My research strategy
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1	Write down your research question. Circle 2 or 3 key concepts or terms.	Research problem				
2	Write each concept in its own box.	*Key concept/ term*	AND	*Key concept/term*	AND	*Key concept/term*
3	Use these columns to list synonyms (other words that have a similar meaning) for each concept.	_____ OR _____ OR _____		_____ OR _____ OR _____		_____ OR _____ OR _____
4	Construct your structured search with your three (3) key words.	*Key concept/ term* 1	AND	*Key concept/ term* 2	AND	*Key concept/ term* 3
5	Construct your structured search with your three (3) key words and three (3) synonyms	(key word 1 OR synonym 1)	AND	(key word 2 OR synonym 2)		(key word 3 OR synonym 3)
6	Identify three databases in which to do your structured search	Database 1		Database 2		Database 3

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Tips and tricks

Once you try your search, you may find that you need to change it:

- Too many hits? Add another concept with AND (Example: AND Canad*)
- Too few records? Add another, similar search term with OR (Example: (rights OR claims OR treaties)
- Use a truncation symbol (*) to search for various forms of a word. Example: Canad* will bring back hits with Canada, Canadian or Canadians

Remember:

Boolean operators = and, or (e.g., cats and dogs cats or dogs)

Truncation = * the asterisk (or star) replaces different endings for words (e.g., Canad* will bring you hits with Canada, Canadian or Canadians)

Parentheses = ( ) putting words in brackets keeps similar terms together

Need to get to the library's home page? Go to www.library.carleton.ca.

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