

Planning your Search

2. Analyse the Topic *and* 3. Select Keywords

Why analyse the topic?

Your assignment or essay title will often come in the form of a statement. Analyse what is expected of you and find **key words** appropriate to the topic.

- In order to produce key words that will make your search easier, faster and more productive, be very specific.
- Use nouns or adjectives as key words.
- Ignore words like 'discuss' or 'analyse' when looking for information. They are important when you start to write up your assignment as it is then you must 'discuss' and 'analyse' the information you have found.
- Ascertain other issues or features (e.g. time and place).

For example:

*'Discuss the impact of **environmental change** on people's **health** in the **UK**.'*

The words in bold type are issues and features – use these words to start your search. Consider using **synonyms** (words meaning the same thing) and also **related** (broader or narrower) names or words.

Reflect on this advice using the table below:

| Environment | Health | UK |
|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Environmental change | Disease | Great Britain |
| Global warming | Illness | England |
| Greenhouse effect | Cancer | Wales |
| Ozone layer | Sickness | Scotland |
| Pollution | Infection | Northern Ireland |

You get the picture!

- Analyse the topic
- Find keywords
- Use synonyms – a thesaurus will help you find these
- Use other related words that have meaning to your topic to start your search.