◺ STEP #4: Be a Savvy "Shopper"

✒ **Brainstorm keywords for your topic**

Keywords are the words that will help you find the information you need about your subject – thus, they "unlock" the door to useful information. You can use them in book indexes, database searches, and Internet searches.

Follow these steps to create a "keyword bank":

1.   Write 1-2 sentences about your topic and underline all of the words that relate directly to your topic.
2.   List each of these underlined words. Now, add any related terms and synonyms.
3.   Add words and phrases that describe the larger topic, of which your topic is a part.
4.   Then add words that are subtopics of your topic that might lead you to more information.
5.   You should have a good sized bank of words to use to unlock information within sources.

Example: WHALES→ocean,sea,cetaceans→mammals,marine life,animals→blue,killer,humpback

          (related/synonyms)   *("larger"topics)*   *("smaller"subtopics)*

✒ **Use Boolean search techniques with electronic resources**

Mathematician George Boole developed a system that can be used to narrow computer searches. Try using the following words or symbols to combine your keywords during database and Internet searches:

Boolean operator	Word	Symbol or example
AND limits your search, requiring that all words appear (Google implies AND between words)	Vietnam AND protest AND students	+Japan +cooking
OR used to capture synonyms or related words (Google uses ~)	car OR automobile	coronary ~heart
NOT eliminates topics that may cause problems	Martin Luther NOT King	+eagles –Philadephia -football
Truncation useful when you want varying forms of a word or if you aren't sure of spelling	teen* (will return results with teenage, teenagers, teens, etc.)	Herz* (for Herzegovina, when you aren't sure how to spell it)
" " use when you want words to appear together in order	"George Washington Carver"	"raisin in the sun"
Most search engines and databases provide "search tips." Check this information to learn about the specific search language used in the particular search engine, database, or directory you are using.		

✒ **E V A L U A T E Internet resources!**

*Internet sources should pass "the test" to be deemed credible***:**

True   False

☐   ☐ 1. Does the page list the author and/or institution that published the page? Is there a way to contact the author?

☐   ☐ 2. Does the page list the author's credentials? Is it a preferred domain? (.edu, .gov, .org, .net)

☐   ☐ 3. Does the page present information in an objective way, without bias? Is advertising minimal?

☐   ☐ 4. Is the information current and has it been updated recently? Are the links to other pages

current?

☐   ☐   5. Are you able to view the page easily, without fees, special technology or software?

If you answered "True" to all 5 questions above, then you may have found a web page worth using!