

GOOGLE FOR RESEARCH: Tips & Tricks for Expert Searching

more →

KEEP IT SIMPLE	GOOGLE SEARCH CONVENTIONS	NOTES	EXAMPLE
Use lower case letters.	The Google search engine is not case sensitive.	Exception, when using the OR operator (see below)	
Leave out punctuation.	Google ignores most punctuation marks and symbols.	Exceptions: dollar signs when used to indicate price; symbols when used to convey meaning such as a program language (C++) or musical term (G#). See a list here https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/2466433	
No need to connect terms with AND. Word order matters.	Google's relevancy ranking puts results that contain all the search terms toward the top of the results list. Google ranks the first word slightly higher than the second, and so on.	The Boolean AND does not function in Google as it does in many database and search engines. AND is assumed between words.	
Enter search terms in singular forms.	Through a process called stemming, Google automatically tries to find all forms of words.	Word truncation does not function in Google. If all word variants are not retrieved, connect word with OR (see below)	diet returns diet, diets, dietary, dietician

SEARCHING	FUNCTION	NOTES	EXAMPLE
OR	Searches for either term.	Excellent strategy to retrieve results for synonyms or words that are closely related in meaning. OR must be capitalized. Broadens your search.	avian OR bird
~	Use the tilde (~) to find words with similar meanings.	Does not work consistently for all words. Broadens your search.	"highway safety" ~elderly (will find seniors, senior citizens, and older drivers also)
()	Craft a search formula - enclose each concept in parentheses, with OR connecting similar words.	Google searches for the terms within the parentheses first before combining with terms outside the parentheses.	(flu OR influenza) (avian OR bird) (outbreak OR incidence OR case)
" "	Enclose multiple words in quotation marks to search those exact words in that exact order.	Phrase searching works well for names, titles, and terms that include multiple words.	"global warming" OR "climate change"
-	Exclude words from results.	Can also be used to exclude domains, e.g. -site:edu. Do not leave a space after the minus sign.	football -soccer - rugby violin music +sonata -concerto
*	Use the asterisk to fill in the blank if the intervening word is unknown.		"george * * bush" "obama voted * on the * bill"
...	Search within a range of numbers (dates, costs, measurements)		"science milestones" 1910...1920 \$250-\$500 laptop

intext:	Restrict results to pages that have the query word or phrase in the body of the document.		intext: "grant funding" intext:"society of neuroscience"
intitle:	Restrict results to pages that have the query word or phrase in the title of the document.		2009...2014 intitle:Toyota recall
site:	Search only one website or only one domain.	Common domains included edu, com, org, gov, country codes (uk, ca, ke, etc.)	volunteer opportunities Boston site:org
filetype:	Restrict search to a specific file type.	A list of filetypes indexed by Google can be found at https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35287?hl=en	IRS tax forms filetype:pdf
define:	Searches for definitions of words from various web sources.		define: combinations define: passive voice
link:	Find linked pages – show web pages that point to a particular URL/website.		link:clarkson.edu (find pages that link to Clarkson's home page)
related:	Search for similar or related web pages.		related:cdc.gov