

Generating Search Terms

ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration

Purpose: To equip students to move from their initial research questions to identifying appropriate search terms.

Resources: Generating Search Terms handout, [Generating Search Terms LibGuides page](#)

Time Required: 30 minutes (outside class); 10 minutes (debrief in class)

Lesson Plan:

Pre-Work (Students): Students should read and complete the handout 5-7 days ahead of class (ideally after they have already selected a research topic).

In Class:

Debrief in class using the following reflection questions (may use a Jamboard to gather feedback):

1. What worked well in identifying search terms?
2. What didn't work well?
3. What questions do you have?

Use student questions as an opportunity to provide further instruction on any confusing aspects of developing search terms.

Note: Ideally this activity should be paired with hands-on searching where the students can test their search terms and put them into practice.

Variants: While designed for asynchronous instruction, this lesson can also be adapted as an in-class activity. Additionally, this plan can be combined with the [Workshopping Search Terms lesson plan](#).