

## Database Searching – the process

1. **Define the task** – what am I asked to do?  
*Not* what do I *want* to do?
2. **Write your task in a sentence** or group of sentences.  
Read any Bible passages or key articles or other documents. Search the Moore Library catalogue to see what we have – does the record help in locating terms? If you are new to the subject area, read the entries in an encyclopedia from the Reference Collection or Wikipedia.
3. **Deconstruct your task** -pull it apart – look at it from every angle
  - It might be helpful to use a table or grid – write down terms as you think of them.

Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Keyword 3	Keyword 4
<i>How significant</i>	<i>temple</i>	<i>holiness</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians</i>
		<i>Holy</i>	

- By what other terms might your search terms be represented in the literature?
  - Do the terms have variant spellings?
  - Are there broader or narrower terms?
4. Construct your search strategies – a good search strategy aids in producing a *manageable* number of *relevant* citations. Write down your search strategies.
    - Boolean operators are used to join the terms

Operator	Search Example	Result
and	Church and state	<i>and</i> retrieves all citations that contain both terms
or	Clergy or pastor	<i>or</i> retrieves all citations that contain one term or the other term (or both terms)
not	Spirit not holy	<i>not</i> retrieves all citations that contain the first term and not the second term
?	Wom?n 19??	The question mark matches any character – Wom?n matches woman or women. 19?? matches any date in the 1900s.
W[+number]	Infant w0 regeneration	W (=within) specifies maximum intervening words as well as word order. Infant w0 regeneration matches the phrase 'infant regeneration.' A number must be specified with the W or the W will be searched as the letter.

### Search strategy

Temple	AND	1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians			
Holy OR Holiness	AND	1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians			
Temple	AND	Holiness OR holy	AND	1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians	

5. Identify the databases you are going to search.
  - Each database has its own characteristics such as default searching algorithms, subject and chronological coverage, fulltext content – know your database!
  - Searching several databases simultaneously can mean that you miss out on the functionality of each individual database – we recommend you search each database separately.
  - If you do not know the database well it might be a good idea to start with a broad search to get “the feel” of the database.

### ATLA

Scriptures search	Corinthians, 1 <sup>st</sup>	AND temple
	Corinthians, 1 <sup>st</sup>	AND holy or holiness
	Corinthians, 1 <sup>st</sup>	AND holy or holiness AND temple
Subjects all search	Corinthians, 1 <sup>st</sup>	AND temple

6. Search the database using your search strategy.
  - Keep a record of what terms you have searched in what resource. This will save time repeating searches.
7. You may wish to save your citations into reference management software such as the shareware Zotero or the proprietary EndNote.
8. Review, reflect, refine – searching can be a cyclical and informing experience!
  - How relevant were the search results?
  - Did I retrieve too many citations?
  - Are some references irrelevant – Yes? Refine search strategy and search again.
  - Are some citations irrelevant – Yes? Refine search strategy and search again.
  - Did I retrieve too few citations? – Yes? Think of broader terms, synonyms and search again.
  - Have a good look at the full records of the citations retrieved – what can I learn from them?
  - What are the controlled vocabulary terms in the relevant records?
  - Are there terms in the records that I had not thought of?
9. Remember to keep in mind the overall task – “How significant is ...” “Analyse”
10. Give yourself time for ideas to brew in your mind. Remember, finding nothing or very little might well be an accurate reflection of the literature.
11. Finding the fulltext – is a pdf attached to the citation? Can I link to the Moore catalogue? What does a search of the Moore catalogue show? Does a search of ATLA for the article prove productive? If I am in 4<sup>th</sup> year or above, how about requesting an interlibrary loan (Docdel@moore.edu.au).
12. Information literacy is a social activity – talk about your work – other people may give you good ideas