

Researching and using symbols for before research

[http://www.sc.edu/beaufort/library/
pages/bones/lesson9.shtml](http://www.sc.edu/beaufort/library/pages/bones/lesson9.shtml)

- Use the plus (+) and minus (-) signs in front of words to force their inclusion and/or exclusion in searches.

EXAMPLE: +meat -potatoes

(NO space between the sign and the keyword)

- Know the default (basic) settings your search engine uses (OR or AND). This will have an effect on how you configure your search statement because, if you don't use any signs (+, -, " "), the engine will default to its own settings.

- Combine phrases with keywords, using the double quotes and the plus (+) and/or minus (-) signs.

**EXAMPLE: +cowboys +"wild west" -
football -dallas**

(In this case, if you use a keyword with a +sign, you must put the +sign in front of the phrase as well. When searching for a phrase alone, the +sign is not necessary.)

- Use double quotation marks (" ") around phrases to ensure they are searched exactly as is, with the words side by side in the same order.

EXAMPLE: "bye bye miss american pie"

(Do NOT put quotation marks around a single word.)

- Put your most important keywords first in the string.

**EXAMPLE: dog breed family pet
choose**

- Type keywords and phrases in lower case to find both lower and upper case versions. Typing capital letters will usually return only an exact match.

EXAMPLE: *president* retrieves both *president* and *President*

- Use truncation (or stemming) and wildcards (e.g., *) to look for variations in spelling and word form.

EXAMPLE: librar* returns library, libraries, librarian, etc.

EXAMPLE: colo*r returns color (American spelling) and colour (British spelling)

Uses word not symbols

- **WHAT'S A "BOOLEAN"?**
- Boolean logic takes its name from British mathematician George Boole (1815-1864), who wrote about a system of logic designed to produce better search results by formulating precise queries. He called it the "calculus of thought." From his writings, we have derived Boolean logic and its operators: AND, OR, and NOT, which we use to link words and phrases for more precise queries.

- **BOOLEAN "AND"**

- The Boolean AND actually narrows your search by retrieving only documents that contain every one of the keywords you enter. The more terms you enter, the narrower your search becomes.

EXAMPLE: truth AND justice

EXAMPLE: truth AND justice AND ethics
AND congress

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- **HOST (OR SITE) SEARCHING**

- If you are seeking information that resides on a specific computer or server, you can narrow your search with a "host" or "site" query.

EXAMPLE: host:www.sc.edu

returns pages hosted at the University of South Carolina.

- **URL SEARCHING**

- If you are seeking a specific file, and that file's name is part of the host site's URL, you may find it more quickly by choosing a URL search.

EXAMPLE: url:bck2skol

returns sites in which the filename, bck2skol, (my old course for Internet "newbies") is incorporated into the URL.

- **LINK SEARCHING**

- If you have a web page and would like to know who is linking to it, or if you would like to see who is linking to a particular page of interest, you may choose a LINK search.

EXAMPLE: link:www.sc.edu/beaufort/

returns pages with links to my campus of the University of South Carolina

- **IMAGE SEARCHING**

- If you want to find a particular image on the web, you may choose an IMAGE search. You will need to specify the image by name, which works well if the name is part of the image file name. If not, you may miss that particular image altogether.

EXAMPLE: IMAGE:soccer.gif

(Actually, I found the "dancing bones" logo that I use for this tutorial with a Boolean search as follows: "free gifs" AND bones)

ASSIGNMENT:

- Assume you are about to start looking for work and need to write a cover letter. What search string would you use? Go to [Google](#) and select a few of the following strings to search:
- **"cover letter" "job search"**
- **"cover letter" +resume**
- **"cover letter" +template +form**
- **"cover letter" +example**
- **"cover letter" +sample "helpful tips"** Scan the results page for each search you conduct and see if you can tell which searches seem to be the most productive and why.