

Constructing a Search Strategy

Use this Guide to help you plan your database search

Step 1: Define your topic

Write your search question below:

Try not to choose a topic that is too broad or one that is too narrow.

Step 2: Choose your Keywords

Look at your search question – what are the keywords?

Write your keywords below:

Step 3: Identify alternative terminology

Write a list of your keywords below, and then think of alternative terms for them.

Think about alternative or similar words (synonyms), American terminology, acronyms and alternative spellings, and truncation.

Step 4: Combining your keywords

Use BOOLEAN Operators to combine your keywords. Write your Boolean search strategy below.

Remember – OR makes your search broader, AND makes your search narrower

Step 5: Limiting

How will you limit your search if you get too many results? Write the ways you might limit below.

Think about:

How far back you wish to search (Publication date/range)?

Do you only want articles written in English?

Gender – male or female?

Do you only want primary research articles or review papers?

What else can you think of?

Step 6: Choose your databases

Write a list of all the databases you want to use to obtain your results: