# General rules for searching

Database provides continually strive to the research process, so it’s worth your time to check the databases Help links.

1. **What do you want to know?** Try to state your information need in a sentence or phrase and identify the key terms:

    *What impact does advertising have on children’s diets?*

2. **Identify synonyms for your terms.** How else can you say it? Try using the database thesaurus.

    - advertising
    - childrens
    - impact
    - diets
    -marketing
    - adolescents
    - effect
    - eating habits

3. **Use Boolean operators (AND, OR) to combine synonymous words or terms:**

    *advertis* will find advertisement, advertising, advertiser etc.

    - advertising      OR  marketing
    - AND               OR  adolescents
    - childrens        OR  effect
    - impact            OR  eating habits
    - diets

4. **Wildcard characters (*** can refine and/or expand a search.** An asterisk can equal one or more characters; a question mark (??) equals one character. **Advertis* will find advertisement, advertising, advertiser etc.**

    - advertis*          OR  market*
    - AND                OR  adolescent*
    - childrens          OR  effect
    - impact              OR  eating habits
    - AND                OR  diets

5. **Phrase searching**—use quotation marks (”) when searching for an exact phrase:

    “eating habits”