Database Searching Worksheet
Using Your Key Words

This worksheet provides activities that will help you use different Kean University Library databases to search for and find information on your research topics.

By successfully completing this activity, you will be able to:
√ Select key words using one particular brainstorming strategy.
√ Choose relevant databases.
√ Construct, employ, and revise as necessary search statements that databases will understand.
√ Employ critical evaluation skills to identify relevant articles.

Let’s take this in steps:

1. **Brainstorm for Key Words**

   a) Write a sentence or two describing your topic:

   b) From your description above, separate your topic into its main concepts. Use the table below to list the main concepts. In the column below each main concept, write any other synonyms or related keywords. (Depending upon your topic, you may or may not need to use all of the columns.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Concept</th>
<th>2nd Concept</th>
<th>3rd Concept</th>
<th>4th Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keywords</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Related</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>words</strong></td>
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2. **Formulate Your Search Statement**

   a) Most of the library’s research databases will not work effectively or efficiently if you type a natural language query or, in other words, type a sentence or phrase as if you were asking a question out loud. Instead, databases require that you construct a search statement that the database will understand. A good database search statement usually includes several keywords that have been combined by using various operators. Databases generally require the following:
Use the "and" operator to combine terms and retrieve items that contain all of the terms.
Use the "or" operator to retrieve items that contain one or more of the grouped terms (not necessarily all of the grouped terms). For instance, use the "or" operator to connect synonyms.
Use the asterisk (*) as a truncation symbol after a word root to retrieve articles with the word root and all of its possible word endings.

Here is an example of a search statement using and/or operators and truncation symbols:

(teen* or adolesc* or child*) and (television or media) and (violen* or aggress*)

b) Refer to the key words you listed previously in the "Brainstorm for Keywords" table to write your preliminary search statement:

3. Select a Database to Find Full-Text Articles Using Your Key Words

Now, let's try using your search statement in a database that we have not yet covered in class. Make sure that you select a database that is relevant to your research topic.

To access a database:
√ Go to the library homepage at http://library.kean.edu.
√ Click Articles & More to access the page on which the library's databases are listed alphabetically and by subject/format.
√ Select a database from the Databases Listed By Subject and Format menu.
√ Click the name of a database to access the search form.

Again, be prepared to present your steps:

a) What database did you select and why?

b) What search statement did you type in the search box? How many articles did you retrieve?

c) Modify your search by adding some additional keywords listed under 2nd Concept, 3rd Concept, or 4th Concept in the table on the previous page. What search statement did you type in the search box? How many articles did you retrieve?

d) Browse through the results list for relevant articles that are available in full-text format. E-mail the relevant full-text articles to yourself. (Alternatively, save the articles to a disk.) Be prepared to explain to your classmates how the articles relate to your topic.