Planning Your Keyword Search

1. Express in the form of a question or sentence what it is you want to know or what your thesis statement is:  

______________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Identify the **major concepts** in your topic that will become the keywords in your search statement:

   Concept/Keyword 1  Concept/Keyword 2  Concept/Keyword 3
   ___________________ and ___________________ and ___________________

3. Identify the synonyms, antonyms, and alternative words and spellings of each of the keywords in #3 above:

   
   Keyword 1  AND  Keyword 2  AND  Keyword 3
   or ___________________ or ___________________ or ___________________
   or ___________________ or ___________________ or ___________________
   or ___________________ or ___________________ or ___________________

4. **Truncate** words at their roots or stems in order to pick them up with all of their various endings at the same time. Use “**quotation marks**” to indicate phrases: words that need to appear together in a particular order. Try to think “outside the box” in order to come up with as many search terms as possible! Remember to **broaden** your search if necessary.

5. **Combine your terms** into a search string:

   Example:  (“mass media” OR televis* OR tv) AND violen* AND aggress*