

## Designing a Search Strategy Worksheet

*What is a search strategy?* A search strategy is a **roadmap or plan for doing research.**

*Why should I design a search strategy for an assignment?* Designing a search strategy will help to **organize** your thoughts, allow you to **design an action plan** for research, and most importantly, **save you a lot of time.**

Fill out this worksheet for each research assignment, and use it when you search the online databases and online catalog.

Explanation of research assignment:

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Number of sources required and type (ie. five peer reviewed journal articles):

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Topic/Thesis Statement:

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Library resources to search including specific online databases (ie. ProQuest Research Library, etc.):

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Keywords to search for your topic on the online databases and online catalog:

(Tip: Brainstorm, use a thesaurus, look in an encyclopedia for your topic and refer to the 'see also' suggestions.)

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Keep track of the databases you search and terms/combinations you search:

Online Database	Term(s)/Combinations Searched	Number of Results

Quick tips for using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT):

- Too many records? Add another search term with **AND**.  
*Example: poverty **AND** crime*
- Too few records? Add another search term with **OR**.  
*Example: college **OR** university*
- Too many records on an unrelated topic? Eliminate a word with **NOT**.  
*Example: cats **NOT** dogs*

Notes:

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For research assistance, contact a reference librarian by phone (800-726-6500), email ([refdesk@stfrancis.edu](mailto:refdesk@stfrancis.edu)), or stop by the reference desk.