



## Search Tips

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### **Boolean Searching** *(can be used with both electronic database & Internet searching)*

Boolean logic is named for the British mathematician, George Boole. It refers to the logical relationship among these three logical operators: *and*, *or*, *not*.

#### **AND**

The Boolean operator *AND* is used in order to require that all search terms be present on the information listed in results. It can also be described as a “match all” search.

**poverty AND crime**

In this search, we retrieve records in which both of the search terms are present. We will not retrieve any records with only “poverty” or only “crime”.

#### **OR**

The Boolean operator *OR* is used in order to allow any of the specified search terms to be present on the information listed in results. It can be described as a “match any” search.

**college OR university**

In this search, we retrieve records in which at least one of the search terms is present. *OR* logic is most commonly used to search for synonymous terms or concepts. *OR* logic collates the results to retrieve all the unique records containing one term, the other, or both.

#### **NOT**

The Boolean operator *NOT* is used in order to require that a particular search term not be present on the information listed in results. It can be described as an “exclude” search.

**cats NOT dogs**

In this search, we retrieve records in which only one of the terms is present. No records are retrieved in which the word “dogs” appears, even if the word “cats” appears there too. The *NOT* command excludes records from your search results. Note: be careful when using *NOT*. The term you do want may be present in an important way in documents that also contain the word you wish to avoid.

### **Proximity Operator- NEAR**

The *NEAR* command is used in order to specify how close terms should appear to each other.

**moon NEAR river**

In this search, we retrieve records in which both terms are present and in close proximity to each other.

**moon NEAR/10 river**

In this search, both terms are present and the exact distance is specified (within 10 words of each other).

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## **Nesting ( )**

Nesting allows you to build complex searches. It is used to specify the order of the search. With nesting, parentheses are placed around words to make a single search statement.

**(fraud or evasion) AND income tax**

In this search, we retrieve records that have “fraud” and “income tax” and all those that have “evasion” and “income tax”. Without the nesting we would retrieve all the records that have “fraud” (with or without “income tax”) and all those that have “evasion” and “income tax” in the same record.

## **Search Engine Math** *(use with Internet searching only)*

This type of search is more basic than Boolean searching and may be all you need. You simply add, subtract, and multiply.

### **ADD (+)**

Use this symbol when you wish to find Web pages that have all the words you enter, not just some of them.

**+clinton +starr**

Only pages that contain both words would appear in your results.

### **Subtract (-)**

Use this symbol when you wish to find Web pages that have one word on them but not another word.

**clinton -lewinsky**

This tells the search engine to find pages that mention “clinton” and then to remove any of them that also mention “lewinsky.”

### **Multiply (“ “)**

Multiplying is phrase searching and incorporates the use of quotation marks. Use quotations when you wish to retrieve Web pages in which the terms appear in exactly the order you specify

**“yosemite camping reservations”**

Now only pages that have all the words and in the exact order shown above will be listed. The answers should be much more on target than with simple addition.

## **Combining Symbols**

Once you’ve mastered adding, subtracting and multiplying, you can combine symbols to easily create targeted searches.

**“star trek” –voyager –“deep space nine” –“next generation”**

All star trek pages will be retrieved, minus the 3 items specified.