General Tips

This advice will help you improve your search results:

1. *Use at least two search terms.* By using more search terms to narrow your search, you can locate essays that fit your information needs better. The following sample results are hypothetical:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Number of Hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War soldier</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War soldier confederate</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War soldier confederate prisoner</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* By default, the search engine finds only those essays containing all of the words you specify.

2. *Be specific.* If you’re looking for information about *ancient Rome*, enter both of those words in your search. If you enter just *Rome*, your search may give you essays that discuss modern Rome or Rome, N.Y., but not ancient Rome.

3. *Find an exact phrase with the help of the W operator.* You can narrow your searches by requiring that the search terms appear as a phrase in the order that you typed them. For example, if you are looking for *time travel*, search for these words as a phrase, *time W1 travel.* (It literally means "find time "within 1 word of" travel.) This narrows your results from hundreds of matches to a few dozen matches, assuming the phrase that you typed is not too common.

4. *You can also mix phrases and single search terms in the search box.* For example "ancient Rome" AND Caesar.

5. *Broaden your search by using OR.* For example, *racism or prejudice.* Unless you tell the search engine otherwise, it finds only those essays containing all of the words that you specify in the order you have specified. By inserting OR between your search words, you’ll find documents that contain as few as one of your requested words. Using OR will increase the number of essays that are found; use OR if your search isn’t finding enough essays.

6. *Use plural or other word endings.* For example, if you are looking for discussions of murder, search for various forms of the word using the OR operator as the connector, e.g. *murder or murders or murderer or murderous.* It is also possible, depending on the
desired search term, to use the truncation (or wildcard) feature to retrieve both singular and plural forms of a word, e.g. *murder*.

7. Try using synonyms for your original words. For example, "nervous breakdown" or "mental breakdown" or "nervous disorder" or "mental instability".

8. Check your spelling. If you type *litrature* instead of *literature*, your search won’t find any matches.

Capitalization

The search engine is not case sensitive. That is, use of capitalization does not affect the results of a search in any way.

Punctuation

Hyphen. A hyphen (-) used between two words is considered part of the term. If you are searching for a word or phrase that normally contains a hyphen, include the hyphen:

*  "nineteen-thirties"
*  "self-doubt"

Apostrophe. Apostrophes (’) are not recognized by the search engine and should be deleted from search terms.

*  Salem Lot (instead of Salem’s Lot)
*  Chatterly (instead of Chatterly’s)

& -- The Ampersand. Ampersands (&) are not recognized by the search engine. Use the W (Within) proximity operator.

*  Tulips W2 Chimneys (means "tulips within two words of chimneys"; instead of Tulips & Chimneys)
*  Socialism Radicalism W2 Nostalgia (instead of Socialism, Radicalism & Nostalgia)

Truncation (Wildcard)

The * (asterisk) and ? (question mark) and ! (exclamation point) are used to search for words or numbers sharing a similar pattern. The * and ? and ! replace alphabetical and numerical characters.

The * (standing for any number of characters) is placed at the end of the term’s root. The search retrieves all words sharing the same root. For example, the term *faith* retrieves essays that contain the words faith, faithful, or faiths.
The ? is used to replace exactly one character within a word to retrieve various forms of that word. For example, the term wom?n retrieves essays that contain either woman or women; and psych????y matches either psychology or psychiatry but not psychotherapy.

The ! point stands for one or no characters. For example, analog!! matches analog, analogs, and analogue but not analogous.

**Use of Stopwords**

Because the search engine does not recognize stopwords, your search term must be included in quotes OR you can drop the stopword from the title or phrase.

For example, when searching for a title containing the word "to":

Enclose the phrase in quotations marks. The search will work on the exact phrase (example: "Farewell to Arms").

Omit the word "to" from the search (example: A Farewell to Arms would be entered as Farewell Arms).

Stopwords include the following: a, an, and, aspects, but, co, corp, etc, for, from, if, in, inc, into, is, it, its, jr. ltd, of, on, or, that, the, to, with.

**Search Operators**

The Boolean search operators AND, OR, NOT, and proximity operators may be used to refine your search. Whether the operators are typed in uppercase or lowercase does not affect the search.

Please note that the search engine cannot differentiate between a Boolean operator and a search term. Put quotes around titles and other strings of text containing "or," or "not" to ensure that you are searching for the entire phrase.

**AND.** Use the AND search operator to retrieve documents that contain both of the specified search terms. This operator places no condition on where the terms are found in relation to one another; however, both terms have to appear somewhere in the field you are searching. For example, a full text search for apples AND bananas will find any essay that contains mention both of apples and bananas.

**NOT.** Use the NOT search operator to retrieve documents that do not contain the specified term. For example, a full text search for apples NOT bananas will find essays that mention apples but not bananas.

**PROXIMITY.** The proximity operators W (within) and N (next to) may be used to refine your search:

The N operator locates documents containing the words you specify within the number of words you specify, but the words can be in any order. For example, apples N4 bananas
finds documents that contain the words *apples* and *bananas* within four words of each other, regardless of their order (that is, *bananas* could precede or follow *apples*).

The $W$ proximity operator and the OR Boolean operator have been described above.

**Parentheses.** The operators described above each operate on either simple terms (words or phrases) or a more complex query delimited by parentheses ( ). Parentheses allow you to construct very powerful queries. For example:

* "pulp fiction" AND ((detective AND crime) OR hard-boiled)
* ("cowboy*" OR ("gold rush" AND california)) AND (1849 OR nineteenth century)

Boolean operators are applied in the order in which they appear. Therefore, the following searches are equivalent:

- apples AND bananas OR oranges
  (apples AND bananas) OR oranges

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