

# Resources, strategies, and tips for academic research success

**Resources: Library Skill Modules:** <http://libguides.library.kent.edu/tutorials>

*Topics available:* Developing a search strategy, KentLINK, Research database usage, evaluating information on the web, and avoiding plagiarism.

## Quick search strategies

### Boolean Operator Quick Reference:

Simple Boolean operators are AND, OR and NOT. Using these operators in your search requests, in either a search engine or an electronic resource database, will return more specific results.

Using AND: Can be added to a search request when looking for something AND something else. For example: Erie AND Canal. Can be used for multiple terms: Erie AND Miami AND Canal.

Using NOT: Can be added to a search request when looking for something and NOT something else. For example: Canal NOT Erie. Can be used for multiple terms: Canal NOT Erie NOT Miami.

Using OR: Can be added to a search request when looking for something OR something else. For example: Canal OR Waterway. Can be used for multiple terms: Canal OR Waterway OR Aqueduct.

### Search Strategies Quick Reference:

#### *Quotations*

Putting words or terms together in quotations helps refine a search's results.

Quotations (“”) tell the database or search engine to find results that contain these elements exactly as they are phrased in quotations, e.g. “Where the Wild Things Are” or “academic research.”

#### *Truncation*

Truncating a word at its root in a search asks the search engine or database to search for results with all variations of the word beyond truncation.

Example: educat\* will find ‘educate,’ ‘educator,’ ‘educated,’ etc.

The asterisk (\*) is the most common truncation symbol. Check your database's ‘help’ menu for others the database may use instead.

## Quick research tips

- ▶ Consult advisors and subject librarians for assistance in identifying your research topic/need.
- ▶ Formulate research ‘action plan’ or strategy before beginning your literature research.
- ▶ Identify key words and phrases related to your topic; refine throughout the literature research process.
- ▶ Seek current research (i.e. published within the last decade), but don't forget value of pioneer works.
- ▶ Choose reliable/authoritative sources (e.g. peer reviewed journals or academic websites).  
Also, review current journals in your field often to learn about the latest research trends.
- ▶ Abstract, introduction, and conclusion: Read first, will help you determine if article is useful to you.
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the preferred reference style in your field (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).
- ▶ Consider visiting the Writing Commons (4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Library) for assistance with writing/synthesis.
- ▶ Adopt academically honest practices early and throughout the research/writing process.