HOW TO: Search (tips & tricks)

When searching you may want to increase or decrease your search results. Here are some tips and tricks to find the results you are looking for:

**USE BOOLEAN SEARCH OPERATORS: AND, NOT, OR**

When you want your search to return more specific results, enter two search terms and join them with the word AND.

For example: don’t search for just peanuts, search for peanuts AND walnuts

![Diagram showing AND search](image)

Using AND will narrow your results giving you something more specific because the result must meet both criteria.

Another way to narrow your results is to tell the search something you do not want.

For example: Search for peanuts NOT walnuts, instead of just peanuts

![Diagram showing NOT search](image)

This will only give you the results that mention one, not both.

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You can also increase your search results by using the word OR. Joining search terms with the word OR will give you additional results because the search is looking at more options.

For example: Search peanuts OR walnuts and you will get all the results for peanuts & all the results for walnuts (not just results that overlap or results that are one, but not the other).

**USE QUOTATION MARKS:**

Putting a phrase or part of a sentence in quotation marks tells the search engine that you want to search only the exact wording included in the quotation mark.

For example:

If you are doing a report on the Shakespeare play Much Ado About Nothing, you might just search the words: **Much Ado About Nothing**

The search engine is going to run a search for **Much** and a search for **Ado** and a search for **About** and a search for **Nothing** and you may get some results that overlap.
But if you want the search engine to understand that these two words go together you can put quotation marks around them “Much Ado About Nothing.” Then the only results you will get are where all four words appear together in that order – increasing the changes that your results will be about the play.

This strategy works well when wanting to search for a complete title and not just keywords.

**Keywords:**

When searching using keywords, keep things simple. Avoid including articles and prepositions, such as the, an, etc. Also avoid complete sentences or questions. Use more technical terms, instead of vernacular. For example:

If you want to search, “what are the best books to read to kids?”

Try instead: best books AND children

**Use an Asterisks (*) to search for truncated words:**

If you are not sure the form a word takes, or you want to search multiple forms, OR you are not sure how a phrase ends, you can place an asterisk at the end of the word/phrase and the search will fill in the blanks for you. For example:

Searching interact* = interact; interacting; interactions; interacts; interactivity

This type of search is helpful for finding information like song lyrics, when you do not know all the words. For example:

“Come* right now* me” = the song lyrics to the Beatles’ song “Come Together”
These tips also work when searching in GOOGLE. You can also:

Search for websites ending in specific domains by starting your Google search with a colon followed by the domain name. For example:

`.org Cambodia` = will only return website results about the country of Cambodia ending in .org

`.org Cambodia AND poverty` = will only return results containing information on both poverty and Cambodia from websites ending in .org