

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

	Concept A	("Latin America"	OR	"South America")	OR	
AND						
	Concept B	(ethnic*	OR	race)	OR	
AND						
	Concept C	("political participation"	OR	vote*	OR	elect*)
	Concept A	(OR		OR)
AND						
	Concept B	(OR		OR)
AND						
	Concept C	(OR		OR)

Finding Books <http://catalogue.mcgill.ca>

- 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  to verify if your article is available online or in hardcopy in one of the McGill branch libraries
 - b) If  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/>