

DATABASE SEARCH TIPS

*While all databases have their own special features,
some search tips are tried and true for all.

Quotation marks	Limit (decrease) your results.	“free will”	*Returns only sources with the two words connected and in that order. <i>*There is no need for quotes if you are separating individual words by and/or.</i>
AND	Limits (decreases) your results.	God and existence	*Returns only sources which contain both the words “God” and “existence”. Each source must have both words in it.
OR	Expands (increases) your search results.	God or existence	*Returns all sources containing either “God” or “existence.” Both terms need not be present in a given source.
Truncation	Expands (increases) your search results.	God or exist*	*Returns all sources containing either “God” or any words with exist as the base (e.g. existed, existing, existence...). *It is important to consider where you truncate your word. (e.g. If you are searching about Socrates and the Socratic method, searching Soc* - will bring up society, socialism, etc)
Wildcards	Expand (increase) your search results.	coloni?ation	This will bring up sources with both colonization and colonisation

Do

- Use your noodle and expand your search.
 - Vocabulary and key words
 - **God** - divine being, deity, supreme being
 - **Existence** - presence, proof, entity, real, substantiated
- Get creative with keyword combinations and truncation
 - (God or deity or supreme being) or (presence or proof or entity or substan*)
- Try a Subject search if it is available. You may get less but more precise results.
- Look for new search terms in the resources you find.

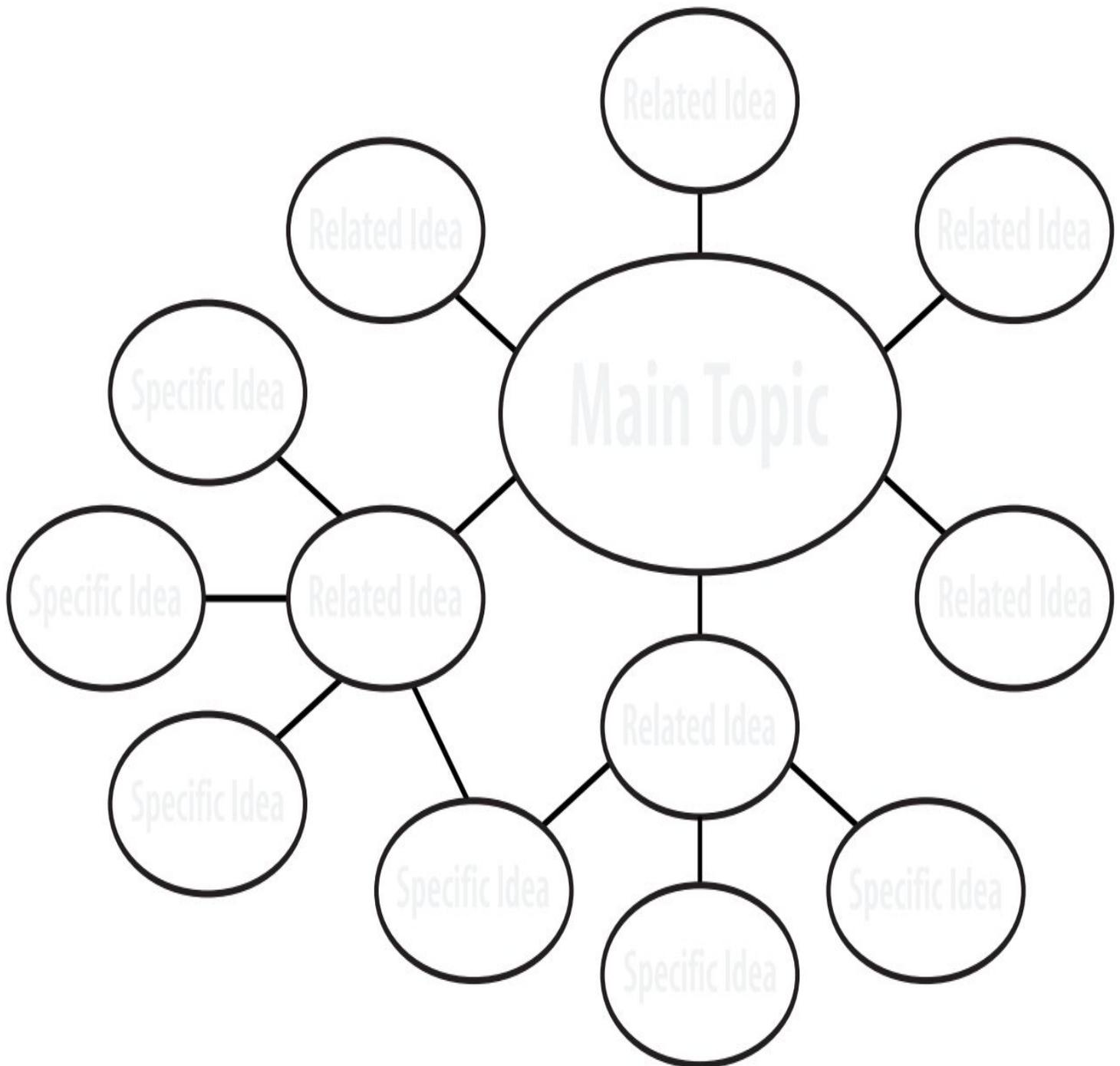
Don't

- Search full sentences like you do in Google.
- Simply search a list of words without AND or OR between them

Adapted from:

“Top Ten Search Tips.” *Northeastern University Libraries*, 2018, library.northeastern.edu/get-help/research-tutorials/effective-database-searches/top-ten-search-tips.

Complex Web Worksheet



*Stuck:

- Try doing a synonym search using an online thesaurus.
Or
- Peruse an initial source to develop new ideas for your search.