There are normally 2 search modes in a database: Basic and Advanced

1. **Boolean Operators:**
   - “AND” (narrows your results; both terms must be present)
   - “OR” (expands your results; either term or both must be present)
   - “NOT” (first term must be present; second term must not be present)

2. **Controlled Vocabulary:**
   Subject heading or thesaurus or descriptor. (Helps put a concept or idea into words you can use to search.)

3. **Field Searching:**
   The ability to restrict your search to a specific field (title, author, etc.) You can combine this with other tools.

4. **Limiters:**
   Most databases allow you to limit your search by “full-text,” “publication date,” “peer-reviewed material,” “source type,” or “language.”

5. **Proximity Searching:**
   Sets rules for the relationship between terms. You can state how close to each other, and sometimes in what order, terms must appear in the text.

6. **Folders and Alerts:**
   You can create a folder (as many as you wish) and store articles for future use.
   You can create an email alert and each time a new article on your topic is indexed, you will receive an email that contains that article.
   You can create a periodical alert. Each time a new volume (a periodical of your choice) is published, you will receive it in your email.

Over
Other terms to become familiar with:

False Drop: A document that is retrieved by your search, but the terms in the document are not used in the sense you intended. (example: You searched “jobs or careers” and in your results there is an article about “Steve Jobs.”

Stop Words: These are “noise words” or common words that most databases do not index. Typical stop words include an, by, for, from, of, the, to, with, be, where, how, it, or, not, etc.

Wildcard or Truncation: Picks up as many variations of a word as possible using a symbol (*, ?, !). For example: employ* picks up employ, employs, employer, employed, employment.