6 QUICK TIPS
TO IMPROVE YOUR SEARCHING

$(a+b)^2 = a^2+b^2+2ab$

Northeastern University
Library

Link related terms with OR

Cops   OR   Police

          OR

If your original search didn't retrieve enough material, try coming up with related terms or synonyms for your keywords and linking them with OR.

The Boolean operator OR is also a helpful tool when a search needs to be as comprehensive as possible.

Link related terms with OR

Cops

Searching: **Specific Databases, Show all** | Choose Databases by Subject

cops | Select a Field (option... ▼)

AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)

AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)

Basic Search   Advanced Search   Search History ▶

« **Refine Results**   **Search Results: 1 - 50 of 1,005**

In the left example, a search for the single term "cops" retrieves just over 1,000 articles.

(Cops OR Police)

Searching: **Specific Databases, Show all** | Choose Databases by Subject

cops or police | Select a Field (option... ▼)

AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)

AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)

Basic Search   Advanced Search   Search History ▶

« **Refine Results**   **Search Results: 1 - 50 of 48,604**

At the right, the Boolean operator OR links the related terms police with cops and increases our search results dramatically.

Add concepts with AND

(Cops OR Police)   AND   misconduct

If you need to narrow and focus your results, add new keywords to your topic and link them with AND.

The Boolean operator AND is a helpful tool when you want to combine several different concepts.

Boolean Operator AND

(Cops OR Police)

EBSCOhost

Searching: **Speci fi Databases,** Show all | Choose Databases by Subject

cops or police	Select a Fi eld(opti on.. ▾
AND ▾		Select a Fi eld(opti on.. ▾
AND ▾		Select a Fi eld(opti on... ▾

Basic Search   Advanced Search   Search History ▶

« **Refine Results** | **Search Results:** 1 - 50 of 48,604

The example on the left illustrates our broad search with the related terms cops or police.

(Cops OR Police) AND misconduct

EBSCOhost

Searching: **Speci fi Databases,** Show all | Choose Databases by Subject

cops or police	Select a Fi eld(opti on..
AND ▾	misconduct	Select a Fi eld (option…
AND ▾		Select a Field (option…

Basic Search   Advanced Search   Search History ▶

Refine Results | **Search Results:** 1 - 50 of 1,044

In the example on the right, we've used the Boolean operator AND to narrow our search to focus on police misconduct.

Truncation Searching

Psychology → Psychology → Psychology → Psycholog*

Psychology   Psychology

Psychological   Psychological

Psychologist   Psychologist
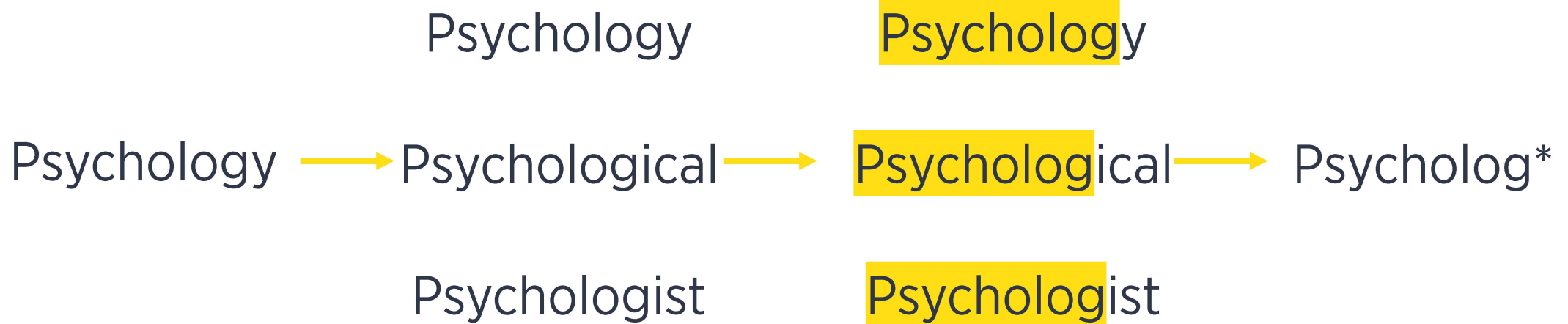
You can also make your searches more effective by looking for multiple forms of a word.

This will increase your number of results. You can look for multiple word endings by doing truncation searching.

First, look for the common root word.

Add an asterisk to the end of the common root. This will tell the database to return results that use that common root word and any variety of endings.

Truncation Searching

Psychology

Searching: **Specific Databases, Show all** | Choose Databases by Subject

Psychology | Select a Field (option... ▼)
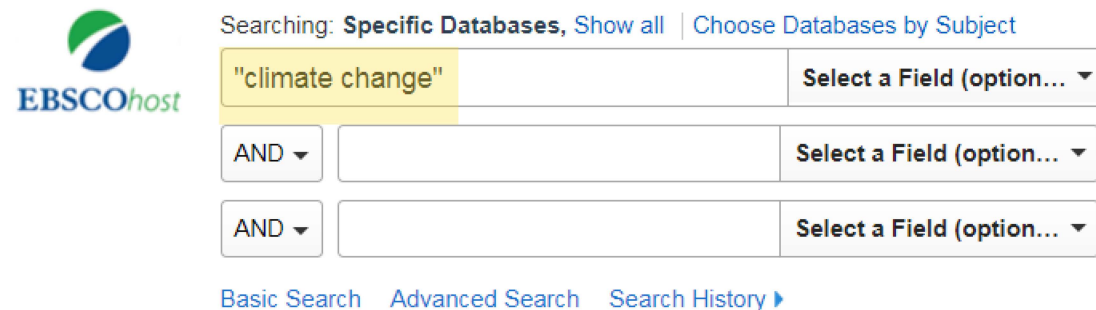AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)
AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)

Basic Search   Advanced Search   Search History ▶

Refine Results

Search Results: 1 - 50 of 1,144,693

Current Search ⌄

Page: 1 2 3 4 5 Next ▶

You can see that a search for psychology had 1.1 million results…

Psycholog*

Searching: **Specific Databases, Show all** | Choose Databases by Subject

Psycholog* | Select a Field (option... ▼)
AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)
AND ▼ | Select a Field (option... ▼)

Basic Search   Advanced Search   Search History ▶

Did you mean: psychology

Refine Results

Search Results: 1 - 50 of 1,348,458

Current Search ⌄

Page: 1 2 3 4 5 Next ▶

…while a truncation search added over 200 thousand more results

"Climate change"

Another way to make your searches more effective is to use quotation marks for phrases.
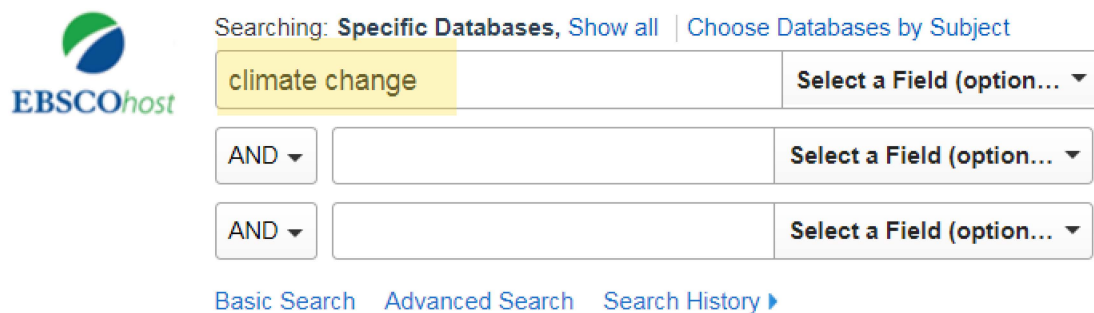
The quotation marks tell the database to look for an exact set of words, in that exact order.

Climate AND change

Without quotation marks, the database looks for the words, but not necessarily used together.

Phrase Searching

Without quotation marks:

Searching for climate change without quotes had over 126 thousand results.

With quotation marks:

Using quotation marks to search for a phrase reduced the number of results by nearly two thousand.

Don't limit to full text

Most recent first ▾ | **Sort**

Narrow results

Full text ⌃

Full text included (50,981)

Citation, abstract, or indexing only (14,616)

Some databases offer a "limit to full text" option. If you place this limit, you may inadvertently eliminate useful items from your results.

Refine Results

Current Search ⌄

Boolean/Phrase:

information sharing

Limit To ⌄

☐ Full Text

☐ References Available

☐ Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals

1947 | Publication Date | 2018

Don't limit to full text

All results:

Limited to full text:

In this example, limiting to full text cut over half of the possible results.

Want full text ? Look for these links:

Full text available

PDF Full Text

Full text

Online access

HTML Full Text

Full text - PDF

Check for full text

Check for full-text

Find a copy

Use Multiple Databases

Different disciplines will approach the same topic from their individual viewpoints. Searching multiple relevant databases will enrich your trove of results.

Use Multiple Databases

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Library Catalogs + Articles

Databases A-Z

E-Journals A-Z

Research Subject Guides

Citations & Bibliographies

Archives & Special Collections

Digital Repository Service

Google Scholar

WorldCat

You can access our full list of databases from the Databases A-Z list on the library website.

$(a+b)^2 = a^2+b^2+2ab$

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