



Planning Your Search Strategy Worksheet

St. Benedict Library Learning Commons 2021

The following worksheet is meant as a guide to searching resources for school assignments.

Understand Your Topic

Write a clear topic statement. Or Write your research topic as a question.	
Identify and write the keywords from your topic statement/question.	

Finding Keywords and Search Terms

For each keyword write alternative keywords including synonyms, alternative spellings and related terms. These keywords will become the search terms you will use in the library's databases. Use an online dictionary, thesaurus or encyclopedia to find alternate terms if necessary.

Keywords	Alternatives: Synonyms, Related Terms

Constructing Your Search

Now combine your keywords together to create a “search statement”. Use these tips to help you.

1. Use Boolean operators **AND, OR, NOT**

AND – narrows a search OR – broadens a search NOT – exclude terms from a search

2. Do phrase searching: use quotations marks “ ” or brackets () to keep phrases together: for example: “Second World War” , Canada AND (climate change OR global warming).

3. Use truncation to include variations in spelling and forms of words. use an asterisk * in place of the word ending: for example, child* will search child, children, childhood, childrens

Search 1: _____AND/OR_____AND/OR_____

Search 2: _____AND/OR_____AND/OR_____

Search 3: _____AND/OR_____AND/OR_____

Search 4: _____

Search 5: _____

Search 6: _____

Refine Your Search

1. Gale databases/ebooks allow searches to be refined by full-text, peer-reviewed, publication title, document type and subject.

2. Try searches in different databases.

3. Use the advanced search function in the database.

4. Try doing a subject search instead of a keyword search. A keyword search searches are broad and a good start. Subject searching uses subject headings assigned by the database and offers more specific searching. Results can be highly relevant.

Choosing a Database

1. School databases can be accessed from the St. Benedict’s Online Resources or directly at <https://www.galepages.com/?loc=camb70211> (Home access requires a password. See your teacher or the school librarian.)

2. On the Gale Online Resources page select the relevant subject area databases:

General Research: Academic OneFile, Gale General OneFile

Background Information: Gale In Context, Science In Context, Canada In Context, Gale eBooks

Controversial Subjects: Opposing Viewpoints In Context

Science: Gale Interactive Science, General Science Collection, Gale In Context: Science

Literature: Blooms Literature, Gale Literature Resource Center, Lit Finder, The Shakespeare Collection

History: Gale OneFile World History, Canada In-Context, Gale OneFile U.S. History