

## Module 1.3 Key Concepts, Keywords, and Synonyms

In this part of the tutorial, we've talked so far about identifying interesting, manageable, and appropriate research topics, and we've talked about thinking even more about these topics so that we can identify interesting research questions and thesis statements. Now we're going to talk about key ideas, key words, and synonyms.

Taken all together, these three tutorial modules are showing you the process that you can use to set yourself up for success at the beginning of any research project.

So, you've thought about what's interesting to you and what would be manageable and fit the expectations in your assignment. Then you've thought about it even more, and focused your interest into a possible research question or thesis statement. The last thing you need to think about before you head out to search for information is how you can translate your statement or question into a set of keywords and synonyms that search systems can use to give you the information you want.

This step in the process is a bit like translation. At this point you have a good idea of what you're looking for, but you can't sit down over coffee with a library database and explain yourself. You need to translate your thesis statement or question into words that will command the search systems you use, such as databases, to bring you information that is relevant to you.

Here's what you do. Take your thesis statement or research question and identify the main ideas it contains.

Next, think about each of the main ideas. Are there any other words that express these ideas? Make a note of these synonyms.

This list of words you're creating is your list of **keywords** for searching. These synonyms can be really important when the time comes to search for information. They help you communicate with databases about what precisely you're looking for.

As well, synonyms give you confidence in your searching, and in the sources you find. You wouldn't want to miss really important sources just because those sources use different words to describe the ideas that interest you.

What we've worked through just now is a good process for beginning any assignment that will involve searching for information.

Over time, this approach to research assignments will help you become a strong, effective searcher.

Next up, explore the many shapes and forms of the publications you might utilise for your projects and assignments. Thanks for taking part!