

Steps to Create a Search String

For the research the topic: "What is the impact of coffee on stress?"

1. Create your initial search string by identifying the key components or ideas of the statement/question and using **AND** between them. The results will contain all of your keywords.

AND narrows your search to materials that contain all search terms; i.e., **stress AND coffee** retrieves only materials containing both terms.

stress AND coffee would retrieve the following books:



Initial search string: stress and coffee

2. Adding another term further *narrows* the search.

Revised and more focused search string: stress AND coffee AND "United States"
(Note: Only materials that contain all three terms will be retrieved.)

*** Put phrases of more than one word such as "**United States**" within quotes. This tells the system to search for the phrase as a unit and not as the individual words.***

3. When alternative terms exist for your key concepts, use **OR** between the terms and enclose the group within **PARENTHESES**.

OR broadens the search by retrieving materials that contain either or both search terms, i.e., **(stress OR anxiety)** retrieves materials containing either or both terms.

(stress OR anxiety) would retrieve the following books:

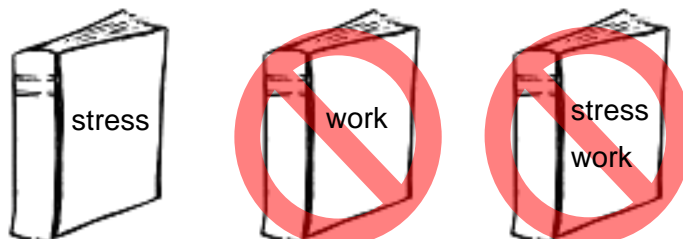


Revised search string using the alternative terms: (stress OR anxiety) AND coffee AND "United States"

4. Use **NOT** before any idea or term you do not want included in your results.

NOT limits the search by excluding all terms following it and is placed at the end of a search string, i.e., **stress NOT work** retrieves materials containing the term "stress" but not "work".

stress NOT work would retrieve the following books:



Note: Use **NOT** sparingly since it may eliminate materials that could be of use.

Revised search string including NOT operator:

(stress OR anxiety) AND coffee AND "United States" NOT work