

## Video Transcript: 10 Research Tips and Tricks

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Try using these tips to see your research process through the “assignment” phase to the point at which you have journal articles to begin informing your investigation.

**Tip #1: Write out your topic, underlining the main concepts.**

In a single statement or question, describe what you want to find.

**Tip #2: Choose databases to work with.**

Check the Subject Guide for your area, or talk to a librarian for advice in choosing databases.

**Tip #3: Expand your searching vocabulary.**

Think of synonyms for your main concepts. If it has one, use the thesaurus of your database to identify the subject terms that best describe your concepts.

**Tip #4: Limit your search.**

Use the database's limiting tools to refine your search. You might want to limit by time period, document type, language, or publication date. Different areas of study have different ways of limiting searched, so do explore these.

**Tip #5: Use truncation and “wild-cards” to make searching some terms easier.**

Truncation allows you to search for variant endings of a word, usually by using an asterisk. Wild-cards, usually indicated by a question mark allow for variations within a word.

**Tip #6: Choose appropriate fields for the terms of your search.**

The Advanced Search screens in most databases allow you to select fields for the elements of your search. Most databases let you specify author, words in the title, keywords, subject terms, and journal title. Some are far more elaborate.

**Tip #7: Connect your search terms with AND, OR, and NOT.**

These logical operators allow you to widen and narrow your search appropriately. Use OR to link related terms. Use AND to combine unrelated concepts in your search and narrow it. Some databases let you select operators, or you can key in your search with operators.

**Tip #8: Use the database Search History to build up your search.**

Most databases will let you review sent searches, and recombine these using logical operators to eliminate unwanted material.

**Tip #9: Analyze your results.**

Take a look at the results list. Look at the full record for some that look most useful to you. Consider the author and his or her affiliation if it is provided, the date of the article, and the journal in which it was published. Is it a peer-reviewed article in a scholarly journal? Does the abstract suggest that it is going to be of interest to you? If it is suitable, have a look at the Subject or Descriptors field to see if there are terms used to index it that you can pull into your current search.

**Tip #10: Adapt your search.**

You will notice that some results of your search look useful, and others are not of interest to you. Re-work your search to include more subject terms or keywords that are appropriate. Similarly, you might use the NOT operator to exclude material that is off topic for you.

If you have any questions or need further assistance in your research, please don't hesitate to ask any staff member.

This video is available at: <http://www.lib.unb.ca/research/video/researchtips.html>

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