

Advanced techniques for your favorite search engine!



Go beyond basic keywords!

How **Google Search** works:

- Google works by “keyword searching”—every time you enter something and click “Google Search,” Google is checking every web page it can find for your word.
- Google ranks its search results by *popularity*, not relevance! So, if you search “smurfy,” Google will turn up the *most popular* web pages that had “smurfy” in them—not necessarily the ones with the most information about “smurfy” in them.

Techniques and concepts:

Using AND / OR (Boolean operators)

AND: this will show pages that only have *both* search terms on them
(In Basic Search, Google does this already.)

OR: this will show pages that have either Search Term 1 *or* Search Term 2 on them,
not pages that have both .

Articles, common words, and punctuation: the, and, or, like, how

- Generally, Google doesn’t search for these terms, since they appear in practically every Web page known to humanity.
- Same for punctuation like periods, commas, question marks and exclamation points.
- Google is also *not* case sensitive; it doesn’t understand the difference between “Chris Rock” and “chris rock.”

Finding phrases or quotations:

- Put your phrase in quotes, as in “the good the bad and the ugly.” This forces Google to search for every single word between those quotes, in that order.
- If that’s too much work, adding a + (plus sign) in front of your search term gets the same results.

Definitions:

Define: [your search term] will produce definitions. Be sure to put a space after the colon!

Synonyms:

[search term]~ (~ is called a “tilda”) produces synonyms. For example, *~turtle* finds tortoises as well as turtles.

Fill in the blanks:

For example, “The rotary engine was invented by”* will force Google to fill in that blank. Be sure to use quote marks so that Google will use the entire phrase!

Words with more than one meaning (homonyms):

To exclude one particular meaning, place a minus sign in front of the search term—for example “bass – fish” will exclude links on bass fishing, but not bass guitar, Bass brand shoes, etc.

Search within a site:

Site: [URL of your choice] plus your search term will find you that search term within that particular site. For example, *site: jeffco.edu PSB test* will find pages in Jefferson College’s website that have “PSB test” in them.

Searcher Beware!

Links over on the right side of the page and *sometimes* at its top are not sorted by relevance at all—they’re placed there because the owners of the sites paid Google for that placement. Essentially, they’re advertisements!

Look for the words “Sponsored Link”—they’re a clear giveaway.