

Stop words

Stop Words are words which do not contain important significance to be used in Search Queries. Usually these words are filtered out from search queries because they return vast amount of unnecessary information. A better definition is provided below:

“Words that do not appear in the index in a particular database because they are either insignificant (i.e., articles, prepositions) or so common that the results would be higher than the system can handle. Stop words vary from system to system. Also, some systems will merely ignore stop words where use of stop words in other systems will result in retrieving zero hits. ”

For example, if you entered **company of America**, the search engine will return **company of America**, **company in America**, or **company for America**. It will not return **company of the America**, because the search engine retains a word distance.

Additionally, if you enter two stop words, the search engine will find any two stop words in their place. For example, if you searched for **company of the America**, EBSCOhost would return any two words in the place of the stop words.

Notes on searching with stop words:

- When a phrase is enclosed by double quotations marks, the exact phrase is searched. If a phrase contains stop words, the stop words will not be searched, but the searchable words will be searched in the order as entered.
- A stop word will not be searched for in an EBSCOhost database, even if enclosed in double quotation marks.
- A search query with stop words only (i.e. no other terms) yields no results.

Phrase Search

- Phrase Searching means searching for two or more words as an exact phrase.
- In order to search for an exact phrase you must enclose the words of that phrase in quotation marks or make the appropriate choice on the database search page:
- Examples of phrase searching:

"Library and Information Science"

"LIS Research Culture"

"HEC Digital Library"

"Innovative library services"

"Library Research in Pakistan"

Word Proximity

Proximity operators search for **words or phrases that occur near one another**. They operate very differently depending on the system. NEAR doesn't typically take a parameter, but W/# is followed by a number (#) indicating how many characters can separate the two terms. Google's uses AROUND(#) takes a number indicating how many words can separate the terms.

Example of word proximity using AROUND in Google

"steve jobs" AROUND(3) "andy rubin"

About 582,000 results (0.24 seconds)

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Truncation & Wildcards

- Use the wildcard and truncation symbols to create searches where there are unknown characters, multiple spellings or various endings.
- Neither the wildcard nor the truncation symbol can be used as the first character in a search term.

Wildcard

- The wildcard is represented by a question mark **?** or a pound sign **#**.
- To use the **?** wildcard, enter your search terms and replace each unknown character with a **?**
- For example, type **ne?t** to find all citations containing **neat**, **nest** or **next**.
- **Note:** When searching for a title that ends in a question mark, the symbol should be removed from the search in order to ensure results will be returned.
- To use the **#** wildcard, enter your search terms, adding the **#** in places where an alternate spelling may contain an extra character.
- For example, type **colo#r** to find all citations containing **color** or **colour**.

Truncation

- Truncation is represented by an asterisk (*). To use truncation, enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with an *****.
- For example, type **comput*** to find the words **computer** or **computing**.
- **Note:** The Truncation symbol (*) may also be used between words to match any word.
- For example, **a midsummer * dream** will return results that contain the exact phrase, **a midsummer night's dream**.

Note: Wildcards and Truncation can not be combined for a term in a search. For example, a search for *p#ediatric** would be the same as a search for *P**.

Prefix and suffix

By adding prefixes and suffixes to the basic term or word, we can change its meaning.

Prefixes are added to the beginning of a base word. They change the meaning of the base word. Un + happy = unhappy Re + do = redo

Prefixes

The prefix 're' means again. • Reread means to read again. • Rewrite means to write again. • The prefix 'un' means not or the opposite of. • Uncomfortable means not comfortable. • Unpack means the opposite of pack.

Suffixes

Suffixes are added to the end of a base word. They change the meaning of the base word. E.g. wonder + ful = wonderful rest + ful = restful

The suffix 'ly' means in a certain way. • Quickly means in a quick way. • Loudly means in a loud way. • What does suddenly mean? • The suffix ful means full of. • Colorful means full of color. • Playful means full of play.

TIP: Use Prefix and Suffix to play with words and keywords to get more results for you search Queries

Search Strategy

A search strategy is a structured organization of terms used to search a database. The search strategy shows how these terms combine in order to retrieve the best results.

Once you have chosen a database to search for journal articles on your topic, here are some strategies for creating an effective search:

- **Step 1: Write your topic out in sentence or question form**
 - *How did Aboriginals participate in the fur trade in Canada?*
- **Step 2: Break your topic sentence up into main ideas or keywords**
 - *aboriginals, fur trading, canada*
- **Step 3: Think of synonyms or alternate words to describe each concept**
aboriginals - natives, indians

Tip: Use dictionaries, encyclopedias, or a thesaurus to find alternate words.

- **Step 4: Add "Boolean operators" (AND, OR, NOT) to make a complete search statement**
 - Use AND to limit or narrow your search to results that mention all of your keywords.
 - Use OR to broaden your search to include synonyms.
aboriginal AND fur trading AND canada
aboriginals OR natives OR indians
- **Step 5: Add wildcards to search for all possible word endings**
 - A wildcard is usually represented by a *. This is also called truncation.
 - *aboriginal* OR native* OR indian**
- **Step 6: Evaluate your results**

If you are finding too many or too few results, try these tricks:

- **To broaden your search (find more):**
 - Find synonym for each keyword.
 - Search for a broader concept ('dog' instead of 'poodle').

- Use wildcards/truncation.
- **To narrow your search (fewer):**
 - Add another concept or idea to your search with AND.
 - Use more specific words ('poodle' instead of 'dog').

Some Tips

- **CREATING A SEARCH STATEMENT**
- **UTILIZE DATABASE FEATURES**
 - **Basic Searches**
 - **Advanced Searches**
 - **Controlled Vocabulary**
 - **Other Features**
 - Search within results.
 - Analyze results.
 - Search history.
 - Search by taxonomic data.
 - Related articles and links.
- **KEYWORDS AND CONTROLLED VOCABULARY**
- **Thesaurus**
- **Library of Congress Subject Headings**
- **TRUNCATION AND WILDCARDS**
- **COMBINING TERMS (BOOLEAN SEARCHING)**
- **Refine and repeat search statement**

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