

Developing Your Research Question(s)

Step One: What do you already know about your topic? Write that below.

Step Two: Develop questions you'd like to answer with your research.

Remember, your questions may change as you learn more about your topic. That's OK!

For example, if you are analyzing the film "Apocalypto" (2006), you might ask yourself:

When and where did the film take place? *Who* objected to the film and *why*? *How* were indigenous portrayed?

Develop questions using these prompts:

<i>Who?</i> <i>What?</i> <i>When?</i> <i>Where?</i>	
<i>Why?</i>	
<i>How?</i>	
<i>Should?</i>	
<i>What if?</i>	

Use the keywords from your questions and brainstorm below.

Note: The keywords you choose will become essential for searching catalogs, websites, and databases. Keywords can have a profound influence on the results of your research. If at first you don't succeed, revise!

Topic Keyword/Phrase	Similar	Broader	Narrower	Related
Smoking	Smoke, smoker	Tobacco	Cigarettes, Cigars Chewing tobacco	Nicotine, Lung cancer

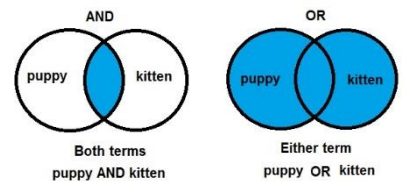
Searching tips

Truncation: Many databases utilize a truncation symbol (like * and ?) to **broaden** a search by searching the root of a word. Check the help pages of the tool you are using to determine the correct symbol.


- smok* will locate smoke, smoking, smoker
- business* will locate business, businesses, businesspeople

Boolean Operators: Many databases and catalog utilize **AND, OR and NOT** (Boolean operators) for concept and synonym searching.

- (cigarette* OR tobacco) searches for records with either or both words.
- bacon AND (sodium OR salt) searches for the word bacon and one or both of the following words



Many databases have an advanced search screen that makes Boolean searching easy!



Searching: [Academic Search Complete](#) | [Choose Databases](#)

bacon

AND

AND

[Basic Search](#) [Advanced Search](#) [Search History](#)