Plan a search strategy using your own area of research interest

**Topic/question/problem**

Write your topic/question/problem and underline the key concepts.

**Synonyms**

Write a key concept into each box in the top row, and in the column beneath, list as many synonyms/alternatives you can think of. Remember to include singular/plural, acronyms, newer/older terminology, US/UK spellings/terminology and technical terms.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[Concept 1]** | **[Concept 2]** | **[Concept 3]** | **[Concept 4]** |
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**Search operators**

Look at your synonyms above and consider how you might streamline the search to combine with Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT). Consider other techniques, such as:

* truncation/word stemming (e.g. analy\*)
* wildcards (e.g. wom#n, organi#ing, p?ediatric, tumo?r
* exact phrase searching “…” (e.g. “modern slavery”, “ethnic minority”)
* word adjacency/proximity searching: NEAR/*n*, ADJ*n* (e.g. cancer NEAR/2 therap\*)

**Limits**

Think about any limits that might apply to your topic/question/problem.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date range** | **Language** | **Material type** | **Other?** |
|  |  |  |  |

**Broadening/Narrowing**

Consider how you might broaden/narrow your search if you find too few/too many references.

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| --- | --- |
| **Broadening search** | **Narrowing search** |
| e.g. think of more synonyms, remember to use truncation | e.g. add more precise concepts, apply more limits (e.g. age/review articles) |

Now you are ready to start entering your search on the database(s) of your choice.

See [NUsearch](https://nusearch.nottingham.ac.uk/primo-explore/dbsearch?vid=44NOTUK) to find which databases we have access to for your subject area.

Remember to keep accurate records of what you have done, and why!