Boolean “OR” combines different sets into one group

The search strawberries OR blueberries OR raspberries finds any article/document that contains any of these words.

Boolean “AND” finds the intersection or overlap between different sets.

The search strawberries OR blueberries OR raspberries AND antioxidants finds ONLY articles/documents any one of the berry words i.e., strawberry, blueberry, raspberry AND the word antioxidants.

“ADVANCED SEARCH” in the library databases is set up to support good Boolean searching.

HINT: Place all your synonyms for 1st concept in one “box”, USE “AND” place synonyms for 2nd concept in 2nd box.

HINT: Try to think of 2 different key words for your topic & search using an AND operator.

Using 3 text boxes with 2 AND operators is even better.

Limit your keyword to TITLE
Accessing the Library’s Databases:

- **On campus** use the college’s home page to click on the “library” link that you will find on the left hand side (middle) of the web page.
- **At home**, use Google or another search engine to go to [http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/library/](http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/library/). Have the number of library card number ready as well as your PIN.

Research Sequence:
You should have a plan to conduct your research, this will save you time and maximize your effectiveness.

1. **Scope the Question** - Consult reference books & reference databases to understand, clarify the subject (your paper’s topic). Define the subject, define terms. Understand sub-topics and closely related topics. Determine boundaries, and core areas and peripheral ideas.

2. **Scope the Subject** – Conduct simple searches in the appropriate library databases. Scan the results of searches. Review the information resources available. Is there sufficient coverage for your subject or thesis topic? Is there enough or too much information published on your topic? Should you concerning your topic been published?

3. **Retrieve journals articles and books for first reading** - Search appropriate the library databases and the library book catalog. Use papers from academic journals and news sources to get more recent information.

4. **Refine adjust your outline/theme/treatment** - Alter and adjust your subject/theme/thesis to adjust to the information available and to what you are learning about the subject.

5. **Create an outline and note taking system** - or make use of the online database methods to create bookmarks, folders, to save, export or email articles and papers and citations you find and plan to use. Export citations, refer to Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) site or handouts in the Cañada Library to create your works cited page.

6. **Evaluate your sources** - (little or minimal effort to evaluate the accuracy and authoritativeness of a work is need when using the library databases). Open web resources will need careful evaluation.

7. **Use the library databases to generate a correct citation** - You must cite the sources you use. *CQ Researcher* offers “CiteNow!” *Opposing Viewpoints* presents a “Source Citation” at the end of each paper.

8. **Repeat** your information research steps as needed. You will learn and perhaps revise your ideas as you go.

Choosing the Best Databases for your assignment:
A library database is a cohesive collection of information and publications that **focused** and **concentrated** on a limited subject area. Your first research step is to choose the appropriate database to begin your research. Pull down the scrolling list to see an alphabetical list. Ask a reference librarian for database suggestions. Over time with repeated use of the databases you will learn the different coverage of each database.

**Best** database to get authoritative and expert definitions and concise explanations:
- *Gale Virtual Reference Library*

The **best** databases for an issues (argumentative /persuasive) paper. Use “Browse” feature to minimize your search effort. Contents are bundled together cohesively around different topics.
- *CQ Researcher*  
- *Opposing Viewpoints*

The **best** general databases are good for a wide range of topics. They include academic journals and news sources. Open the “Advanced Search” window to best search each database. Use the “Advance Search” feature.
- *Academic Search Complete* (Ebscohost) or *MasterFile* Complete (Ebscohost)
- *Academic OneFile* (Cengage/Gale) - includes more popular publications that have easier reading levels.