

# Search tips and tricks

## Truncation searching

Truncation is a search method that allows you to broaden your search to include variations of your keyword. Truncation is often performed by putting an \* [asterisks symbol] at the end of the keyword (some databases and search engines may use different symbols).

Example:

KEYWORD	RESULTS WILL INCLUDE
Aborigin*	Aborigine, Aborigines, Aboriginal, Aborigines
program*	program, programs, programme, programmes, programming
sport*	sport, sports, sporting

## Wild card searching

A wild card search is when you use a symbol within a keyword to replace a single letter. This is useful when you know there are various spellings of the word.

The ? [question mark] symbol is often used for wild card searching (some databases and search engines may use different symbols).

Example:

KEYWORD	RESULTS WILL INCLUDE
organi?ation	organization, organisation
colo?r	color, colour

## Phrase searching

Phrase searching allows you to search a phrase (two or more words) that would normally be found together. Quotation marks are often used to indicate a phrase.

Example:

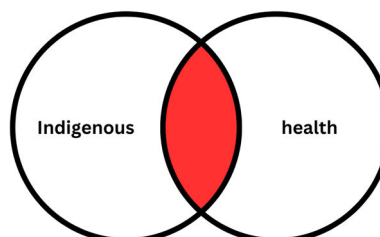
KEYWORD	TO SEARCH AS PHRASE
child care	“child care”
Alice Springs	“Alice Springs”
closing the gap	“closing the gap”

## Boolean operators

Boolean operators are found when using the Advanced Search option. Boolean operators are AND, OR, and NOT. Using these operators allows you to combine words and phrases, and to exclude words in search results.

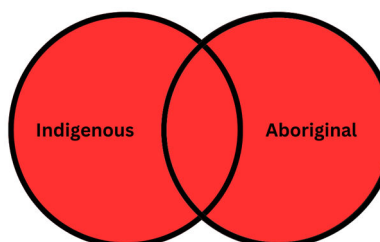
**AND** combines your keywords.

Indigenous AND health



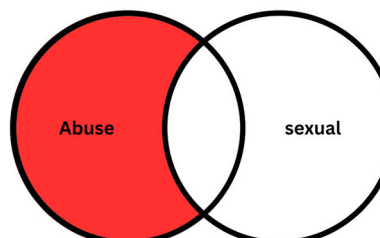
**OR** groups your keywords.

Indigenous OR Aboriginal



**NOT** excludes your keywords.

Abuse NOT sexual



## Fields and tags

When using the Advanced Search option, you can search a specific field or tag (like author, title, subject, date etc). This can improve your search results as it creates a more focused search.

In the example below, the **Title** and **Author** have been selected in the Search Index field and search terms entered. The Boolean operator is set to AND.

The search results will show resources with the word Australia in the Title only and with Stan Grant as an author.

Advanced search		
Search for		
Search index	Search terms	Operator
Title ( ti: )	australia	AND
Title ( ti: )		AND
Author ( au: )	stan grant	+

## Building a search strategy

Before you start searching for any information you should first develop a search strategy.

A search strategy is a plan that helps you look for the information you need.

### Search strategy tips

- Identify the keywords and concepts.
- Determine alternative terms for these concepts.
- Refine your search to dates, subject etc.
- Record your steps
- Reference and/or save relevant resources

Remember that learning search strategies can take time, and that strategies and styles will differ according to personal choice and what you are studying.

## Example search strategy

What are the **benefits** of **bilingual education** in **remote schools**?

Search concept 1	Search concept 2	Search concept 3	Search concept 4
benefits	bilingual	education	remote schools
advantages	second language	teaching	Aboriginal communities
impact	Aboriginal language	curriculum	schools
disadvantages	English	learning	homelands

### Steps

1. Keywords and phrases are identified (in blue).
2. Alternative words of these keywords and phrases are listed in a table.
3. Search methods are documented.
4. Enter your search methods using Basic or Advanced Search option (examples below).

### Basic search

benefits bilingual education

### Advanced Search fields

**Advanced search**

Search for

Search index	Search terms	Operator
Keyword (kw:)	(benefit* OR advantage* OR impact*)	AND
Keyword (kw:)	bilingual	AND
Keyword (kw:)	education	AND
Keyword (kw:)	Aborigin*	⊖ ⊕