Hi, my name is Elizabeth and I’m here to talk to you today about choosing keywords. By the end of this tutorial, you will be able to effectively choose keywords from a research question or topic sentence.

Keywords are the search terms you choose when using a search engine and are meant to represent your paper topic as a whole. So, say you wanted to write a paper on the history of zombies in pop culture. In Google, you might type in that you want “articles about zombies in popular culture” and get results, but our library’s catalog does not work this way.

In our catalog, Scout, we must choose keywords. So typing in “articles about zombies in pop culture” will bring you back results, but not the ones you need. Instead, we must choose the right keywords to make our search as relevant as possible.

For this topic, our two main keywords will be Zombies AND “popular culture.”

Then, from here we can choose synonyms to help broaden our search to make sure we find as many relevant sources as possible. For example, in addition to searching for Zombies AND “popular culture” you could also search undead AND film or walking dead AND television.

From here, you can then plug these keywords into Scout, using the fields provided. Also, remember to put quotation marks around phrases that contain two or more words.

Thank you for watching. Please see our next video to find out how to use Boolean Operators with your keywords to improve your search results, and don’t forget to visit us at, lib.ua.edu.