# Four Easy Steps to Plan a Literature Search – transcript.

## Planning your search.

### Step 1: Break your topic down:

Beginning with your research question, consider how you can break this down into meaningful search words or keywords and phrases. Try to pull out keywords from the question or brief that are relevant to your search.

Example topic:  Corporate Social Responsibility and small business strategies in the UK.

Example keywords:

* Corporate Social Responsibility,
* Small Business Strategies,
* UK.

Tip: Make a note of any keywords so you can keep track of what you have searched.

### Step 2: Think about related areas:

This step requires you think outside the box and consider other aspects that are relevant to the topic or research question.  Consider:

* What you know already about the topic?
* What can you find out about the topic through an initial search?

Tip: Do some background reading around the topic e.g. use introductory books, the web, newspapers.

### Step 3: Consider alternatives:

The next step is to think of any variations of the search words or any other relevant keywords, including:

* Synonyms and phrases e.g. Corporate Social Responsibility, Business ethics.
* Abbreviations e.g. CSR, SME.
* Americanisms e.g. Organization.
* Plural or Singular variations e.g. Strategy, Strategies.

### Step 4: Create meaningful search strategies:

The next stage is to bring some of the keywords together to create meaningful search strategies. If you are trying to focus your search down then link keywords with ‘AND’.

Example search strategy:

CSR AND Small Business AND UK.

To create wider searches, you can use ‘OR’ e.g. CSR OR Corporate Social Responsibility.

Tip: Pick up on any keywords or descriptors as you search and add these to your plan.

### Next step:

The next step is to test out some of your keywords and search strategies online to locate information.

You may need to revisit your search plan once you have carried out an initial search or you can add to your list of keywords as you find useful information.