

Advanced Search Techniques

Objective: Students will understand advanced search techniques including the use of quotation marks for phrase searching, truncation or wild card*, and advanced search screens.

Search Techniques

Search techniques are the methods you use to search catalogs, article databases, and web search engines to find information.

The use of the **Boolean operators** AND and OR between keywords to create a search statement is an example of a search technique.

This lesson will cover some more **advanced search techniques** which can help you refine your searches.

Quotation Marks and Truncation

In **library catalogs** and **article databases**, the two most helpful advanced search techniques are:

- 1) Quotation Marks
- 2) Truncation or Wild Card

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used around **phrases**. By using quotations marks, you are telling the computer to only bring back pages with the terms you typed in the exact order you typed them.

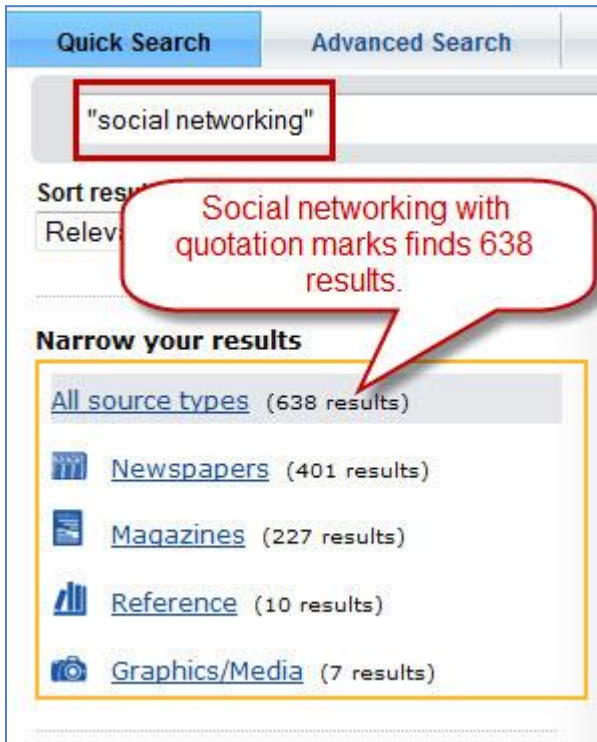
Example:

“health care reform”

instead of

health AND care AND reform

For example, if you are interested in finding information on social networking, it is best to search for “social networking” in quotation marks. Otherwise, the computer might search for social AND networking and find many more irrelevant results.



Quick Search | Advanced Search

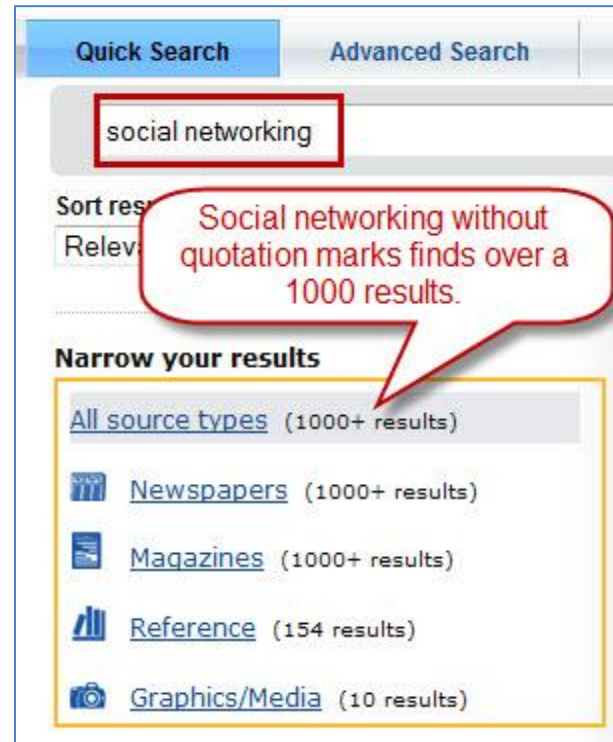
"social networking"

Sort results by: Relevancy

Social networking with quotation marks finds 638 results.

Narrow your results

Source Type	Results
All source types	(638 results)
Newspapers	(401 results)
Magazines	(227 results)
Reference	(10 results)
Graphics/Media	(7 results)



Quick Search | Advanced Search

social networking

Sort results by: Relevancy

Social networking without quotation marks finds over a 1000 results.

Narrow your results

Source Type	Results
All source types	(1000+ results)
Newspapers	(1000+ results)
Magazines	(1000+ results)
Reference	(154 results)
Graphics/Media	(10 results)



Truncation

Truncation means to chop off. When you truncate you chop off the end of the word, so the computer can search for multiple endings.

For example, your research question includes the keyword **education**. You can truncate education, so that the computer will find all of the word ending variations.

Educat* will find:

Education

Educate

Educated

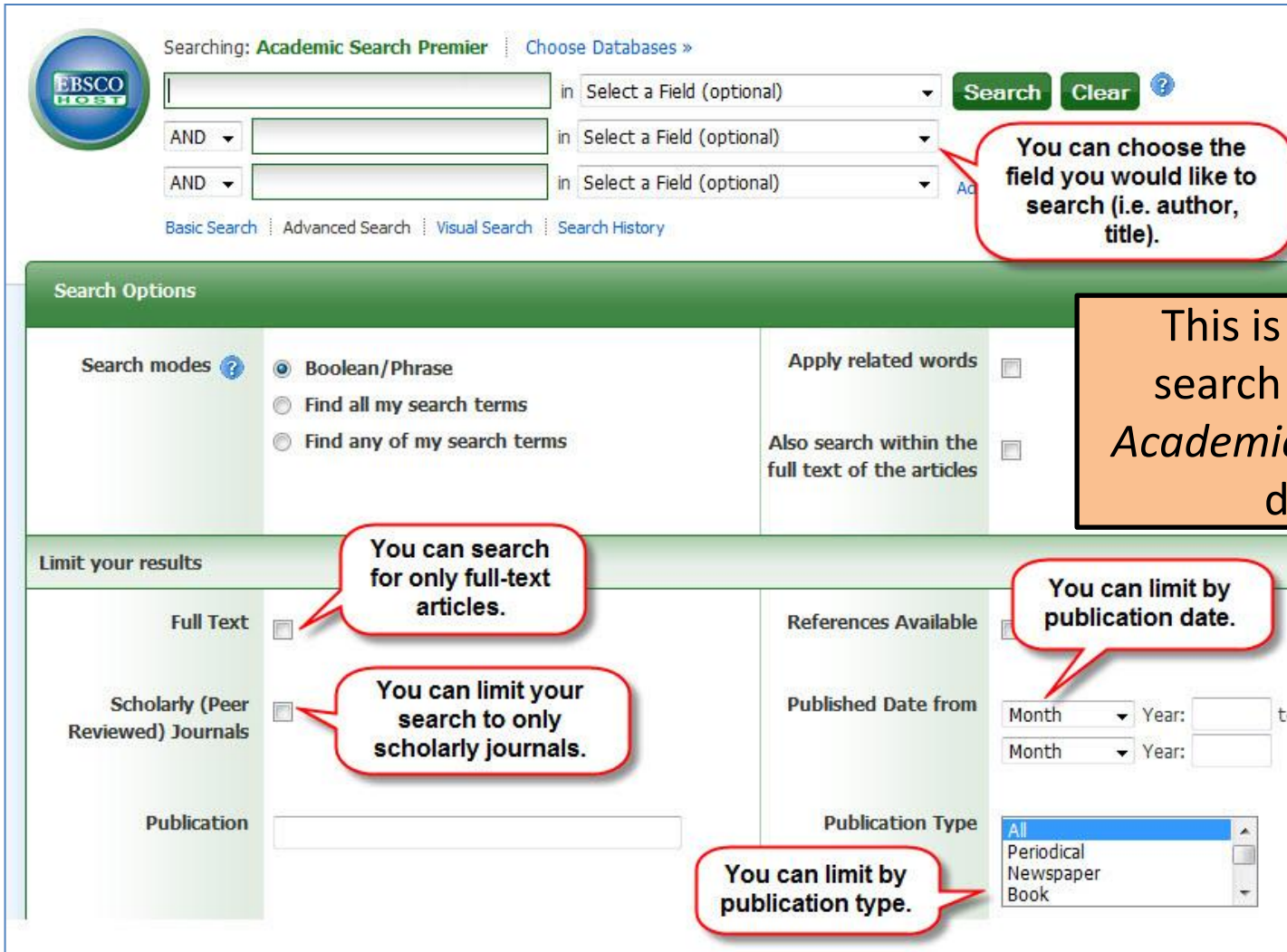
Educating

Hints

Be careful where you place the truncation symbol.
Educate* *will not* find education or educating,
although it will find educate and educated.

Truncation *will not* find synonyms (i.e. scien* will not find the words botany, biology, or astronomy), although it may bring up articles on those topics **IF** they include the words science, scientific, or scientist.

To search more precisely in article databases, you can use their advanced search screens.



Searching: **Academic Search Premier** | [Choose Databases »](#)

EBSCO HOST

Search fields: [] in Select a Field (optional) [Search] [Clear] [?]

AND [] in Select a Field (optional)

AND [] in Select a Field (optional)

[Basic Search](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | [Visual Search](#) | [Search History](#)

Search Options

Search modes [?]

- ☒ Boolean/Phrase
- ☐ Find all my search terms
- ☐ Find any of my search terms

Apply related words ☐

Also search within the full text of the articles ☐

Limit your results

Full Text ☐ *You can search for only full-text articles.*

Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals ☐ *You can limit your search to only scholarly journals.*

Publication []

References Available ☐

Published Date from Month [] Year: [] to Month [] Year: [] *You can limit by publication date.*

Publication Type

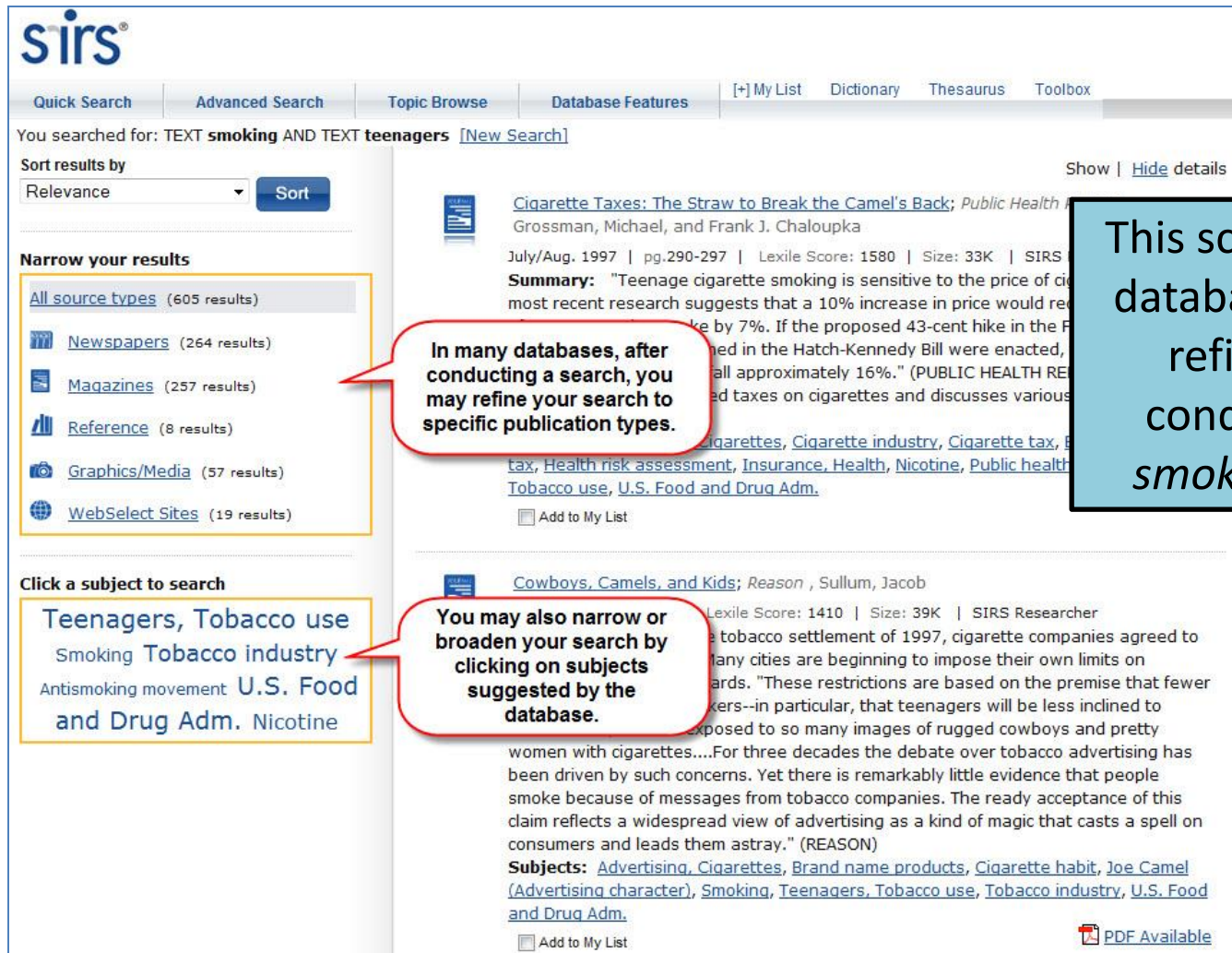
- All
- Periodical
- Newspaper
- Book

You can limit by publication type.

You can choose the field you would like to search (i.e. author, title).

This is the advanced search screen for the *Academic Search Premier* database.

In article databases, you can also refine your search after reviewing your search results.



sirs®

Quick Search | Advanced Search | Topic Browse | Database Features | [+ My List | Dictionary | Thesaurus | Toolbox

You searched for: TEXT **smoking** AND TEXT **teenagers** [New Search]

Sort results by
Relevance

Show | [Hide](#) details

Narrow your results

[All source types](#) (605 results)

[Newspapers](#) (264 results)

[Magazines](#) (257 results)

[Reference](#) (8 results)

[Graphics/Media](#) (57 results)

[WebSelect Sites](#) (19 results)

Click a subject to search

[Teenagers, Tobacco use](#)

[Smoking Tobacco industry](#)

[Antismoking movement](#)

[U.S. Food and Drug Adm.](#)

[Nicotine](#)

Cigarette Taxes: The Straw to Break the Camel's Back; *Public Health* Grossman, Michael, and Frank J. Chaloupka

July/Aug. 1997 | pg.290-297 | Lexile Score: 1580 | Size: 33K | SIRS

Summary: "Teenage cigarette smoking is sensitive to the price of cigarettes. The most recent research suggests that a 10% increase in price would reduce teenage smoking by 7%. If the proposed 43-cent hike in the Federal excise tax on cigarettes enacted in the Hatch-Kennedy Bill were enacted, it would increase the price of a pack of cigarettes by approximately 16%." (PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS) The article discusses various taxes on cigarettes and discusses various

[Cigarettes](#), [Cigarette industry](#), [Cigarette tax](#), [Cigarette taxes](#), [Health risk assessment](#), [Insurance](#), [Health](#), [Nicotine](#), [Public health](#), [Tobacco use](#), [U.S. Food and Drug Adm.](#)

☐ Add to My List


Cowboys, Camels, and Kids; *Reason*, Sullum, Jacob

July/Aug. 1997 | pg.290-297 | Lexile Score: 1410 | Size: 39K | SIRS Researcher

The tobacco settlement of 1997, cigarette companies agreed to pay \$246 billion to the federal government. Many cities are beginning to impose their own limits on cigarette advertising. "These restrictions are based on the premise that fewer teenagers--in particular, that teenagers will be less inclined to smoke--are exposed to so many images of rugged cowboys and pretty women with cigarettes....For three decades the debate over tobacco advertising has been driven by such concerns. Yet there is remarkably little evidence that people smoke because of messages from tobacco companies. The ready acceptance of this claim reflects a widespread view of advertising as a kind of magic that casts a spell on consumers and leads them astray." (REASON)

Subjects: [Advertising](#), [Cigarettes](#), [Brand name products](#), [Cigarette habit](#), [Joe Camel](#) (Advertising character), [Smoking](#), [Teenagers](#), [Tobacco use](#), [Tobacco industry](#), [U.S. Food and Drug Adm.](#)

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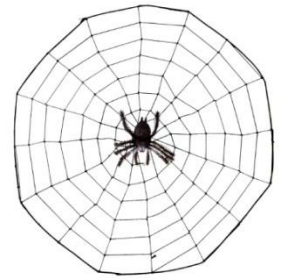
This screen shot of the *SIRS* database shows additional refining options after conducting a search for *smoking AND teenagers*.

Advanced Search Techniques for Web Searching

Using **advanced search techniques** when searching the **web** is even more important because you are sifting through so much information.

Some of the techniques used for searching the web versus library catalogs and article databases are **different**.





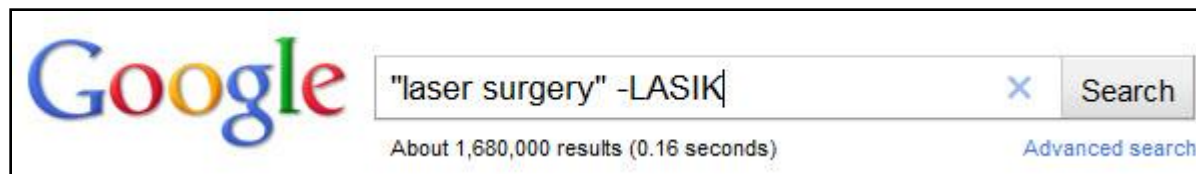
Web Searching Advanced Search Techniques

- Use **quotation marks** to search for phrases
- Use the **minus (-) symbol** in front of a word to exclude it
- Use the **advanced search screen** to help refine your search
- Be **very specific**
- Search in **appropriate domains** (.com, .edu, .gov)

Minus Symbol (-)

Sometimes when searching the web, the computer displays lots of results that are not on your topic.

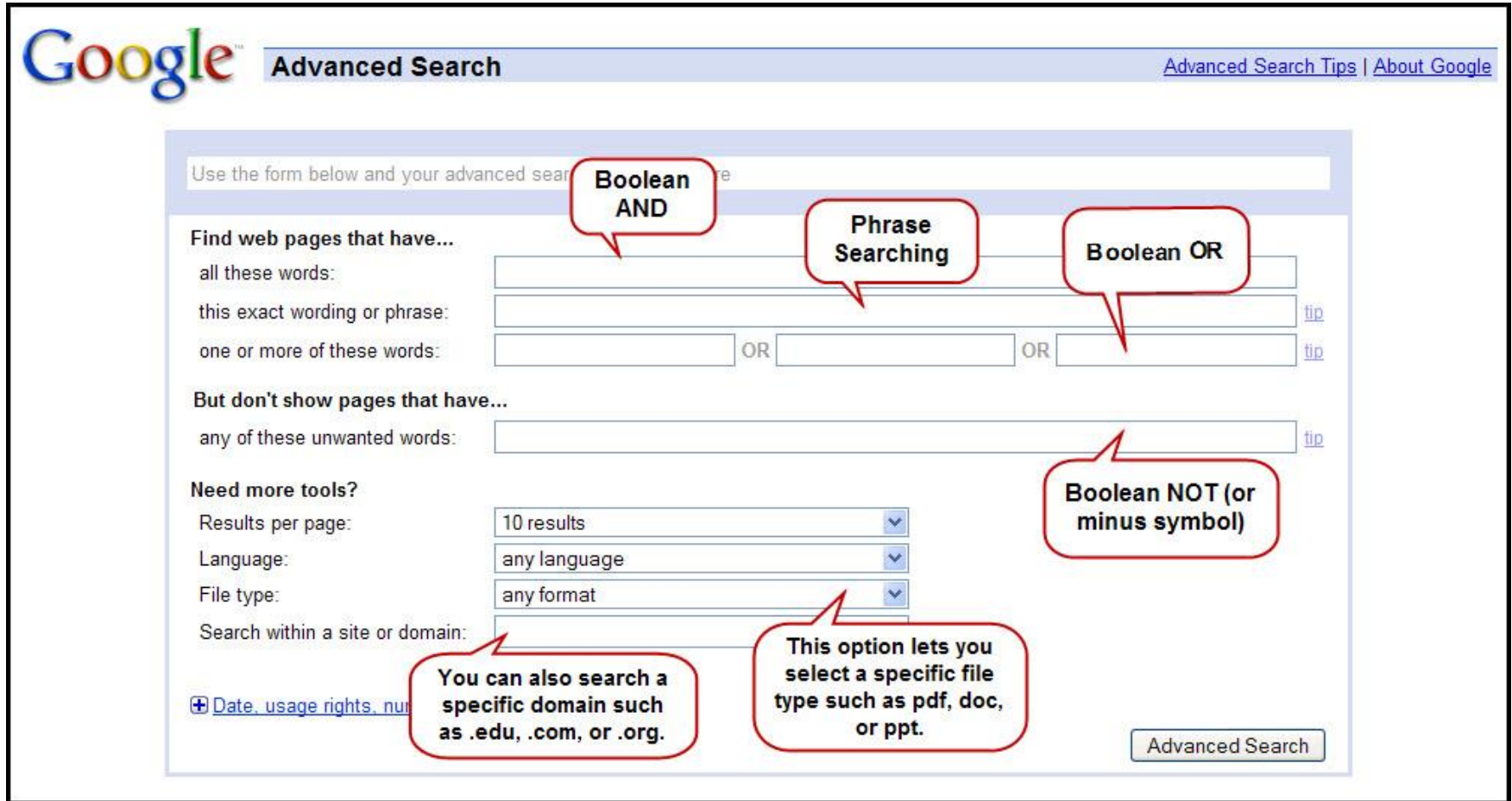
For example, you want to find information on laser surgery, but most of the search results are pulling up LASIK. To remove these hits, search for: “laser surgery” -LASIK



Advanced Search Screen

Like article databases, most search engines have an **advanced search screen**. This screen offers many options to help you refine your search.

Google's Advanced Search Screen



Google **Advanced Search** [Advanced Search Tips](#) | [About Google](#)

Use the form below and your advanced search results will be displayed.

Find web pages that have...

- all these words:
- this exact wording or phrase: [tip](#)
- one or more of these words: OR OR [tip](#)

But don't show pages that have...

- any of these unwanted words: [tip](#)

Need more tools?

- Results per page:
- Language:
- File type:
- Search within a site or domain:

[+ Date, usage rights, num](#)

Boolean AND

Phrase Searching

Boolean OR

Boolean NOT (or minus symbol)

You can also search a specific domain such as .edu, .com, or .org.

This option lets you select a specific file type such as pdf, doc, or ppt.

Be Very Specific

Library catalogs and article databases have a **limited** amount of information. The web is virtually **limitless**. To pull up the most relevant information when searching the web, you need to use **lots** of terms related to your research question.

For example, if you search for “tattoo removal” you find over 1,350,000 hits.



If you search for “tattoo removal” “blue ink,” you only find 723.



Notice here, that both concepts are being searched as phrases.

Domain Searching

Finally, when searching the web, it is often helpful to limit your results to a specific domain.

The domain of a web site indicates the type of organization or geographic region from which the site originates. Helpful domain limiters include:


- .edu-education
- .gov-government,
- .mil-U.S. military,
- .org-organization
- .com-commercial

To limit your search to a specific domain type

- Add *site:domain* to your search.



- Or use the *advanced search* option and type in the domain.

A screenshot of the "Need more tools?" section of the Google search interface. It contains several dropdown menus: "Reading level:" set to "no reading level displayed", "Results per page:" set to "10 results", "Language:" set to "any language", and "File type:" set to "any format". The "Search within a site or domain:" field is highlighted with a red rectangle and contains the text "edu". Below this field, there is a small text example: "(e.g. youtube.com, .edu)".

Summing Up

Using advanced search techniques when searching **library catalogs**, **article databases**, and **web search engines** will help refine your search. They will help limit the number of search results, and the results found should be more **relevant** for your research question.