

Search Strategy Worksheet

Step 1: Write a short (one sentence or less) description of your topic. Circle the key words or phrases in it.

Step 2: List any additional key words or phrases you can imagine. (These plus the ones in Step 1 are your "search terms.")

Step 3: Study these search terms. Using the boxes below, put related terms into groups. (These groups of related terms are a "concept." You might find it helps to give each concept a name.) Terms within each concept are linked by the word **OR**. The different concepts (you may not need to use all three) are linked by the word **AND**. The use of **OR** and **AND** tells the computer how to look up these terms.

Concept 1		Concept 2		Concept 3		
	_____		_____		_____	
OR	_____	OR	_____	OR	_____	
OR	_____	AND	OR	AND	OR	_____
OR	_____		OR		OR	_____
OR	_____		OR		OR	_____

Step 4: At this point you should have an idea of **what** to look for, but not **where** to look. Look for **Article Databases/Indexes** in the appropriate subject section(s) of **InfoTree** and list all databases you find there that *might* be worth searching for this topic. Then choose one of them for your search. Circle your choice.

Step 5: Search for your topic in the database you've chosen. As appropriate, use the techniques described on the "Basic Searching Concepts" handout to do a search for your topic. Print out the *Search Screen* (the place where you entered the search terms) and bring it to class next time. If you found the kind of articles you want, wonderful! If not, we can spend some time in that next class working to improve your search results.

Sample Worksheet

Step 1: I want to find oral histories or diaries about Ohio farmers

Step 2: *biography, interview, journals, narratives, letters – midwest, appalachia – farmers, farming, agriculture*

Step 3:

Concept 1	
	<u>oral history</u>
OR	<u>diaries</u>
OR	<u>journals</u>
OR	<u>narratives</u>
OR	<u>letters</u>

Concept 2	
	<u>midwest</u>
OR	<u>appalachia</u>
OR	_____
OR	_____
OR	_____

Concept 3	
	<u>farmers</u>
OR	<u>farming</u>
OR	<u>agriculture</u>
OR	_____
OR	_____

Step 4: Possible databases: *ALICE; Academic Search Premier; In the First Person; North American Women's Diaries; North American Immigrant Letters*

Step 5: Entering the Search: Note that both of these search boxes use the same search terms, but they need to be arranged differently because of the different ways the various databases work.

ALICE Keyword Search

Things to note:

- The words within each concept, connected by **OR**, are also enclosed in parentheses
- Each "parenthesized" group is connected by **AND**. (No room in the search box to show all terms)
- The asterisks are used to search for word roots (truncation)

Type the **WORD(S)** you want, then click Submit Search
 (oral histor* or interview* or narrative*) and (midwest or appalachia*)

Language: Material Type:

Location:

Search and Sort:

Academic Search Premier

Things to note:

- Each line contains one concept, with words connected by OR.
- AND is used to connect the three lines
- The asterisks are used to search for word roots (truncation)

Find: in

in

in