Suppose that you're researching academic performance. That's pretty easy, right? We'll just type "academic performance" into our search and get back all of the results that have to do with "academic performance."

But wait a minute! What if someone wrote a whole article about academic performance but they only used the word grades. We'd better add that word too.

We use "OR" to connect different words that mean similar things. Academic performance and grades are not exactly the same, but they are similar.

This search will find sources that use the word "academic performance" or the word "grades" or both words.

You can use OR to add as many words that mean the same thing as you want.

For example, we could add marks too.

Every time we add another word using OR the red area gets bigger, and we find more resources.

But what if we wanted to combine words that mean different things?

Suppose you're researching children's academic performance. We want research that is about children and academic performance

We use AND to connect different things

Children get grades, but grades and children are not the same thing

This search will find sources that use the word children and the word grades but not sources just about children or just about grades

Just like with OR, we can keep adding concepts with AND. We could add the words physical activity to search for the impact physical activity has on children's grades

But wait, every time we add another concept the red area where all the concepts overlap gets smaller and smaller. Soon our search might have zero results. What can we do about this?

Well, first we can take away some words to make the red area bigger, but what happens when we can't take anything else away?

Remember OR? We'd still be happy to find sources that use the words children OR kids. So let's search for children OR kids AND grades. The red area gets bigger.

But what if someone wrote an article all about the grades and only used the word marks? I think you know where this is going.

If we search for the words children OR kids AND grades OR academic performance the red area gets even bigger.

So where can you use AND and OR? You can use them on the library website at library.yorku.ca using the advanced search. You can use them in all kinds of research databases like ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and Scholars Portal. You can even use AND and OR to search Google.

Just remember to use OR to connect words that mean similar things, and use AND to connect words that mean different things. Happy searching!