**Topic Search Plan**

It's important to break down your research topic into keywords and concepts so that you know what you are typing into the search engine or database. Completing the steps in this process will help you to locate key information quickly.

**Step 1: Write down your topic question.**

**Step 2: What are the key concepts in your topic question?**

Spend a few minutes thinking of a minimum of 3 concepts and note them in the box below.

**Step 3: What keywords/phrases would you search for underneath each of those concepts?**

Think about broad terms and more specific terms. Sometimes your concepts will be your keywords. Then begin to add synonyms, words that mean the same things. You may want to use a thesaurus for this.
Step 4: Let’s look at your keywords as part of a search.

This example of "The impact of emissions on global warming after Kyoto" gives you an idea of how quick it is to build that search. Add your keywords to the boxes below to start off the search.

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Global Warming AND Emissions AND Kyoto AND Carbon emissions
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Global Warming OR Climate Change OR Greenhouse Effect AND Kyoto
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Step 5: More tips: add to your search with phrases, truncation, wildcards

- Include your key search term in inverted commas to search for it as a phrase rather than two separate words e.g. “Global Warming”
- Search for your key search term in the title of the article
- Search for multiple endings of the same word e.g. emission* searches for emission and emissions
- Limit your search by including a date range e.g. 2009-2014

On Library Search and the Library databases you can combine your search terms with AND OR and NOT to refine your search and locate relevant journal articles.

AND will narrow your search

OR will broaden your search

Add some of the keywords to the boxes below and write AND/OR in between the boxes and then use the key terms on either Library Search or one of the Library databases.
Further Support

My Learning Essentials:
http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/mylearningessentials/

Online Resource: Planning your search