To retrieve information
- The words used when searching a database must match the words in the field.
  For example, if you want info on “adolescent”, using “teenager” or “youth” will not necessarily retrieve the record you want.
- Define your question carefully e.g. is there a relationship between weight problems and computer use in teenagers?
- Choose the keywords for that question e.g. weight, problems, computer, teenagers.

Common types of simple searches using field searches
- Author
- Title
- Subject
- Keyword
  E.g. If you know an author but not the title, you can search the author field for all the records by that author

Searching Databases
- Select keywords – use both scientific and common names
- Try not to be too general as you may get too many references.
- Try not to be too specific as you may miss relevant references.
- Some ways of controlling the number of records found:
  - use of connectors (boolean operators i.e. AND, OR, NOT)
  - use of truncation e.g. infect* will find terms like infected, infecting
  - Use wildcards e.g. wom?n searches for women and woman
- Always refer to the help features to get the most out of the database

 Controlled Vocabulary/Thesaurus
- … is a carefully selected list of words and phrases, used to tag units of information so that they can easily retrieved by a search

Limits
- Many databases will allow searches with in Limits
  - Date: can limit your search to a particular year or a year range.
  - Language – English or other language, all languages
  - Format – brief citation, with abstract, with full-text
  - Age – in ranges or children/adult
  - Gender – male / female or both

Keyword vs. Subject searching
- **Keyword / low precision-high recall**
  - Searches different parts of the record, including title and abstract
  - Searches for any word or phrase
  - May retrieve irrelevant records
  - Good for obscure topics
- **Field/high precision- low recall**
  - Searches only subject heading/descriptor field
  - Searches from an existing list of subject headings
  - High degree of relevancy
  - Good for common topics

Stopwords
- ... are terms that appear so frequently that they lose their usefulness as search terms are ignored if you search for them in combination with another word e.g. The, An, A, In