

Effective search strategies & Boolean operators

Write down your search topic in the form of a question and underline the **key words or phrases**:

Example: How does violence on television affect children?

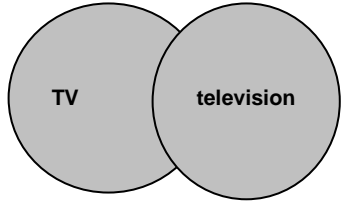
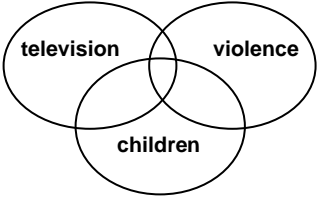
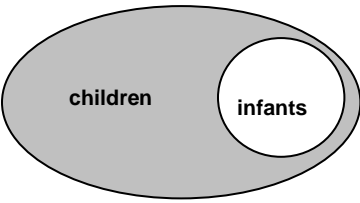
Divide these key words into concepts and list, along with any synonyms:

- Concept 1: violence, aggression
- Concept 2: television, TV
- Concept 3: children, youth

This search will need **Boolean operators** to help find the most relevant sources of information.

What are Boolean operators? Boolean operators are computer commands. They define the relationships between words or groups of words.

The 3 most common Boolean operators are **or**, **and**, **not**.

<p>OR: Broadens a search</p> <p>This command tells the computer to look for <u>at least one of the search terms</u>. It is useful for linking synonyms.</p>	<p>violence or aggression</p> <p>TV or television</p> <p>children or youth</p>	
<p>AND: Narrows a search</p> <p>This command tells the computer to find <u>all of the search terms</u>.</p>	<p>television and violence and children</p>	
<p>NOT: Eliminates certain words</p> <p>Prevents any term after the "not" command from appearing the results.</p>	<p>violence not war</p> <p>television not film</p> <p>children not infants</p>	
<p>(parentheses): Groups ideas</p> <p>Include parentheses when using two or more Boolean operators; otherwise, the computer confuses the order of commands.</p>	<p>(violence or aggression) and (television or TV) and ((children or youth) not infants)</p>	