

# KEYWORDS, OPERATORS & FILTERS

Literature Search: a librarian's handout to introduce *tools, terms and techniques*



## BRAINSTORM keywords

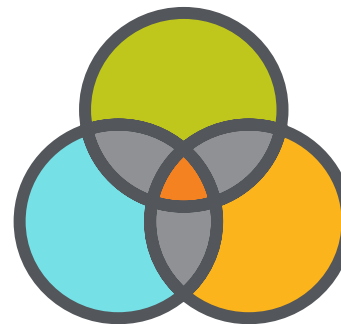
These are the main ideas of your research question/topic sentence.



## EXPAND your keywords

Look at the subject headings of the materials you find and use those terms as applicable.

Or look up your keywords in a subject-specific database thesaurus to find predefined terms (called “*controlled vocabulary*”).



## USE Boolean operators

Insert **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT** into your search to broaden or narrow it.

*For example:* PTSD OR Post Traumatic Stress Disorder AND soldiers NOT Navy.



## REFINE your search results

Filters in the database allow you to narrow a search by year, content type, etc.

**At the library:  
Consult a liaison librarian  
or subject specialist.**

