As you might know, library research databases work differently than Google. This video will cover some strategies for searching library databases effectively.

Most of us are pretty good at searching Google these days. Just type in a few keywords, and it's usually easy to find what you want.

But, using library databases means you're going to have to spend some time thinking about how and what you are going to search. That's your search strategy, and coming up with one can you save you a lot of time and effort.

One study found that students with a good search strategy spent 50% less time searching for sources than students who just put in a few random words.

Students that use a search strategy think about the words they are going to use, and the words they aren't going to use, and how they're going to put them together.

Let's say you've decided to write a paper on this question: "What are some effective health care solutions for refugees in Europe?"

You can take the path of least resistance and copy and paste the question words into Global Search — but that will most likely give you poor results. Or you could take a few minutes and come up with a search strategy.

Let's give it a try. First, we want to pick out only those words that are directly related to our research question, and eliminate the ones that aren't going to help us much.

"What," "are," "some," "for," and "in" are not words specific to our research question so we're not going to use them.

What about "solutions?" It could help, but it could also appear in a lot of information not directly related to our question, so let's eliminate it for now.

That leaves us with three great keywords: "healthcare," "refugees," and "Europe."

Now we're ready to put those words together. Unlike Google, which often places an invisible AND between all your keywords, in most library databases you must add the word AND between your keywords.

So we need to change "healthcare, refugees," "Europe" to "healthcare AND refugees AND Europe."

So we're done, right? Not so fast. Library databases also use another important word to combine key terms, and that word is the magical OR. OR can add so much to your search!

As you know there are many different terms you can use for the same idea or concept. You can use OR to include these other words — words like synonyms, related words, and examples.

So for the word "refugee" we could also use the words migrant, asylum seeker, and evacuee. And for "healthcare" we could also use a related word like medicine.

Now we need to put these together with our other words.

Library databases do this with the use of OR and parentheses. Anytime you use an OR, you want to make sure you nest the related words in parentheses.

In this example you are telling the database to look for resources that include the word Europe AND the words refugees or asylum seekers plus the words healthcare or medicine.

This will produce results like this one, that definitely include the word "Europe" and either the word "refugees" or "asylum seekers" and either "healthcare" or "medicine."

There really is no limit to how many words you can use, for example: "Europe AND (refugees OR migrants OR asylum seekers OR evacuees) AND (healthcare OR medicine OR health).

So, next time you need to use a library database, save yourself time, effort, and frustration by following these steps.

Enter only those words that are directly related to concepts in your research question.

Eliminate words that are not relevant.

Come up with synonyms and other words related to your keywords.

Put them together with ANDs and ORs.

This will give you results that are much more relevant than if you just pasted the question into the search box.