

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

Example: media

AND

Example: children

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

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:

3

Title: _____

Location: _____ **Call Number:** _____ **Available?** Circle: Yes / No

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

4

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): _____

5

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")

6

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.

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.

Example (of one concept): violence **OR** aggression **OR** crime

Concept #1

(_____ OR _____ OR _____)

AND

Concept #2 (if you have one)

(_____ OR _____ OR _____)

AND

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

✓ **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*.

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