

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

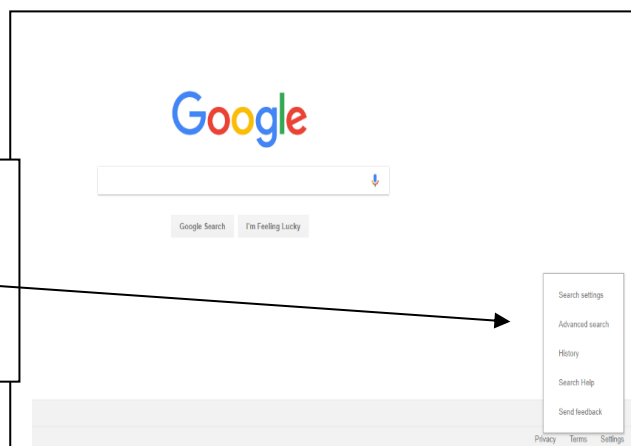
However, the simplest way to focus your search (without having to remember any of the above) is to use the Advanced search

Make your searches more efficient by using Advanced Search

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?



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 wording or phrase

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

one or more of these words

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

any of these unwanted words

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

Results per page allows you limit the number of results on a page
Language allows you to select the language of the pages you want to find
File type allows you to select the type of file you want to find, e.g. PDF
Search within a site or domain allows you to limit the pages you want to find to a specific address or domain, e.g. .ac.uk or .gov.uk

You can also choose a date range, and where your keywords should appear on the page by clicking on Date, usage rights, numeric range, 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 the 'Advanced Search' form with the following fields filled in:

- all these words:** (empty)
- this exact word or phrase:** climate change
- any of these words:** agriculture or farming
- none of these words:** Scotland
- numbers ranging from:** (empty) to (empty)

To the right of each field is a tip explaining how to enter the search terms in the search box.

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 the 'Then narrow your results by...' section of the Advanced Search form with the following filters selected:

- language:** English
- region:** United Kingdom
- last update:** upto a year ago
- site or domain:** gov.uk
- terms appearing:** anywhere in the page
- SafeSearch:** Show most relevant results
- file type:** Adobe Acrobat PDF (.pdf)
- usage rights:** not filtered by licence

Two arrows from the text above point to the 'site or domain' and 'file type' filters.

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.