

Catalog Search – Techniques, Tips, and Tricks

There are several search strategies you can use in your search.

Truncation

In order to find different forms of keywords, you can use truncation to increase the number of hits. To do so, you can truncate search terms in all fields at the end or in the middle of the term. Truncation at the beginning of the term is not possible.

Truncation is done with the placeholder „*“ or „?“.

- *** replaces any letters to the right of the asterisk**
*techn** finds matches to: technical, technique, technology, technisch, ...
- *** replaces any letters in the middle of the term**
*t*le* finds matches to: tile, tale, table, tulle, ...
- **? replaces exactly one letter**
M?ller finds matches to: Miller, Maller, Muller...

Truncation can be helpful in following cases:

- when searching for persons
 - In Catalog **plus**, search area „Articles & more“ (Katalog **plus**, Bereich „**Artikel & mehr**“), for example, author names are not treated consistently
-> It is recommended to search the first given name truncated after the first letter, e.g. Smith, H*.
- for the simultaneous search for both female and male forms, for example in German, or both singular and plural forms
 - e.g. *bacteri** searches for bacterium, bacteria or e.g. in German, *Astronaut** searches for Astronaut, Astronautin, Astronauten, Astronautinnen
- for topics whose core terms have central roots
 - e.g. *migr** searches for migration, migrating, migrant
- for different ways of spelling or languages
 - e.g. *Tos?ana* searches for Toscana and Toskana

Phrase search (exact word order: “...“)

A phrase search allows the search for related terms, such as „social media“. The search terms are entered into the search field using quotation marks. The search will only return hits in which the search term occurs in the exact word order.

- A phrase search is possible in all fields of the simple and advanced search.
- You can also combine a phrase search with other search criteria.
- Phrase search is also helpful when searching for literature about authors, e.g. „Charles Darwin“.
- Truncation is not possible within a phrase.

In the Advanced Search Form, using the field “Title precise” carries out a phrase search in the title. It is not necessary to use quotation marks in this field.

Use this field, for example, to search specifically for journals with titles that you know and that cover a wide range of topics, e.g. „Pädagogik“ or „Science“.

Boolean Operators

Using Boolean Operators, you can create combinations between search terms and limit or extend the number of hits this way.

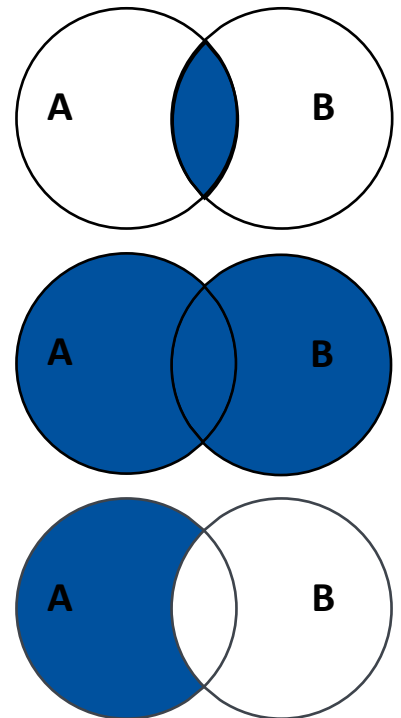
Search terms can be combined with **AND**, **OR**, or **NOT**.

The Boolean Operators have to be in upper case.

- combination with **AND**:
 - standard combination, it is used automatically if no other operators are chosen
 - example: sport **AND** health
 - hits that contain both terms (**intersection**)

- combination with **OR**:
 - used to include synonyms or a term in different languages in the search
 - hits that contain at least one of the terms (**union**)
 - example: sport **OR** health

- combination with **NOT-Verknüpfung**:
 - used to exclude terms and limit the number of hits
 - example: sport **NOT** health
 - hits that contain either one or the other term (**difference**)



Indexing

The „Advanced Search“ has an index feature.

- In the catalog you find indexing via the indexes of the individual input fields.
- If you do not know the exact spelling of persons' names, corporations or the standardized subject headings, it can be helpful to search in the index.
- With the help of the index of persons, for example, persons of the same name can be distinguished by their dates of birth and death.
- In the Catalog plus clicking the word „Index“ will open the index at the term in the input field.
-> All entries that begin with the letter sequence of the entered search term are displayed.

For technical reasons the index feature is not available in the Catalog plus, search area „Articles & More“ (Catalog plus „Artikel & mehr“).

Snowball system

- Search for more sources in bibliographies of found items
 - Literature published earlier will be found
- Search in citation databases for publications mentioning the source
 - Literature published later will be found
 - Example: Web of Science, Business Source Premier, Google Scholar

Creating a search matrix

A search matrix is usually created before a search. It is used to find an overview of terms that are related by subject. This allows a more diversified literature search.

Subject	Immigration and social mobility in Germany		
Core terms	Immigration	Social mobility	Germany
Synonyms	Immigrating, immigrant	Social permeability	Deutschland
Hyperonyms	Migration	Mobility	Western Europe
Hyponyms	(il-)legal immigration	Vertical/horizontal mobility, (social) advancement	
Related terms	In-migration	Social stratification, status change	

Changing the Number of Hits

- **Limit the number of hits**
 - Enter several search criteria and combine with Boolean Operators
 - More specific search with narrower terms (hyponyms)
 - Limit the search to certain criteria beforehand
 - Limit the set of hits subsequently using certain criteria
- **Extend the number of hits**
 - Enter fewer search criteria
 - Truncate
 - More general search with broader terms (hyperonyms)
 - No use of search restrictions
 - Additional search with synonyms and terms in other languages, e.g. German/English
 - Search in subject databases for more specific research

General Hints

- Upper and lower case does not have to be taken into account.
- Umlauts are also found in dissolved form.
- Punctuation is ignored.
- Stop words such as „and“, „or“, „the“, „und“, „oder“, „der“, „die“, „das“ etc. are not taken into account.
- Hyphenated words are also searched written as one word.
 - Example: a search for Technologietrends retrieves documents with Technologietrends and Technologie-Trends
- A restriction of the hits can be done subsequently by so-called facets or filters in each set of hits or already during search by adding further search words.

If the University Library doesn't have the requested source in their holdings either in printed or digital form, you can request it via interlibrary loan.

Have you got questions? The library team will gladly help you -> [„Ask a librarian“](#)