

DATABASE SEARCH TIPS

THIS IS A QUICK REFERENCE TO ASSIST WHEN SEARCHING MULTIPLE DATABASES. FOR DETAILED SEARCHES, CREATE/LOG IN TO YOUR OWN ACCOUNT TO SAVE YOUR SEARCHES

Boolean/Proximity
Operators

Phrase

Truncation/
Wildcards

Subject Headings

OTHER TIPS

OVID MEDLINE / PSYCINFO / EMBASE / COCHRANE Central

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	No quotes required	Truncation * or \$ or : at end of a word or root word retrieves all suffix variations e.g. child* will find child, children, childhood, childless, etc.	Medline: MeSH Headings PsycINFO: Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms Embase: Emtree terms	Search with or without the hyphen to find hyphenated and non-hyphenated occurrences of the word in the title and abstract
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADJ (adjacent) will search words in the order you entered them with no words between 		Wildcard # within a word or at the end of a word to replace a single character e.g. wom#n will find woman, women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map terms to subject headings • search by subject headings or browse thesaurus 	<u>Field codes</u> e.g. default field in Medline is .mp. 'multi-purpose' (.mp.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADJn will search words in any order, with up to n words between them, in the same paragraph 		Wildcard ? within a word or at the end of a word to replace zero or one character e.g. colo?r will find color, colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a subject heading contains an operator or a stop word, use double quotation marks around it e.g. "substance use disorder" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Medline fields</u> • <u>Psycinfo fields</u> • <u>Embase fields</u>
<p>ADJ1 will search words in any order with no words between; ADJ2 will search words in any order with one word between; ADJ3 will search words in any order with two words between etc. e.g. postnatal ADJ2 depression finds postnatal depression, postnatal maternal depression, postnatal symptoms of depression etc. e.g. postnatal ADJ4 depression finds postnatal predictors of postpartum anxiety and depression, or depression and quality of life among postnatal, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop words are not counted in proximity searches 		Limited truncation *n or \$n specifies a maximum number of characters (n) that may follow the word or root word e.g. intern*4 will find intern, interns, internship, but not international		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can search in languages other than English that use the Roman alphabet (e.g. French, Spanish, Italian, and German), but you can't include accents or diacritics. • See more <u>Ovid Help</u> - Searching

EBSCO – CINAHL COMPLETE / CRIMINAL JUSTICE ABSTRACTS / BUSINESS SOURCE COMPLETE / AGELINE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	Use double quotes " "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *at the end of a word or root word retrieves all suffix variations e.g. child* retrieves child, children, childhood, childless, etc. In addition, an asterisk can replace a word e.g. "leaving * care" 	Databases in EBSCO may have a link for Subject headings, a link to Indexes, or a link to Thesaurus	Automatically searches on plural forms of singular terms and vice versa e.g. drug also finds drugs (except when using double quotes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near operator and number: Nn retrieves words within n words of each other, in any order e.g. e.g. sustainable N3 consumer finds consumer preference toward sustainable, or sustainable consumption and the consumer, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? within a word to replace a single character e.g. dis?s will find disks, discs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search by subject headings or thesaurus term 	Hyphens are ignored so search with or without for the same results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within operator and number: Wn retrieves words within n words of each other, in the order in which you entered them e.g. sustainable W3 consumer finds sustainable pathway to consumer, or sustainable manufacturing practices and consumer, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # within a word or at the end of a word to replace zero or one character e.g. colo#r will find color, colour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to 'Indexes' and select the option to browse an index by subject terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can search in multiple languages with words that include diacritics • For more see the Help section of the database

INFORMIT – A+ Education / CINCH / APAFT / BUSINESS COLLECTION / INDIGENOUS COLLECTION / HEALTH COLLECTION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AND, OR, NOT 	Use double quotes " " for an exact phrase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * within a word or at the end of a word to replace zero or more characters e.g. child* will find child, children, childhood, childless, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Advanced search select Subjects and enter the search term or phrase (in double quotation marks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation is ignored so search hyphenated terms in double quotes e.g. "ill-treated" • diacritics are ignored
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~n is the proximity operator and finds words up to n words apart in the specified order e.g. "leaving care"~2 finds leaving state care or leaving adult foster care 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? within a word or at the end of a word to replace a single character e.g. wom?n will find woman, women 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for DOIs using the format 10.3316/code.2016.0000 (do not add http://dx.doi.org/) • diacritics are ignored
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop words are not counted in proximity searches 		Truncation/wildcards cannot be used with phrase searching or proximity searching		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex proximity searches and those without double quotes can be unreliable.

PROQUEST - ERIC / SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS / SOCIAL SCIENCE PREMIUM COLLECTION / LITERATURE ONLINE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	Use double quotes ""	Wildcard ? used to replace zero or one character, either inside or at the end of a word e.g. dis?s retrieves disks and discs. Multiple wildcards can be used to represent multiple characters e.g. t??th will find tooth and teeth (but also truth, tenth, etc.)	Click Thesaurus to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View available thesauri in each database • Search for subject terms (contains words/begins with) • Browse subject terms A-Z 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click the Recent Searches icon on the top right of the screen to see your Search History to edit and combine searches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAR/n or N/n Looks for documents that contain two search terms, in any order, within n words apart. • They must be used with a number although zero can be used NEAR on its own defaults to NEAR/4 and N on its own searches for the letter N e.g. foster NEAR/3 care finds foster care, or foster and residential care, or care utilization of foster, etc. 		Truncation * at the end or in the middle of a word finds variations of the search term, replacing up to 5 characters. e.g. child* will find child, children, childless, childcare, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click the subject term to see any broader or narrower terms • Click notes symbols to see more information • Tick the box and click Add to Search to add one or more subject terms to your search 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use TI,AB,IF to search title, abstract, and keyword fields e.g. TI,AB,IF("higher education") • See more Common Field Codes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRE/n or P/n looks for documents that contain one search term that appears within a specified number of words before a second term. e.g. leaving PRE/3 care finds leaving care, or leaving foster care, or leaving out of home care 		Defined truncation *n replaces up to the number of characters (n) specified e.g. commun[*5] will find commune, community, and communities but not communication		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truncated terms are not considered when sorting results by relevance • the use of hyphens will alter the number of results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXACT or X looks for your exact term in its entirety in specific fields such as Subject. e.g. SU.EXACT or X("higher education") • Cannot be used with truncation or wildcards • Not recommended when searching across multiple databases 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diacritics are ignored • See more Proquest search tips

GOOGLE SCHOLAR

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR must be in capitals • a (pipe) can be used for OR <p>No spaces are necessary on either side of the pipe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. asylum seeker refugee will retrieve the same results as asylum seeker OR refugee • terms combined with OR will be processed before those without which will be treated as AND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use double quotes "" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a specific title put it in double quotes e.g. "A History of the China Sea" • Quotes can also be used in conjunction with operators e.g. author:"d knuth" or author:"donald e knuth" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Scholar does not use a truncation symbol • Google Scholar often uses automatic stemming which identifies the root of the keywords used and automatically searches for additional characters. <p>You must use a complete word. e.g. child might find child, children, childhood, childless etc.</p>	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of characters in the search is limited to 256 • Don't use parentheses (round brackets) as they are ignored • Searches are not case sensitive • You can only view the first 1000 search results regardless of the number of results specified • Cannot save search histories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a space will function as an AND as terms are ANDed by default 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Advanced Search use the option <i>-with the exact phrase</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Scholar often searches for synonyms of the search terms or root words entered e.g. tourism might also find tourist • It is worth running some tests when crafting search statements to assess what Google Scholar is doing • Using the – in front of unhelpful synonyms will remove them from the results • Using double quotes will ensure the exact term is being searched 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The order in which the words and elements occur matters • It is worth running some tests when crafting search statements to assess what Google Scholar is doing and select the best result e.g. a different number of results will be found for the following: therapy dog animal assisted dog animal-assisted therapy animal assisted dog therapy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a – (hyphen/minus sign) will function as a NOT • Immediately precede a term with a hyphen to exclude it from the results e.g. mercury -planet 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An asterisk in Google Scholar can be used in a phrase to replace a single word e.g. "leaving * care" 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diacritics are ignored • See Google Scholar Search Tips for more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proximity searches use AROUND(n) <p>AROUND must be in capitals and the number immediately suffixed and in parentheses e.g. "leaving AROUND(2) care"</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using Advanced Search, instead of operators, just choose from the options e.g. <i>- with all the words</i>, <i>- without the words</i> 				

SCOPUS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, AND NOT 	<p>Phrase searching uses double quotes to retrieve the words next to each other in title, abstract and keyword fields</p> <p>Using double quotes allows truncation/wildcards, ignores punctuation & automatically finds singular/plural forms of words</p>	<p>* before, within or after a word or a root word to replace zero or more characters e.g. child* will find child, children, childhood, childless etc.</p>	<p>Not available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scopus has no controlled vocabulary. When a Scopus record includes subject headings such as MeSH or Emtree terms, these are located in the Keywords field. The keywords field is searched as part of the default search field in Scopus <i>Article title, Abstract, Keywords.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRE/n the first word in the search precedes the second by a specified number of words (n) e.g. leaving pre/1 care finds leaving care, or leaving institutional care (but not care leaving) 	<p>Use {curly braces} to find an exact phrase search e.g. {community of practice}</p> <p>Truncation/wildcards cannot be used in an exact phrase and multiple searches are needed to capture both singular/plural forms</p>	<p>? within a word to replace a single character. e.g. wom?n retrieves both woman and women</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search the singular form and you will mostly find the singular, plural and possessive word forms • Scopus also uses stemming/lemmatization in text fields to find related terms e.g. criterion finds criteria and criterion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W/n – within - retrieves words that are within 'n' words of each other, in either direction e.g. "wind turbine" w/3 noise finds wind turbine blade noise, or noise emission from a wind turbine 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diacritics work with or without the accent included • Punctuation and stop words are ignored unless an exact phrase {} search is done. e.g. Hyphenated and non-hyphenated terms retrieve the same results.

WEB OF SCIENCE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	<p>Use double quotes ""</p>	<p>* before, within or after a word or root word to replace zero or more characters e.g. child* will find child, children, childhood, childless etc.</p>	<p>No controlled vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operators cannot be used in all fields or types of searches. They are predominantly used in Topic and Title fields. See Web of Science Help for more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAR/n - retrieves words that are within 'n' words of each other, in either direction e.g. sustainable NEAR/5 consumer finds sustainable marketing and consumer, or consumer willingness to pay for environmentally sustainable etc. 		<p>? within or after a word or root word to replace any single character e.g. wom?n retrieves both woman and women</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyphens and apostrophes are treated as spaces. When phrase searching both hyphenated and non-hyphenated forms will retrieve the same results e.g. searching "hydro-power" will find "hydro power" & "hydro-power" (but not hydropower).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no number is specified the operator defaults to NEAR/15 		<p>\$ within or after word or root word to replace zero or one character e.g. odo\$r finds odor and odour</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diacritical marks are not searchable. Search for variants of names that contain diacritical marks in the original. The name Schröder may appear in the database as Schroder or Schroeder. Search for both variants: • Searches are not case-sensitive.

PubMed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT <p>Use uppercase characters</p>	<p>Use double quotes "" to force a phrase search</p>	<p>* at end of word or root word retrieves all suffix variations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the PubMed home page click Explore: MeSH Database to search for your term in the MeSH tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see how your terms were translated, check the Search Details available on the Advanced Search page for each query under History.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity searching is not available in PubMed. However, many phrases are recognized by the MeSH Translation Table (Automatic Term Mapping): 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double quotes will turn off the Automatic Term Mapping (unless the phrase is not found in the phrase 	<p>Truncation will turn off the Automatic Term Mapping e.g. searching for cancer* will not map to the MeSH neoplasms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Advanced search, select MeSH Terms in the search builder drop-down menu, and enter your term. Click Show Index on the right to see a list of matches to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting results by Best Match uses an algorithm to put the most relevant citations at the top • If you apply a filter to limit your results it remains activated in

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If your term is found, by default it will be searched as MeSH (including narrower terms) and in all fields as a free text search. ● If there is no match the terms are combined with AND, then searched in all fields. 	<p>index, in which case the quotes are ignored)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a hyphen between terms can return a phrase, as can searching in a specific field (unless the phrase is not found in the phrase index) 		<p>choose from. Click ADD to add the MeSH term to your query.</p>	<p>subsequent searches until you turn it off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Filters may exclude articles from your results if they have not yet been indexed with MeSH
	<p>In a phrase, only the last word can be truncated</p>	<p>At least 4 characters must be provided in the truncated term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See the Medical Subjects Headings page for more on MeSH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ignores diacritical marks ● See the PubMed User Guide for more help

Cochrane library (WILEY), central register of controlled trials, database of systematic reviews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OR, AND, NOT 	<p>Use double quotes "" for exact match</p>	<p>*before, within or after word or root word to replace zero or more characters e.g. child* will find child, children, childhood, childless etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the MeSH button to add a MeSH term to the Search manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Search Cochrane Library and then click the tab for the source you want e.g. click Trials to see results from Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NEAR/n retrieves words within n words of each other, in any order. <p>e.g. surgery NEAR/3 lung finds lung volume reduction surgery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If no number specified, NEAR defaults to words within 6 words of each other 	<p>Truncation/wildcards do not work in phrase searches. Use NEXT proximity operator with wildcards.</p>	<p>? within a word to replace zero or a single character (e.g. wom?n retrieves women, woman), or at the end of the word or root word to find zero or a single additional character (e.g. system? retrieves system and systems but not systematic or systemic.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is possible to enter one or more MeSH searches directly in the Search Manager if utilising the correct syntax. e.g. entering [mh vaccines] would search on the MeSH heading vaccines and explode by default 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Automatic stemming means variants for your search terms are searched by default, e.g. tumor, tumour, and automatic matches of plurals and singulars including non-standard variants e.g. mouse also finds mice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NEXT matches terms that appear next to each other in the order specified e.g. cholera NEXT treat* retrieves cholera treatment 		<p>The root word must be at least 3 characters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To search a MeSH heading without term explosion, use the mh label and insert a caret ^ in front of the term e.g. [mh ^vaccines] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For terms that may be hyphenated, search both with and without a hyphen as you can retrieve different results ● Searches are not case-sensitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parentheses () can be used to explicitly group searches using Boolean or proximity operators 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Search for accented characters by copying and pasting a character or by using the wildcard (*) character.

ENGINEERING VILLAGE (Compendex, Inspec, GEOBASE, GeoRef, Knovel, etc.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	<p>Use curly braces {} or double quotes ""</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use autostemming to find variations of search terms or manually enter truncation or wildcards • There is a limit to three wildcard or truncation operators per term • Wildcards and truncations are ignored in exact searches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available depending on which databases are selected • Available in Inspec, Compendex, GEOBASE, GeoRef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search codes can be used to construct a search using field tags listed at the bottom of the page. • To search for terms within a specific field, use the "within" tag WN plus a field code. e.g. "space station" wn AB will find the phrase space station within the Abstract field.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAR/n retrieves words within n words of each other in any order e.g. electric NEAR/2 energy will find electric energy, energy electric, electric vehicle energy • The NEAR proximity operator is transformed to the Boolean operator AND query when used with wildcards or truncation. 		<p>* before, within or after a word or a root word to replace zero or more characters e.g. sul*ate will find sulfate, sulfonate, sulphate, sulphonate</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of diacritics does impact results e.g. análisis vs analysis (increases results)
		<p>? replaces a single character anywhere in a word (wom?n finds women, woman)</p>		

IEEE Xplore

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	<p>Use double quotes ""</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildcards can be used within any word of 3 or more characters • Up to 6 wildcards can be used in a single search string 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEEE Terms and INSPEC terms can be used • Access to the IEEE Thesaurus must be requested through IEEE Xplore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A search can also be built using the Command search • Further information is provided in the IEEE Xplore Video Tutorials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAR/n retrieves words within n words of each other in any order e.g. wind NEAR/3 energy will find wind energy, or save energy by installing wind turbines • ONEAR/n keeps words in the same order 		<p>* at end of word or root word retrieves all suffix variations e.g. comput* will find computers, computing, computerise</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diacritics are ignored
		<p>? within a word to replace a single character e.g. dis?s will find disks or discs but not discuss</p>		

ACM Digital Library

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	<p>Use double quotes ""</p>	<p>* within a word to specify any number of unknown characters. e.g. comput* will find compute, computation, computing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACM Computing Classification System (CCS) can be searched on ACM Digital Library • Enter as keyword and select from drop-down list in search bar 	<p>Choose between the two indexes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ACM Full-Text Collection 2. The ACM Guide to Computing Literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By default, an OR relationship is assumed between words in the same Search Within field 		<p>? within a word to replace a single character. e.g. compute? will find computer or computed but not computers</p>		<p>Use of diacritics does impact results e.g. "El Niño" vs "El Nino" (increases results)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An AND relationship is used between each Search Within field, and can only be changed to OR or NOT by editing the Query Syntax 		<p>The following special characters are recognised: + - && ! () { } [] ^ " ~ * ? : /</p>		

OVERTON

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OR, AND, NOT 	<p>Use double quotes ""</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truncation * at the end of a word or root word retrieves all suffix variations e.g. child* will find child, children, childhood, childless, etc. • Overton refers to the * asterisk as a wildcard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Overton uses machine learning techniques to map topics, entities, and subject areas to policy documents, these terms are not searchable as subject headings 	<p>Overton is sensitive to diacritics. For example, querying Overton for "nino" will return different results than a search for "niño". The same applies to researcher names.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can use brackets to signify which parts of the query should match first. e.g. (("data science" or "artificial intelligence") AND "governance") OR "AI ethics" will match documents either containing "governance" as well as "data science" or "artificial intelligence", OR the phrase "AI ethics" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truncation/asterisk cannot be used in phrase searching, only single words 	<p>? within a word to replace a single character. e.g. compute? will find computer or computed but not computers</p>	<p>- see https://help.overton.io/article/about-topics-entities-and-subject-areas/</p>	<p>Field searching is possible only in the in the scholarly articles view by adding the field name (title:, abstract: or author: respectively) before your search terms e.g. title:"child protection" NOTE: abstract: "child protection" will look in both title and abstract fields e.g. author:"P Mendes" OR "Philip Mendes"</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~n is the proximity operator and finds words up to n words apart in the specified order e.g. "leaving care"~2 finds leaving state care, or leaving adult foster care 		<p>The following special characters are recognised: + - & & ! () { } [] ^ " ~ * ? : /</p>		<p>You can also find policy documents containing links to a given domain or even a site-specific identifier like a catalog number or DOI (assuming Overton has collected this information – only for certain sources) using the domain: or id: preprends. e.g. domain:vic.gov.au</p>
				<p>Find more tips on Advanced Searching</p>

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