

USING SEARCH WORDS EFFECTIVELY

Here are some tips for finding good search words and on using them effectively to improve your search results.

Before you search, break down your topic into its main concepts. For example, for nannies' immigration to Canada, the main concepts are nannies, immigration, and Canada. You need to include all these concepts in your search to get relevant results.

Next, think of other words that could be used for your main concepts. I had trouble with another word for nannies, but thought of immigrants for immigration, and Canadian for Canada. We'll use these alternate words in our search.

Let's see how it works. Type each concept on a separate row, and the alternate words in the same row separated by OR (which says either one of these words is ok).

I put nannies in the first search box, immigration OR immigrants in the second row, and Canada OR Canadians in the third row.

I only get 5 results. When this happens, look at your results for clues in the titles, descriptions or subjects about other alternate search words you might have missed. You can use these to revise your search.

I saw that another term for nannies is domestic workers or domestics, and another term for immigration is migration.

I can use these terms in a new search. I'll type nannies OR domestics in the first row, then immigration OR migration in the second row, and Canada OR Canadian in the third row. I get 57 results, which is a lot more useful.

As you can see, your search results depend on your search words and how you search with them.

The Library's other search tools look a little different but work the same. This includes Omni's Advanced Search and the Ebscohost databases.

If you have any questions, ask us at library.wlu.ca/help/askus.