UC SANTA BARBARA LIBRARY

Quick Tips …
SEARCH STRATEGIES

Start with Keywords:

Keyword searching uses *your* vocabulary - words that you think best represent your topic. A keyword search looks for matches between your words and words in the titles, abstracts, subjects, etc. of articles included in a Library database.

Do an Advanced Search:

An Advanced Search screen lets you break a complex topic into its component facets. You will search for each facet on a separate line of the Advanced Search screen. Here we see a search for sources on *racial discrimination* and the *death penalty*.

Search Using Synonyms:

Try to think of the different words or phrases that a person writing on your topic might use. For example, the concept of *capital punishment* might be expressed using the phrase *death penalty*. Enter words that express the same concept, or facet, of your topic on one line of your search screen, separated by the word OR.

Searching: **Academic Search Complete** | Choose Databases »

"capital punishment" OR "death penalty"	in	Select a Field (optional) ▾
and ▾	race OR racial	in	Select a Field (optional) ▾
and ▾	discriminat*	in	Select a Field (optional) ▾

Basic Search | Advanced Search | Visual Search | ▶ Search History/Alerts | Preferences »

Use "Phrase Searching" and Wildcards (*):

In the example above, phrases are placed in quotation marks to ensure that the database looks for articles that include these exact phrases. The asterisk after *discriminat** is a wildcard that searches for such words as *discriminate*, *discriminating*, *discrimination*, etc.

Follow the Subject Headings:

In library databases, subjects are assigned using a controlled vocabulary: the librarian who "catalogs" or "indexes" (creates a database record for) an article selects words or phrases from a list of subjects, choosing one or more subjects that s/he believes best represents what the article is about.

1. Academic Journal

   Racial disparity and death sentences in Ohio.
   By: Williams, Marian R.; Holcomb, Jefferson E. Journal of Criminal Justice. May/Jun2001, Vol. 29 Issue 3, p207. 11p. 4 Charts.
   Abstract: Studies racial disparities in the imposition of the death penalty in Ohio. History of Ohio's death penalty law; Examination of race and the use of the death penalty; Study show lack of racial disparity in imposing the penalty in Ohio. (AN: 4574720)
   Subjects: CAPITAL punishment; DISCRIMINATION in capital punishment; OHIO; UNITED States

   Database: Academic Search Complete

If you discover a subject term that describes all or part of your topic well, you can click on that subject to find other items in the database that have been assigned that same subject.

In the example above, you could click on "DISCRIMINATION in capital punishment" to see a list of every other item in the database that has been assigned the same subject.