# Constructing a search strategy

Use this guide to help you plan your literature search

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| **Step 1: Define your topic**  Write your search question below:  *Does domestic violence increase after international sporting events*  Remember to choose a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow. |

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| **Step 2: Choose your keywords**  Look at your search question; what are the most important words? Write them below:  *Domestic violence*  *International sporting events [or even just sport]* |

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| **Step 3: Identify alternative terminology**  Think of alternative terms for your keywords:  *Alternative words for domestic violence could include: assault, wife beating, domestic abuse, intimate partner violence,*  *Alternative words for international sporting events could include: sport, football, World Cup, soccer, FIFA*  Think about synonyms, acronyms, American terminology and alternative spellings. What bigger topics does your topic fit into, and what smaller topics belong to it? |

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| **Step 4: Choose your type of material**  Look back at your question. What sort of resources would be most useful for you to read? (e.g. journal articles, newspapers, statistics, videos etc.)  *Options could include:*  *Official crime statistics on domestic violence. [Do you want to focus on England, or have some international figures too?]*  *Academic journal articles*  *Reports by organisations such as FIFA, The Premier League, Women’s Aid or Refuge* |

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| **Step 5: Limiting**  Write the ways in which you might limit your search if you retrieve too many results:  *e.g. maybe I should just limit it to England? Or just to a specific sport e.g. football? Or to a specific event or tournament e.g. the FIFA World Cup or the Euros.*  How far back do you want to search? Do you only want articles with a UK focus? Could you use any of the ‘smaller topics’ you identified in step 3 to get a shorter list of results? |

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| **Step 6: Choose your databases and websites**  Write a list of some of the databases and websites you think would be good for searching for this topic.  *Office for National Statistics website*  *Academic Search Complete*  *LibrarySearch*  *Websites of organisations such as FIFA, The Premier League, Women’s Aid or Refuge* |

Once you have followed all these steps you are now ready to go and try out your search. For more advice or help, please visit <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/criminology/>

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