

## Search Techniques

Knowing some search techniques to use in [Library Search](#) and [Library databases](#) will help you focus and refine your search - you can even use them in search engines such as Google!

### Linking words: combine your keywords in useful ways

<b>AND</b>	<b>e.g. jam AND toast</b> Search results will only include resources that contain both the word jam and the word toast. A blank space between words also works for AND.
<b>OR</b>	<b>e.g. jam OR preserve OR jelly OR confit</b> Search results will contain resources that include one or more of these terms.
<b>NOT</b>	<b>e.g. Spreads NOT honey</b> Search results will exclude resources that contain the word 'honey'.

### Search modifiers: make your keywords work harder

<b>“ ”</b> <b>Speech marks</b>	<b>e.g. "chocolate spread"</b> Phrase searching: search results will only include resources that contain the words 'chocolate' and 'spread' beside each other in a sentence.
<b>*</b> <b>Asterisk</b>	<b>e.g. toast*</b> Truncation: search results will include resources that contain words beginning with 'toast', e.g. toast, toasts, toasted, toasting, toaster.
<b>( )</b> <b>Parentheses</b>	<b>e.g. (jam* OR "chocolate spread") AND (toast* OR crumpet*)</b> Use with synonyms: results will include resources that contain either the term jam or chocolate spread or both, and either toast or crumpet or both.
<b>?</b> <b>Question mark</b>	<b>e.g. colo?r</b> Wild card: use to replace one or more characters when you can spell a term several ways. Colo?r will find resources with both 'color' and 'colour'.

### Searching tips

- Use **AND** with keywords to narrow and reduce number of results
- Use **OR** with synonyms and related terms to widen and increase the number of results
- Check the database you are using for alternative search tricks
- Use **search fields** to restrict your search within the title, abstract, subject etc.
- Experiment with different combinations to find the best results. If in doubt, keep your search simple.