

**Online Search Techniques**

Below are search techniques to help you find relevant results when using the library databases.

**Identify Keywords**Create a list of keywords associated with your topic and keep them with you throughout the research process.

**Write down your topic**: *Does viewing television encourage aggressive behavior in children?*  
**Important words from your topic**: television, aggressive, behavior, children.  
**Synonyms or other related words**: *television, TV, aggressive, fighting, hostile, angry, behavior, action, attitude, children, kids, tweens, teens, etc.*

Now you have generated a useful list of keywords for finding resources!

*Search terms:* **television AND aggressive behavior AND children**

**Exact Phrase Searching**To look for an exact phrase, type your phrase within **quotation marks** (**" "**). The results will contain the exact words in the quotation marks.

*Example:*  **“attention deficit disorder”**

**Truncation to Expand Your Search**Using an asterisk (**\***) or question mark (**?**) at the end of a root word (known as *truncation* or *stemming*), allows you to retrieve results containing any form of the root word.

*Example:* **teen\*** will find **teen**, **teens**, **teenage**, **teenager**, **teenagers**

***Note:***

Most databases use the asterisk (**\***) as the truncation symbol.  Check the *Help* link of the database you are using for the truncation symbol.

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**Boolean Operators to Narrow or Broaden Your Search**  
Boolean searching is based on connecting keywords with three basic operators: **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**.

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| --- | --- |
| **AND** The database will only retrieve resources that contain **both** words. This will **NARROW** your search and **DECREASE** search results.  *Example:* **school AND crime** | circ-and |
| **OR** The database will retrieve resources that contain **at least one** of these words. This will **BROADEN** your search and **INCREASE** search results.  *Example:* **baby OR infant** | circ-or |
| **NOT**  Type **NOT** before a keyword to **exclude** that word from your search. Use **NOT** when you are searching for a keyword that may have multiple meanings.  *Example:* **bat NOT baseball** | Boolean-NOT |
| **Combining Boolean Operators**  Use **parentheses** **( )** to keep combination searches in order. In the example below, resources retrieved will contain the word *law* and at least one of the words in parentheses.  *Example:* **law AND (ecstasy OR mdma)** | circ-combine |

**Still need help? Ask a librarian!**

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