

# Tips for Searching Databases

Licensed **databases** at UNB Libraries are powerful search tools that sort through numerous publication records and allow you to craft and re-craft your searches to meet your research needs. Though many of our **databases** have different interfaces, they operate according to similar principles. Always check the **help option** within a database to find search tips for browsing, viewing, saving, and organizing your search results.

Find the **databases** most relevant to your topic in our **Subject Guides** located on the library's home page [lib.unb.ca](http://lib.unb.ca) under **Research by Subject**.

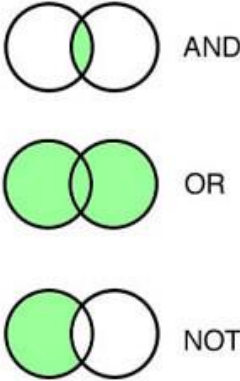
## Search Vocabulary

<b>Keywords</b>	Words and phrases that describe your topic. Key terms that you have gleaned from <b>reference sources</b> and <b>books</b> on your topic, during preliminary research. <b>Use double quotation marks around multiple words (" ") to search for exact phrases.</b>
<b>Synonyms</b>	A word or phrase similar to, or meaning almost the same thing as, a given word or phrase. <b>Synonyms</b> help you generate more accurate search results for your topic.
<b>Controlled Vocabulary and Subject Headings</b>	A set of words or phrases used by a database to categorize its content. <b>Controlled vocabulary</b> or <b>subject headings</b> help you retrieve more precise search results by tapping into the preferred language used by a database. You can search for <b>controlled vocabulary</b> under the "Thesaurus" or "Index" links located on the main navigation ribbon of many databases.

Most UNB Libraries' **databases** are a combination of indexing/abstracting and full-text **databases**. Your search may retrieve results that have direct links to "html full-text" or "pdf full-text" but also, in the same list, you may find links that ask you to "Check for full-text." This option will redirect your query to UNB's print and electronic holdings. If an item is indexed in a **database** but the full-text is unavailable, use the **document delivery** system to obtain the material from another library.



## More Search Tools and Options

<b>Limiters</b>	Search settings within a database that allow you to refine your search by format, author, year, language, type of content, and topic. Some databases will also have a “peer reviewed” option among their limiters.
<b>Boolean Operators: AND, OR, NOT</b>	 <p><b>AND</b> Use <b>AND</b> to link concepts and narrow your results.</p> <p><b>OR</b> Use <b>OR</b> to search widely for synonyms and expand your results.</p> <p><b>NOT</b> Use <b>NOT</b> to exclude terms from your search. For instance, <i>fruits NOT oranges</i>.</p>
<b>Truncation</b>	A search strategy to find different endings of a root word. In some databases, the <b>asterisk</b> * can replace an unspecified number of characters. For instance, the search term “child*” will find child, child’s, children, children’s, and childhood.
<b>Wildcard Symbols</b>	Symbols that allow you to search for terms that may have variant spellings. Different databases use different symbols for wildcard characters, including ?, #, \$, and *. For instance, the search term “wom?n” will find women and woman. Most databases offer a “Help” section to inform users of the wildcard characters used in that particular database.
<b>Stop Words</b>	Stop words are common words, such as <b>in</b> , <b>the</b> , <b>about</b> , or <b>a</b> that can inflate your search results and are sometimes ignored entirely in database searches. Exclude them from your search or deliberately keep them in by putting double quotation marks (“ ”) around your phrase.
<b>Proximity Operators</b>	Use <b>NEAR</b> to look for words that are close to each other or have specified distance between each other. For instance, in the databases published by EBSCO, you can search “education <b>near</b> female” to find instances of these words close to each other. Searching “education <b>near.6</b> female” will retrieve instances where “education” and “female” are within 6 words of each other.

For more research tips, visit our **Video Quick Tips** <http://www.lib.unb.ca/research/video.php> and our **Research Help** page <http://www.lib.unb.ca/research/>