Search Strategies

Combining words and phrases rather than expressing ideas in complete sentences
Keywords not Sentences

- Databases and search engines do not understand natural language
- Search for individual concepts or keywords instead
- Some words will be implied
  - Effects
  - Research
  - Impact
  - Pros and cons
  - Treatment
  - Relationship
Deconstruct a Search Prompt

• Look at the sentence as a whole to find the context and relationship of concepts

• Pick out the unique/meaningful words

• Brainstorm additional words, either synonyms or related topics

• Use multiple combinations of related terms to ensure you find the most relevant research

• Look at “controlled vocabulary”
  • Subjects, descriptors, topics
Controlled vocabulary

- Start broad
- Use the suggestions given to you by the catalog or database
- The more focused of a database you use, the more helpful the controlled vocabulary will become
Reference Materials

- Reference materials can be extremely helpful in defining your research topic, identifying related topics, and suggesting further sources of information.
- Can help you figure out the scope of your topic; if there is an entire encyclopedia on your topic, it is too broad a topic for a 5 page paper.
- Identify relevant keywords and related terms.
- http://www.unf.edu/library/databases/
Prescription drug abuse is on the rise among teenagers. Explain some of the factors that may be causing this phenomena.
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What are the main concepts?

- Prescription drugs?
- Abuse?
- Rise?
- Teenagers?
- Explain?
- Factors?
- Cause?
- Phenomena?
What are the main concepts?

- **Teens**
  - Teenager
  - Adolescent
  - Youth
  - High school students
  - College students

- **Prescription drug abuse**
  - Controlled substances
  - Addiction
  - Pain killers
  - Vicodin
  - OxyContin
  - Substance Abuse
  - Medication
  - Pharmacy
  - Problem
Concept map from Credo Reference
Putting it together

- Teens and controlled substances
- High school students and OxyContin
- Adolescents and painkiller addiction
- College students and medication