

Online Search Techniques

Below are search techniques to help you find relevant results when using the library databases.

Identify Keywords

Create a list of keywords associated with your topic and keep them with you throughout the research process.

Write down your topic: *Does viewing television encourage aggressive behavior in children?*

Important words from your topic: television, aggressive, behavior, children.

Synonyms or other related words: *television, TV, aggressive, fighting, hostile, angry, behavior, action, attitude, children, kids, tweens, teens, etc.*

Now you have generated a useful list of keywords for finding resources!

Search terms: **television AND aggressive behavior AND children**

Exact Phrase Searching

To look for an exact phrase, type your phrase within **quotation marks** (" "). The results will contain the exact words in the quotation marks.

Example: **"attention deficit disorder"**

Truncation to Expand Your Search

Using an asterisk (*) or question mark (?) at the end of a root word (known as *truncation* or *stemming*), allows you to retrieve results containing any form of the root word.

Example: **teen*** will find **teen, teens, teenage, teenager, teenagers**

Note:

Most databases use the asterisk (*) as the truncation symbol. Check the *Help* link of the database you are using for the truncation symbol.

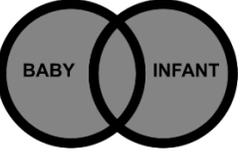
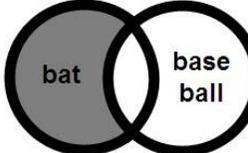
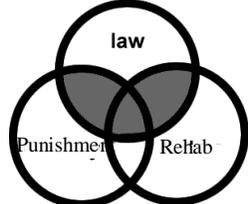


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Boolean Operators to Narrow or Broaden Your Search

Boolean searching is based on connecting keywords with three basic operators: **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**.

<p>AND</p> <p>The database will only retrieve resources that contain both words. This will NARROW your search and DECREASE search results.</p> <p><i>Example: school AND crime</i></p>	 <p>A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle is labeled 'SCHOOL' and the right circle is labeled 'CRIME'. The intersection of the two circles is shaded gray, representing the results of an AND search.</p>
<p>OR</p> <p>The database will retrieve resources that contain at least one of these words. This will BROADEN your search and INCREASE search results.</p> <p><i>Example: baby OR infant</i></p>	 <p>A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle is labeled 'BABY' and the right circle is labeled 'INFANT'. The entire area covered by both circles is shaded gray, representing the results of an OR search.</p>
<p>NOT</p> <p>Type NOT before a keyword to exclude that word from your search. Use NOT when you are searching for a keyword that may have multiple meanings.</p> <p><i>Example: bat NOT baseball</i></p>	 <p>A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle is labeled 'bat' and the right circle is labeled 'base ball'. The area of the 'bat' circle that does not overlap with the 'base ball' circle is shaded gray, representing the results of a NOT search.</p>
<p>Combining Boolean Operators</p> <p>Use parentheses () to keep combination searches in order. In the example below, resources retrieved will contain the word <i>law</i> and at least one of the words in parentheses.</p> <p><i>Example: law AND (punishment or rehabilitation)</i></p>	 <p>A Venn diagram with three overlapping circles. The top circle is labeled 'law'. The bottom-left circle is labeled 'Punishment' and the bottom-right circle is labeled 'Rehab'. The intersection of the 'law' circle and both the 'Punishment' and 'Rehab' circles is shaded gray, representing the results of a search for 'law AND (punishment or rehabilitation)'.</p>

Still need help? Ask a librarian!
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