

FEEDBACK WORKSHEET

Library Research Worksheet

This worksheet allows you to formulate a search strategy related to your research topic and save and e-mail it to a librarian for feedback.

Use the following worksheet as part of the preparation process for doing online library research. Complete the worksheet now.

Please complete the following information:

First name: _____

Last name: _____

For feedback my E-mail address is: _____

Course or Professor: _____

NOTE: This form is intended to help MSASS students formulate a research question. Library staff will offer suggestions on how to refine the search as needed. This is not a "reference" service. None of this information will be sold, or given to any company, and you will not receive any mail unless you request feedback via e-mail.

STEP 1: Define your research topic.

Entering your statement as a question is sometimes easier.

Example: What are the stress factors on family members in caregiving roles?

Enter your research statement here:

STEP 2: Identify your key concepts.

After you have defined your research statement, you will need to identify key concepts related to your topic. Usually you will be able to identify three or four main ideas.

Our topic is: What are the **stress** factors on **family members** in **caregiving** roles?

The key concepts for this example are:

Stress,
Family members,
Caregiving

When you choose your concepts, consider truncating the term so that you get the singular and plural. For example, *caregiv** will give you *caregiver, caregivers, caregiving*. Check the help menus in individual databases to see which truncating symbol is used.

Enter one concept word relating to your statement on each of the concept lines. Use the "*" symbol to indicate truncation when it is appropriate.

Your statement is:

Concept 1: _____

Concept 2: _____

Concept 3: _____

Concept 4: _____

(To continue, you must at least enter something on the first line).

STEP 3: Identify synonyms for the concepts you have selected.

After you have identified your key concepts, it is useful to identify synonyms for the terms. [Thesauri](#) will provide you with ideas for keywords relating to your topic.

In the example used here:

Synonyms for *stress* might be: burden, anxiety, depression

Synonyms for *family members* might be: children, parents, siblings, mother, father

Synonyms for *caregiving* might be: home care, respite, caregiver(s), caretaker(s)

Enter synonyms or related terms for *your* concepts (Remember to truncate when it is appropriate):

Synonyms for Concept 1:

Synonyms for Concept 2:

Synonyms for Concept 3:

Synonyms for Concept 4:

STEP 4: Combine the concepts and synonyms to do keyword searching.

Once you have your concepts and synonyms you need to put them together in a search string so that you can retrieve citations or documents. Almost all online searching requires you to use some form of Boolean logic when you make up your search string.

Boolean logic uses the OR connector to tell the system to retrieve synonyms for your concepts. It uses the AND connector to retrieve citations that include all of your key concepts.

[Click here if you need more information on Boolean logic](#)

In our example, the search string would look like this. Notice that we are only choosing some of the synonyms for our initial search.

(stress or burden) AND (family or parents or mother or father) AND (caregiv*)

You will continue to revise your search string as you work with the online resources - making it narrower or broader depending on your results.

The concepts and synonyms relating to your research statement are:

Your concepts and synonyms are:

Concept 1 and Synonyms:

Concept 2 and Synonyms:

Concept 3 and Synonyms:

Concept 4 and Synonyms:

Use Boolean logic to combine your concepts into a search string in the space below:

STEP 5: Choose the appropriate databases or indexes and abstracts.

After you have defined your search statement and created your search strategy you need to select the databases that are most closely related to your topic. Some of the social sciences databases available to you through Case Western Reserve University are listed below. Select those that you think are most appropriate for your research topic. Check the [Research Databases](#) web page for more information on the databases.

ABI/Inform
Ageline
AIDSline
Bioethics Line
Child Abuse and Neglect
CINAHL
ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)
Ethnic Newswatch
Health and Psychosocial Instruments
Lexis/Nexis Universe
Medline/PubMed
PAIS (Public Affairs Information Service)
Periodical Abstracts
Popline
PsycINFO
Social Sciences Citation Index
Social Work Abstracts
Sociological Abstracts

STEP 6: Revision

You have completed the Library Research Worksheet. Please review your work and make any necessary corrections. *If you have comments, questions or complaints please use the **Comments about the Worksheet** box at the bottom worksheet.*

Your Final Statement:

Concepts and Synonyms:

Your Search String:

Comments about the Worksheet:

For feedback on your search strategy e-mail your completed form to harrisref@case.edu or bring a print copy to the Harris Library Reference Desk.