Research Hacks

**Brainstorm** your topic to identify search terms! Think about synonyms (other words that have the same meaning), related terms, and opposites!

Topic example: **Strategies for College Success**.

- When searching for information on your topic, you can combine these alternative words to find other relevant resources. For example, *college success and strategies* would result in different resources than *college success and behaviors*. Changing the order of search terms can also impact the results.

**Search tools** can expand or narrow your search results. Use these in Google or Library databases:

- **Wildcard searching / Truncation**: accomplish* would search for accomplish, accomplished, accomplishes, accomplishing, or accomplishments. (Expands results!)

- **Phrase searching**: Using quotation marks " " around two or more words limits your search results to the words typed in the order typed. For example: “good grades” would search for good next to grades. (Narrows results!)

- **Boolean searching**: You can use AND, OR, and NOT to broaden or narrow your search results. Following are some examples: study habits **AND** success **university OR college** college **NOT** high school

  You can also combine Boolean searches: (strategies **OR** behaviors) **AND** college success

When you use parentheses ( ), the computer will search for the words in the parenthesis first, and then combine the results with the other words in your search string. This is the same as the *Order of Operations* in math! Capitalize AND, OR, and NOT so the computer knows that these are not just other words you are searching for!

If you would like to learn more about using these “search tools” in Google, search for *Google cheat sheet!*

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