



# ONLINE SEARCHING: PRINCIPLES & SPECIFICS

Here are some commonly used, specific basic search techniques that can be applied to many of the online information resources available through Murphy Library. For more information, please contact a reference librarian.

## Searching Principles: The Big Three

- o **Phrases:** When you need to make sure that two or more words are adjacent to each other.
- o **Boolean Operators / Connectors:** Using words or symbols between your search terms to specify how those terms will be processed together. Includes **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**.
  - **AND** finds only items that contain both of the search terms (limits results)
  - **OR** finds items that contain either one of the search terms (expands results)
  - **NOT** eliminates items that contain that term (limits results)

Example: **zeppelin not led**

Use parentheses when combining connectors.

Example: **(ethics or morals) and medicine**

- o **Wildcards / Truncation:** Using a symbol to replace a letter or group of letters. Allows you to search for many variations of a word at one time.  
Example: **ethic\*** finds *ethic, ethics, ethical, and ethically*

## Specifics: Applying the Principles

	PHRASES	WILDCARDS/ TRUNCATION	AND	NOT	OR
<b>Library Catalog</b>		% (single character)			
• <b>Keyword Search</b>	Quotes " "	? (many characters)	+	!	default
• <b>Boolean Search</b>	Quotes " "	% (single character)	and	not	or
• <b>Author/Title/Subject Heading Searches</b>	Automatic (beginnings of headings)	Automatic	N/A	N/A	N/A
• <b>Advanced Search</b>	menu choice	% (single character) ? (many characters)	menu	menu	menu
<b>EBSCOhost databases like Academic Search Complete and Newspaper Source Plus</b>	Automatic	? (single character) * (many characters)	and	not	or
<b>CQ Researcher</b>	Quotes " "	? (single character) * (many characters)	automatic	not	or
<b>FirstSearch databases</b>	Quotes " "	# (single character) * (many characters)	and	not	or
<b>ProQuest databases like ABI/INFORM</b>	2 words: Automatic 3+ words: Quotes " "	? (single character) * (many characters)	and	and not	or
<b>Google</b>	Quotes " "	N/A	+	-	OR

## A Few Essential Resources

Online resources are underlined. Visit the Murphy Library web site to access these resources.

### Articles in Periodicals

- [Academic Search Complete](#) and [MasterFILE Premier](#): These databases contain articles (many are full text) from a variety of fields. Both magazines and scholarly journals are included.

### Statistics

- [Statistical Abstract of the United States](#): Statistics on social and economic conditions in the United States. Access it in print, Ready Reference HA202 or online, <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>.
- [American FactFinder](#) (<http://factfinder.census.gov/>): Demographic and economic statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Timely Information (Current)

- [Newspaper Source Plus](#): Full text newspaper articles and radio and television transcripts.
- [LexisNexis Academic](#): News section includes 350 newspapers, 400 magazines/journals, 600 newsletters, broadcast transcripts, campus news, and wire services, all full text.

### Biographies

- *Current Biography*: Reference CT100 C8
- [Biography & Genealogy Master Index \(Gale\)](#): Indexes biographical dictionaries, volumes of literary criticism, and *Who's Who* for biographies of over 4 million people.
- [Who's Who \(Marquis\)](#): Profiles on over 1 million of the most accomplished individuals from all fields of endeavor.
- *American National Biography*: Reference Collection CT213 A68 1999

### Legal Information

- [LexisNexis Academic](#): Legal Research section includes full text secondary literature, case law, codes & regulations, tax law, international legal materials, patent research, and legal career information
- *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*: Reference KF154 W47

### Pro-Con

- [CO Researcher](#): Covers current and controversial issues with complete summaries, insight into all sides of the issues, bibliographies and more.
- [Opposing Viewpoints in Context](#): Pro/con viewpoint essays, topic overviews, primary source documents, biographies of social activists and reformers, court-case overviews, periodical articles, statistical tables, charts and graphs, images, podcasts

### Encyclopedias

- *Encyclopedia Americana*: Ready Reference