articles; these editors are most likely not experts on the topic of the article they are editing.

**Look for:**
- colorful images
- easy to understand, non-technical writing
- advertisements
- varied article length (e.g. short news, longer “feature” articles, analysis, editorials and op-ed columns)
- lack of formal citations; may refer to studies or experts in the text

TRADE PUBLICATIONS

**Purpose:** Inform professionals of current trends and news in fields related specifically to their business or industry area. Sell field-specific products.

**Authorship:** Often, but not always, specialists or practitioners in the fields about which they write.

**Accuracy:** Editors working for the trade publication review the articles. These editors are more likely to know about the topic the article is about than a magazine or newspaper editor would, but they still are not experts on it.

**Look for:**
- colorful images, often featuring an “industrial” or trade-specific setting
- field-specific terminology
- industry-related advertising
- varied article length (e.g. short news blurbs, longer “feature” articles)
- may or may not cite information sources or include reference lists