

Library Basics and Beyond

Tips and tricks for using the PSU Library resources

- Learn the *Top Five Literature Searching Tips!*
- Discover appropriate databases to search
- Troubleshoot finding the full text of that elusive article
- Explore various library services available to Extension



Top Five Literature SEARCH TIPS



#1 Choose the right Database!

No sense searching for genetics information in an art database!

- Use the a Subject Guide to find the top databases
- ASK me for a research consultation!

Agricultural and Extension Education

Resources to support Penn State students and faculty working in the agricultural and extension education field

[Home - Articles and Databases](#)

[Find Books](#)

[Associations and Government Programs](#)

[Citing Styles](#)

Graduate Students

- [Graduate Student Research Guide](#)
Resources and tips especially for Graduate Students!

Top Picks

- [CAB Abstracts \(agriculture, nutrition and global health\)](#)
includes agricultural education and extension, as well all other agricultural subjects.
[more...](#)
- [ERIC \(ProQuest\)](#)
education literature, both journal articles and government documents and reports
[more...](#)
- [ProQuest Education Journals](#)
all aspects of education
[more...](#)
- [PsycINFO \(via ProQuest\)](#)
best for subjects with a psychological aspect.
[more...](#)

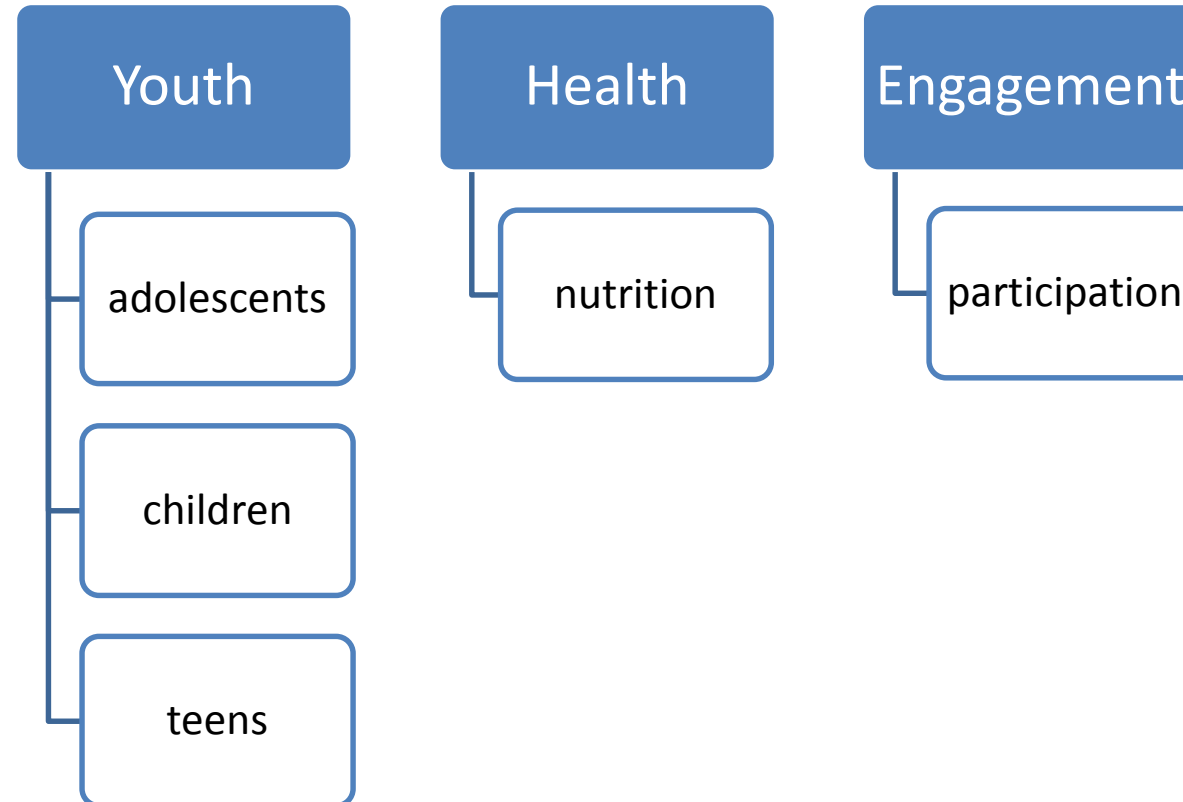
#2 Choose the RIGHT keywords!

Retrieving the best articles relies on using the right terms

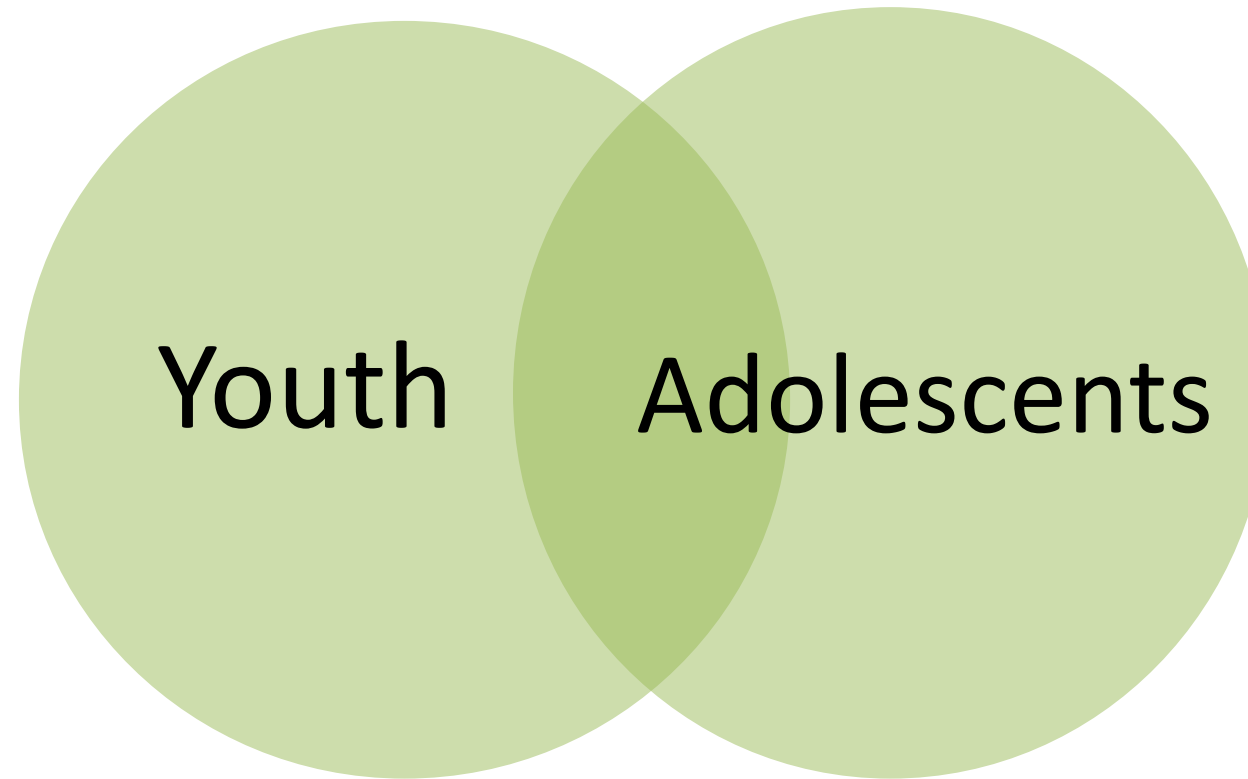
- Identify the **main concepts** of your topic
- Brainstorm **synonyms and alternative phrasings** for each concept
- Use the database's **thesaurus** to find more relevant terms

#2 Develop keywords/concepts

What factors affect youth engagement in their personal health?

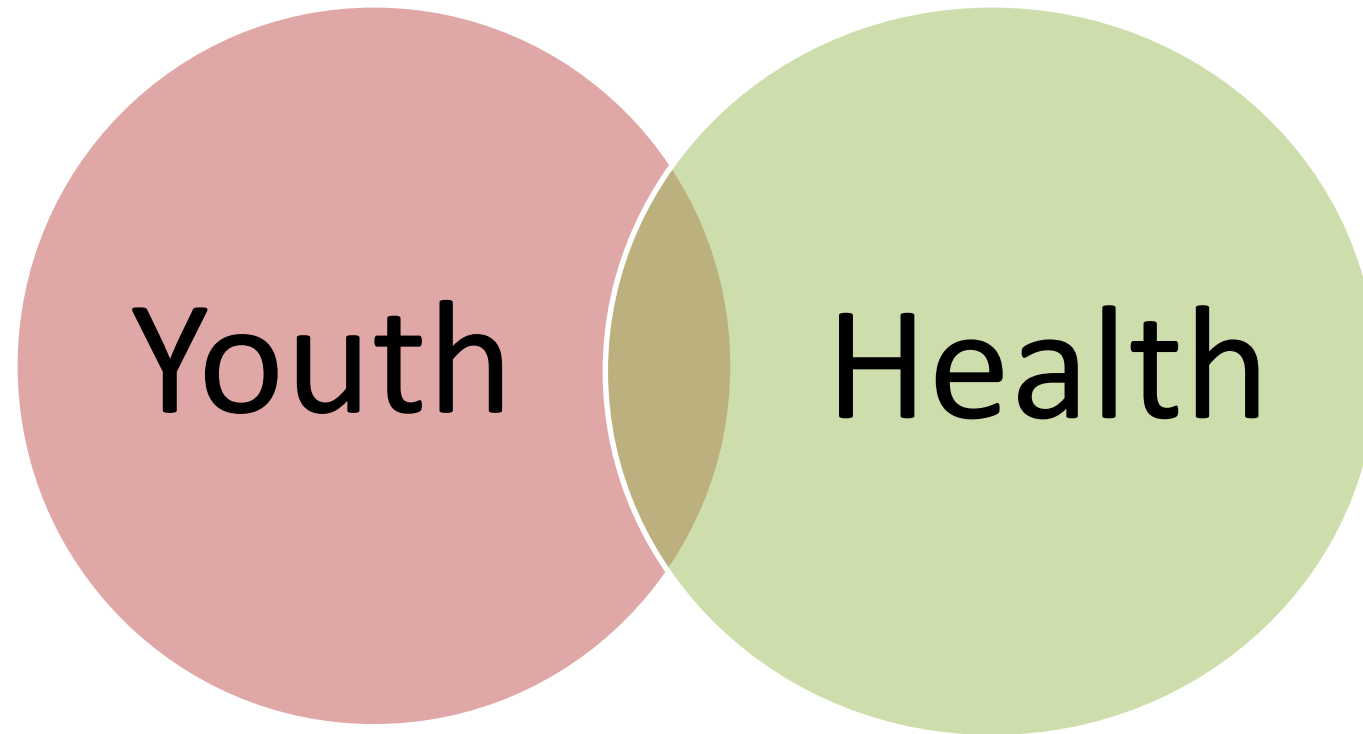


#3 Combining keywords/concepts



“OR” broadens your search
[synonyms or similar concepts]

#3 Combining keywords/concepts

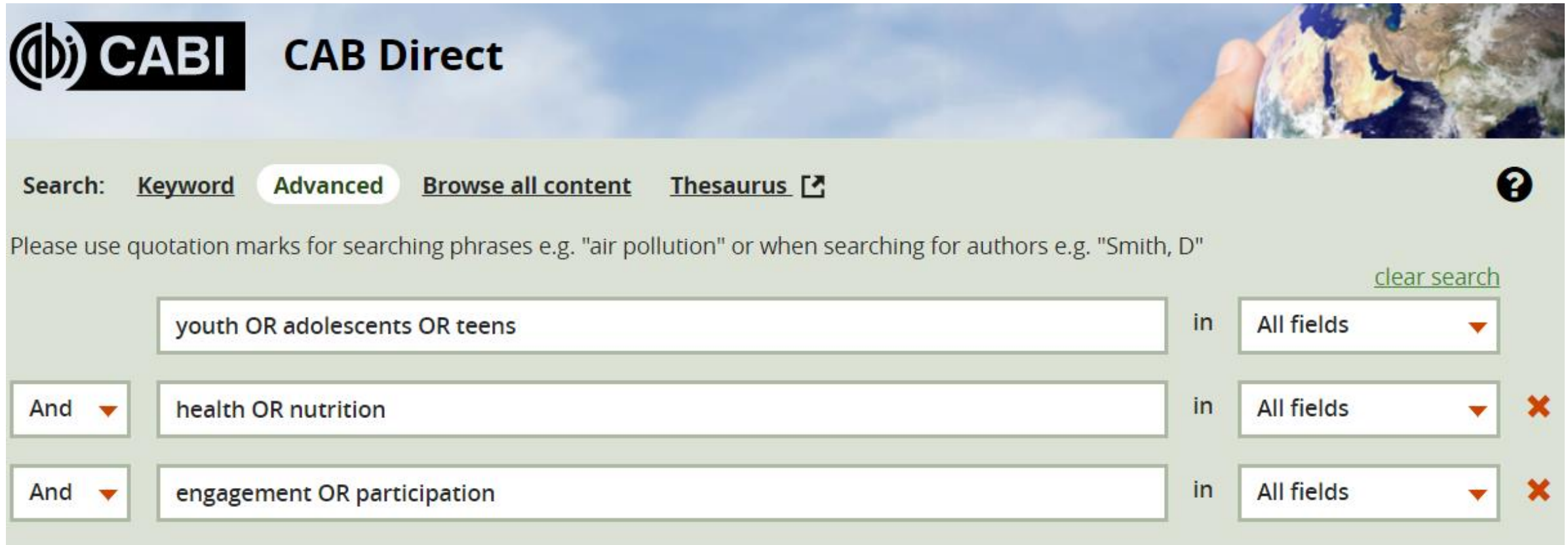


“AND” narrows your search
[two distinct concepts]



#3 Combine Terms Properly

Librarians call this “Boolean searching”

CAB Example



CABI CAB Direct

Search: [Keyword](#) **Advanced** [Browse all content](#) [Thesaurus](#)  

Please use quotation marks for searching phrases e.g. "air pollution" or when searching for authors e.g. "Smith, D"

[clear search](#)

	youth OR adolescents OR teens	in	All fields ▼	
And ▼	health OR nutrition	in	All fields ▼	✘
And ▼	engagement OR participation	in	All fields ▼	✘

#4 Learn to use advanced search features

- Truncation
 - Retrieve items with various word endings and spellings
 - For example: child* will find child, children, or childish
 - Usually the symbol is an asterisk (*), but sometimes it is a question mark (?) or a dollar sign (\$)
- Phrase Searching
 - For most databases, use quotation marks around a phrase to force the words to be in that order.
 - For example: “invasive species” instead of: invasive species
- Limiting
 - Many databases have advanced limiting features relevant to the subject
 - Check for limiting by year, publication type, gender, or age groups.

#5 Follow the citations!

Find more studies by using citation searching

Backwards searching

Look through the reference lists of articles you have found – these references are likely to be relevant for you as well

Forwards searching

Find articles that cite older articles. This allows you to move forward from a seminal work and discover what new research is based on that earlier research. Suggested databases:

- Web of Science
- Google Scholar

One more TIP!!

Evaluate and modify your search as necessary.

Are there other relevant keywords that are showing up in your results? Go back and use those words in your search!

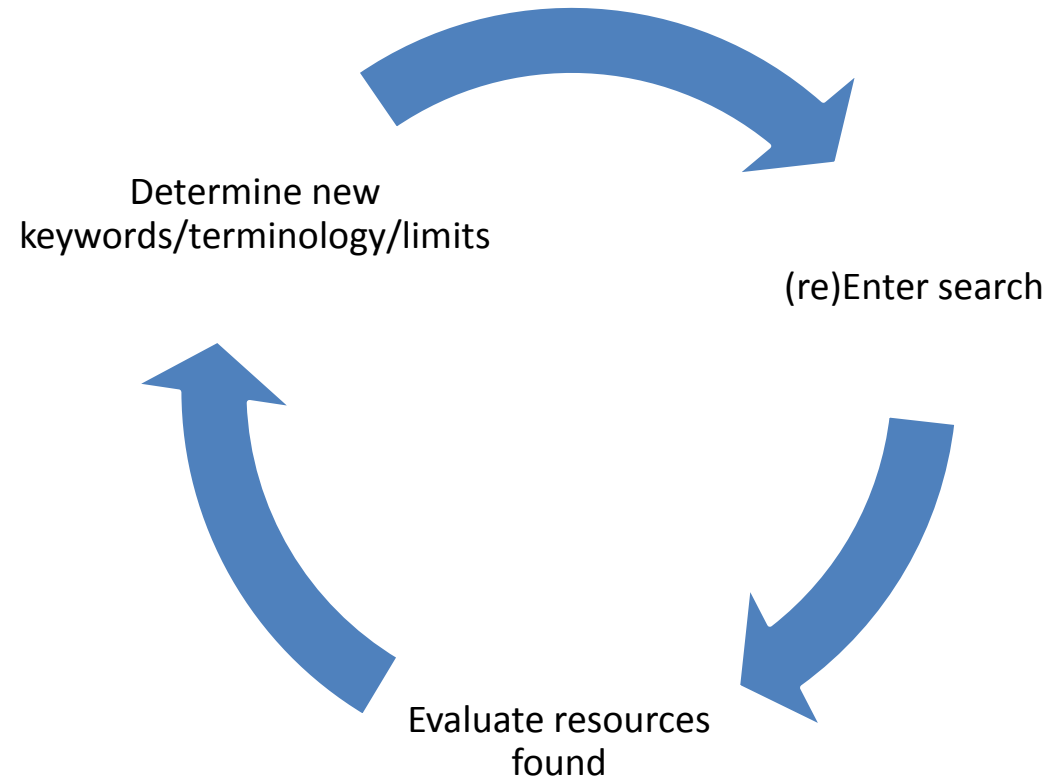
Too Much Information? Try these strategies

- Add another concept
- Use only official subject headings (not keywords) – results will be more relevant
- Search by a notable author
- Use limits: dates, gender, language, publication type, etc.

Too Little Information? Try these strategies

- Remove a concept
- Use more general terms and don't limit terms to specific fields
- Try another database
- Don't use limits

It's a reiterative
(and some would say never-ending)
process.



Questions ?

