

Script: GoAnimate

This video will show you how to develop a basic search string, using three practical tools:

- a) Boolean operators
- b) "quotation marks"
- and c) the asterisk, or star symbol

These three tools can be used in most databases, and will help make sure you are getting the most relevant results for your research, without spending hours staring at the computer screen.

The first of these tools is Boolean Operators, which involves using the words AND, OR, and NOT. When incorporated into your search strategy, these words are ALWAYS written in capital letters, and can be used as often as you need them.

AND

-Retrieves items that include two different concepts together (for example: an article that talks about caffeine AND sprint performance).

OR

- OR is useful when it doesn't matter which concept shows up in your results, as long as ONE concept is included. For example: searching for teenagers OR "young adults" will likely provide information on similar types of people, even though you're using different terms.

NOT

- NOT can remove search results you may not need, by filtering out specific words. For example: if you were interested in information on outdoor walking patterns, and kept getting information about treadmill walking, you could search for "walking patterns" NOT treadmill, which would help to remove some of this information from your list.

TRUNCATION

- truncation involves the use of the star symbol or asterisk. This symbol comes at the end of your root word and is helpful when you're using a concept that might have different endings. For example: by using the star symbol at the end of the word teen* you would get results for teen, teens, teenage, teenager, AND teenagers – without having to type in all these words separately. You could even use it for a word like Canada, by dropping the "a". This way, you'd get information that used the words Canada, Canadian, or Canadians.

QUOTATION MARKS

- By putting quotation marks around a specific concept or phrase, you will be able to keep these words together in your search. For example: if you didn't put the term "heart rate" in quotation marks, you could get articles that talk about either of these words separately, bringing up unrelated terms like "heart disease" or "mortality rate".

Finally, it's important to keep in mind that there is no such thing as a perfect search – don't be afraid to

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(3:04 min, 20 Jun 2016) by [Sarah Clark](#); used with permission and is licensed under [CC BY 3.0](#)

try different options, to see which techniques work best. For more help with developing an effective search strategy, contact your subject librarian, or visit any library service desk.