

Step 1: Defining your question, terms and parameters

Think about what is your question?

Break your question down into searchable terms.

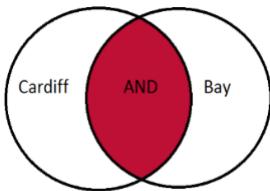
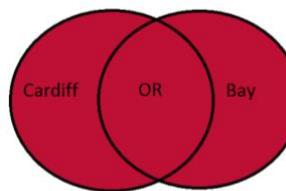
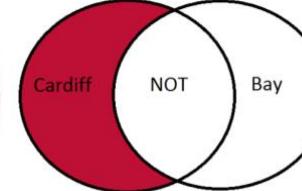
Think of synonyms for your search terms.

Any restrictions? Date/ age/ geography etc.

Step 2: Database selection

Select the relevant databases/resources for your search.

Step 3: Search tips

Search tip	Operator	When to use it
Phrase searching	" "	Allows you to search for exact terms by enclosing the search term in quotation marks. This returns documents containing the exact phrase e.g. "architectural conservation".
Fielded searches		Search in a particular field of the document, for example the title, author or publication date. Many databases will let you select available fields to search from a drop-down menu.
Combining searches - Boolean	AND OR NOT	You can use one or more operators together e.g.(city OR urban OR town) AND regeneration. This will find documents with regeneration and any of the words city, urban or town.   
Proximity searching	e.g. N2 W2	This is a way to search for two or more words that occur within a certain number of words from each other e.g. Salmon near/3 virus. There is a lot of variation between databases in what symbols to use, so check the database's help section before using proximity searches.
Wildcards	?	Replace letters within a word e.g. wom?n would find both woman and women. Be aware that databases tend to use different symbols for truncation and wildcards, so check the database's help section before you start.
Truncations	*	Allows you to search for words that share a common stem by using a specific symbol e.g. comput* would search for any word containing the stem comput (e.g computer, computing, computation).
Saving searches		Saving searches allows you to rerun searches at a later date, update them and create automatic email alerts for new articles and results. To save a search create an account with the database.
Subject Headings	(Health databases ONLY)	Use subject heading on healthcare databases to map your search terms to the indexed terms in the database, to return a greater number and more specific results.