

DATABASE QUICK REFERENCE

Database	Find all search terms	Find any search terms	Include first search term, exclude second	Find exact phrase~	Parentheses*	Proximity operators+	Truncation#	Wildcards^	Search dates
Google Scholar	(default – don't need to enter) e.g. <i>cat dog</i>	OR e.g. <i>cat OR dog</i>	- (no space after hyphen) e.g. <i>cat -dog</i>	" " e.g. " <i>fast food</i> "			* (whole word)		.. e.g. <i>1990..1999</i> e.g. <i>...2005</i> (single year)
ProQuest	AND e.g. <i>cat AND dog</i>	OR e.g. <i>cat OR dog</i>	NOT e.g. <i>cat NOT dog</i>	" " e.g. " <i>junk food</i> "	For nested queries e.g. <i>cancer AND (dog OR cat)</i>	NEAR/ <i>n</i> , PRE/ <i>n</i> e.g. <i>PRE/4</i>	* e.g. <i>advertis*</i>	? (one character) * (one or no character) e.g. <i>nurse?</i> e.g. <i>analy?e</i> e.g. <i>colo*r</i>	< less than > greater than <= less than or equal to => greater than or equal to - range e.g. <i>YR(2005-2009)</i> e.g. <i>YR(<=2000)</i>
EBSCO	AND e.g. <i>cat AND dog</i>	OR e.g. <i>cat OR dog</i>	NOT e.g. <i>cat NOT dog</i>	" " e.g. " <i>climate change</i> "	For nested queries e.g. <i>cancer AND (dog OR cat)</i>	N <i>n</i> , W <i>n</i> e.g. <i>tax N5 reform</i> e.g. <i>climate W3 change</i>	* e.g. <i>comput*</i>	? (one character) # (one or no character) e.g. <i>nurse?</i> e.g. <i>colo#r</i>	(use limiters)
Gale	AND e.g. <i>cat AND dog</i>	OR e.g. <i>cat OR dog</i>	NOT e.g. <i>cat NOT dog</i>	" " e.g. "student teacher"		N <i>n</i> , W <i>n</i> e.g. <i>flea n5 dog</i>	* e.g. <i>immigra*</i>	? (one character) ! (one or no character) e.g. <i>nurse?</i> e.g. <i>colo!r</i>	(use limiters)

NB: Some databases don't care if AND, OR, and NOT are capitals or lowercase but some (e.g. Google Scholar) do. It's easier to always put them in capitals. It also makes it easier to see where they are.

~ Quotation marks find a phrase exactly as typed. If the database usually finds plurals or alternative spellings, using quotation marks with stop this.

* Usually a database searches operators in this order: **AND** then **OR** then **NOT**. The search *cancer AND dog OR cat* would first search for *cancer AND dog*, then add *OR cat* to these results. Put *dog OR cat* in parentheses, i.e. *cancer AND (dog OR cat)*, to search for cancer in dogs as well as cancer in cats.

+ Proximity operators look for works that are near each other but not next to each other. NEAR or N looks for two search terms in any order that are *n* words apart, e.g. *cancer NEAR/3 dog* looks for "cancer" within 3 words of "dog". PRE or W looks for one search term *n* words in front of another term in the order that you enter them, e.g. *climate PRE/4 change* looks for "climate" within the four words ahead of "change".

Truncation replaces MULTIPLE characters at the end of a word. E.g. *migra** finds "migrant", "migrated", and "migration". E.g. *comput** finds "computer" or "computing". In some databases truncation also finds missing words, e.g. *a midsummer * dream* finds "a midsummer night's dream".

^ A one character wildcard replaces a SINGLE character. E.g. *nurse?* finds "nursed" and "nurses" but not "nurse". E.g. *ad???* finds "added", "adult", or "adopt", but not "add". E.g. *ne?t* finds "neat", "nest", or "next", but not "net". A "one or no character" wildcard can be replaced by a single character or by no character, e.g. *colo#r* to find "color" or "colour". NB: If the database usually automatically searches for plurals or a search term, using a wildcard probably means it no longer will.

NB: Combining truncation and wildcards in a single word usually means the word won't be searched for properly. Just use one or the other, not both.

More tips (for more detailed help, check the database Help page or ask a librarian)

ProQuest

- ProQuest searches using AND as the default, e.g., *healthy eating* is searched as “healthy AND eating”.
- ProQuest doesn’t use stop words and so searches all words you type, e.g. *cat in the hat* is searched as “cat AND in AND the AND hat”.
- The symbols >, <, /, *, and ? have specific meanings. Don’t use them as normal punctuation.
- Terms using truncation or wildcards are not considered when sorting results by relevance.

Gale

- Gale ignores stop words even when within brackets or quotation marks, e.g. *a, an, as, at, in, is, on, that, the, which*, etc. E.g. searching for *man in the moon* is the same as searching for *man moon*.
- If search terms include “and”, “or”, or “not” as words, not search operators, put the search term(s) in quotation marks, e.g. “*black and white photographs*”.
- Proximity operators can only be used between two search terms. I.e.: *fleas n10 (dogs or cats)* will not work but *fleas n10 dogs or fleas n10 cats* will.

Google Scholar

- Google Scholar automatically searches for plurals, verbs, and alternative spellings or your search terms. It also tries to find related terms. You can stop it doing this by putting your search term in quotation marks.
- Google ignores stop words, e.g. *the, an, a, of, or, many*, etc. If these are important for your search, put them in quotation marks.

EBSCO

- EBSCO automatically searches for plural and singular versions of a word and some regional spellings (e.g. colour and color). This will not happen for words in quotation marks.
- EBSCO ignores stop words, e.g. *been, however, of, in, or so*, even if they are in quotation marks. It will find any single word instead. E.g. searching for *company of America* will bring up “company of America”, “company in America”, and “company for America”. It won’t bring up “company of the America” because there was only one word between “company” and “america” in the original search.
- Using AND, OR, or NOT inside quotation marks, e.g. “*cat OR dog*”, means they are treated as stop words and not searched for. Don’t use them within quotation marks.
- If you’re searching for a title with a question mark, remove the question mark as that is a wildcard in EBSCO.
- You can use multiple terms on either side of a proximity operator, e.g. (baseball or football or basketball) N5 (teams or players)

Need help? Contact us:

Library

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