Research Strategies

A few quick tips for turning a topic into a search strategy.

Step One

State your research topic.
Example: The impact of video games on violence in teens.

Step Two

Identify key concepts.
Example topic: The impact of video games on violence in teens.
Example key concepts: video games violence teens

Step Three

Brainstorm related terms.
Examples:
Violence = aggression, shootings, attacks
Video games = gaming, gamers, computer games
Teen = teens, teenagers, adolescents, youth

Step Four

Apply search strategies.
Search for synonyms. Combine similar terms with OR. Example: violence or aggression.
Consider word variations.
Use an asterisk * to retrieve variations. Example: Teen* = teens, teen, teenagers.
Apply phrase searching.
Use quotations to search for phrases. Example: “video games”
Combine it all together with AND.
Example: “video games” AND teen* AND (aggression or violence)

Try different search combinations and strategies! The process is iterative.