

TURN QUESTIONS INTO KEYWORDS

Get the most out of your search by developing your research question into keywords.

This activity quickly guides you through a few key strategies designed to help you explore your topic and get ready to research. Breaking your research question into keywords is an important step in the research process. Good keywords will help narrow your search while capturing a broad scope of potential articles to enrich your research.

1

Do **crows** show **empathy**?



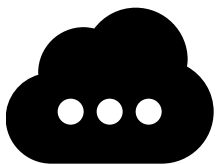
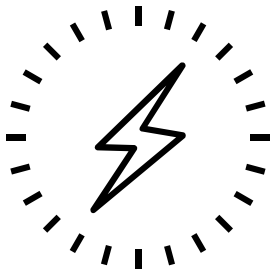
Identify the core concepts

- What is your research question or topic?

- What are the main concepts in your question or topic?

_____/_____/_____

2



Brainstorm related words and phrases

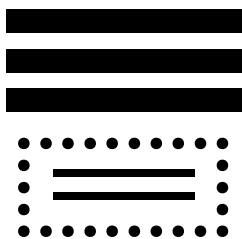
Generate several synonymous words and phrases for each core concept:

Concept #1

Concept #2

Concept #3

3



Constructing the perfect search

- Now that you've come up with words and phrases, practice constructing putting them together for a search!

- Use OR to join synonyms (e.g. crow OR raven)

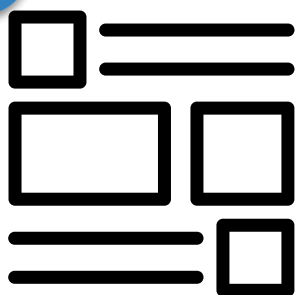
_____ OR _____ OR _____ OR _____

- Use AND to join core concepts

AND _____

AND _____

4



Asterisks & Quotations

- Use an asterisk (*) at the end of a root word to find multiple endings, i.e.:

empath*

empathy

empathetic

empathize

Place an asterisk at the end of one of your key words: _____*

- Place quotation marks (") around an entire phrase instead of just its component parts, i.e.:

"social intelligence"

List a key phrase you will search for: "_____"



What's next?

- ☐ Be sure to repeat this process with one or two more papers in the field to confirm that the profile you have gathered is representative.

- ☐ Now you are ready to start writing your paper!

- ☐ For more research tips check out our website: uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips

- ☐ Come visit us at one of our many library locations or the UCLA Writing Center and get one-on-one research and writing assistance tailored to your topic and questions.