Eng. 102 -- Search Strategy Worksheet

*Developed from a worksheet by Shahla Rowhani of Bellevue Community College Library Media Center. Used by permission.*

1. Identify and choose a topic that you are interested in. Example: Poverty

2. Narrow this topic by focusing on one aspect of the problem and come up with 1 – 3 viable questions. Reference sources are great starting points!!

   Question #1: What is the role of the government in dealing with homelessness in America?
   Question #2: 
   Question #3: 

3. Identify the main concepts for each question and generate a list of search terms. Search terms can be synonyms (terms that mean the same thing, like housing and shelter) or related terms (such as United States and Washington State). Subject encyclopedias are excellent for finding synonyms and related terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1st Concept</th>
<th>2nd Concept</th>
<th>3rd Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>homelessness</td>
<td>government</td>
<td>America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synonyms or related terms</td>
<td>shelter</td>
<td>Federal government</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synonyms or related terms</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>State-Local government</td>
<td>Specific State!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Develop search statements using Boolean operators & other search parameters. 
   (homelessness OR shelter OR housing) AND government AND (America OR United States)

   *Tip:* Searches usually work best with **single words** rather than phrases, and **nouns** instead of verbs or adjectives.

5. Use search terms for keyword searches and subject searches.

6. Use **multiple databases** and alternate search techniques including different combinations of terms to find more sources.

**Note:** At some point in the process, you will narrow your questions down to a single research question. This may happen immediately, before you begin searching, or it may require looking at the topic from different angles. But eventually you should have a single question guiding your search, the answer to which will become the thesis of your research paper. That question will evolve over time, but it will always guide your research.