



Learning Resource Centres

7 Steps to Searching

Who has time to search through 6 million web sites returned by Google?
Make your searching more effective by planning your search strategy.

<p>Step 1: Define the topic. What do you want to know?</p>	<p>Example: How do I keep fit?</p>
<p>Try to identify precisely what you are looking for.</p>	
<p>Step 2: Create your search terms. What will be the keywords to look for?</p>	<p>Example: fitness, exercise, health*, nutrition</p>
<p>Start with broad terms, work towards narrower terms; Use subject headings and indexes; Use a thesaurus for alternative words; Use wildcard characters (eg *).</p>	
<p>Step 3: Use Boolean operators. How can your search terms be combined using Boolean operators?</p>	<p>Example: health AND sport</p>
<p>Use AND and OR to combine words and phrases</p>	
<p>Step 4: Use limiting parameters. How can you limit your search?</p>	<p>Example: young people, Yorkshire</p>
<p>By date? By geographic location? By type of person?</p>	

<p>Step 5: Use a variety of information sources. What information sources are most appropriate for your search?</p>	
<p>Books – use the Web Catalogue or ask the librarian; Journals – use the online databases; Newspapers – print copies or databases; Internet – use the subject rooms on Blackboard or a search engine.</p>	
<p>Step 6: Evaluate the sources. Are the sources that you have found suitable?</p>	
<p>Quantity – how extensive is the source? Relevance – how relevant is it to the question? Authority – how qualified is the author? Quality – is the source reputable?</p>	
<p>Step 7: Record the sources. Have you recorded where you found your information?</p>	
<p>Book accessed; Database used; Journal used; Web site address; Date information found.</p> <p>Record your references in a standardised format – see your tutor.</p>	

Refine and repeat until you have the information that you need.