My Research Strategy

1. Write down your research question or statement. Underline two or three concepts that are essential.

   Example: How does violence in the media affect children?

2. Write each concept (the keyword or phrase) in its own box. Put phrases in quotation marks (e.g., "Civil War").

   Example: violence
   _______________________
   AND
   _______________________
   AND
   _______________________

   Example: media
   _______________________
   AND
   _______________________
   AND
   _______________________

   Example: children
   _______________________
   AND
   _______________________
   AND
   _______________________

   You just created your keyword search! You can type this into the Library's search tools to find resources.

   Example: violence and media and children

3. Need Books? Search the UNCW Library Catalog using your keyword search (Library website > UNCW Library Catalog)

   Identify one relevant book and list the Title, Location, and Call Number below:

   Title: ________________________________________________________________
   Location: ___________________________  Call Number: ___________________________  Available? Circle: Yes / No

4. Need Articles from Journals, Magazines, or Newspapers? Search Databases (Library website > "Find & Research" > "Search for Articles on a Topic")

   Identify and list the name(s) of one or more databases that are relevant to your question/statement below (e.g. PsycINFO):

   1) _________________________________  2)  _________________________________  3) _________________________________

   After searching one or more databases, identify one relevant article and list the Title, Author(s), and Publication information below.

   Article Title: ________________________________________________________________
   Author(s): ____________________________________________________________________

   Publication (Journal, Magazine, Newspaper) Name: ________________________________
   Date of Publication: _____________ Volume No.: ______ Issue No. (if given): _______ Page No.: _____________________
   Full text available immediately? Circle: Yes / No

   To obtain books and articles not available in Randall Library, use Interlibrary Loan (Library website > "Use the Library > "Interlibrary Loan")

5. Did you find what you thought you would find? If not, you might need to expand your search (see below) and repeat steps 3 through 5.

6. In many databases, you can use multiple search boxes to create a more powerful search. In each box to the right, list one keyword or phrase (one concept) and any synonyms for that word or phrase. An "OR" should separate each synonym. Add your next concept and its synonyms in the second box and so on. Try this search.

   Concept (of one concept): violence OR aggression OR crime
   (_________________ OR ___________________ OR ___________________)

   Concept #2 (if you have one)
   (_________________ OR ___________________ OR ___________________)

   Concept #3 (if you have one)
   (_________________ OR ___________________ OR ___________________)

   Are you in a database that only has one search box? Look for the "Advanced Search" or use parentheses to create your own boxes. Example: (violence OR aggression OR crime) AND (media OR television OR movie) AND (child OR youth OR teen)

7. Tip: Try to use words a scholar would use (e.g., "adolescent" in addition to "teen"). Librarians can help! Library website > "GET HELP"

   ✓ Too many results on an unrelated topic? Eliminate a concept with NOT (Example: surf NOT Internet)

   ✓ Use a truncation symbol (*) to search for variants of a word. Putting an asterisk (*) after the beginning of a word tells the search tool to search for all the variations of that word. For example: violen* will retrieve results containing the words violence and violent. Teen* will retrieve the words teen, teens, teenager, and teenagers.