

## *How do you get started with research?*

**Filling out the following guide prior to beginning library research may help.**

Not all blanks may be useful for your topic or idea. You may think of better approaches on your own. Also try using the library guide *Selecting a Research Topic* to help you get started. Your instructor may give you an example or two to use, and feel free to ask a reference librarian for assistance.

- What do you want to know?...find out?...know more about?  
(complete the following sentence describing your interest)

I want to know about: \_\_\_\_\_

- Assign one word or a short phrase to the main topic of the above sentence.  
This may help you to determine the best database to use when you search.

\_\_\_\_\_

- Think of synonyms for this word/phrase.

\_\_\_\_\_

- What else do you want to know about your topic? (Think of supporting concepts)  
Assign a synonym to each of these concepts.

Concept \_\_\_\_\_ synonym(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Concept \_\_\_\_\_ synonym(s) \_\_\_\_\_

- Should you narrow your topic further by time period, geographical location, persons or groups affected or other factors such as the best source of information (for example: scholarly articles, newspapers, books, journals?)

Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Place \_\_\_\_\_  
Persons \_\_\_\_\_  
Other factors affecting this topic: \_\_\_\_\_

- Re-write a research question using a combination of the terms above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Re-write your research question into language for your database search instrument  
Basic Formula = (main topic *OR* synonym) AND (supporting concept) AND (supporting concept)  
NOT (excluded concept)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- **Try it out!** Open the ACADEMIC SEARCH ELITE database (library A – Z index) and fill in the search boxes with your rewritten research question.

- Adjust your research question as needed using various combinations of terms from this exercise and trying it in various library databases to see which produces the best results. Good luck!

