



# Searching as Exploration

INFORMATION ABOUT RESOURCES

# Introduction

The “Searching as Exploration” collection helps students learn how to search effectively, explore library resources, and reflect on their experiences. These basic resources are aimed at students who have little or no research experience. However, they can be easily adapted for students with more experience.

These resources are good supplements to library sessions; they are also good options for pre- or post-session activities. This collection also has great self-paced options for students to practice, develop, and reflect on their research skills.

This document provides additional context for this learning collection. For each resource, you’ll find a link, a learning goal, a description, and teaching ideas. Check for the most updated resources on the Libraries’ Teaching and Learning page (<https://lib.utk.edu/instruct/searching>).

## Questions?

If you have questions about the resources or this collection, contact one of these librarians in Teaching and Learning Programs:

- Grace Therrell, *Assistant Professor and Online Learning Librarian*, [gtherrell@utk.edu](mailto:gtherrell@utk.edu)
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## Attribution



Grace Therrell, UT Libraries

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# List of resources

Click on the resource name below to jump to that section, or just scroll through to see what options are available. Check for the most updated resources on the UT Libraries' website at <https://lib.utk.edu/instruct/searching>.

- A Quick Guide To Developing Keywords
- Collaborative Keywords
- Exploring Library Databases
- Finding Books & More
- Finding Articles
- Mind Map
- General Search Tips and Strategies

# Resource overviews

## *A Quick Guide To Developing Keywords*

**Format:**

Information sheet and practice – PDF

Accessible description – PDF

**Links to Resources:**

- Sheet & practice: <https://tiny.utk.edu/keywordsheet>
- Accessible description: [https://tiny.utk.edu/keywordsheet\\_ad](https://tiny.utk.edu/keywordsheet_ad)

**Learning Goal:**

This guide and practice activity helps students define what a keyword is and identify strategies for developing keywords from research topics. It also gives students an opportunity to practice these skills in the context of an assignment.

**Description:**

“A Quick Guide To Developing Keywords” provides a brief introduction and overview of keywords. The first slide is a visual information sheet with a definition of keywords, a strategy for creating them, and a search tip. The second slide is a guided practice for developing keywords. An accessible PDF description of the slides is also available.

Students can spend as much time as they need reviewing and practicing their skills. The practice activity takes approximately 10 minutes.

**Teaching:**

Post these slides as a PDF in a module or in your course resources on Canvas. Ask students to try the guided practice and share their ideas and experiences with one another, either in a synchronous discussion or an asynchronous discussion board. If students are in the classroom, they can view the PDF online and practice developing their own keywords. You can then ask students to share their ideas and experiences with one another. In lieu of a discussion, students can individually reflect on their experience developing keywords.

Students can use the keywords they develop to begin searching for resources in library databases. Point them to the Libraries’ One Search resource or the [Articles and Databases page](#) for additional and subject-specific resources.

## *Collaborative Keywords*

**Format:**

Activity – PDF

**Link to Resource:**

<https://tiny.utk.edu/keywordactivity>

**Learning Goal:**

This activity helps students practice creating keywords related to a specific topic, both their own and someone else's. Students will also reflect on the keyword development process, working with their classmates, and where they are in their research.

**Description:**

The “Collaborative Keywords” activity helps students work with each other to develop keywords based on a topic. The activity PDF includes the learning goal, time, materials, and instructions. There is also an example worksheet that you can use or adapt.

The activity takes approximately 15 minutes.

**Teaching:**

Instead of having students physically pass papers to each other, they can have their own digital versions of the worksheet in a Google Doc. Have students share documents with each other and add ideas with different color text. You can also do this activity without the worksheet with a collaborative tool like Padlet or on a discussion board in Canvas.

Students can post their topics and keywords, and their classmates can add their own ideas beneath.

## *Exploring Library Databases*

**Format:**

Activity – PDF

**Link to Resource:**

<https://tiny.utk.edu/databaseactivity>

**Learning Goal:**

This activity allows students to explore databases together and practice using different database features. Students will also reflect on how databases are useful and why they might need to use a specific database for their research.

**Description:**

The “Exploring Library Databases” activity helps students practice searching Ithe Libraries’ databases by letting them explore using some guiding questions. The activity PDF includes the learning goal, time, materials, and instructions. There are also a couple of examples with screenshots to show what this activity might look like in practice.

The activity takes approximately 15 to 25 minutes.

**Teaching:**

This activity can be for online or in-person classes. For online courses, divide the students into groups and give them a database to explore either synchronously in a Zoom breakout room or asynchronously. Have students document their answers in a Google Doc, on a discussion board, or through a collaborative tool like Padlet.

For in-person classes, students can work collaboratively online to explore their group’s database and record their observations. You can ask students to share their findings with one another after they have time to search.

## *Finding Books & More*

**Format:**

Interactive tutorial

**Link to Resource:**

<https://tiny.utk.edu/findbooks>

**Learning Goal:**

This interactive tutorial teaches students how to use One Search to locate books and other materials from UT Libraries. Students learn how to use filters to refine search results; limit searches to physical items; view maps for book locations at Hodges Library; and access online resources like articles and ebooks.

**Description:**

The “Finding Books & More” tutorial takes students through the process of finding books and other resources through One Search and the UT Libraries’ website. The tutorial is formatted with directions and prompts on the left side of the screen, and an interactive version of the website on the right side of the screen. Students can follow the prompts and practice their skills in real-time. There is also a quiz at the end. The tutorial works best on a desktop or laptop.

Students can complete the tutorial in 5 to 10 minutes.

**Teaching:**

Ask students to complete this tutorial before they begin searching for sources or as a refresher of how to use One Search. You can also ask students to complete this tutorial as prework before a library instruction session or workshop. After they complete the tutorial, ask students to reflect on what they learned and what they still have questions about.

Check out the Libraries’ other tutorials (<https://libguides.utk.edu/tutorials>) to see if there’s a database tutorial that could be helpful for your students.

## *Finding Articles*

**Format:**

Interactive tutorial

**Link to Resource:**

<https://tiny.utk.edu/findarticles>

**Learning Goal:**

This interactive tutorial teaches students how to use the Academic Search Complete database to locate articles. Students learn how to sort results, use filters to refine their search, and find the full text for articles.

**Description:**

The “Finding Articles” tutorial gives a basic introduction to finding articles through databases. The tutorial is formatted with directions and prompts on the left side of the screen, and an interactive version of the website on the right side of the screen. Students can follow the prompts and practice their skills in real-time. There is also a quiz at the end. The tutorial works best on a desktop or laptop.

Students can complete the tutorial in 5 to 10 minutes.

**Teaching:**

Ask students to complete this tutorial before they begin searching for sources or as a refresher of how to use library databases. You can also ask students to complete this tutorial as prework before a library instruction session or workshop. After they complete the tutorial, ask students to reflect on what they learned and what they still have questions about.

Check out the Libraries’ other tutorials (<https://libguides.utk.edu/tutorials>) to see if there’s a database tutorial that could be helpful for your students.



## *Mind Map*

**Format:**

Video

**Link to Resource:**

<https://tiny.utk.edu/mind-map>

**Learning Goal:**

This short video teaches students how to use mind mapping to generate keywords to search for their topic.

**Description:**

The “Mind Map” video shows the process of a student creating a mind map using an example topic. The video is hosted on the Libraries’ YouTube channel.

The video is 1 minute and 15 seconds long.

**Teaching:**

Ask students to watch the video and create their own mind maps for their research topics. Students can share examples of their mind maps with one another via screen-sharing or through pictures online. This exercise would be best as students are developing their research topics and beginning to think about searching for information.

## *General Search Tips and Strategies*

**Format:**

Research guide

**Link to Resource:**

<https://tiny.utk.edu/searchtips>

**Learning Goal:**

In this guide, students learn tips, tricks, and strategies for searching more effectively. Students can use this guide regardless of where they're searching (e.g. Google, One Search, a database).

**Description:**

The "General Search Tips and Strategies" research guide is divided into three different sections. The first section covers keyboard shortcuts. The second section covers search tips such as using Boolean operators, phrase searching, and truncation. The third section covers strategies such as keyword searching, using filters, and narrowing search results.

Students can spend as much time as they need reviewing and practicing the skills in the research guide.

**Teaching:**

This resource is a great supplement for students who learn well independently, who need more support, or who want to practice new skills.

You can also use this as a teaching resource in a class period dedicated to research. If students are using a specific database, have students pick one strategy or tip to practice in that database. Students could work individually or in groups and share their thoughts and experiences with one another online in a discussion board or together in an in-person class.