

## Search Terms: Keyword vs. Subject & Your New BFF, the Thesaurus



As you already know from the searches you conducted last semester, a search for information on a catalog or database is only as good as the search terms you use to find what you want.

But what search terms should you use? Ah, that's the question! ☺

Searching can be much like mind-reading: You must correctly guess what term or terms the catalog or database uses for the subject you're looking for. For example, if you're searching for information about "cats," but the catalog uses the term "feline," you'll be out of luck until you type in "feline." That's just the way it goes...But that's only half of the story!

Remember, too, that the results you'll get will also depend on if you search by "subject" or "keyword." *More* fun! Remind me, what's a...

"subject" search? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

"keyword" search? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Take a gander at your Research Questions worksheet. List each of your 5 subtopics from your Research Questions worksheet below. Then, for each subtopic, brainstorm a synonym (another possible search term!) for your subtopic. Next, pick out the keyword for each of your 3 detailed questions and synonyms for each. Your goal is to come up with other terms that will help get you to the information you need.

Here is an example. ☺

**Main Topic:** University of Arizona

**Subtopic #1:** Off campus Life

**Detailed Questions:** 1) What part-time jobs are available?

2) What are the top restaurants in the area?

3) What cultural events are popular?

**Subtopic #1:** Off campus **Synonym for Subtopic:** extracurricular

**Detailed Question #1 Keyword:** jobs **Synonym:** employment, work/study programs

**Detailed Question #2 Keyword:** restaurants **Synonym:** cuisine, food

**Detailed Question #3 Keyword:** culture **Synonym:** theater, movies, museums, festivals, concerts

## Your Turn...

Now take your Research Questions worksheet, and work your keyword/synonym magic! ☺

Main Research Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtopic #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym for Subtopic: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #1 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #2 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #3 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtopic #2: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym for Subtopic: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #1 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #2 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #3 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtopic #3: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym for Subtopic: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #1 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #2 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #3 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtopic #4: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym for Subtopic: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #1 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #2 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #3 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtopic #5: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym for Subtopic: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #1 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #2 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Question #3 Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Synonym: \_\_\_\_\_