Research Worksheet

Course: ____________________ Instructor: ____________________ Citation Style: _______ Due: _______

Assignment Directions: Page length, type of resources you can use (e.g. only peer reviewed) or number of resources required.

Research Topic /Question: Try to frame your topic as a question – one that doesn’t just have a yes/no answer!

Brainstorm Keywords for your topic. Add to the list as you do your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonyms &amp; Related Terms</th>
<th>1st Concept</th>
<th>2nd Concept</th>
<th>3rd Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“capital punishment”</td>
<td>deter</td>
<td>“criminal behavior”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“death penalty”</td>
<td>Stop, prevent, discourage</td>
<td>Crime, “criminal offenses”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broader/Narrower Concepts</td>
<td>influence</td>
<td>Murder, felony/felonies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use Your Keywords to Search for Information

Put phrases in quotation marks
Use AND to narrow your search and find fewer, more precise results
Use the word AND between two keywords to find articles that contain both or all of your concepts. For example: “capital punishment” AND crime AND deter will find only articles that contain all 3 of those terms.

Use OR to broaden your search and find more results
Use the word OR with synonyms and related concepts to ensure that you are finding all of the articles that discuss your topic.
For example: “capital punishment” OR “death penalty” will find articles that contain one of those two phrases, but not necessarily both.

Use * to cover all of your bases
You can put an * in a word to find all forms of a word. For example: crim* will find crime, criminal, and criminals.

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Chat or Book a Librarian for one-on-one research help on our website:
http://www.umhelena.edu/library
Research Worksheet

Keep Track of the Resources You Use

**Encyclopedia** (for background information - such as Credo Reference, Britannica)

**Library Catalog** (for books and videos - search Helena College or expand to UM affiliates)

**OneSearch** (for books, videos, ebooks, and articles – look in all of the library’s resources in one search)

**Specific Databases** (for articles, ebooks, and some media - try Databases A-Z or the Subject & Class Guides)

**Web** (find government information, professional organizations, statistics, blogs, start on the Subject & Class Guides)

**Other** (think of including primary source materials such as photos or interviews, podcasts, videos)

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**Why are keywords important?**

Databases find information by *matching* the keywords you provide with the words in an article. They search for matching words in the article or journal title, the authors’ names, and the subject terms that have been assigned to an article. Many databases also search for matching words in the abstract (article summary) and some can even search for matching words *anywhere in the article.*

**How do I choose my keywords?**

Databases search best with individual concepts, rather than a long string of words. Break up your research statement into individual concepts or terms.