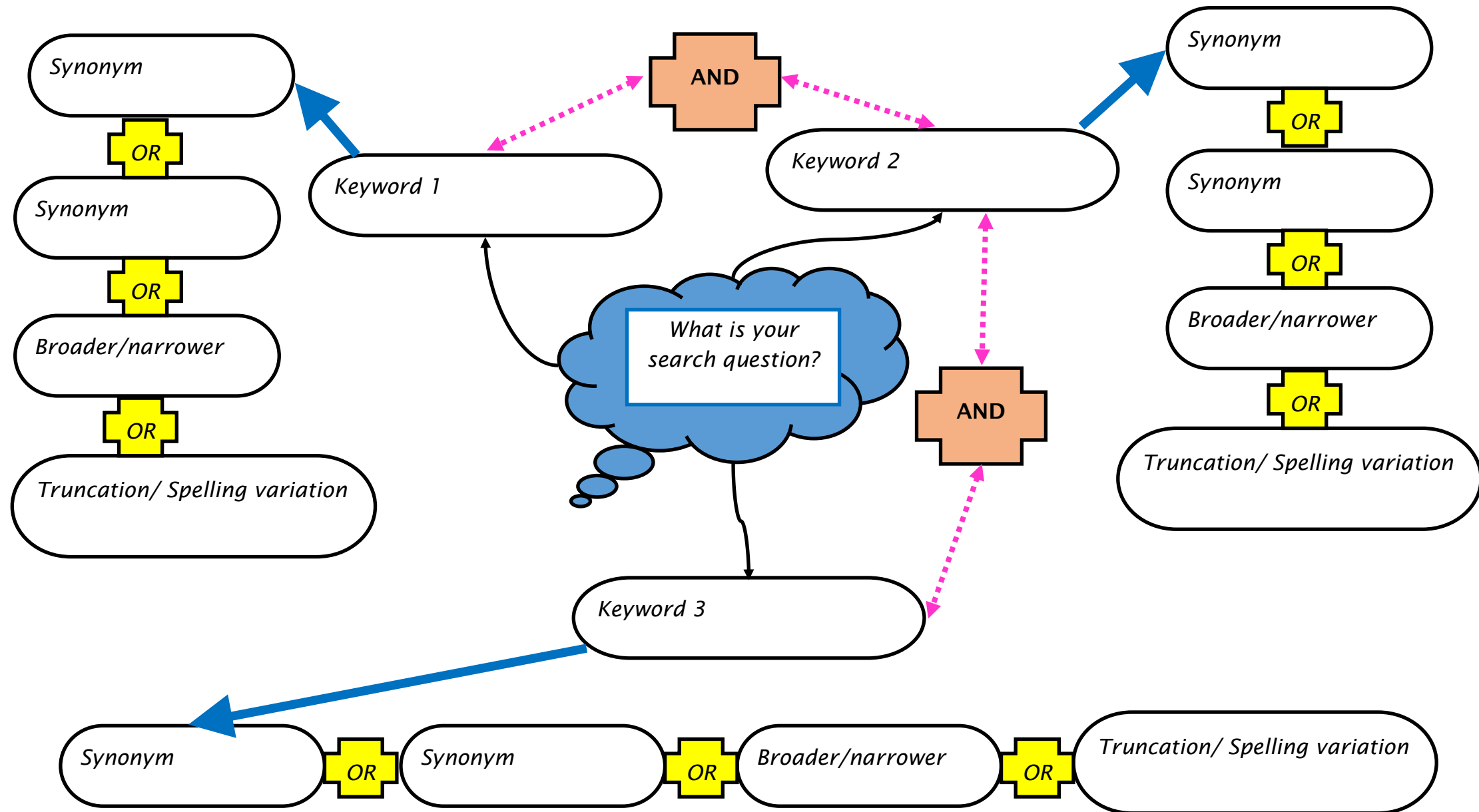


Search Planner Mind Map Template : For choosing and combining your keywords



What are the Keywords?

- What are the unique words, distinctive names, abbreviations or acronyms in your search question?
- Are there any words that mean more or less the same thing (synonyms)? E.g. flood defences, flood barrier
- Can any keywords can be truncated to find words starting with the same word stem? climat* will find climate, climates, climatic, climatology
- Are there any spelling variations for your keywords and can you use a wild card symbol to find them?
- Are there more broad or narrow keywords you can use?
- Put each keyword in an individual bubble. Use the word OR to link the related keywords. You may add more synonyms if you find them.

Combine your keywords together to put your search question in a format that a database will be able to understand.

- Use the words OR, AND, NOT to combine your keywords (these are sometimes called Boolean operators).
- Use brackets to group or nest synonyms/alternative keywords in a logical order.
- Indicate truncated terms with a * and wildcards with a ? (but remember the actual symbols used with different databases can vary).
- When you start using a database you may need to enter your search in this style (see example below) if there is only one search box (as is the case with Web of Science), or the search screen may have the words AND, OR, NOT already showing between the boxes on the screen.

Example

- (flood defen?e* OR flood barrier*) AND (London OR Thames) AND global warming

Top Tips

- **Not enough/too many items found by your search?** Try using different keywords or different combinations of keywords. Remember to keep a record of the words you have used and how you combined them!
- **Keep a record of where and when you have tried your search,** library catalogues, your subject databases <http://>

library.soton.ac.uk/resources and the Internet (note the Internet search engine e.g. Google, Google Scholar, Bing, Duck Duck Go *etc.*).

- **Need more information about planning your search?** Contact your Academic Engagement Librarian, their contact details are on your subject guide <http://library.soton.ac.uk/subjects>