Keywords are the basic terms that describe your topic. Use them with connecting words to create searches.

**AND**

**AND** is the main connector. **AND** requires all keywords you select to be present.

Example 1 below shows the overlap where both these terms occur: tigers AND monkeys

![Illustration showing overlap of tigers and monkeys]

- **AND must find both** TIGERS and MONKEYS in the same article, resource, or web page. The illustration above shows the overlap where both words occur.

Add more keywords to narrow and focus a search:

**Example 2:** tigers AND monkeys AND habitat

**OR**

**OR** looks for either term or multiple terms.

**Example 3:** (tigers OR monkeys) AND habitat

- Google requires **OR** to be in all caps. The library catalog requires **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT** in uppercase and other terms in lowercase for keyword searches to find books. Library databases such as *Academic Search Complete* are not case sensitive.

- **OR** works best combined with the technique called NESTING below:

**NESTING ( )**

Make a “nest” of parentheses ( ) around groups of alternate terms. Place **OR** between each word to search groups of related terms or synonyms at once. Connect nests with **AND**.

**Example 4:** (tigers OR monkeys OR lions) AND (habitat OR environment)
**NOT**  *excludes* terms from your search.

Example 5: tigers NOT monkeys

**“PHRASE SEARCH”** Surround a phrase such as “drunk driving” or “conflict of interest” with quotation marks to search for those words next to each other *in that order*. This IS A GREAT WAY to control results and keep search words together in library databases and Internet search engines!

**STOP WORDS**  *Avoid* little words (called stop words) that could slow or stop your search, such as: in, for, the, a, an, of, by, unless you enclose a phrase in quotes, such as “for profit” or “conflict of interest.”  *Use AND* to connect the main keywords that describe your topic.

**WILDCARD**  *To expand* your search, use wildcard symbols for cutting off (truncating) words to search singulars, plurals, and variant endings. The * (asterisk) is the most frequently used wildcard or truncation symbol.

Example 6: convict* could find convict, convicts, convicted, convicting, conviction, or convictions

**LIMITS**  You can usually click a check box to limit results to full-text articles or to peer-reviewed (refereed) publications. You can limit by publication year, publication type, or language using pull down menus or text boxes.

**PROXIMITY**  You can specify how many words apart you want search terms to occur. Proximity operators find search terms within “X” number of words of each other.

**w3, W/3**  Example 7 proximity: to find “poverty” within three words of “children” in a database, such as EBSCO’s Academic Search Complete, type: poverty w3 children  In the LexisNexis Academic database’s Advanced Search, type: poverty W/3 children

- Check Help or Search Tip screens. Proximity searching varies and is not available in all online databases.

**SUPER-SIZED**  Example 8 shows advanced search techniques in combination. Try to guess the topic of this search:

**COMBO SEARCH**  (false OR wrongful*) AND (convict* OR imprison* OR incarcerat*)  AND (test* OR evidence) AND dna AND “death penalty” AND exonerat*  

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