Identifying Keywords

1) **Analyze** your topic into concepts
   Usually 2 or 3 concepts give the best results
   *Example*
   - Topic: “the effect of ethnicity on political participation in Latin America”
   - Concepts: Latin America, Ethnicity, Political participation
   
   It is not recommended to include words such as impact, effect, result, cause, etc. that describe the relationship between your concepts.

2) **Brainstorm** for keywords related to your concepts
   *Example*
   - Latin America, South America
   - Ethnicity, race, minorities, identity, community
   - Political participation, elections, voting behaviour/behavior

3) Use truncation symbols (* ? !) to retrieve variant word endings
   - ethnic* will retrieve ethnic, ethnicities, ethnic groups, etc.

4) Combine concepts with **AND**

5) Combine keywords with **OR** and enclose them in ( )

   *Example*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept A</th>
<th>(“Latin America” OR “South America”) OR</th>
<th>OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Concept B</td>
<td>(ethnic* OR race) OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Concept C</td>
<td>(&quot;political participation” OR vote* OR elect*) OR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   | Concept A | ( OR | OR | ) |
   | AND       | Concept B | ( OR | OR | ) |
   | AND       | Concept C | ( OR | OR | ) |
Researching and Writing Your Term Paper


1) Use the advanced search

2) Use the truncation symbol (?) to retrieve variant word endings
   elect? will retrieve elect, electorate, election, electors, etc.

3) Write down the call number and library to find your books on the shelves

4) Use the Request function to put holds on books on loan to another user

5) Remember that you cannot use the Library catalogue to find articles!

Finding Articles  http://mclink.library.mcgill.ca:8331/V/?func=find-db-1

1) Start with the “core” databases in your subject area

2) Too many results?
   a) Limit results by adding additional keywords combined with AND, or by specifying publication year(s), document type, language, etc.
   b) Use “” to search for exact phrases e.g. “Latin America”, “developing areas”

3) Too few results?
   a) Increase your results by adding synonyms combined with OR
   b) Use truncation (* ? !)

4) Finding your articles
   a) Click on [Find It McGill] to verify if your article is available online or in hardcopy in one of the McGill branch libraries
   b) If [Find It McGill] or “full-text” links are not available, look up the title of the journal in which your article appears using the Journal title begins with search in the Library catalogue

Access from off-campus requires a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection:
   http://www.mcgill.ca/library-using/connect/

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