**Search Strategies**

Before you begin an internet search for information related to your topic, it is best to spend a few minutes thinking about what words and phrases will return the best results.  A little bit of thought at the beginning of your search can save you time and aggravation.

1. Make a list of key concepts and/or words related to your topic (see the back page).

* Think about terms used specifically in your field as well as words that may be used by the general public (Graves’ disease, diffuse toxic goiter). Read a general article, such as one found in an encyclopedia, to find terms.
* Write down any synonyms/alternate and related terms  (hyperthyroidism, Hashimoto’s thyroiditis)
* Note any acronyms or abbreviations
* Correct spelling is important!

2. Phrase searching

* If the search term has more than one word, enclose the phrase in “quotation marks”.  Otherwise, most databases will automatically put the word OR in-between them, which will broaden your search and return results that may not be relevant.
* "Graves’ Disease"  will only return results with these 2 words as phrase

3. You do not need complete sentences. Most databases skip over small and common words such as A, The, An, What, This, Is, etc.

* use - "Graves’ Disease" AND causes
* not - What is the cause of Graves’ Disease?

4. Boolean Operators can be used to narrow or broaden a search

* AND - narrows the search by requiring **both** terms to be included in an article.
* OR - broadens the search.  either word can appear in an article for it to be included in the results ex. “higher education” or college
* NOT - narrows the search by excluding articles that include that word ex. “star trek” AND “next generation” NOT “deep space nine”

5.  Use the **SEARCH TOOLS** feature to set limits by date. Use the **ADVANCED SEARCH** feature, when available, to narrow your search by English language only, type of domain, date of last update, etc..

* Google - run your search first, then click on the “gear symbol” and choose Advanced Search.
* Yahoo – run your search, then click on the “gear symbol” and choose Advanced Search. Also able to limit by date.

6. It is very likely that you will need to run your search more than once using different search strings to find exactly what you are looking for.

**Search Strategy Worksheet**

List the key concepts in your research question, then determine related terms.

**Key concept #1** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms or related terms

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

AND/OR

**Key concept #2** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms or related terms

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

AND/OR

**Key concept 3#** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms or related terms

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_