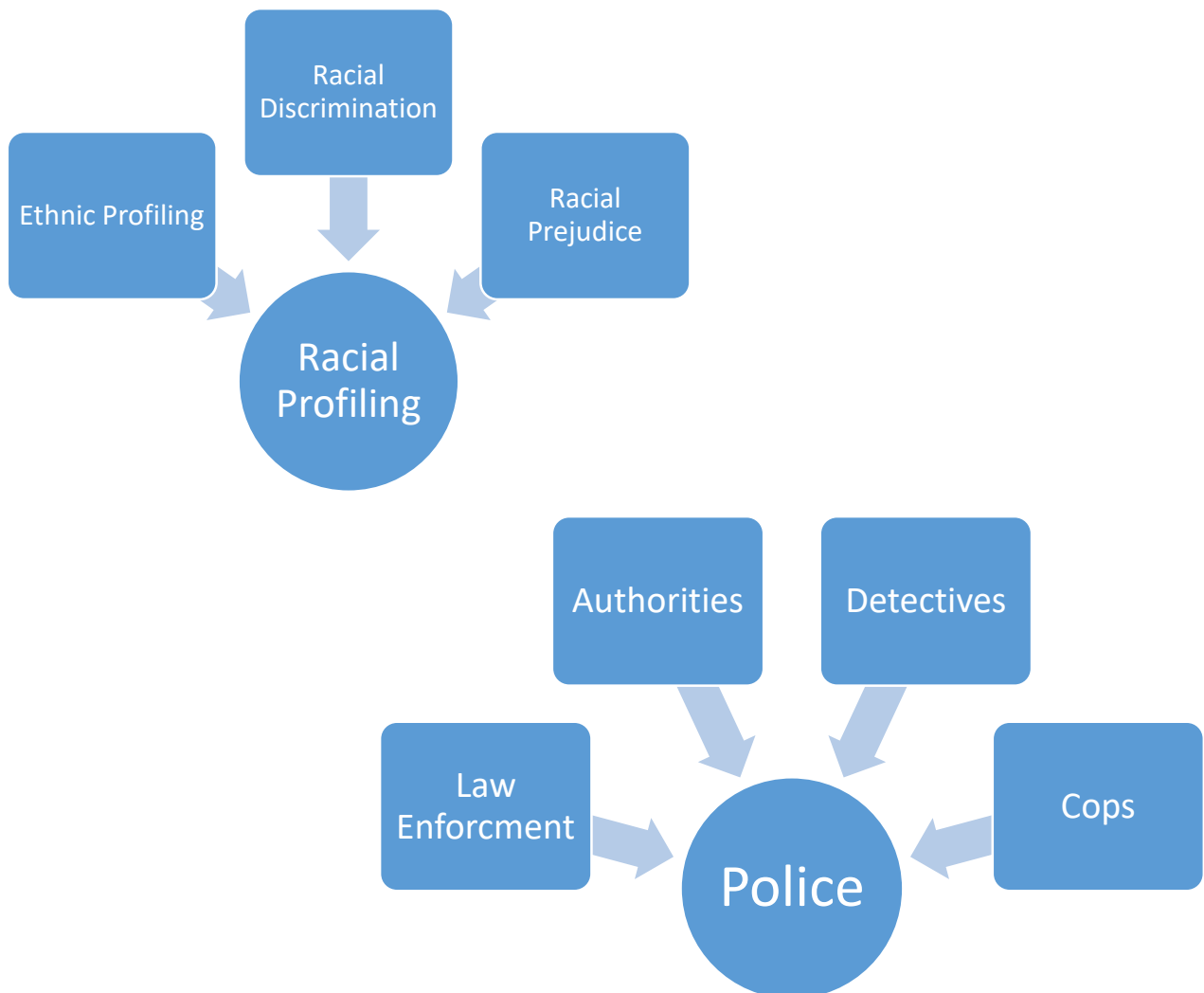# Develop Keywords and Related Terms

Keywords: Keywords will help you search for resources in library databases. *Keep in mind databases prefer keywords to phrases or questions.* You will receive broader results when using keywords.

Think about your topic, determine what the main concepts or points are for it. Then consider what words or terms can be used to describe it.
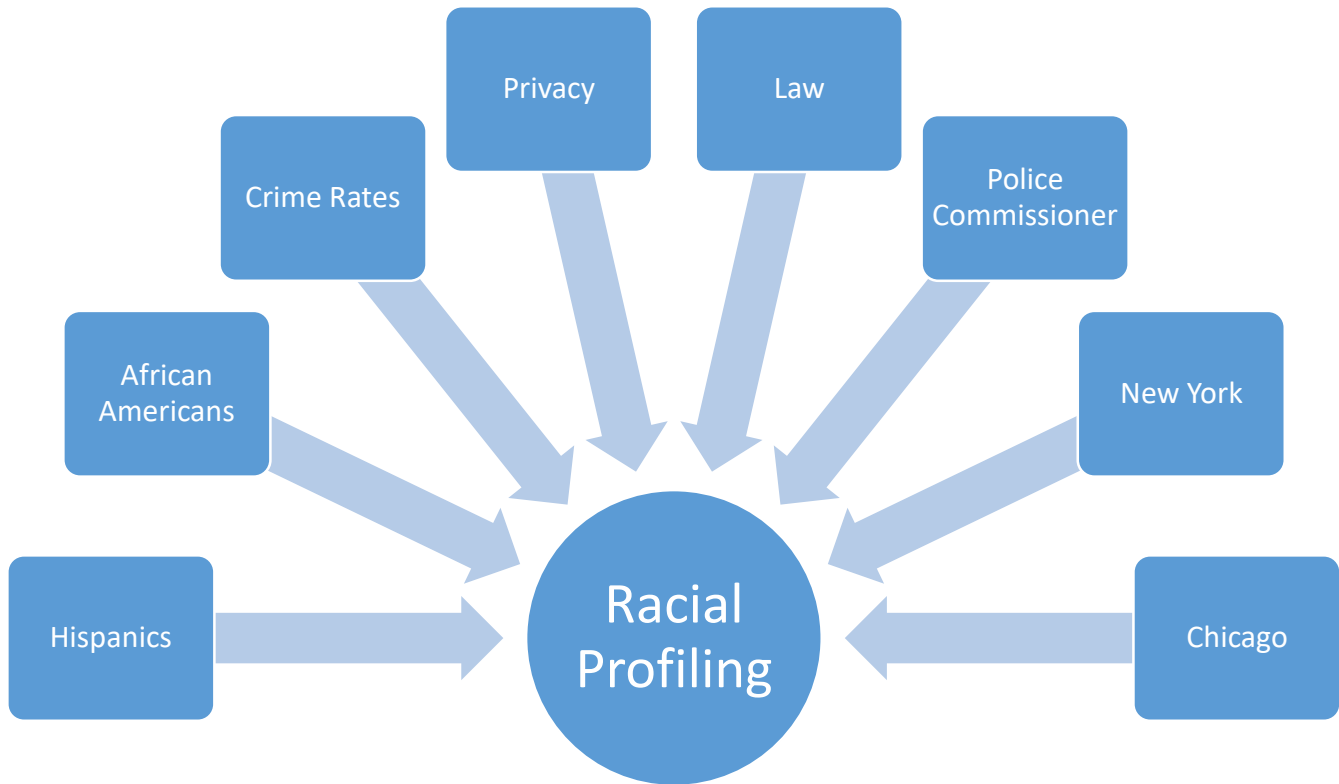
For example, if you read an article about "racial profiling" and the "police" and this is something you would like to write about, keep in mind:

- The keywords that YOU use may not be the same as what others would use to describe the same concept
- Consider the synonyms (or similar words) for each keyword you would use
- Brainstorm and write down any keywords and synonyms you find during your research
- Try to combine some keywords (with Boolean Operators) to see what results you get

Racial Discrimination

Ethnic Profiling

Racial Prejudice

Racial Profiling

Authorities

Detectives

Law Enforcment

Cops

Police

*Adapted with changes from: Kurt R. Schmeller Library, The Research Process Guidebook 2015-2016

Related Terms

- These are terms that are associated with your topic, without being synonyms for it
- As an example, "poverty" and "food stamps" are related terms, but they are two different things with different meanings
- Think about what terms are related to your topic and write them down as you conduct your research
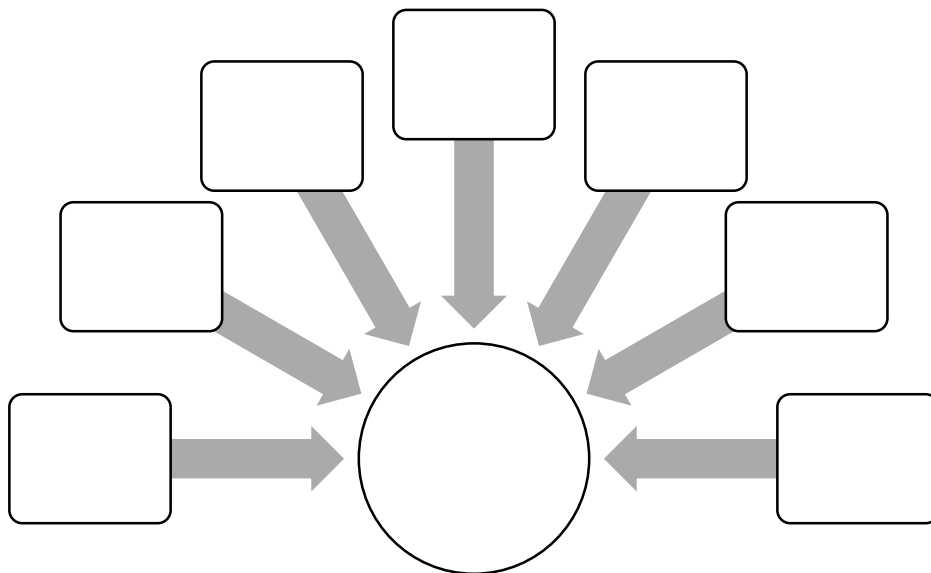- This can help you direct your search and find the exact results you want

If needed, gather some background information.

Background Information from reference sources like dictionaries or encyclopedias can help build a foundation for your topic, as well as provide terms that are similar or relate to your topic that you might not have thought of.
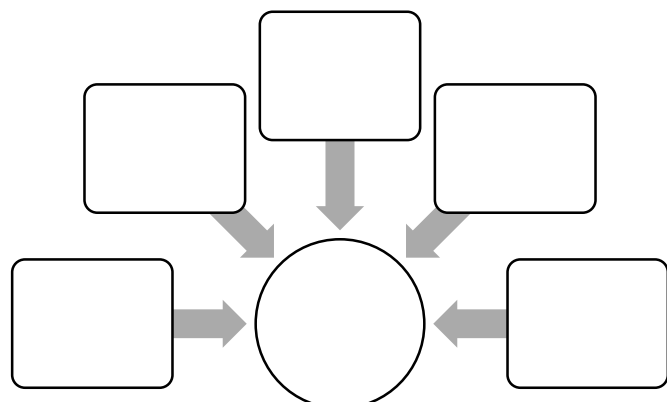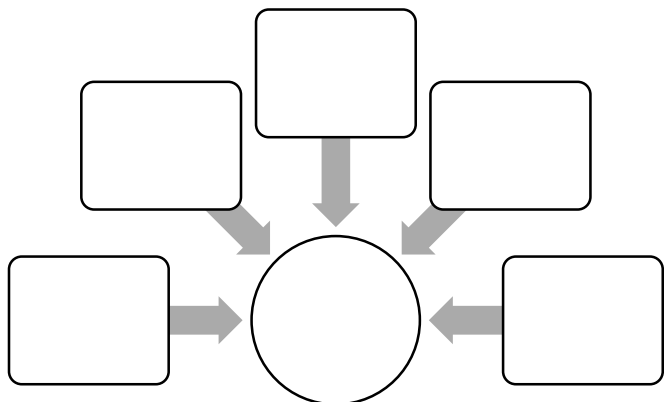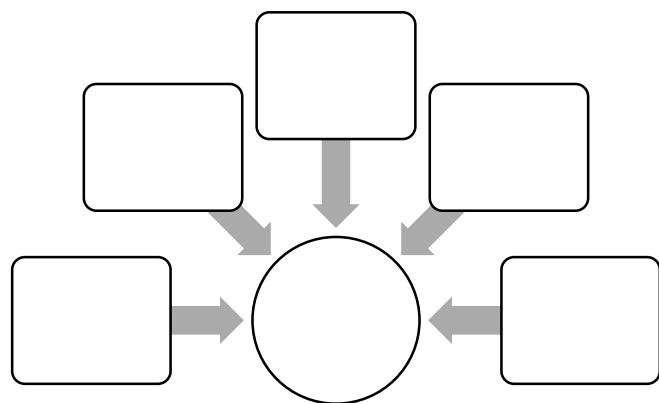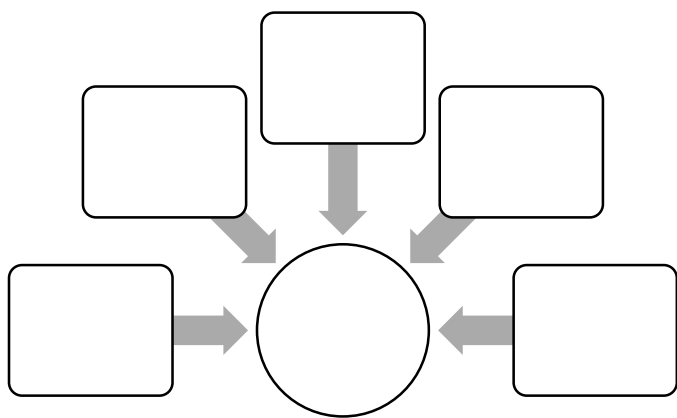
Credo Reference, Gale Virtual Reference, and opposing Viewpoints are a few library databases that would be a good place to start.

*Adapted with changes from: Kurt R. Schmeller Library, The Research Process Guidebook 2015-2016

Keywords and Related Terms Worksheet

Keywords for your topic- Similar Words (synonyms)

Related terms for your Keywords

*Adapted with changes from: Kurt R. Schmeller Library, The Research Process Guidebook 2015-2016