

Some Definitions

- Database** an organized collection of facts and information which can be searched using criteria to find certain specified items, called "records"
Examples: phone books, library catalogs (e.g., *ALICE*), article databases (e.g., *Academic Search Premier*), web search engines (e.g., *Google*)
- Record** an individual unit in a database; each record has several sub-parts, called "fields"
Examples: a single entry in a phone book, consisting of a person's name, address and phone number (which are "fields"); a record for an item in the search results in *ALICE*, *ASP* or *Google*
- Field** a single bit of information in a record in a database.
Examples: name, address, and phone number in a phone book; author, title, location, call number (and many others) in *ALICE*.

Basic Search Techniques

Except as noted below, you can generally use these techniques in most article databases, library catalogs, and web search engines.

Boolean Connectors

AND

Use AND to reduce the number of items found:

capital punishment and juveniles finds fewer items than either "capital punishment" by itself or "juveniles" by itself.

OR

Use OR to combine synonymous or alternate terms and thus increase the number of items found:

capital punishment or death penalty finds more items than either "capital punishment" by itself or "death penalty" by itself.

Combining **AND** and **OR** in a single search. Note the use of parentheses to group the terms connected by OR:

(capital punishment or death penalty) and juveniles finds only those items that have either the term "capital punishment" or the term "death penalty" as well as the term "juveniles."

(capital punishment or death penalty) and (juveniles or adolescents) finds those items that have at least one term from each group.

Phrase Searching

Searching for two or more words which are an exact phrase. Some databases assume that two or more words will be considered as an exact phrase; others (especially web search engines) require that you use quotation marks to identify phrases for searching.

ALICE: **death penalty** — without quotation marks

Academic Search Premier: **death penalty** — without quotation marks

Google: **"death penalty"** — must use quotation marks

Truncation (Word Roots)

Use this technique to find variant forms of a single word. Type the first part of the word, followed by a punctuation mark—usually an asterisk.

This technique is generally NOT available in web search engines such as *Google*.

juvenile* finds "juvenile" and "juveniles"

adolescen* finds "adolescence," "adolescent," and "adolescents"

teen* finds "teen," "teens," "teenage," "teenaged," "teenager," and "teenagers"

(capital punishment or death penalty) and (juvenile* or adolescen* or teen*) would probably find much more than the last example above.

Search Limiters

Look for Limiters, often checkboxes or popup menus, on search screens that will reduce the number of items you find according to specified criteria. Here are some typical limiters:

ALICE Keyword search box:

The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements:

- Language: ANY (dropdown menu)
- Material Type: ANY (dropdown menu)
- Location: (text input field)
- Search and Sort: Date (dropdown menu)
- View Entire Collection (button)
- Publisher: (text input field)
- Year: After (text input field) and Before (text input field)

Academic Search Premier:

[*Google's Advanced Search* also has Search Limiters such as Occurrences (e.g., in the title of the page) or Domain (e.g., .gov)]

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Full Text | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cover Story | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Document Type | <input type="text" value="None Applied"/> |