



Top tips for searching library online resources

1. Think about your search terms

Search engines will only exact match the specific term/s you enter. Before you start spend some time thinking about and noting down the following:

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| | <p>Alternative term/s to those you were thinking of searching with? e.g. <i>anti-social behaviour: nuisance behaviour</i></p> |
| | <p>Relevant words related to the topic? e.g. <i>vandalism: graffiti</i></p> |
| | <p>Acronyms that may be used instead of the words in full? e.g. <i>ASBO for anti-social behaviour order</i></p> |

Incorporating alternative and related options within your search will save you lots of time

Use **AND** to link your search terms

Searching for only one term will often retrieve too many results. Narrow down by linking related words with **AND**

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|------------------------------|--|
| adolescents AND crime | retrieves only results where both words appear within the text |
|------------------------------|--|

2. Broaden your search by linking terms with **OR**

To make sure you don't miss relevant results, link any alternative or related words with **OR** to find either or both words:

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| anti-social behaviour OR graffiti | retrieves only results that contain either or both terms |
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3. Search for an exact phrase

If the term you are describing is expressed using more than one word, enclose the words within speech marks "...". This will only retrieve results where the words appear immediately next to each other in the text

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|-------------------------|--|
| "anti-social behaviour" | retrieves only results where the words appear immediately next to each other |
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4. Watch for American spellings

UK English and American English spell certain words differently. Link the two different spellings with **OR** to make sure you don't miss anything potentially relevant.

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|------------------------------|--|
| behaviour OR behavior | retrieves results with either spelling of the word |
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5. Find different word endings

Because online resources only match on the *exact* word you enter it's easy to miss relevant results if a variation of the word is used instead.

Find all the different word endings by inserting an asterisk * at the point in the word where the word ending changes.

| | |
|--------|---|
| child* | retrieves results containing child, childhood and children. Place the * after the d as this is where the word ending changes |
|--------|---|

6. Limit results to current material

Specify a date range to only retrieve results published on a particular date or range of dates.

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|---|---|
| Publication Date: <input type="text" value="Last 5 years"/> | retrieves only material published in the last 5 years |
|---|---|

7. Specify where you want your search words to appear

The default for online resources is to look for the terms you search with anywhere within the text, however, you can specify where you want the terms to appear. This is a really easy way of narrowing down and improving the relevancy of your results.

For example, if your search terms appear in the **title of an article**, the article will be more relevant to your topic. For slightly broader results try searching in the **abstract** or **keywords**

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| <input type="text" value="in the title"/> <input type="text" value="anti-social behaviour"/> | retrieves only results with the phrase in the title |
|--|---|

8. Choose the right resource to search in

Online Library will allow you to do a broad search across all journal databases. Depending on the purpose and topic of your search you may, however, need to search in other resources.

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| Are you searching for newspaper articles, images, e-books etc.? | Choose Library Databases by Type |
| Are you doing a very thorough search of the journal literature for your literature review? | Choose Library Databases by Subject |

9. Use the resources' help options and user guides

The functionality described above applies to most library online resources, although there may be slight variations in the way different resources search

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|  | Check the help options and the resource's own user guide to see if there are any differences to the examples described above |
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