COMMON SEARCH STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARY DATABASES

Many databases use these common commands as the required method for inputting keywords. However, always check the “help” screen within the database in case of variations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Intention</th>
<th>Search Strategies</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To look for two or more words in your results</td>
<td>cats AND dogs</td>
<td><img src="cats_dogs.png" alt="Diagram of cats and dogs" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To exclude a word from a search</td>
<td>dogs NOT cats</td>
<td><img src="cats_dogs.png" alt="Diagram of cats and dogs" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To search for a phrase (use quotations marks)</td>
<td>“global warming”</td>
<td>Results will include those quoted words in that order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To retrieve variations of a word (truncation)</td>
<td>cultur*</td>
<td>Will find: culture, cultures, and cultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram](start_narrow.png)

If you don’t find anything, **broaden** your search

- Identify alternative keywords and search again
  - If nothing shows up for **jobs**, try **employment**
- Make correct use of search strategies (review chart above).
- Repeat your searches in other appropriate databases and ask for help at the reference desk.

If you have too many results, further **narrow** your search

- Try setting a search limit to restrict the results:
  - Peer-reviewed, scholarly, refereed, etc.
  - Full-text
  - Years of publication (date range)
- Try narrowing by including another search term:
  - Ex: instead of just **“global warming”**, try **“global warming” AND China**