



A Quick Guide to Developing Keywords

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Definition:

A keyword is a word or short phrase that you can use to search for sources on a topic. We use keywords because they get more specific results than typing in a longer phrase or an entire research topic.

Strategy:

Try thinking of broader and narrower terms for your topic. Then search using those terms.

Tip:

Make note of terminology used in your subject area. It might be helpful to use discipline-specific jargon as keywords.

Example

Topic: “gender wage gap”

Broader terms:

- “Occupational segregation”
- “Pay equity”
- Feminism
- “Gender norms”
- Discrimination

Narrower terms:

- Age
- Experience
- “Parental leave”
- Policy
- Education
- “Finance industry”

- “Equal Pay Act”
- U.S.
- Statistics

Practice:

Using the information above as a guide, follow the instructions below to practice creating your own keywords!

1. Get out a blank sheet of paper, or open a blank word document.
2. Write your research topic in the middle of the page.
 - a. Example: “gender wage gap”
3. Think of synonyms or similar topics for your research topic. Write those out to the side next to your topic.
 - a. Example: “gender pay gap”
4. Think of topics, words, or subjects that are broader than your topic. In other words, your topic could fit under the larger umbrella of these topics.
 - a. Example: feminism, “pay equity,” discrimination
5. Think of topics, words, or subjects that are narrower than your topic. In other words, these words could be subtopics and fit under the larger umbrella of your topic.
 - a. Example: “Equal Pay Act,” “parental leave,” policy