

E-RESOURCE SEARCH STRATEGY GUIDE

Plan your search strategy before you begin to search one of the library's e-resources.

STEP 1

Describe your research topic. Be as specific as possible.

STEP 2

Choose the appropriate database(s) for your topic by looking at the **e-resources** descriptions on the Library e-resources web page.

STEP 3

Divide your topic into major concepts (ignore articles and prepositions). The research topic:

Prepare an analysis of a current (within the past five years) Canadian human rights violation using secondary sources such as newspapers, magazines, and journals. Books may be used for descriptive, background, and historical information.

Possible keywords/phrases to use to begin to search: **human rights - violation - Canadian**

Think about possible synonyms or related terms for keywords.

Keyword A

Keyword B

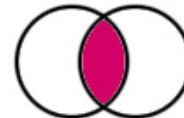
Keyword C

STEP 4

Connect your concepts using the following Boolean Logic operators:

AND limits a search to those records with **both** concepts.

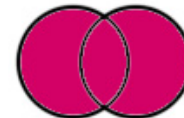
human
rights



violations

OR broadens a search to include records that contain **either** term. **OR** is used to bring similar terms or synonyms together.

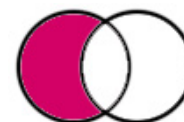
Canada



Canadian

NOT narrows a search to **exclude** records containing a concept. (Be careful with **NOT**, you may lose some valuable information.)

Canada



United States

Keyword A		Keyword B		Keyword C
_____	AND	_____	AND	_____
OR		OR		OR
_____	AND	_____	AND	_____
OR		OR		OR
_____	AND	_____	AND	_____

STEP 5

Search the database. Databases have different search techniques. Use the database help screens to determine the correct method of entering terms and combining topics. You may have to revise your search strategy depending on the results of your search.

If you retrieve **too many records**, narrow your search by:

- Adding another concept using the **AND** operator.
- Using fewer *like* terms.
- Limiting your search to subject headings instead of keyword open text searching

If you retrieve **too few records**, broaden your search by:

- Adding more *like* terms to concepts using the **OR** operator.
- Using fewer concepts. For example, try combining two concepts instead of three when using the **AND** operator.

If you retrieve **too many irrelevant records**, use different search terms:

- If any of the records you have looked at are on topic, try using the subject terms assigned to those records.

STEP 6

Print, email or export the results of your search. To save time, paper and money, print only the articles you need. If you are searching in a full text database such as *Academic Search Premier*, *Lexis-Nexis* or *Research Library* you may be able to print the entire article at this step.

STEP 7

Obtain the full text of records that only give you an abstract by clicking on the **Search for Article** link. You can also check for full text periodicals available in print in the library or online in another database by using the **Full Text Journal List** on the **e-resources** section of the library web page.

AT ANY STEP

Please ask library staff for further assistance.

For more information go to the Library website:

library.centennialcollege.ca → **Research** → **Find Articles & Journals** → **How to Find Articles: Search Assistance Guide**