How to plan your information search
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You received an assignment:

There are many factors that influence the attitude of children towards the church. Distinguish these factors, and formulate a hypothesis of how to positively influence the relationship between the church and children.

What must you do to find information?

Use the following steps to plan and search (and find!) information.
Search strategy

(Searching information on a specific subject)

1. Summarize your topic
2. Select your keywords
3. Identify synonyms and alternative keywords
4. Link keywords and phrases
5. Evaluate results

These steps will be dealt with in the following screens.
Search strategy – Step 1

1. Summarize your topic

Identify the core idea.

There are many factors that influence the attitude of children towards the church. Distinguish these factors, and formulate a hypothesis of how to positively influence the relationship between the church and children.

Core idea:
Attitude of children towards the church
Search strategy – Step 2

2. Select your keywords

The attitude of children towards the church

Use children and church when you search for information on a database.
Search strategy – Step 3

3. Identify synonyms and alternative keywords

- children / youth / teenagers / adolescents
- church / congregation

Although not synonyms, it will give you similar useful results.
Search strategy – Step 4

4. Link keywords and phrases

Use Boolean operators

**AND**  Combines two search terms
  e.g. children and church

**OR**  Finds synonyms/similar terms
  e.g. children or youth or teenagers or adolescents

**NOT**  Reduces results through elimination
  e.g. (church* not Churchill); (Africa not “African American”)

(children or youth or teenagers or adolescents) AND (church or congregation) NOT Churchill
Search strategy – Step 4 cont.

**Manipulate your search terms**

- **Truncation with ***
  - Plurals
    - e.g. church* = church / churches
  - Flexions
    - e.g. pray* = pray / prayer / praying / prays / prayed

- **Make provision for different spellings** – search for
  - honour OR honor
  - counselling OR counseling
  - evangelisation OR evangelization
Search strategy – Step 4 cont.

**TIP:**

Search a **phrase between double inverted commas** to only find words adjacent to each other:

“luke acts”  "new testament"  “missio dei”

To find a journal article, type the title between double inverted commas:

“Ordinary theology as narratives”
Search strategy – Step 4 final

Final search string:

(child* or youth or teen* or adolescen*)

AND

(church* or congregation*)

NOT

churchill*
Search strategy – Step 5

5. Evaluate results

Too many results
- Add additional keywords.
- Limit results by document type, date or subject.
- Conduct search in particular fields (e.g. title or abstract).

Too few results
- Check spelling.
- Remove some of the keywords.
- Try alternate keywords and phrases.
- Try alternate databases.
Tips for searches

• Use more than one search term, more than one database.

• Look out for Help options Tips Links (e.g. other works by the same author, other authors on this subject)

• Do an Advanced search.