Smart Searching For Your Assignments
What is a research question?

... is what you are trying to answer with your assignment/essay.

... guides how you conduct research.

... is clear, concise, & focused.

... if possible, it should be something that interests you.

... requires you to find information and sources related to a topic/subject.

... should be flexible.
Watch: https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/tutorials/teach-yourself/beginning-research/arch_process
5 Steps to Success

1. Define your task – > Think about what is being asked (Describe? Analyse? Compare & Contrast? Explore?).

2. Describe your topic – > Outline your current understanding of the assignment/essay/task.

3. Identify your sources -> What information do you need to find? Where are you likely to find it?

4. Build your search syntax -> Break down your title & identify keywords to search for.

5. Execute search & evaluate your results.
Building a search strategy

• Once you understand your topic the next step is to look at the title of your assignment and put together a search strategy.

• Identify the keywords in your assignment.
• Consider other related words (synonyms).

E.g.
• Athlete / Sportsperson / Specific example e.g. hurler / footballer
• Asthma / Bronchial disease(s) / Bronchitis / Lung problems
• War / conflict / struggle / Specific examples e.g. Great War or WW2
Exercise

Write out the title of your assignment on a page e.g. What is the role of education in promoting positive mental health?

Draw a grid across the page.

Identify keywords & terms to search for e.g. Education / Promote / Mental Health.

Think of some synonyms (different words with near identical meaning)

Education / Tuition / Pedagogy
Promote / Publicise / Advance
Mental Health / Fitness / Wellness / Well-being

Having trouble finding/thinking of synonyms? https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/
What is the role of education in promoting positive mental health?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>promote</th>
<th>mental health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>advance</td>
<td>fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedagogy</td>
<td>publicise</td>
<td>well being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Identifying your information sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Primary</strong></th>
<th><strong>Secondary</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tertiary</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Information collected first-hand/ of the time  
• Original research  
• Raw data, unanalysed  
• New scientific discoveries  
• Examples: Interviews, speeches, diaries, birth certificates, scientific journal articles, newspaper articles (written at the time), statistics, survey results, patents, works of art, dissertations, photographs | • Written after an event  
• Analysis/interpretation/commentary on existing information  
• Offers a review or critique on information  
• Summarises and synthesises primary information  
• Examples: Biographies, journal articles, textbooks, editorials, literary criticisms | • Sources that compile data on a particular topic  
• Summaries or collections of primary and/or secondary sources  
• Examples: Encyclopaedias, bibliographies, directories, abstracts, indexes, literature reviews, library catalogue, databases, Wiki’s |
There are a number of search operations you can combine which will allow you to quickly distil your search results down. By combining boolean operators you can craft and execute complex queries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>Education AND well being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>“Mental Health” “well being”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncation</td>
<td>Educat*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>Tuition N3 fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildcard</td>
<td>publici?e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **And** - allows you to combine two search-terms. It will yield results where both specified keywords/phrases are found.

• **Or** - also allows you to search for two search-terms BUT the results can contain either of the keywords or both of them.

• **Not** - can be used to exclude keywords from your results.
Build your search syntax

• And - allows you to combine two search-terms. It will yield results where both specified keywords/phrases are found.
• Or - also allows you to search for two search-terms BUT the results can contain either of the keywords or both of them.
• Not - can be used to exclude keywords from your results.

source: libguides.lsco.edu
Build your search syntax

Boolean OR

vitamins
minerals
nutrients

vitamins or minerals or nutrients

OR means results will include ANY of the words

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tm-sDKCnO4&feature=youtu.be
Build your search syntax

Phrase-searching:
- Use inverted commas “”
- Searching for 2 or more words as an exact phrase
- E.g. “mental health”, “heart attack”, “student engagement”
- Will retrieve less results than a search using And
Build your search syntax

Phrase-searching:
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You have been asked to talk about the Diet of Worms, but searching the phrase gives you over 11,000 results from the library catalogue. Which of these will reduce your results to a manageable number of relevant resources of good quality?

**A.** (Diet OR sustenance) of Worms

A search for (Diet OR sustenance) of Worms may retrieve sources related to the event the Diet of Worms, but it may also find:

- sources related to the eating habits of worms
- information on worms (the animal)
- information on Worms (the German city)
- information about diet, nourishment, and eating restrictions
- sources containing the word ‘of’ in the title

**B.** Die# of Wo??s

Die# of Wo??s may generate results with:

- other ending variations of the word die in the title e.g. dies, died, diem, or the German masculine definite article Die
- sources containing the word ‘of’ in the title
- other variations of Wo??s in the title e.g. worms, wolds, woods, words, works

**C.** “Diet of Worms”

“Diet of Worms” will retrieve results related to the phrase “Diet of Worms” and will likely bring you relevant resources covering the 1521 imperial council convened to decide the fate of Martin Luther.
Test 2.

Go to menti.com and enter the code
Test 2.
Using subject specific terminology will...

A. Increase the number of results
B. Refine your results
Test 3.

Using the advanced search function will...

A. Increase the number of results

B. Refine your results
Test 4.

Using synonyms for uncommon words will...

A. Increase the number of results

B. Refine your results
Test 5.

Checking the reference list and citations related to a resource will...

A. Increase the number of results

B. Refine your results
Test 6.
Using delimiters such as date range will...

A. Increase the number of results

B. Refine your results
Questions?

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