

i-skills Guide



How to choose your keywords

What is your assignment about? Think about how someone might talk or write about it. Which words would they use?

Here are some ideas for generating keywords, with some examples

Words with the same (or very similar) meaning?

Celebrity, famous, well known, infamous
 Disaster, accident, catastrophe
 Disease, disorder, ailment, illness, sickness
 Size, amount, volume, mass, magnitude

Related words?

Greenhouse gases, global warming, acid rain
 Teach, learn, school, education
 Media, journalism, news
 Human resources, personnel, staffing

Alternative spelling?

Yogurt, yoghurt
 Anaemia, anemia
 Behaviour, behaviour
 Aluminium, aluminum

Abbreviations?

United Kingdom, UK
 Non-governmental organisation, NGO
 Post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD
 Medium density fibreboard, MDF

More specific words? Narrower terms like these are useful for making your search more focused.

Emergency services – police, fire, ambulance
 People – adults, children, men, women, teenagers
 Metal – iron, steel, copper

More general words? Broader terms like these are useful for widening your search.

Solar energy – alternative energy
 Tiger – big cats, carnivores, mammals
 Hatchback – car, vehicle
 China - Asia

A glossary or a thesaurus can be useful if you want help finding key words.

Different endings?

Nutri – nutrition, nutritious, nutritional
 Fem – female, feminine, feminism, feminist
 Inform – inform, informative, information
 Support – supporting, supportable, supportive, supported

Once you have generated your keywords, decide which terms you will search for first. When you are searching you might want to return to your keywords to refine your search or to find other useful terms.