What's in a Database?

Journal Articles
Peer-Reviewed Articles
Magazine Articles
Newspaper Articles
Statistical information
Images
Reports
Reference books
...and More!

TERMINOLOGY

Abstract – A short summary of an article
Boolean Operator – A search modifier used to define the relationship between your search term(s) in a specific way. The three major operators are AND, OR and NOT.
Citation – the author and publication information of a work
Descriptor – see Subject heading
Full-text – The complete text of an article
Item record – information recorded about a particular item in the database (includes citation information & abstract)
Subject heading – standardized terms applied to item records to describe the subject of a work
Thesaurus – A list of all the subject headings (or descriptors) used by a particular database
Vendor – companies that provide access to databases. Some popular vendors include: EBSCO, ProQuest, and Gale

QUESTIONS?

Online Research Assistance is available through the Ask a Librarian service.
1) On the Library Services webpage, Click on Chat with Us.
2) Type your question into the chatbox & begin chatting with a librarian.

RESOURCES

RESEARCH DATABASES
LIBRARY SERVICES

Davis J-124 | HMC A-217 | Trafalgar C-107

HOURS:
Fall & Winter
Monday to Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Summer
Monday to Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

CONTACT:
Davis (905) 459-7533 ext.5866
HMC (905) 459-7533 ext. 5912
Trafalgar (905) 845-9430 ext.2488

facebook.com/sheridanlibrary
library.sheridancollege.ca
DEVELOPING A SEARCH STRATEGY

Research is a process. Follow the steps below for the best results.

STEP 1 - State your topic in one sentence

Example: What are the causes of addiction to smoking among teenagers?

STEP 2 - Identify 2 or 3 main concepts

Example: 1) teenagers 2) addiction 3) smoking

STEP 3 - Identify synonyms or keywords

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT 1</th>
<th>CONCEPT 2</th>
<th>CONCEPT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teenagers</td>
<td>addiction</td>
<td>smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adolescents</td>
<td>substance</td>
<td>tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young adults</td>
<td>dependency</td>
<td>cigarettes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIP: Find additional terms by browsing subject headings, titles, and abstracts as you search.

TRUNCATION: Truncate words with an asterisk (*), number sign (#), or question mark (?). Truncation allows you to retrieve variant forms of a root word. See the help tool in your database to determine which symbol is appropriate. Example: addict* retrieves addict, addicts, addiction, addictions, and addictive.

PHRASE: To specify that terms must be found in the order given, surround with quotation marks. Example: “young adults”

STEP 4 - Connect terms and concepts

OR – broadens your search by specifying that any of the listed terms must appear in the article. Use for synonyms. Example: teen* OR adolescen* OR “young adults”

AND – narrows your search by specifying that all of the listed terms must appear in the article. Use for connecting different concepts. Example: teen* AND addict* AND smok*

NOT – narrows your search by removing articles with unwanted words. USE WITH CAUTION. When you use the NOT operator, you run the risk of missing potentially relevant articles. Example: tobacco NOT marijuana

ENTERING YOUR SEARCH STRATEGY

Once you have developed your search strategy, you are almost ready to begin entering your terms into various databases.

Before you begin, however, consider limiting the results of your search to:

- Full-text articles only
- A date range (example: 2005-2009)
- Scholarly, peer-reviewed journals
- Or other...

Here is an example of how to enter your search terms in a commonly used search interface:

FIELD SEARCHING: To narrow your results, specify where the database should search for your terms. Try narrowing certain search terms to the abstract, or the title field, for example. If you know the subject terms being used by the database, use these terms and limit the search to the subject field (a.k.a. descriptor).

TIP: Try different combinations and keywords to improve your search results. Remember, research is a process!