

The Basics of Google Search

To enter a query into Google, just type in a few descriptive words and hit the <Enter> key (or click on the Google Search button) for a list of relevant web pages. Since Google only returns web pages that contain **all** the words in your query, refining or narrowing your search is as simple as adding more words to the search terms you have already entered. Your new query will return a smaller subset of the pages Google found for your original "too-broad" query.

Choosing Keywords

For best results, it's important to choose your keywords wisely. Keep these tips in mind:

- Try the obvious first. If you're looking for information on Picasso, enter "Picasso" rather than "painters".
- Use words likely to appear on a site with the information you want. "Luxury hotel dubuque" gets better results than "really nice places to spend the night in Dubuque".
- Make keywords as specific as possible. "Antique lead soldiers" gets more relevant results than "old metal toys".

Automatic "and" Queries

By default, Google only returns pages that include all of your search terms. There is no need to include "and" between terms. Keep in mind that the order in which the terms are typed will affect the search results. To restrict a search further, just include more terms. For example, to plan a vacation to Hawaii, simply type:

vacation haw aii	Google Search
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Automatic Exclusion of Common Words

Google ignores common words and characters such as "where" and "how", as well as certain single digits and single letters, because they tend to slow down your search without improving the results. Google will indicate if a common word has been excluded by displaying details on the results page below the search box.

If a common word is essential to getting the results you want, you can include it by putting a "+" sign in front of it. (Be sure to include a space before the "+" sign.)

Another method for doing this is conducting a phrase search, which simply means putting quotation marks around two or more words. Common words in a phrase search (e.g., "where are you") are included in the search.

For example, to search for Star Wars, Episode I, use:

Star Wars Episode +I	Google Search
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~ OR ~

"Star Wars Episode I"	Google Search
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Capitalization

Google searches are **NOT** case sensitive. All letters, regardless of how you type them, will be understood as lower case. For example, searches for "george washington", "George Washington", and "gEoRgE wAsHiNgToN" will all return the same results.

Word Variations (Stemming)

Google now uses stemming technology. Thus, when appropriate, it will search not only for your search terms, but also for words that are similar to some or all of those terms. If you search for "pet lemur dietary needs", Google will also search for "pet lemur diet needs", and other related variations of your terms. Any variants of your terms that were searched for will be highlighted in the snippet of text accompanying each result.

Search By Category

The Google Web Directory (located at directory.google.com) is a good place to start if you're not exactly sure which search keywords to use. For example, searching for [Saturn] within the Science > Astronomy category of the Google Web Directory returns only pages about the planet Saturn, while searching for [Saturn] within the Automotive category returns only pages about Saturn cars. Searching within a category of interest allows you to quickly narrow in on only the most relevant pages to you.