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:

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<th>Online Database</th>
<th>Term(s)/Combinations Searched</th>
<th>Number of Results</th>
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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), or stop by the reference desk.