Building a Search Strategy

1. State your research question:

   Example: Is Benadryl effective for the treatment of anxiety?

2. Break down your research question into **major** concepts:

   ***Note 1: Some **major** concepts may be implied, such as **effectiveness** and **treatment**, and by using these concepts in a search strategy, you will actually reduce the number of results

   ***Note 2: There may be caveats to the above note. For example, using the sample research question above, it is possible you could find results where anxiety was noted as a side-effect of using Benadryl, rather than information relating to the medication's treatment effectiveness.

   Example:

Concept 1	Concept 2
Benadryl	Anxiety

Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3

3. Brainstorm synonyms for your major concepts (Use Medical Subject Headings (**MeSH** terms) from PubMed, in addition to self-generated synonyms):

Benadryl		**Anxiety**
Diphenhydramine (this is the substance name)	**AND**	anxieties nervousness anxiousness

Concept 1		Concept 2		Concept 3
Synonyms	**AND**	Synonyms	**AND**	Synonyms

4. Create your search strategy, using the concept blocks above. Each concept block should be placed in parentheses, with the Boolean operator **OR** within the parentheses, and the Boolean operator **AND** should connect each concept:

   Example: (Benadryl **or** Diphenhydramine**) AND (**anxiety or anxieties or nervousness or anxiousness**)**