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Getting Started: Tips for Beginning your Research Process

Figure out WHAT kind of resource you would like to search and find (to determine WHERE to do your search)

- Do you want to find BOOKS at CUNY? → Search our CUNY Catalog
- Do you want to find any and all BOOKS that are available through the universe of libraries? → Try a search in WorldCat.
 - Request items through Interlibrary Loan
 - Or use WorldCat to see what nearby libraries hold an item you are interested in (and then visit in person with a Metro Pass or your MaRLI card as needed)
- Do you want to find ARTICLES on a given topic, but don't know the exact thing you need yet? → The first step is to choose a Database (see more tips about this below)
- Are you interested to visit an ARCHIVE, or to find one online? → Archive Grid is a great website to use to find an archival collection, and many digital collections are also discoverable through web search engines
- Have an exact CITATION for something that you would like to find?
 - Check the Catalog for CUNY books, or WorldCat
 - Use the Journal Title Search to see if we have access to the journal by date of publication

Tips on choosing what article database to search within

- Take a look at the GC Library's Research Guides by discipline to find what databases are recommended for a particular area (usually under the "Articles" tab is a list of recommended databases)
- Try a selection from our full A-Z list (you can't open too many tabs!)
- Test the new OneSearch multiple database tool
- Ask a librarian, professors, and your advisor for suggestions or their favorites

Not finding what you want?

- Think critically about your search terms and keywords—experiment with different words that could be used to describe a similar topic
 - See the other side of this sheet for more search tips
- Try another database, catalog, or search tool
- Talk to a librarian!
 - MALS librarian Alycia Sellie's contact information is above
 - Our Reference Desk on the 2nd Floor of the Library is another way to ask a question on the fly
 - We also have a 24/7 online chat service through the GC Library Website

Search Like a Librarian

A Few Search Tips and Techniques for Any Catalog or Database (even Google!)

“Phrase searching” uses quotation marks and links multiple words in an exact order.

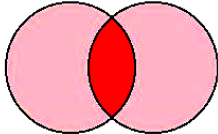
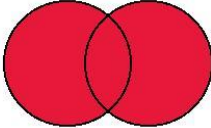
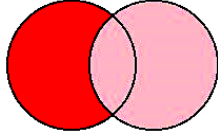
- “Graduate Center”—this will only search for *Graduate Center* as a phrase, not as individual words: not just the word *Graduate* anywhere or *Center* on its own.
- “For Whom the Bell Tolls”
- “Mass Media”

Truncation allows you to search for plural and singular terms at once—or any words that share the same beginning, or stem.

- *Librar** (for library, libraries, librarianship, etc.)
- *Teen** (for teen, teens, teenager, teenagers, etc.)
- *There is also this tricky kind of search:*
 - *Wom*n* (for woman or women)

Boolean Searching controls how your search terms are combined:

<input type="text" value="zombie"/>	in	<input type="text" value="Select a Field (optional)"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
AND <input type="button" value="v"/>	<input type="text" value="vampire"/>	in	<input type="text" value="Select a Field (optional)"/>
NOT <input type="button" value="v"/>	<input type="text" value="werewolf or werewolves"/>	in	<input type="text" value="Select a Field (optional)"/>
			Add Row

<p>AND <input type="button" value="v"/></p>  <p>Results: 28</p> <p><u>zombies AND vampires</u></p> <p>Gives the NARROWEST search results, and perhaps the most specific information to our topic.</p>	<p>OR (equals more!) <input type="button" value="v"/></p>  <p>Results: 1202</p> <p><u>zombies OR vampires</u></p> <p>Gives the BROADEST search results, and results may pertain to only one of our topics or keywords.</p>
<p>NOT <input type="button" value="v"/></p>  <p>Results: 594</p> <p><u>zombies NOT vampires</u></p> <p>Somewhere between AND or OR, this search can avoid topics that are not pertinent to your research.</p>	<p><i>You can think of search strings like math equations: (if that is helpful for you)</i></p> <p>(zombies) AND (mummies) NOT (vampires) (A) + (B) – (C)</p>