EXERCISE 2: LITERATURE SEARCHING IN A DATABASE

TOPIC:

1) What are the main concepts within your topic? Write these concepts in the bubbles provided.

2) Brainstorm keywords and synonyms for each of your identified concepts. Write them in the boxes provided.

3) What would your search look like in a typical database?

Now, try your search in one of the databases you found in Exercise 1.
SUBJECT HEADINGS:

Identify an article that looks interesting to you and click on it. Do you find any subject headings listed? If so, write down a few subject headings for future reference. If not, N/A.

CITATION CHAINING:

... is a great way to (a) find more relevant research and (b) see how the scholarly conversation has evolved. Using the article that you found, try the following:

1) Backward citation chaining (look backwards at the research your article has cited)

Scan the bibliography of the article. Do any of the cited articles look interesting? If so, search for the articles by title in Novanet or Google Scholar.

2) Forward citation chaining (look ahead to see whether any scholars have cited your article)

Some databases will give you this information (e.g. *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*). You can also search for your article by title in Google Scholar and click the “Cited by” link below the record for a list of citing articles. **Please note: this approach does not work well with very recent articles!**

If you’re not working on a humanities-related project and need an example topic to use today, try one of these:

- Gorbachev’s policy of Perestroika and Glasnost and mass media in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s.
- Is acting morally necessary for happiness?
- How is fantasy portrayed in the films of David Lynch?
- How does Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* subvert conventional romance?