Developing a Research Topic
Brainstorming Useful Keywords for Your Project

Name: ________________________________
Email: ________________________________

Keywords are words or phrases that describe your topic or a component of your topic. Since Library databases don’t work the same way that Google does, it’s very important to come up with specific keywords that will help you find what you need more quickly and with less effort.

Use the keywords listed below as an example and then fill in your own keywords in the blanks.

Example Topic: The mental health effects of solitary confinement on inmates in the U.S.

- "solitary confinement"
- "mental health"
- efficacy
- inmates
- legal precedent
- "mental illness"
- "Ganser Syndrome"
- "United States"
- "cruel & unusual"

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Your Backup Plan

Sometimes the keywords you’ve chosen won’t return the results that you’re looking for. When this happens, it helps to have a set of backup keywords that you can use instead. Synonyms (words that mean the same thing) are perfect for this task!

Use the synonyms listed below as an example and then fill in your own synonyms in the blanks.

- "prison abolition movement"
- "mental status"
- effectiveness
- prisoners
- "Angola Three"
- violence
- "prison psychosis"
- America
- torture

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