

Constructing a Search Statement

Identifying the right terms and phrases for your topic is critical to successful searching. The first step is to list the terms that might be used to describe each of the main concept(s) of your topic (use as many as needed).

For example, if your topic is on the ***influence of gender on communication in the workplace***, the main concepts are (a) gender; (b) communication; and (c) workplace.

For each of the main concepts, identify synonymous or related terms which may also be used in your search statements.

Sample Topic:

Influence of gender on communication in the workplace

Concept "A"	Concept "B"	Concept "C"
<i>gender</i> <i>women</i> <i>woman</i> <i>sex</i>	<i>communication</i> <i>conversation</i> <i>listening</i> <i>interaction</i>	<i>workplace</i> <i>job(s)</i> <i>business</i> <i>office</i>

This list of terms may be used in constructing a search statement, using search operators:

- **OR** combines the related terms for each concept, broadening the search to be more inclusive.
- **AND** narrows the search to records that include at least one of the terms from each concept group.

The above terms may be combined as follows:

(gender OR women OR woman OR sex)
AND
(communication OR conversation OR listening OR interaction)
AND
(workplace OR job OR jobs OR business OR office)

Search Statement Worksheet

Your topic statement _____

<i>Concept A</i>	<i>Concept B</i>	<i>Concept C</i>	<i>Concept D</i>

Combine terms from each column above using the **OR** operator:

Concept A terms: _____ **OR** _____ **OR** _____

Concept B terms: _____ **OR** _____ **OR** _____

Concept C terms: _____ **OR** _____ **OR** _____

Concept D terms: _____ **OR** _____ **OR** _____

Place each group of terms (above) inside a set of parentheses and combine each group with the **AND** operator:

Concept A terms: (_____ OR _____ OR _____)

AND

Concept B terms: (_____ OR _____ OR _____)

AND

Concept C terms: (_____ OR _____ OR _____)

AND

Concept D terms: (_____ OR _____ OR _____)