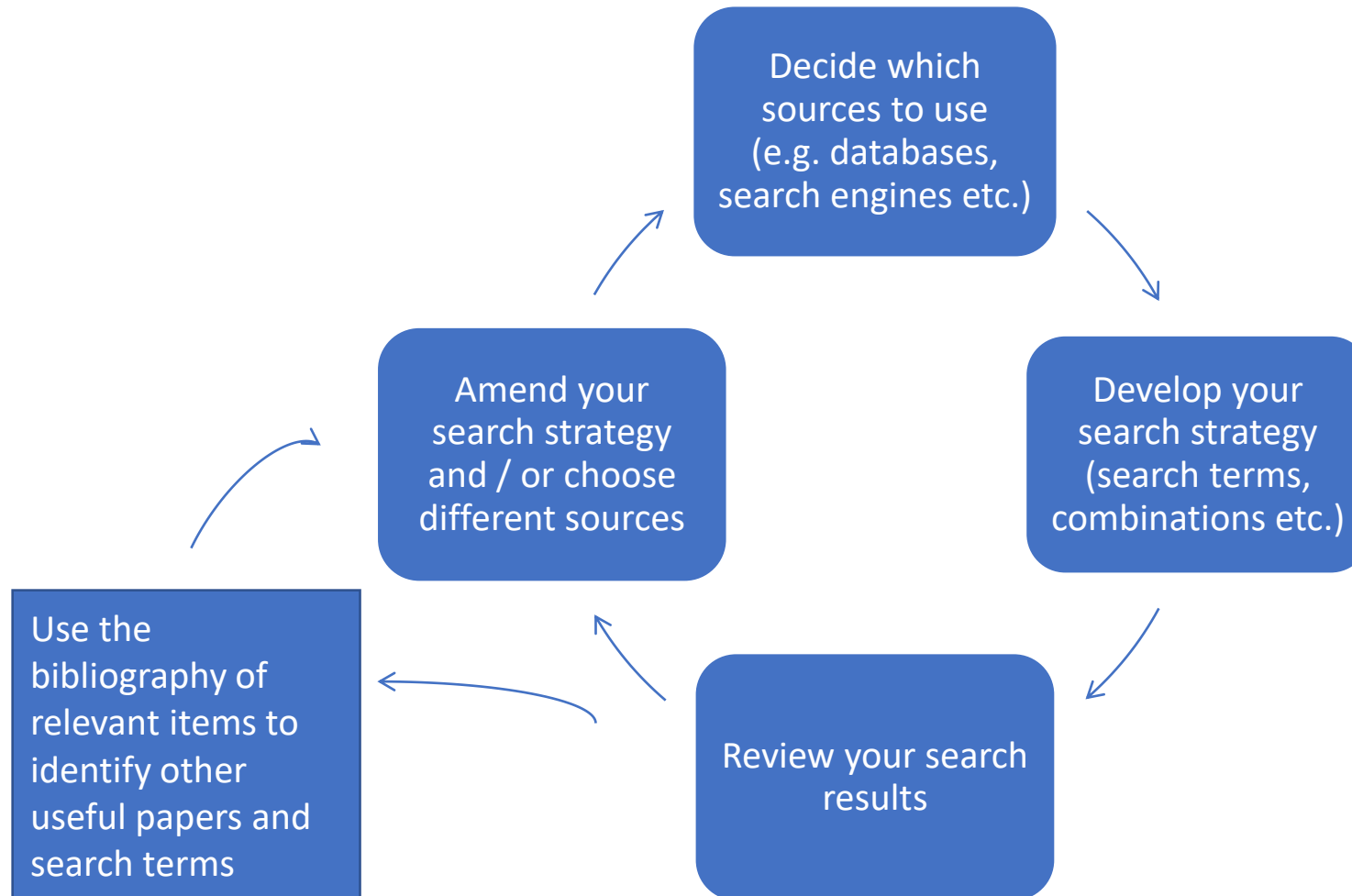




Creating an Effective Search Query

The research cycle



Creating an effective search query (1)

An example:

Human rights of child asylum seekers

Creating an effective search query (2)

An example:

- **Human rights**
- **Child**
- **Asylum seekers**

Creating an effective search query (3)

	Main concept				
Concept 1	Asylum seekers				
AND					
Concept 2	Child				
AND					
Concept 3	Human rights				

Asylum seekers AND child AND human rights

Synonyms:
Can you
give
synonyms
or
alternative
phrases for

Asylum seeker

Child

Refugee

Creating an effective search query (4)

	Main concept		Alternative 1		Alternative 2
Concept 1	Asylum seekers	OR	Refugees		
AND					
Concept 2	Child	OR	Minor	OR	Juvenile
AND					
Concept 3	Human rights				

(Asylum seekers OR refugees) AND (child OR minor OR juvenile) AND human rights

Creating an effective search query (5)

	Main concept		Alternative 1		Alternative 2
Concept 1	"Asylum seeker*"	OR	Refugee*		
AND					
Concept 2	Child*	OR	Minor?	OR	Juvenile*
AND					
Concept 3	"Human rights"				

("Asylum seeker*" OR refugee*) AND (child* OR minor? OR juvenile*) AND "human rights"



My search
string

("Asylum seeker*" OR refugee*) AND (child*
OR minor? OR juvenile*) AND "human rights"



Build your own search string

Build your own search string table

Human rights of child asylum seekers			
	Main concept	Alternative term	Alternative term
Concept 1	"asylum seeker*"	refugee*	
Concept 2	child*	minor?	Juvenile*
Concept 3	"human rights"		

Tips:

Identify keywords and consider synonyms, alternative spellings, broader and narrower terms

- Apply truncation (usually *) for alternative word endings and plurals
- Use wildcards (usually ?) to replace single characters
- Define relationships with Boolean logic:
 - 'and' for both terms
 - 'or' for either term
 - 'not' to exclude a term

e.g. ("Asylum seeker*" OR refugee*) AND (child* OR minor? OR juvenile*) AND "human rights"



Apply search string to database

Which sources to use?

Scholarly search engines

- e.g. Google Scholar and SOLO Articles or Search Everything
- Easy search across tens of thousands of items
- Coverage unclear
- Quality varies
- Nearly always returns too many results

Bibliographic databases (Abstracts/indexes)

- Often dedicated to a particular subject area
- Search across **key** sources in the discipline - quality is assured
- Search brief details (author, article title, subject keywords, abstract)
- Should return a smaller number of more relevant results
- Often include specialist search options
- Especially good for articles, conference papers ...
sometimes less good for books, policy documents, reports

Finding bibliographic databases tip 1

Databases A-Z

(<https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php>)

- A-Z listing all databases
- Choose **Subject** tab

OXFORD LibGuides Subject guides • Workshops • Research skills

Bodleian Libraries / Oxford LibGuides / Databases A-Z

Databases A-Z

Find the best library databases for your research.

All Subjects All Database Types All Vendors / Providers

All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z #

Finding bibliographic databases tip 2

Look for database type “Abstracts/Indexes”

Click 'more' for more info

The screenshot shows a search interface titled "Databases A-Z" with the subtitle "Find the best library databases for your research." It features a search bar with "All Subjects" selected. A dropdown menu for "All Database Types" is open, listing various categories: "All Database Types", "types", "Abstracts/Indexes (208)", "Audio-visual (10)", "Data/Statistics (106)", "Full text (801)", "Full text and Abstracts (35)", "Images (40)", "Library catalogues (64)", "Maps (14)", "Search Engine (1)", "Subject Gateway (8)", and "Websites (150)". The "Abstracts/Indexes (208)" option is highlighted in blue and circled in orange. Below the search bar, it says "1437 Databases found" and lists "AATA Online" and "AB Imperio" with "more..." links.

For bibliographic databases choose “Abstracts/Indexes”

Databases and catalogues: bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/workshops

- Sciences / Medicine
 - Scopus
 - Web of Science
 - Find a database using Databases A-Z
- Social Science subjects
 - ProQuest
 - Web of Science
 - SOLO subject searching (for books)
 - Find a database using Databases A-Z
- Humanities subjects
 - EBSCO
 - SOLO subject searching (for books)
 - Web of Science
 - Find a database using Databases A-Z
- History
 - Historical Abstracts
 - SOLO subject searching (for books)
 - Web of Science
 - Find a database using Databases A-Z
- English Literature / Modern Languages and Literature / Linguistics
 - MLA
 - SOLO subject searching (for books)
 - Find a database using Databases A-Z