



FINDING & USING KEYWORDS IN CONTEXT

“Who lives, who dies, who tells your story” - Hamilton

*Keywords are used to search for specific resources in online databases. But, **language changes over time**, and the words we use to refer to something now may be different than the words that were used in the past; different groups of people may refer to the same thing using different words. So, when you search for a resource, try using a variety of keywords.*

Let's look at two examples!

Keyword: Intersectionality

Since the term was coined by UCLA Distinguished Professor of Law Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989, this keyword likely won't yield significant results prior to 1989.

What keywords might we search for instead?

- Double oppression
- Triple oppression
- Triple exploitation
- Double jeopardy
- Multiple jeopardy

Keyword: Movies

The creation of film or movies dates back to the late 1800's, but different language has been used to refer to a similar concept. We might even search for a specific term relevant to the historical period we're studying.

How could we refer to movies?

- Silent or sound film
- “Talking pictures” or talkies
- Moving or motion pictures
- Film or cinema
- Technicolor or “black and white”



Combine your terms to search for them all at once:
Film OR Cinema OR movies OR “moving pictures” OR “motion pictures”



Identifying Keywords



To learn more about creating keywords, start with the WI+RE Workshop Developing Research Questions and Creating Keywords:

<https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/workshops/developing-research-questions-and-creating-keywords/>

Depending on your background knowledge, you might have identified some or all of the keywords in the examples above, but what do you do when you're new to a topic?

- Determine the **gaps in your knowledge**. Are you looking for how the topic was termed during specific time periods? Wondering how different cultures refer to the topic?
- Check **reference materials** on your topic. Pay attention to the terms used.
- Found a relevant source? **Look at their references** and see what terms they use.

Research Question/ Topic:			
Keywords:			
Is it relevant in your context? (Y/N)			
Contextualized terms:			

How can we help?

Other Tutorials

[Turn Questions into Keywords](https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/turn-questions-into-keywords/)

<https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/turn-questions-into-keywords/>

[Search Experimentally](https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/search-experimentally/)

<https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/search-experimentally/>

Ask a Librarian

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