University of Cumbria

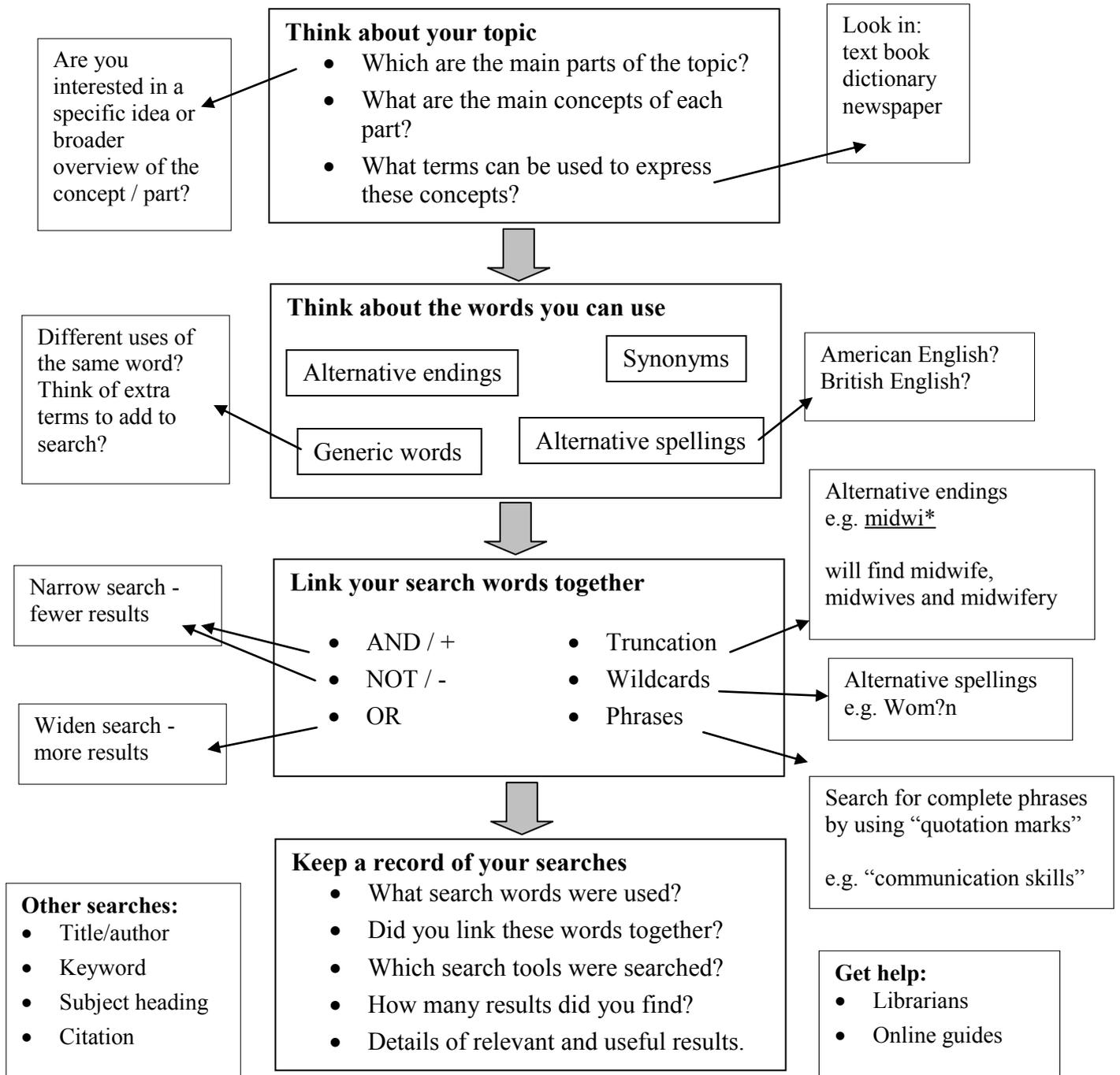## LIBRARY AND STUDENT SERVICES

Advanced searching

> **You can save valuable time by planning your search properly.**
>
> 1. **Identify your information needs**
> 2. **Identify your keywords and subject headings to construct your search**
> 3. **Identify appropriate eresources/ search tools**
> 4. **Run your search**
> 5. **Evaluate the results**
> 6. **Save references and your search strategy**

1. What information do I need?

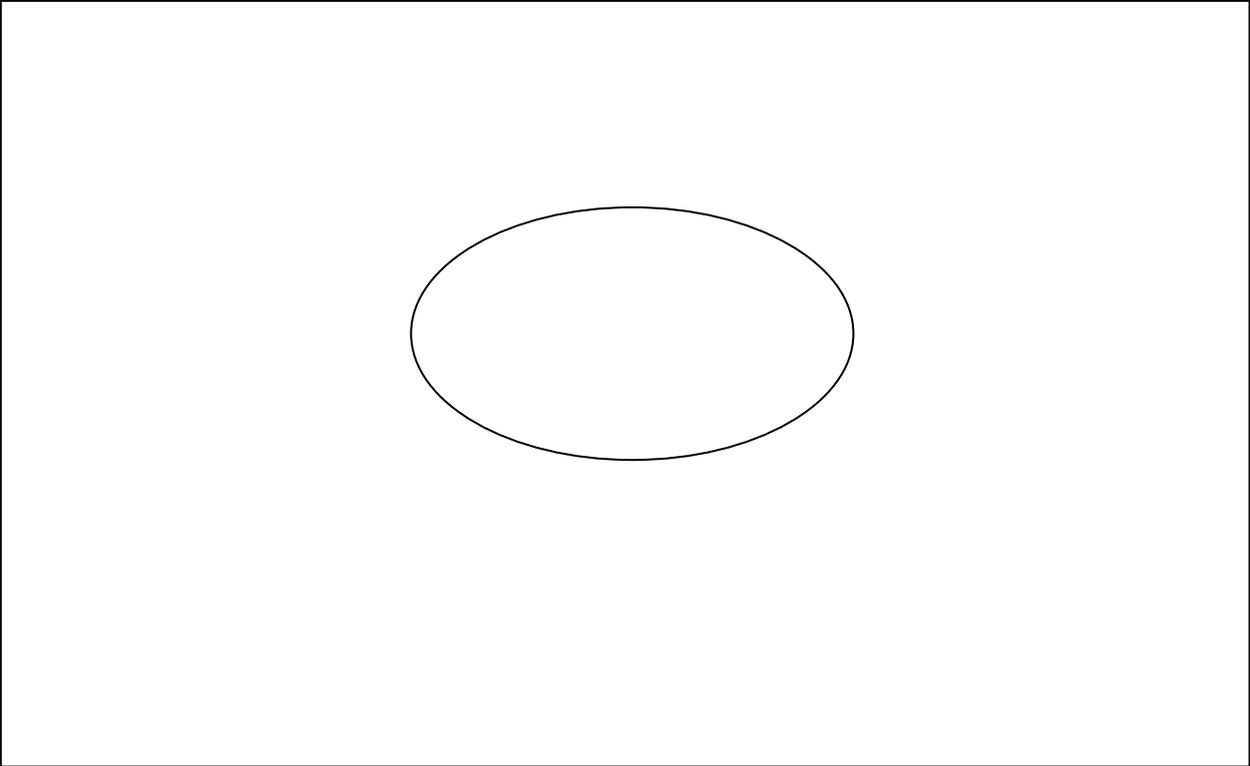| What	Why	Where
Current	Unless you are doing an historical comparison you need up to date information	Journals, newspapers and websites
Scholarly or popular	Popular information may be used to provide real world examples but academic level writing needs academic sources.	TV, Newspapers, web Books, peer reviewed Journals and reviews Use: SciVerse, Cinahl, Medline etc.
Theoretical or practical	A theoretical overview looks at the topic in its wider context. Practical examples and implementation	Books and some academic journals Professional journals, guidelines and books
Evidence based	Clinical trials Qualitative research Systematic reviews	Cochrane TRIP MEDLINE/ CINAHL

2. Plan your search

Think about your topic
- Which are the main parts of the topic?
- What are the main concepts of each part?
- What terms can be used to express these concepts?

Are you interested in a specific idea or broader overview of the concept / part?

Look in:
text book
dictionary
newspaper

Think about the words you can use

Alternative endings

Synonyms

Generic words

Alternative spellings

Different uses of the same word? Think of extra terms to add to search?

American English? British English?

Alternative endings e.g. midwi*

will find midwife, midwives and midwifery

Link your search words together

- AND / +
- NOT / -
- OR

- Truncation
- Wildcards
- Phrases

Narrow search - fewer results

Widen search - more results

Alternative spellings e.g. Wom?n

Search for complete phrases by using "quotation marks"

e.g. "communication skills"

Keep a record of your searches
- What search words were used?
- Did you link these words together?
- Which search tools were searched?
- How many results did you find?
- Details of relevant and useful results.

Other searches:
- Title/author
- Keyword
- Subject heading
- Citation

Get help:
- Librarians
- Online guides

Improving your search

- Which of your search terms were most effective?
  Were any of your search terms ineffective - could these be changed?
- Do you have too few results?
  Have you thought of all the synonyms and alternative spellings for your search terms?
- Do you have too many results?
  Are your search terms generic / should you add another concept to your search?
- Have you searched the most appropriate search tools?
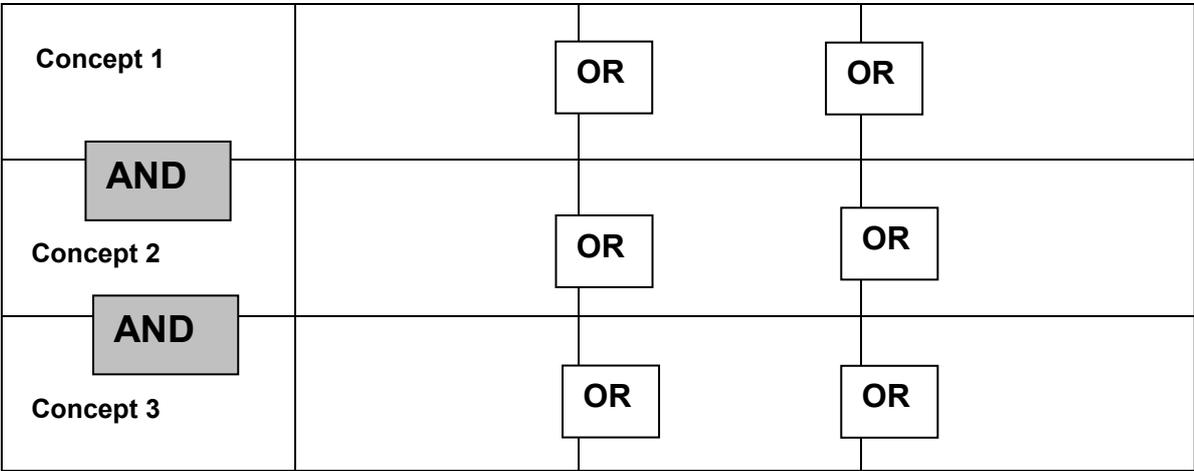 Are you searching for the right type of information?

My Research question…

1. Mind-Map – Put down topic areas, broader terms, narrower terms, alternative expressions, different spellings & types of information.

3. Identify any useful truncation or phrases.

4. Identify any MeSH headings

5. Combine your keywords effectively to construct a search.

Concept 1		OR		OR
AND				
Concept 2		OR		OR
AND				
Concept 3		OR		OR

6. Don't forget to record your search history

3. Identify appropriate resources and search tools

Databases and journal collections

Quest
Searches most of the University's journals collections in one go. Really good for a wide search but it does have fewer limiting options for specific searches. It defaults to Full-text only – you will need to untick the box to search bibliographic records as well.

Academic Search Complete
A Full-text multi disciplinary database of journal articles.

CINAHL
An Index of Nursing and Allied health articles, some full text.

MEDLINE
Based on pubmed this is one of the largest bibliographic indexes for health.

 ScienceDirect
A full-text database covering the sciences, including the health sciences.

Systematic reviews

Cochrane.
Cochrane provides **Systematic Reviews** of clinical based evidence on the effectiveness of specific INTERVENTIONS**. Your results will be a mixture of **Reviews** and **Clinical Trials.**
It will depend on your topic as to whether there will be a relevant review

Current awareness

JournalTocs
Current awareness service

ZETOC
The British Library current awareness service. Set up an alert to run your searches or receive the contents pages of your favourite journals.

Subject gateways

NHS Evidence
This NHS library site has lots of useful information with a focus on Evidence based information. It includes guidelines and Specialist libraries: www.evidence.nhs.uk/

Social care online
A subject gateway for social care pulling together current news journal articles (not full text) reports e.g. Rowntree and much more
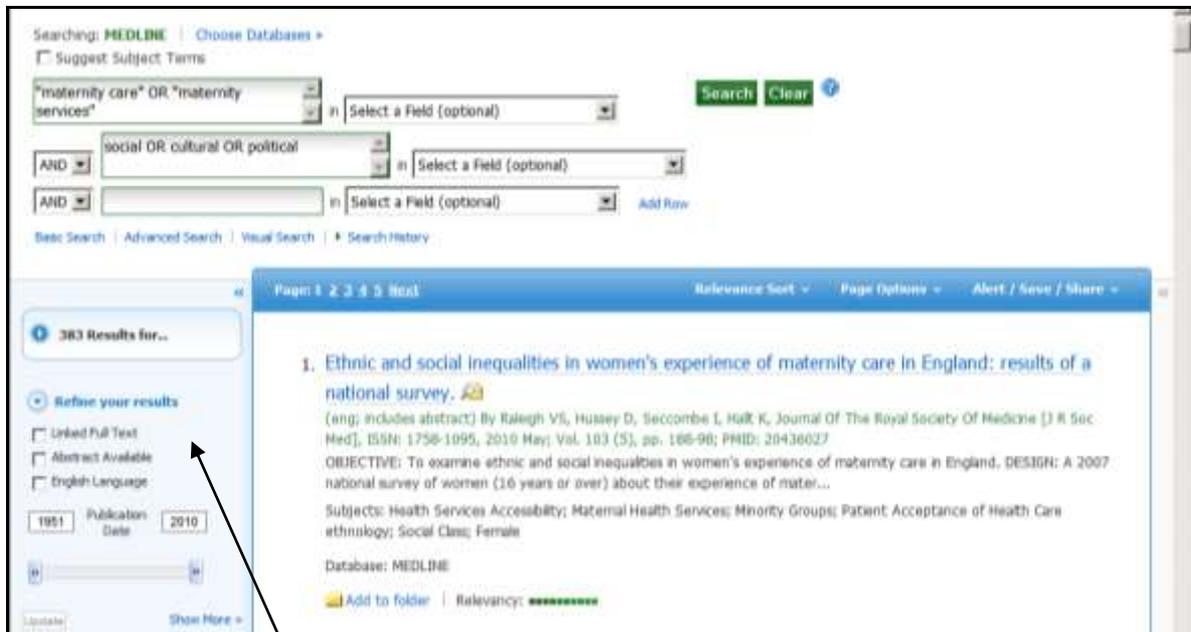
See *Resources for Researchers* page on the LiSS website for further suggestions.
http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/StudentLife/Learning/Resources/Subjects/Research/Home.aspx

4. Carry out the search

The following is an example in **MEDLINE (Ebscohost)** but the same principles apply in most databases.

Keyword search
- Use the advanced search options to set up your keyword search.

- Use the refine search options to limit the results by subject or date etc.

In MEDLINE you will have to access the Full text to see the references. But in CINAHL and Academic Search Complete the results will also provide valuable links to similar resources. (see below)

The reference list for this article

Other articles that have cited this one.

This is an example of a keyword search but there is another way to search and that is using the subject headings. Each database will have its own list of subject headings and every article will be placed under one or more of these subject headings. To perform a comprehensive search of a database you should combine a **keyword search** (*Natural language*) with a **Subject heading search** (*Controlled language*) to make sure you have found everything.

Subject search

The subject headings in Medline are called MeSH (**Me**dical **S**ubject **H**eadings) and these are standardised across many medical and health resources.

- In CINAHL or MEDLINE tick the **Suggest subject terms**

- This will then try and match your term to the most relevant term in the thesaurus.

Tick to see the sub-headings

Click on a heading to see the subject tree

Tick Major concept to limit your search to results with that topic as the major heading only.

Select your heading and Search (Note the help tutorials!)

- Use the **Search History** tab to combine searches, save searches and set up Alerts. (You will need to register for a MyEbscohost account to save searches)
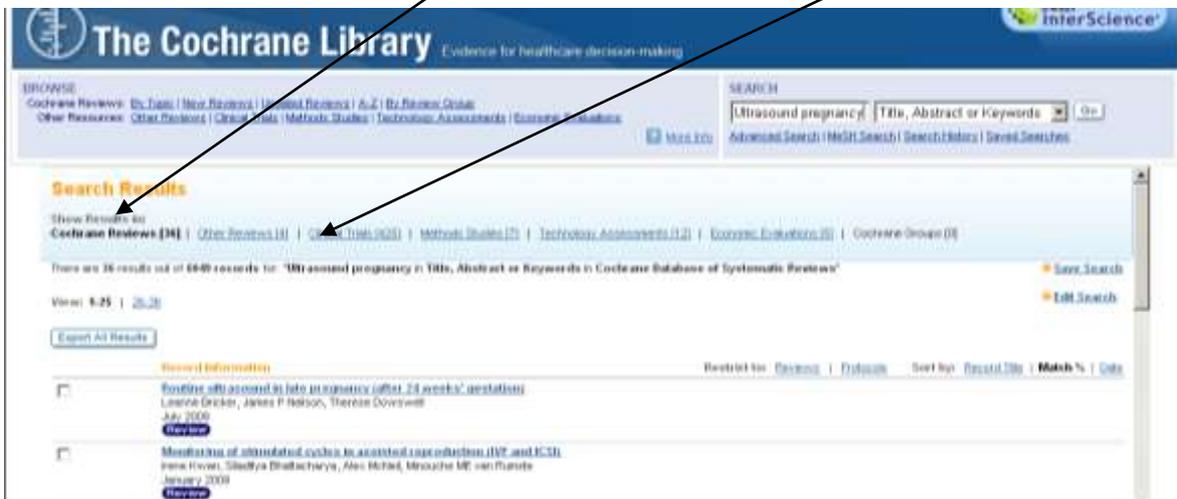
Searching Cochrane

Cochrane provides **Systematic Reviews** of clinical based evidence on the effectiveness of specific INTERVENTIONS**.**
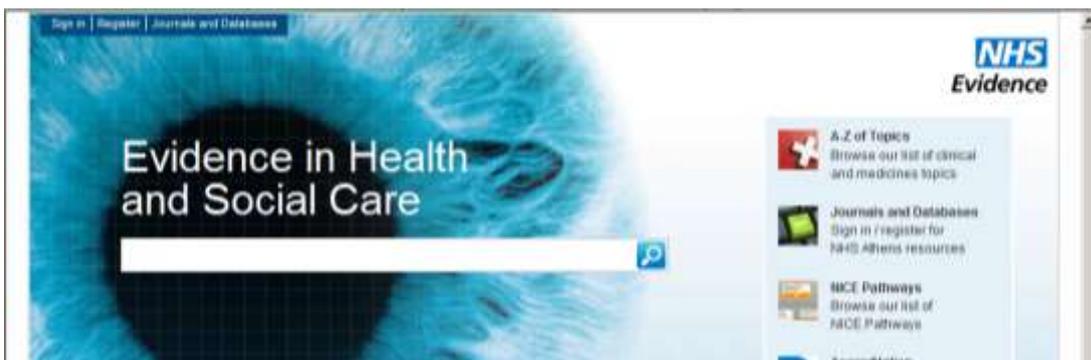
Your results will be a mixture of **Reviews** (of clinical trials) and **Clinical Trials**

- Open the review and scroll down the right hand pane to see the abstract, including **authors conclusions**, and a **plain language summary**.

NHS Evidence - http://www.evidence.nhs.uk

The new NHS library site focuses on evidence based information and gives you access to guidelines, research and specialist libraries.

The topic collections at as a subject gateway for that particular condition.

5. Evaluate

    a. Define your criteria for inclusion or exclusion
- Date
- Country
- Relevance to topic
- Who, What, Where, Why, When

    b. Annotate as you go along

- Citation information
- Type of information
- Author and audience
- Summary
- Critical comment
- Relevance

    c. Critical appraisal
Use one of the tools available to critique the information fully.
See the CASP web site http://www.casp-uk.net/

6. Decide on a way to save your results & strategy
- Set up a folder on a pen drive or on your H drive to save to.
- Use the Folder within Quest to save articles and searches
- Use Refworks to collect all your results in one place

Finding the full text of an article.

If you are searching a collection and only get the reference to an article you may be able to find the full text of the article in another collection.

1. You will need to check the **Journals A to Z** list (from the Quick Links menu) to see if you have access to the article either in print or electronic form.

2. Try a quick search on Google Scholar scholar.google.com to check whether the article is freely available on the web.

3. If you are employed by or are on placement in the NHS, check whether you have access from your hospital Education Centre or the National Library for Health.

4. If all else fails you can request a photocopy on interlibrary loan. You will need to fill in all the details on a ILL request form from the issue desk. There is a charge of £3 per request which must be paid in advance.

Further Help

- Use the **Help** or **Search Tips** provided by the databases themselves.
- Check whether our online tutorials in the skills@cumbria tab on Blackboard can help?
- Book an appointment with a Learning Advisor, ask in the library or email libraryinfoskilss@cumbria.ac.uk