Welcome to the Teaching Resources Center’s Online Tutorial Series. This segment of the series is entitled “How to Conduct Keyword Searches in the Library Catalog”.

As you probably already know, the library catalog is the tool that is used to search for materials found in the library.

When you open the library catalog, it will automatically be set for a General Keyword search under the Basic search feature.

A Keyword search is a good way to search if you do not know the title, author, or an appropriate subject heading to use.

For this tutorial I will demonstrate three different keyword searches: general keyword, title keyword, and subject keyword.

I will use the word “weather” as my search term for all three searches to show you the differences in search results retrieved.

I will start with a general keyword search. After any keyword search is performed, a list of titles will appear. A “search results” indicator will also appear on the left showing how many items have been retrieved. In this case, 3195 titles were retrieved.

Now I will conduct a title keyword search. As you can see, only 1573 hits were retrieved. This is less than half the results of a general keyword search.

Now I will conduct a subject keyword search. As you can see, this search retrieved only 1158 hits, which is the least amount of the three searches.

As shown by the numbers, general keyword searches produce more results than any other search. This is because a general keyword search will look for your search term in the entire item record and not just in the title or subject heading. Even though a general keyword search retrieved the most items, it does not mean that all of these items are about “weather”. It only means that the word weather can be found somewhere in the item record.

All of the item records retrieved in each search contain the word “weather”, but only items with the word weather in the subject heading will be about the subject of weather. To show you what I mean, I will give you two examples.

This is an item record for a book called “Weather and Climate” that was retrieved in all three searches. As you can see in this item record, it has a subject heading of heading of “Weather – Juvenile literature”. The focus of this book is about weather. The word weather was picked up in the title, the subject heading, and the summary of the record.

This is an item record for a book called “Earth” that was retrieved in the general keyword search. As you can see in this item record, it has a subject heading of “Earth – Juvenile literature”. The
focus of the book is about the planet earth, not about weather. Only a small part of the book is about weather. The word weather was found in the contents field of the item record, and this is why the general keyword search picked up this item. This item would not be picked up in a subject search.

Conducting a general keyword search is a good way to search if you do not know of an appropriate subject heading to use. When in doubt of what subject to search for, start with a general keyword search.

As you scroll through the brief records of your search results, and you find an item you like, and you know that you would like to find more items that are similar, click on the title of the item you like. This will pull up the full record for that item.

The subject headings in the full records are “hot” links. Just click on the subject heading and the catalog will pull up an alphabetical list of subject headings, beginning with the one you selected. Click on the subject heading and you will get a list of items that fall within that subject heading. This way you will get more items that you like.

The purpose of these tutorials is to help you find materials in the Teaching Resources Center.

In order to view only the items that are located in the Teaching Resources Center, you need to use the “Limit By” feature to narrow your search results to items that are found only in the TRC.

The “Limit By” feature of the catalog will not appear until after a keyword search has been conducted.

For this demonstration I will use the same keyword searches as before, and I will limit the search results to materials found only in the Teaching Resources Center. I will start with a general keyword search.

As you can see, a general keyword search for weather has produced a list of 3195 items.

To limit the search results to materials found in the TRC, I will click on Curriculum Collection in the Limit By feature, and then click on the arrow to the right.

As you can see, the search results decreased from 3195 items that can be found in various places in the library, down to 324 items that can be found only in the Teaching Resources Center.

I will now repeat the same process for a title keyword search.

As you can see, a title keyword search for weather has produced a list of 1573 items.

To limit the search results to materials found in the TRC, I will click on Curriculum Collection in the Limit By feature, and then click on the arrow to the right.

As you can see, the search results decreased from 1573 items that can be found in various places in the library, down to 167 items that can be found only in the Teaching Resources Center.
Now I will conduct a subject keyword search for weather.

As you can see, a subject keyword search for weather has produced a list of 1158 items.

To limit the search results to materials found in the TRC, I will click on Curriculum Collection, and then click on the arrow to the right.

As you can see, the search results decreased from 1158 items that can be found in various places in the library, down to 139 items that can be found only in the Teaching Resources Center.

Please remember that if you ever have any questions about searching the catalog, or finding materials in the library, please feel free to come to the TRC desk and ask for help. We will do whatever we can to help you find the materials you are looking for.
Quiz for “How to Conduct Keyword Searches in the Library Catalog”

1) A keyword search is a good way to search the library catalog if you do not know the title, author, or an appropriate subject heading to use.

   a) True
   b) False

2) The “Limit By” feature of the library catalog will NOT appear until after a keyword search has been conducted.

   a) True
   b) False

3) A subject keyword search will produce more results than a general keyword search.

   a) True
   b) False

4) You can use the “Limit By” feature to limit your search results to materials found in the Teaching Resources Center.

   a) True
   b) False

5) The library catalog is the tool that is used to find journal articles?

   a) True
   b) False

6) Even though a general keyword search will retrieve more results than any other search, it does not mean that all of the items retrieved will be about the subject you want.

   a) True
   b) False

7) The subject headings in the full record of each item in the library catalog are hot links. By clicking on a subject heading in an item record that you like, an alphabetical list of subject headings will appear, starting with the subject heading you clicked on. This is a good way to find more (similar) items that you like.

   a) True
   b) False
8) Watching this tutorial was helpful to me in learning how to search for materials found in the Teaching Resources Center.

a) True
b) False