ENG127: Writing in the Social Sciences
Keyword worksheet

1. To successfully search for sources using library tools, you must first generate a list of search terms, or keywords. The best way to start this process is to write your research topic or question:

2. Now circle the main ideas or words in your topic above.

Those circled words are your **key concepts**.

3. You will use **combinations** of these **keywords** as your search terms in the library tools. Note:

   a. Select the important words! Do **not** circle words like how, did, the...these are not important words in your topic/research question.

   b. Put phrases in quotes:

   c. Use **AND** (all caps) to combine main ideas of your topic/question:

   d. Create lists of synonyms:
e. Use OR to combine synonyms/like terms:

f. Truncate (with *) to catch all variations of a search term:

g. Add important keywords as you go along. These will be search terms that didn’t appear in your original question or that you find as you run searches. Be sure to note in particular subjects associated with relevant articles and books you find:

4. Finally, create some sample searches to try in the library tools: