

# Search Tips

## Top 3 Ways to Make Your Search More Accurate

Most of the time, you just want to find content that has a particular phrase. Here are the three easiest steps to get what you want:

1. **Enclose your search phrase in quotes.**

A search for "black cat" is going to return content with the phrase "black cat". (If it's in there, of course.)

2. **Choose the space where the content lives.**

Choose a value from the "where" dropdown list. When you pick a space from the list, your search will return results *only* from that space.

3. **Choose the time period during which the content you're looking for was last changed.**

Choose a value from the "when" dropdown list. Was it within the last month? Last year?

## More Advanced Help

Here are a few more tips for getting the most out of your searches. By entering your search terms in certain ways, you can search for content that contains:

- [Certain words, but not necessarily all of the words in order.](#) (page 1)
- [Certain words in a certain order.](#) (page 2)
- [Words with certain letters in them.](#) (page 2)
- [Terms that are pretty close to the one you enter.](#) (page 2)
- [Certain words near each other.](#) (page 2)
- [this word OR that word; this word AND that word.](#) (page 3)

You can [exclude certain words](#). (page 3)

You can also:

- [Boost content with certain words upwards in the results list.](#) (page 2)
- [Include special characters in your search phrase.](#) (page 4)

## Search for content that has certain words, but not necessarily all of the words in order.

This is the most basic search. Simply enter your search terms. For example:

```
black cat adoption
```

This will search for documents containing the words `black`, `cat` or `adoption`.

## Search for content that has certain words in a certain order.

To search for a particular phrase, enclose your phrase in quotation marks:

```
"black cat"
```

Search will try to find content with those words in the order you enclosed them. It will also find other content that merely contains those words.

## Search for content with words that have certain letters in them.

Use "wildcards" to search parts of words. Wildcards are special characters you include in your search terms. These include `?` and `*`.

The single character wildcard (`?`) represents a single character in the search term. This search looks for terms that match with the single character replaced. For example, to search for `text` or `test` you can use the following search:

```
te?t
```

The multiple character wildcard (`*`) represents any number of characters. For example, to search for `test`, `tests` or `tester`, you can use the search:

```
test*
```

You can also use this wildcard in the middle of a term.

```
te*t
```

**Note:** You cannot use a `*` or `?` symbol as the first character of a search.

## Search for content with terms that are pretty close to the one you enter.

"Fuzzy" searches return results that match your search terms exactly as well as results that are close. For example, if you want to find a word that is similar to `foam` add a tilde (`~`) to your search term:

```
foam~
```

This search will match terms like `foam` and `roams`.

## Search for content in which certain words are near each other.

Proximity searches help you find words that are close to each other. For example, if you know the word `new` and `car` are within five words of each other you can enter a search phrase like this:

```
"new car"~5
```

## Boost content with certain words upwards in the results list.

Boosting a search term gives it more weight in the results list. For example, if you search for `black cat` you might get results about black paint and cats but not necessarily black cats. In this case, we want to tell the search engine to weight the word "cat" more heavily:

```
black cat^4
```

You can also boost phrases:

```
"black cat"^4 adopt
```

You can use any number to boost the term -- the higher the number, the higher the boosting. For example, if the query above still returns too many results, consider increasing the boost value:

```
"black cat"^6 adopt
```

## Search for content with *this word OR that word*; *this word AND that word*.

With Boolean operators, you can combine terms. The words `AND`, `+`, `OR`, `NOT` and `-` are supported. Note, these terms must be in ALL CAPS to distinguish them from normal words.

### Using OR

The `OR` operator links two terms and finds a matching document if either of the terms exist in a document. Note, the symbol `||` can be used in place of the word `OR`. To search for documents that contain either "black cat" or just "cat adoption" use the query:

```
"black cat" OR "cat adoption"
```

or

```
"black cat" || "cat adoption"
```

**Note:** `OR` is the default way to put search terms together, even if you leave it out. So the following search is equivalent to both of the previous examples:

```
"black cat" "cat adoption"
```

### Using AND

The `AND` operator says that the search should return content in which all of the search terms are present. Note, the symbol `&&` can be used in place of the word `AND`. To search for documents that contain *both* "black cat" *and* just "cat adoption" use a search like this:

```
"black cat" AND "cat adoption"
```

or this:

```
"black cat" && "cat adoption"
```

You can get fancy by grouping Boolean phrases using parentheses. For example, to find results about different colors of cats, try the following:

```
(black OR orange OR white) AND cat
```

## Search for content that *doesn't* have certain words.

The `NOT` operator excludes documents that contain terms after `NOT`. You can use the `!` symbol in place of the word `NOT`. To search for documents that contain "black cat" but not "cat adoption" use something like this:

```
"black cat" NOT "cat adoption"
```

or

```
"black cat" ! "cat adoption"
```

**Note:** The NOT operator must be used with multiple terms. For example, the following search will return no results:

```
NOT "black cat"
```

### Include special characters in your search phrase.

There are a few special characters that you can't include in a search phrase without special treatment. That's because these are part of the query syntax. However, you can use a special "escape" character to tell the search engine to treat the special character like any other.

The current list special characters includes:

```
+ - && | | ! ( ) { } [ ] ^ " ~ * ? : \
```

To escape these characters use the \ before the character. For example, to search for (1+1):2, which has the special characters (, ), +, and :, use the query:

```
\(1\+1\)\:2
```