

Using Outstanding Keywords and Tips when Searching for Sources

It is vital to have outstanding keywords when searching a database. The more specific the words you use the narrower are the search results that you will get.

Tips

- 1) Vary the language that you use. If you use the same words you will get the same results. So it is important try several different keywords when searching a database.
- 2) You should do some background reading on your topic and be careful when choosing a topic. When you do your basic overview of your topic you should search for and write down keywords to use later on.
- 3) You should use keywords that are used in that field. Every field has technical words. People that write articles in the field tend to use bigger vocabulary. Instead of using the word "farming" use "agriculture" instead for different results.
- 4) If you cannot think of similar words try a thesaurus and then a dictionary if needed.
- 5) Use more specific words when doing a search. Instead of using the word "farming" try the words "urban farming." This will give you different articles that are more specific.
- 6) When you find a source that you like notice the vocabulary that is used. This will help you find more keywords for your next search.
- 7) When searching in a database you can search one database, all of the databases or a specific number of databases at once. More is not always better. Try search individual databases or just a few at a time that specifically relate to your topic.
- 8) Write a topic sentence or a thesis statement before you start searching. You can change the wording of your thesis statement as you do your research. However, writing a specific thesis statement is a good way to decide what you want to look for.
- 9) When doing research you often get a ton of information. It is important to slow down and read some of the great sources that you find. Often people find a number of sources and think they are done. Then they read the sources and change his or her ideas about the topic or find the sources don't fit the topic as well as you would like. Always read carefully before finishing a search for good sources.
- 10) After you have done some research go back and do another keyword search.
- 11) Use different databases when searching to vary your results.
- 12) Ask a teacher or a librarian for help or advice on how to better search for a specific topic. Often times they can suggest different keywords or a related database.
- 13) You have so much control over what you search today. Often times databases give you control over what you can find. This can be anything from the type of source to the reading level. Take your time and read through the information and use the tools to get a source that is best for you.
- 14) Databases and e-books have features today that give extra benefits to students. Some examples are define a word. Read a passage to you, highlight words, allow you to take notes, language translations and other features. If these features benefit you then use them.