

Search strategy: How do I make the most out of a Google Search?



Simply typing in your search term will bring back thousands, sometimes millions, of *'hits'*. Be smart and reduce this number to get exactly what you want from your search.

You can use the modifiers below to make your searching more precise. Add one at the end of your search or between two different terms.

Search term
site:edu

hits limited to
educational
websites

Search term
filetype:ppt

hits limited to
Powerpoint
presentations

Search term
OR
synonym

hits include
results with
either search
term

You can use speech marks " " as a modifier. This keeps the phrases you want together and stops Google from looking at each word separately.

Search term
*Regenerative
animals*

1,950,000 hits
*Mixed selection
based on each
word*

*"Regenerative
animals"*

2,410 hits
*all deal with
your subject*

If you are looking for a quotation, put the speech marks around your phrase so that Google keeps the phrase together and searches for all of it, rather than all the words separately. Thus *"the child is father to the man"* will bring you up where that quote came from.

Search for *Define: word* to bring up a dictionary definition, or *Thesaurus: word* to find alternatives to the word. *Translate: word* to translate from or into several languages

Intitle: word will only show results with that word in the title. Choose your search words carefully and use alternative ones if the first ones are not bringing back enough useful results.

Remember *a search engine will only look for the words that you put in – it has no idea of the meaning!*

Use ctrl +F to search for a particular word in the web page or document that you have found so that you can spot them in the text.

REMEMBER

to ask your librarian or teacher if you need support or guidance with your search strategy.