

Google Search Operators Worksheet

This Wilmette Library technology class will help you get the most out of Google.com's search engine. You will learn a lot of 'operators' in this class. Operators are symbols or codes that we can use to tell Google what we want to see in our search results.

First Rule of Googling:

Punctuation for Grammar Does Not Matter

Punctuation matters a ton when you realize they're Operators

- Most operators do not have the same meaning as they do in standard English. They are much closer to algebraic designations
- Commas are completely out
 - if you want to use a comma between search terms, don't bother because spaces between search terms default to the meaning 'and'
- Parentheses indicate order of operations
 - Typing in all caps the word OR or a pipe symbol | is how to tell Google search results can feature one *or* the other search term
 - Parentheses can be used to group operators

Question 1: We want to know about Walt Disney and Snow White or Pinnocchio or Fantasia and the keywords animations or illustrations. How would we Google that? (Answer key at the end of this worksheet)

Quotation Marks

- Putting a word or multiple words in quotes means you want **exactly** the content you typed inside those quotes
 - for single words, it means there will be no synonyms in your search results
 - For multiple words, it means the exact sequence of those words
- This is useful for vague words or phrases that by themselves are unremarkable, but which take on significance when they're ordered a certain way
 - The 2022 Netflix thriller *The Woman in the House Across the Street From the Girl in the Window* features vague, general words that wouldn't return great search results because it is the *order* of them that matters. Putting the title in quotes in this case is smart!



the woman in the house across the street from the girl in the window



Search a Specific Website for Keywords

- Google is capable of searching all the webpages inside one website
 - Often, Google's ability to search a website is superior to the website's own search bar
- You can ask Google to find all the pages that reference 'cooking' inside wilmettelibrary.info!



cooking site:wilmettelibrary.info



Question 2: If I wanted to find the exact phrase Chewbacca or Han Solo raise awareness in Variety.com, what would I type into Google? (Answer key at the end of this worksheet)

Keyword Search One *Type* of Website

- Domain suffixes refer to the end of a website's URL and typically indicate what type of organization owns it.
 - Example.com = a commercial website
 - Example.org = a nonprofit website
 - Example.edu = an educational institution's website
 - Example.gov = government websites
 - Example.info = reference and informational websites including libraries
- If you're looking for information only provided by government websites, you can write site:.gov into the search field
- In the example below, we're looking for any U.S. government website with content about cyber security in it. Note that there are no quotes around cyber security so that means any web pages that include those words, and not necessarily together



cyber security site:.gov

Question 3: We want to find nonprofits that care about exactly lake preservation and frogs. What would we Google? (Answer key at the end of this worksheet)

Exclude Terms

- Minuses (-) indicate exclusions in your search results
- Helpful when you know your search term has two or more different significant meanings such as how Apple could mean the computer brand or the fruit
- While you can just further define what you want, like Apple fruit, you can also choose to subtract certain meanings using the minus, like Apple -computer
- You can also subtract types of websites or any other operators
 - Example: if you want to read the reviews for a website like Madewell, and you want to exclude all commercial websites' reviews, you can Google search reviews Madewell -site:.com

Question 4: We're looking for the exact phrase Alexander Hamilton and the keyword federalist. We do *not* want results about the theater production. We only want results from educational/university sites. What would we Google? (Answer key at the end of this worksheet)

Sources

For more information, feel free to contact Linnéa Lundberg, at llundberg@wilmettelibrary.info or digital@wilmettelibrary.info or visit these more detailed websites about mastering Google's search engine.

"Refine Web Searches." *Google Support*, 2022, <https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/2466433?hl=en>

"Google Search Operators." *Moz, Inc.*, 2021, <https://moz.com/learn/seo/search-operators>

Hardwicke, Joshua. "Google Search Operators: The Complete List (42 Advanced Operators)." *Ahrefs*, 2020, <https://ahrefs.com/blog/google-advanced-search-operators>

Answer Key

Question 1: Walt Disney (Snow White | Pinnocchio | Fantasia) (animations | illustrations)

Question 2: "(Chewbacca | Han Solo) raise awareness for" site:variety.com

Question 3: "Lake preservation" frogs site:.org

Question 4: "Alexander Hamilton" federalist -play -theater site:.edu