# Search Operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find word variants</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>child* will retrieve child, children, childhood, and more</td>
<td>Results contain words beginning with the stem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find words in the exact order</td>
<td>“ ”</td>
<td>“drug prescription”</td>
<td>Results have words in the same order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add new ideas</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>healthcare AND reform</td>
<td>Results must have both terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add synonyms and related concepts</td>
<td>( OR )</td>
<td>(teen OR youth OR adolescent)</td>
<td>Results have at least one of several words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Always enclose OR terms in parentheses ( ).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude terms</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>vision NOT eye</td>
<td>Excludes results with the specified word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In Google Scholar, use a hyphen: vision -eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find terms near each other</td>
<td>NEAR/n</td>
<td>free NEAR/3 clinic symptom NEXT/3 headache</td>
<td>Results have no more than n-1 terms between the words. With NEAR/n, either word may appear first. With NEXT/n, the first word must appear before the second. Works in Embase, not PubMed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NEXT/n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control search order</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>(tobacco OR alcohol) AND cancer NOT (“lung cancer” AND elderly)</td>
<td>Nest search statements. Terms within parentheses ( ) are searched first.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combine operators to create complex search statements.

(aged OR elderly OR geriatric) AND (depression OR insomnia) NOT (hypertension OR “high blood pressure”)

Based on: bit.ly/1C164Jl, bit.ly/1f5e0V1, bit.ly/1GAov01N, and bit.ly/1J9Q2j  Updated 5/30/19
## Search Tips

### Too many results?
Narrow your search.

1. Add more search words.  
   **POOR:** cancer  
   **BETTER:** cancer AND brain AND children

2. Replace search words with more specific concepts.  
   Replace United States with California

3. Exclude words with the NOT operator.  
   cancer NOT lung

4. Filter results for conditions.  
   For example, filter by age group, article type, or publication date.

5. Try a different database.  
   Embase, Google Scholar, Scopus, or PubMed.  
   More options at http://ucblib.link/AtoZ.

### Too few results?
Broaden your search.

1. Remove search words.  
   hepatitis AND treatment AND "clinic locations"

2. Replace search words with broader concepts.  
   Replace California with United States

3. Add synonyms and related concepts using the OR operator.  
   ("cellular phones" OR "mobile phones" OR smartphones OR "online services")

4. Search for word variants with truncation searching (*).  
   prevent* will retrieve prevent, prevention, preventative, and more

5. Deactivate search filters in use.

6. Try a different database.  
   Embase, Google Scholar, Scopus, or PubMed.  
   More options at http://ucblib.link/AtoZ.

7. Conduct a cited reference search on a relevant article.  
   Try Web of Science, Scopus, or Google Scholar.

8. Look for links to "Similar Articles/Records/Results"

**Reminder:** Good literature searching is not linear; it's a process.