

FINDING INFORMATION

With so much information available, it is often difficult to find exactly what you need. Before ever touching a computer you need to create search statements to guide your research.

What is a search statement?

A search statement is a combination of keywords and search tools used to refine your research and get better search results. Keep in mind that we can use search statements to get better results from any search—even a Google search!

What are keywords?

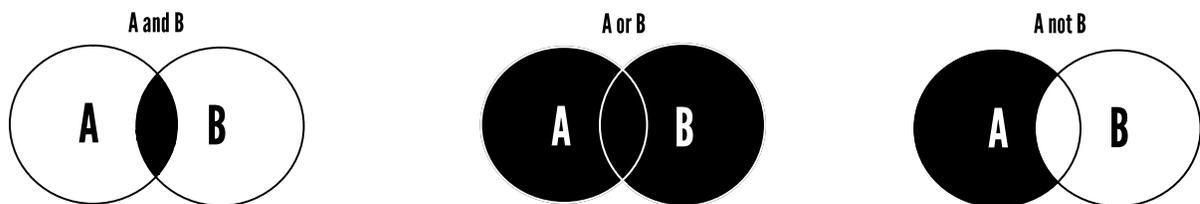
Keywords are terms (words or phrases) used to search the Internet, electronic databases, and online catalogs. To more easily identify keywords, frame your topic into a statement or question and then select the most important concepts. These are the terms you will combine with search tools to create a search statement.

What are search tools?

Search tools are techniques used to combine or enhance keywords to create stronger search statements.

1. Boolean operators

Use the words -AND, OR, NOT- to combine keywords.
For example:



2. Quotation marks

Use quotation marks to indicate a phrase.

For example: "Abraham Lincoln", "mountaintop removal" or "post-traumatic stress disorder"

3. Truncation

Use an * to search for the root of a word with varying endings.

For example: diet* will retrieve results that contain any of these: diet, diets, dieting, dietary, dietitian, dietitians...

Putting it all together

If your topic statement is “Should college athletes be tested for steroids?”, search statements might look like:

athlet* AND steroids
NCAA AND steroids
“college athletes” AND steroids
athletes AND “drug testing” NOT professional

Keep in mind...

- The more precise your keywords are, the more likely you are to find articles directly pertaining to your topic.
- Keep your database search simple, using up to two or three keywords or phrases. Using too many keywords can narrow your results too much.
- We can't always know exactly how the author has chosen to express their concept, so always think of synonyms – terms that mean the same, or almost the same, thing - as your keywords.
For example: teen, youth, adolescent, young adult, teenager...

Topic Statement:

Keywords	Search Statements