Keyword Searching

Keyword searching uses the words **AND, OR,** and **NOT** as connectors between keyword terms to tell the database how to search according to a system of Boolean logic. Your first task is to determine your research question or thesis statement.

Example: What are some factors that contribute to high morale on the job?

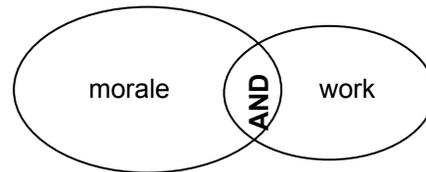## 1. Identify the key concepts. In the example above, the key concepts are **morale** and **work**.

2. Make a list of synonyms for each of the concepts:

morale	**work**
satisfaction	job
attitude	career

3. Use Boolean logic to connect these keywords into a search statement.

AND requires both terms to appear in a record, for example: **morale *and* work**

This search will find all records with the word "morale" (the first circle) and the word "work" (the second circle) but will only show the records in which <u>both</u> terms appear.
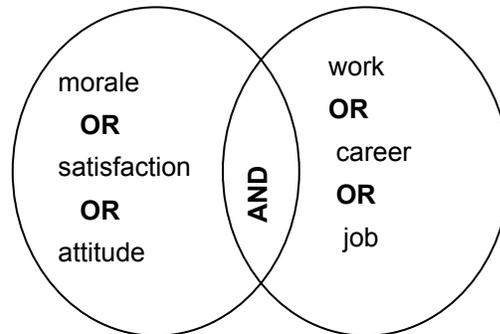
OR requires only one of the terms to appear in a record, for example: **morale *or* satisfaction**

Use "OR" to broaden your search.
This search will retrieve all the records in which at least one of the terms in each circle appears.

Group OR terms inside parentheses:

(morale or satisfaction or attitude)

Put into one statement, this search looks like this:

(morale or satisfaction or attitude) and (work or career or job)

4. Truncate the keywords to pick up plurals or other alternative endings.   The truncation symbol is often an asterisk (*), but sometimes a database will use a question mark (?), hash mark (#), or exclamation point (!).

Example: satisf* finds records with the words **satisfy, satisfies, satisfied, satisfying, or satisfaction**

Complete search statement:
        (morale or satisf* or attitude*) and (work* or career* or job*)

→ **One last tip:**
You may also use **NOT** to eliminate citations from your results which contain certain terms.
Example: For articles about employee satisfaction unrelated to management, use this search statement:

        (morale or satisf* or attitude*) and (work* or career* or job*) not manag*

KEYWORD SEARCHING –
PREPARATION FOR LIBRARY SESSION

Write your broad topic on the line below:

Example: genetically modified food

_____

Now focus your topic by formulating a question that interests you:

Example: Are genetically modified foods safe for human consumption?

_____

If you are uncertain about focusing your topic, or need to identify keywords used in the discipline to represent the concepts you are wanting to find, consult a specialty encyclopedia in the Reference collection on the 1st floor of the library. The Max Chambers librarians will be happy to assist you.

Keywords. Fill the chart below with your research **concepts** and potential **keywords**.

Grid for Your Topic	Write Concepts for *Your Topic* in the Boxes Below		
	Concept #1	Concept #2	Concept #3
Keyword #1			
Keyword #2			
Keyword #3			

Use your keywords to construct a sample search using Boolean operators (**And**, **Or**, and **Not**):

_____

Your Goal: In your library instruction session, the instructor will help you identify the best databases to use to retrieve scholarly materials relevant to your research question. Your goal will be to search the databases and retrieve a manageable number of citation records. (A good rule of thumb is 25 to 100 records, though results will vary somewhat with each topic.)