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; consider synonyms or variant spellings. Write them down and keep them with you throughout the research process.

Write down your topic: *Does television viewing encourage aggressive behavior in children?*
Write down the important words from your topic: television, aggressive, behavior, children.
Write down synonyms or related words from your list: *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!

*Simple search:* 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:* typing teen* will find teen, teens, teenage, teenager, teenagers

*Note:*
Most databases, such as *Academic Search Complete* and *JSTOR*, use the asterisk (*) as the truncation symbol. Check the *Help* screen of the database you are using for the truncation symbol.
### Boolean Operators to Narrow or Broaden Your Search

Boolean searching is based on connecting keywords with three basic operators: **AND, OR and NOT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Diagram</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>The database will only retrieve resources that contain <strong>both</strong> words. This will <strong>NARROW</strong> your search and <strong>DECREASE</strong> search results.</td>
<td><code>school AND crime</code></td>
<td><img src="diagram.png" alt="AND Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>The database will retrieve resources that contain <strong>at least one</strong> of these words. This will <strong>BROADEN</strong> your search and <strong>INCREASE</strong> search results.</td>
<td><code>baby OR infant</code></td>
<td><img src="diagram.png" alt="OR Diagram" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>Type <strong>NOT</strong> before a keyword to exclude that word from your search. Use <strong>NOT</strong> when you are searching for a keyword that may have multiple meanings.</td>
<td><code>bat NOT baseball</code></td>
<td><img src="diagram.png" alt="NOT Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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)`

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

*library.reynolds.edu*