

Advanced Search on Google

Remember that using Internet search engines such as Google are *not* usually the best way to research for academic work and you should only use these as an additional tool alongside specialist databases.

Much of Google's popularity appears to be based on its ability to rank results so that the most 'useful' sites are listed at the top of the screen. However, when searching for information on a topic, one of the major problems is getting too many irrelevant results.

You can narrow down a Google search by adding various 'operators' to your search terms. Here are some examples:

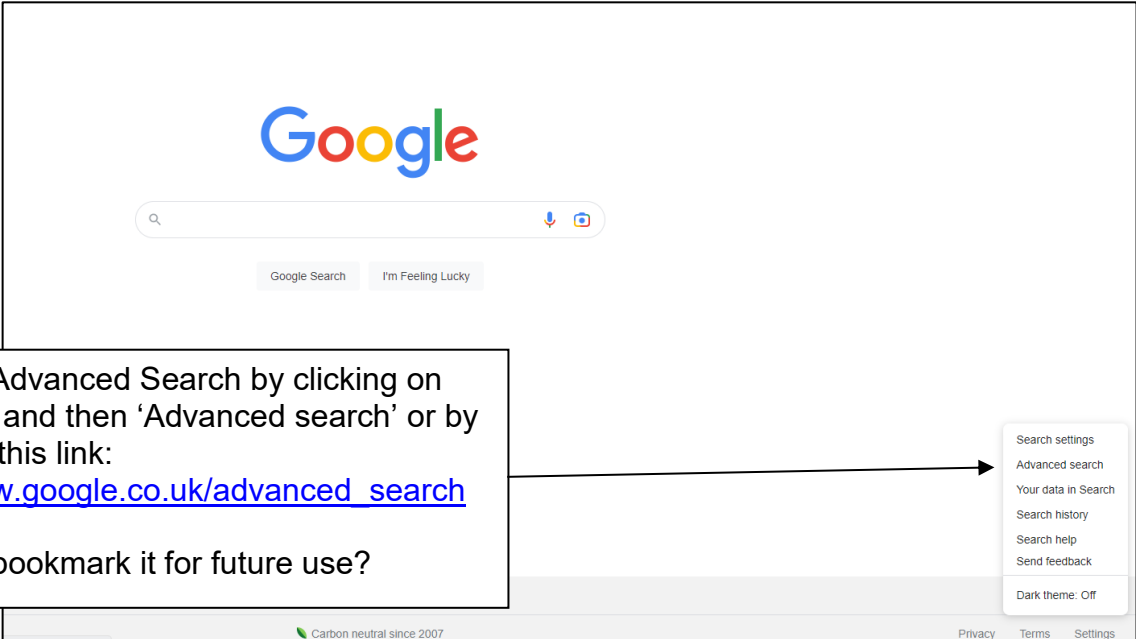
virus -computer will find the word virus but NOT the word computer

site:.ac.uk will search only British academic sites

intitle:olympics will find only pages with the word olympics in the title

However, the simplest way to focus your search (without having to remember any of the above) is to use the Advanced search

Make your searches more efficient by using Advanced Search



The image shows a screenshot of the Google homepage. The Google logo is at the top, followed by a search bar with a microphone icon and a camera icon. Below the search bar are two buttons: "Google Search" and "I'm Feeling Lucky". A callout box on the left contains the following text: "Find the Advanced Search by clicking on 'Settings' and then 'Advanced search' or by following this link: http://www.google.co.uk/advanced_search Why not bookmark it for future use?". An arrow points from the callout box to the "Settings" link in the bottom right corner of the page. The "Settings" link is part of a menu that also includes "Search settings", "Advanced search", "Your data in Search", "Search history", "Search help", "Send feedback", and "Dark theme: Off". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with "Carbon neutral since 2007" and "Privacy Terms Settings".

The Google Advanced Search page offers a number of options and you can fill in and select as many, or as few as you like, specifying the words/phrases you want (or do not want) to find.

all these words

type up to ten single words (preferably in order of importance) all of which you want to find on a page

this exact word or phrase

type a phrase of two words or more you want to find on a page in quotation marks, e.g. "national health service"

any of these words

type alternative words that mean the same from which you want to find at least one on a page, e.g. child, children

none of these words

type words that you do NOT want to find on a page

Language allows you to select the language of the pages you want to find

Site or domain allows you to limit the pages you want to find to a specific address or domain, for example .ac.uk or .gov.uk

File type allows you to select the type of file you want to find, e.g. PDF

You can also choose a date range, and where your keywords should appear on the page by clicking on Date, usage rights and more

For example:

To search for pages about the effect of climate change on agriculture outside of Scotland, you might fill in the boxes like this:

The screenshot shows an 'Advanced Search' form with the following fields and instructions:

Find pages with...	To do this in the search box.
all these words:	Type the important words: tri-colour rat terrier
this exact word or phrase: "climate change"	Put exact words in quotes: "rat terrier"
any of these words: agriculture or farming	Type OR between all the words you want: miniature OR standard
none of these words: Scotland	Put a minus sign just before words that you don't want: -rodent, -"Jack Russell"
numbers ranging from: [] to []	Put two full stops between the numbers and add a unit of measurement: 10..35 kg, £300..£500, 2010..2011

This means "find me the sites that mention the phrase 'climate change' and that include at least one of the words 'agriculture' or 'farming', but that do not include the word 'Scotland'".

If you wanted to narrow your search further to PDF documents on UK government websites, you might select the following:

The screenshot shows a 'Then narrow your results by...' section with the following filters selected:

language:	English	Find pages in the language that you select.
region:	United Kingdom	Find pages published in a particular region.
last update:	upto a year ago	Find pages updated within the time that you specify.
site or domain:	gov.uk	Search one site (like wikipedia.org) or limit your results to a domain like .edu, .org or .gov
terms appearing:	anywhere in the page	Search for terms in the whole page, page title or web address, or links to the page you're looking for.
SafeSearch:	Hide explicit results	Tell SafeSearch whether to filter sexually explicit content.
file type:	Adobe Acrobat PDF (.pdf)	Find pages in the format that you prefer.
usage rights:	not filtered by licence	Find pages that you are free to use yourself.

Advanced Search

Google is useful for searching **government** and **news sources**. Meanwhile, **Google Scholar** searches specifically for academic material. (See *Using Google Scholar* handout)

Practice at trying various combinations to make your searches much more efficient.