## 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>“all you need is love”</td>
<td>Results have words in the same order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add new ideas</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>career AND family</td>
<td>Results must have both terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add synonyms and related concepts</td>
<td>( OR )</td>
<td>(cats OR kittens OR dogs)</td>
<td>Results have at least one of several words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Always enclose OR terms in parentheses ( ).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude terms</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>cakes NOT gluten</td>
<td>Excludes results with the specified word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In Google Scholar, use a hyphen: cakes -gluten</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 for complex search statements.

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

### Too many results?
Narrow your search.

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

2. **Replace search words with more specific concepts.**
   - Replace California with San Francisco

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 San Francisco with California

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 for a relevant article.**
   - Try Web of Science, Scopus, or Google Scholar.

8. **Look for link to "Similar Articles/Records/Results"**

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