

Step 1: DESCRIBE YOUR TOPIC

Clearly state your topic in one or two sentences. Try to be as specific as possible

Step 2: IDENTIFY YOUR MAIN CONCEPTS

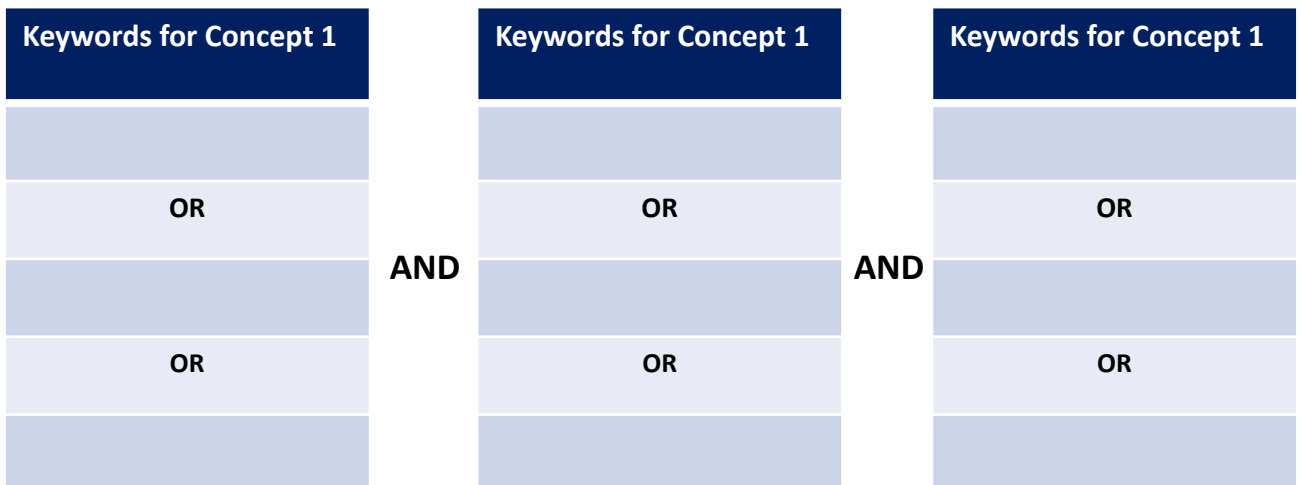
Go back to Step 1 and indicate your key or main concepts by underlining, circling, or highlighting them in your topic sentence(s).

Step 3: LIST YOUR MAIN CONCEPTS

List your main concepts and any synonyms or word variations. By using Boolean operators (AND, OR), you can start creating your search strategy. (Don't worry about filling in all the spaces. You may not have three concepts in your topic.)

Using AND always helps you narrow your search because both concepts must be present in the record or article.

Using OR broadens your search because all records containing one or both concepts will be included. In this search strategy table, you will use OR to compile synonyms (or variations) of the concepts



Step 4: DETERMINE THE BEST RESOURCES

Research requires you to find information from a variety of resources. Determining which resources are most useful for your needs will depend on your topic and the requirements of the assignment.

- a. Review your assignment requirements. List any special considerations, such as information must be from a particular time period.

- b. What specific resources does your assignment require? Does it restrict the use of particular resources (for example, Wikipedia or other websites)? Do you have to use peer-reviewed journal articles? Can you use trade publications or other sources?

Step 4: SEARCH THE LIBRARY DATABASES

- a. Use the keywords identified in your search strategy worksheet to begin searching in the library databases and/or with online search engines (like Google and Google Scholar) for articles and websites (if permitted).
- b. If you have any phrases, use quotation marks to search the keywords together.

Example: "online social networks."

- c. You may want to write out your search strategy on this worksheet by connecting your keywords for each concept with the Boolean operator OR. Keywords connected with OR should be enclosed by parentheses. Connect the OR sets with the Boolean operator AND.

Example: ("online social networks" OR "social media") AND (cheating OR plagiarism OR "academic dishonesty") AND (colleges OR universities)

For further assistance, contact the Bryan Librarian at: library@bryanuniversity.edu or 602.838.7312.