

# SOWK 562 – Search strategy worksheet – USC Libraries

## Step 1 – Define what you want the articles to be about (Break topic into concepts)

**Instructions:** Write your topic on the column to the left and then break your topic into one or more relevant concepts.

Topic	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3	Concept 4
<i>Example:</i> impact of foster care participation on children's academic achievement	foster care	children	academic achievement	

## Step 2 – List all the relevant keywords

**Instructions:** Add similar or related keywords for your concepts.

Topic	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3	Concept 4
<i>Example:</i> impact of foster care participation on children's academic achievement	foster care	children <b>or</b> youth <b>or</b> adolescent	academic achievement <b>or</b> student performance	

## Step 3 – Organize how the keywords will be entered

**Instructions:** Use AND/OR to connect concept columns. Use AND/OR to connect keywords within a concept column. Use parentheses to group keywords within a column. Use quotation marks for phrases.

Topic	Concept 1		Concept 2		Concept 3
<i>Example:</i> impact of foster care participation on children's academic achievement	foster care	AND	(academic achievement or student performance)		
<b>Final search entry:</b> “foster care” AND (“academic achievement” or “student performance”)					
<b>Final search entry:</b>					

