**ELECTRONIC RESEARCH**

***Remember that electronic research is a process of trial and error. If you don’t find what you need in your first search, consider synonyms, narrower terms, and broader terms, as well as other databases and electronic resources, to continue your research.***

**How do I tell the computer what I need?**

We don’t always speak the same language as computers. To find the information you are looking for, you should “translate” your research question into an online search term. Try following these steps:

1. Choose *and develop* a topic.
   - Example: You are interested in bipolar disorder in young people

2. Turn this into a specific question (which should reflect the point you’re trying to make or the focus of your paper).
   - Example: *How does bipolar disorder affect the social lives of American youth?*

3. Find keywords in your research question that might come up as general topics for a search.
   - Example: youth, bipolar, American

4. Narrow your search using Boolean operators, additional search terms, and synonyms.
   - Example: “manic depression” AND “American youth” AND “social life”

**Boolean Operators**

Use these words to narrow your searches.

**OR** - Will retrieve materials with one of your search terms or the other, but will exclude materials with both words

**AND** - Will retrieve only materials containing BOTH of your search terms in the record.

**NOT** - Will exclude any materials containing a certain word

“” (quotations) - Will retrieve only materials containing your search words in the exact order in which you have typed them

* (asterisk) - The asterisk is a truncation tool. For example, if you type CHILD*, the catalog will look for CHILD and CHILDREN.