

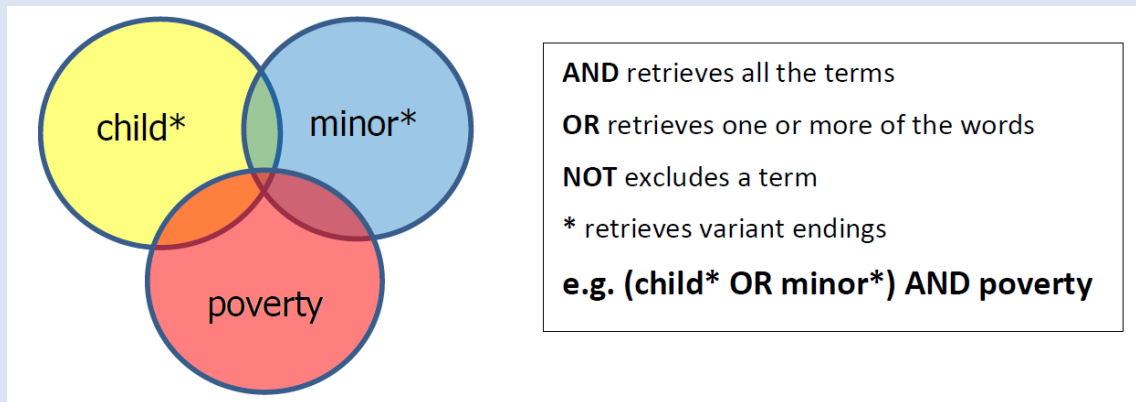
Search Techniques

Search Strategies

- Identify the different concepts in your research question e.g., if you are searching for information about child poverty, the concepts would be **children** and **poverty**. The key concepts are your search terms.
- Are there any synonyms for your search terms? e.g. children, minors, infants.
- Are there any alternative spellings or abbreviations e.g. child and children.
- If you get too many results, try narrowing down your search by using a more specific search concept or by adding more search concepts (for example for child poverty you could add a particular country or time period). Alternatively try limiting by date (for example last 2 years) or by format (e.g. peer reviewed articles only).
- If you get too few results, try using broader search terms (e.g. rights of the child or poverty).
- Once you have found some good results, look at the full details and see what keywords the database has used in describing the item. This can give you more ideas for search term. In some cases, you will be able to click on the keywords to see everything in the database on that topic. This is called the “one good record” method.

Using Boolean operators and truncation

You can use these techniques to improve the results of your keyword searching.



- To combine the distinct concepts in your search use **AND**. This tells the database that both concepts must be present in your results, e.g. child **AND** poverty.
- When using synonyms, use **OR** to specify that one or other of your terms but not necessarily both should appear in your search terms, e.g. child **OR** minor.
- When using **AND** and **OR** in the same search use brackets around the terms combined using **OR**, e.g. (child **OR** minor) **AND** poverty.
- Use “quotation marks” to look for a specific phrase (where words have a particular meaning when they are together), e.g. “United Nations”.
- To find alternative word endings use * e.g. child* finds child, children (and also childish, childishly...).
- To find alternative spellings use ? e.g. wom?n finds women and woman.
- Some databases also allow you to use proximity operators to specify that particular words must appear near to one another. Consult **Help** from within the database to see if this is an option and to fully explore all the search options.