# CHECKLIST LITERATURE SEARCH - UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

A literature review is an iterative process, which you control yourself. You can execute the following steps to make sure that you have performed a thorough literature review. Of course, the writing process cannot be (entirely) separated from this.

**Tips & Tricks**

### Subject selection
Search for a subject that makes you feel **enthusiastic**. Look on the Internet, social media, news(papers), journal articles, textbooks or reference works.

### Frame your research question
**Narrow** your subject and divide your **research question** by any sub-questions. Look for aspects that interest you in the literature relevant to your discipline.

*NOT: Overfishing*
*DO: What is the influence of different fishing methods on sole and plaice. For more info, check here.*

### Define key terms and synonyms
Check a reference work e.g. Wikipedia, a dictionary and review academic articles in order to familiarise yourself with your subject. Note key **subject terms** and their **synonyms**.

*Databases are often available in English. If this is not your mother tongue, make sure you know the correct English terms. E.g., check a thesaurus.*

### Determine publication type
What **publication type** provides the information you need? I.e. are you looking for news, scientific information or e.g. quantitative data?

*Check this overview.*

### Select a search tool
What search tool do you need? A **search engine**, a **bibliographic-** or **numerical database** (e.g. Google Scholar, RUQuest, PubMed, Orbis, Hudoc, Web of Science)?

*Find the right search tool via the library guide of your research discipline: libguides.ru.nl/subjects.*

### Search
Search **systematically**; combine key subject terms and synonyms with the correct search operators. Evaluate results based on quantity & quality. Revise your search as you see fit. Search for, or follow **citations**, i.e. check reference lists of an article or book for recent developments or the bigger picture. You could also check whether an article of your interest is being cited in other publications.

*Stay informed about new publications by means of setting alerts, if the system allows you to. Create a (free) personal account if necessary.*

### Document
Record your **search strategy** e.g. search terms, search options, search filters, search operators etc. **Collect your references** with a reference tool such as Endnote, Mendeley or Zotero.

*Record your search history if the system allows you to, or copy the search history e.g. to MS Word or your note-taking app.*

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