

CONSTRUCTING A KEYWORD SEARCH IN A RESEARCH DATABASE

- Identify keywords that represent the key concepts or different aspects of your topic.
- Brainstorm other words—synonyms or related terms—that a researcher writing on your topic might use.
- Use truncation (*) to search for variant endings to root words. Example: farm* retrieves farm, farms, farming, farmer
- Use “quotation marks” for phrases

	Keyword		Synonym or Related Term		Synonym or Related Term
AND	nanotechnology	OR		OR	
AND	agriculture	OR	farm*	OR	“animal production”
		OR		OR	

Combining keywords with:

AND: retrieves articles/documents that contain both, or all, search terms
Combining keywords with AND focuses/narrows your search

OR: retrieves articles/documents that contain any of the search terms
Combining keywords with OR broadens your search

The sample search above would retrieve articles that discuss nanotechnology AND (agriculture OR farm* OR “animal production”)

Note: Databases use different symbols for truncation (*, ?, \$, !) so check a database’s search tips for more info.