

How Many Ways Can You Say the Same Thing? Creating an Effective Search Strategy

1. What is your basic research topic?

2. Create a keyword strategy search:

- Select basic keywords/phrases from your topic, enter them into the top boxes of the chart (line A)
- There are often many ways to say the same thing, think of all of the synonyms that could also describe those keywords.
- Enter the synonyms under their corresponding keywords, as many as you can think of. (start with line B & go down)

A		and		and	
	or		or		or
B		and		and	
	or		or		or
C		and		and	
	or		or		or
D		and		and	
	or		or		or
E		and		and	

3. Do a search using combinations of your keywords and synonyms using Academic Search Premier. Use the Boolean operators:

- **and** to link combinations of key topic words
- **or** to link alternate synonyms with their keywords
- * truncation can be used to catch various word endings
Ex.) typing in `educat*` would bring results including educate, education, educated, educational, educator, etc.

4. Search statements & results:

Write down the way you searched _____

How many results did you get?

Is this too many or to few?

Take a look at some of the articles, are they relevant to your topic?

Write down another way you could do a search _____

How many results did you get?

Is this too many or to few?

Are they relevant to your topic?

Try a third way to do a search _____

How many results did you get?

Is this too many or to few?

Are they relevant to your topic?

5. Which search strategy worked the best and why?

6. Take a closer look at some of your results. Are there any keywords within some of the articles that you have not tried in your searches? What are they?

7. Are there any subject headings located within the results that could help with your search strategy? If so, what are they:

Use the strategies that you have learned today to locate at least 2 articles related to your research topic. You can print the articles or email them to yourself.