

## Developing a Search Strategy

1. Once you have chosen a topic, write it down in the **form of a question or brief statement**:

*Why are blonde females so prevalent in American popular culture?*

2. Underline the key words and phrases that are most specific to your topic.

*Why are blonde females so prevalent in American celebrity culture?*

3. Write down each key word or phrase, and underneath it, list synonyms or related terms. For example:

### Blondes

- hair color (symbolism)
- perceptions of ignorance
- “ ” of sexual appeal
- purity, virginal
- Nordic

### Females

- objectification
- lower power status
- historical status (low)
- exalted sexual status

### Celebrity Culture

- popular culture
- emblematic
- mass products
- public narratives

4. Write down your key words and phrases along with their synonyms. Use these terms (and *forms of these terms*) to generate your search parameters.

## Keyword Versus Subject Searching

Keyword Searching	Subject Searching
<p>Use keyword when your term may be very new, very distinctive, or jargon, e.g. "emblematic", "public narrative".</p> <p>Use a <i>variety of keywords</i>. There may be additional items on your topic that use different terms.</p> <p>Be aware that you may retrieve items not related to your topic (called <i>false drops</i>).</p> <p>When you cannot remember the exact title of an item, do a keyword search using the <u>title words</u> you remember.</p>	<p>New topics may not yet be included in the database's controlled vocabulary.</p> <p>Using the appropriate subject heading for a topic will retrieve all items in the database indexed under that topic.</p> <p>If you do not know the appropriate subject heading for your topic, conduct a keyword search first and look at the <u>subject heading(s)</u> of a relevant item.</p>