Search Strategies: Tips to Improve Searching

~ I searched for my topic but did not find anything...
~ There isn’t anything about my topic in the databases...

WRONG!!

Remember that One Search and library databases will only look for exact matches to the string of letters that you typed. Think outside of the box of your topic & try other search strategies for better results.

SEARCH FOR KEYWORDS
Topic Sentence:
What is the connection between smoking and depression among teens?
Keywords:
smoking and depression and teens

THINK OF SYNONYMS
Try to think of different words that describe your topic.
smoking = cigarettes, nicotine
depression = depressed, mental health
teens = teenagers, adolescents, youth, young adults

USE THE WORD AND
When you enter a long phrase, some databases interpret this as if were asking that all the words must appear in that exact order. Break up your phrases using the word ‘AND’

smoking and depression and teens
fast food and obesity

“PHRASE SEARCHING”
Putting “quotes” around your search words tells the database that you are looking for that exact phrase.
“fast food” “Barack Obama” “Global Warming”

BROAD & NARROW TERMS
Sometimes you may choose a topic that little has been written about or appears in a chapter of a book rather than in the main title. Try to think of a broader term that encompasses your topic. The more general the search, the more likely you are to retrieve additional records.

Broad = Standardized Testing
Narrow = AIMS Test

Broad = fast food
Narrow = McDonald’s

TRUNCATION
Search for all alternate endings of a word. Type the root of the word and then an asterisk*
test
tests
testing
test*
testings

school
schools
schooling
school*