Basic Search Strategies:

When you search Google, you can throw any question in there. Such as, can caffeine kill you? Why do we yawn? Is it unethical to pose as a meteorologist? Or maybe you want to know: how many polar bears were in captivity between 1970 and 1984 in the United States. What? You like polar bears and disco, it's perfectly normal.

When you search a library database, you need to break your topic down into keywords. In our question, those would be "polar bear", "captivity" and "United States". Now don't get crazy, you should have two to four keywords. Anymore and you'll mess up your search and not get the best results. Most databases even have boxes where you can organize your search. Throw one word into each box and click that search button. Once you do this, the stars align, flowers bloom, unicorns dance, and you have your results.

Or, you fail miserably. Which is gonna happen, and that's totally okay. And I'm not just saying that because I'm making this video right now and now and now. If you come up with nothing, what do you do? Think of different words you could use. For instance, instead of polar bears, you could use the Latin name Ursus maritimus or its literal meaning: maritime bear. A hoy!

What do you do if you don't get any results? Reduce your standards. Kind of like dating, you need to give up on the idea that you're going to find someone who sends you flowers for no reason. You're not going to find the perfect article right off the bat. You'll need to apply some strategies to get more results. Such as: take out some of your keywords. In some cases, you can search multiple databases at once. Or, maybe try a different database .

If you have too many results, you've gotta narrow it down. Add more keywords and apply some filters, like date range, type of publication, or only scholarly (peer reviewed) articles.

If you've been at this for a good twenty minutes and nothing is working, stop in the name of love and give us a call, send us an email, or stop by. We're here to help. Unlike, help is not a dirty word.