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| What is it? | It is making a list of the words that will help you find the information you need about your research topic. They are called “keywords” because they can “unlock” the doors that will lead you to useful information. |
| When will I use them? | You will use them when searching through books (using indexes) and through electronic sources (using search screens in online databases or search tools such as search engines). |
| Why do I need to do it? | If you have good keywords, you’ll find the kind of information you want faster. If you don’t have good keywords, you can waste a lot of time not finding the information you need. |
| What are “good keywords”? | Good keywords are the important words or short phrases that specifically describe your topic and closely related topics. They are not long sentences. |
| When do I list them? | Start as soon as you have a general topic. You will be able to add more keywords to your list as you focus and learn more about your topic. |
| How do I list them? | 1. First, write one or two sentences about your topic. 2. Next, underline all of the specific words that describe your topic. 3. Make a separate list of these specific words. 4. Add to your list any other words that mean the same thing (synonyms) or are related terms. 5. Think of more words or phrases that describe the larger topic, of which your topic is a part. Add those to the list. |

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