Library Research Skills Workshop

1. Identify the assignment topic you are interested in and write down the key concepts or key terms that you will need to research.

2. Look for your key concepts in the Glossary and the Subject Index in the back of your set textbook.

Identify which chapter/s you should read to find out more about your topic.

3. Use the Further Reading and/or Bibliography in your text to find at least 2 more books or articles on the topic that are available from the UTAS Library.

4. Start creating a list or mind map of keywords and concepts that relate to your topic. Add more words and ideas as you read.

Example:

![Mind Map Example]

**Shortcuts**

Words with the same beginning may be truncated using the asterisk (*) symbol. Write down any terms from your list that could be truncated.

Example: discriminat* will retrieve discriminate, discriminated, discrimination.

You can use a wildcard symbol - usually a question mark (?) – to replace one letter in a word where alternative spellings are possible. Write down any terms from your list where you could include a wildcard.

Examples: wom?n will retrieve woman and women
          organ?ation will retrieve organisation and organization

Search for words as a phrase by putting “quotation marks” around them. List any phrases you could include in your search strategy.

Examples: “white collar” “deaths in custody” “indigenous health”

5. Combine some of your search terms using Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT) to create a search strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| AND      | Finds articles containing both terms
Use to combine different concepts and reduce the number of results
Example: gender AND inequality |
| OR       | Finds articles containing either term
Use to combine synonyms or related concepts and increase the number of results
Example: youth OR adolescent |
| NOT      | Finds articles containing the first term, but excludes the second one |
Use when you want to exclude a term from your search and reduce the number of results
Example: unpaid work NOT housework

Keep it simple – use your main concepts and see how many results you get before adding ORs.
Try running a few different search strategies to see which combinations of terms give the best results.

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“social stratification”</th>
<th>“social capital”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND education</td>
<td>AND youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR school</td>
<td>OR teen*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most databases provide several boxes that allow you to build your search strategy, particularly if you choose the Advanced Search option. If you have to put your search in one line, remember to put brackets around the OR statements.

Example: “social inequality” AND (work OR employment) AND gender


Try out your search strategies in one or more of these databases:
MegaSearch
Wiley Online Library
Sage Journals
JSTOR
Sociological Abstracts (via ProQuest)

Choose relevant articles from your results list by reading the abstracts and asking ‘how will this help me to answer the assignment question?’

If you’re not happy with the quality of your results, think about how you might change your search to improve them.

- Try different search strategies in the same database and compare the results
- Try the same search strategy in different databases and compare the results
- Find the ‘Help’ or ‘Search tips’ link and read what it says about searching that database
- Explore the ‘Limits’ or ‘Refine your search’ options – how might these help to give you better results?

Can’t find the Full Text?
If you’re having trouble linking to the full text of an article from the databases, try checking the ejournals list to find out if the UTAS Library has access to the journal. Pay attention to the date range (i.e. 1995 to present) to make sure that our access includes the article you’re looking for.

- Choose Journals & ejournals from the menu on the left
- Select ejournals as the search type
- Type in the journal title (not the title of the article) – i.e. Social Science and Medicine