Sample topic: What are the health effects of using cannabis?

How do I know what to use as search words?
1) Don’t search the entire sentence. Only major words/terms are necessary.
2) What are major words/terms?
   - **Health** - yes. It describes my topic.
   - **Cannabis** - yes. It describes my topic.
   - **Effects** – maybe. Other words are possible, such as *impacts, results, consequences.*
   The others – **what, are, the, of, using** – are unnecessary. They would appear in almost
   record and don’t help define my topic.
   - My search: *health cannabis* (over 28,457 results)
   - My search: *health cannabis effects* (over 22,641 results)

Adding words to an existing search means fewer results.
Changing words means different results.
I can use results to help find other possible search terms and narrow my search.

What are results?
1) A One Stop Search result is a record from the BU Library system. A result appears when my
   search term appears in an individual record. If I search 2 terms, both terms must appear in a
   record before that record becomes a result. The more terms I search at once, the fewer
   results I will get, as it is less likely that ALL my terms will appear in one record.
2) A One Stop Search (OSS) searches records for different **Resource Types** - including print
   books, e-books, scholarly & non-scholarly journal articles, dissertations, videos, journal
   titles, Course reserves. My results may include all of these, some of these, or none of these.
3) My results for my search *health cannabis effects* include items from the **Library Catalogue**
   and **Journal Articles** groups, but no **Course Reserves**. Clicking on any one category will show
   specific group results. (Over 22,641 results on OSS, but only 16 of those are results are
   found for a Library Catalogue search.)
4) Click on **Library Catalogue**.
   - What order are the results in?
   - How do I get more information about any one result?
   - How do I get the thing itself?
   - Can I keep track of what I like?
5) I may Sign In to the Library system to track results & searches and see my library account.

What results are best for me?
1) What do I need?
   a) **Books**? Click on **Library Catalogue**. Do I need academic books? What does that mean?
- Books are a good source to start research – they may include more background information as an introduction to the topic.
- Click on the title of any one result for more information about that result.
- Does that information include other words to describe my topic?
- Do I need to change my search terms?

b) Journal Articles? Click Journal Articles. Do I need peer-reviewed articles? What does that mean?
- The Library has more articles than books, so there are usually more article results.
- Articles usually are more detailed about a small part of a larger topic. A book might be called *Health effects of cannabis use* and have a chapter on one positive effect, a chapter on a negative effect, and chapter dealing with the law for medical use of cannabis, and so on. A journal article (especially an academic, peer-reviewed or scholarly one) is likely about a very specific aspect of one health effect in a specific population- for example, *Cannabis Use in Psychosis: the Effects On Metabolic Health*.
- Results include various Resource Types. If you want only Articles, look for your choices in the Resource Type section to the left of results. Find choices for Peer-reviewed limiters in the Availability section to the left of results.

- I add the term *editor* to my search: *health cannabis effects editor*. There is only one result, and when I check it, it isn’t what I need.
- I need to change my search to get more results: *health cannabis editor*
- Now there 3 results – one of which I find useful for this topic.

2) Not all results are useful. I need to check several results, decide what fits together, and if they support my argument.

Where can I get help with this?
- Professor
- Make a Research Appointment button on the Library homepage.
- Reference Desk (no appointment needed) - Main Library Monday-Thursday 11 AM-3 PM and Friday 11 AM-2 PM.
- Chat Reference - see popup box on the Library homepage.
- Ask at the Main Circulation Desk
- Talk to/email us about scheduling other times if none of this works for you.
- There is no limit to the number of times you may visit the Reference Desk, use Chat, ask questions, or book appointments.
- We do not discuss with your professor any of the information about which you ask.
- Writing Centre – they also schedule times in the Library

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.