

### Step 3: 'Which words will I use in my search?'

Search engines such as Google and Yahoo hold a lot of information, but not all of it will be relevant to your information need.

It is important to know how to refine your search to find the right information.

Here is a really useful video on how to search the web effectively: <http://www.commoncraft.com/video/web-search-strategies>

The video explains:

1. How search engines work - it's important to understand that a search engine will return every page that your search word appears on. The more times your word appears on a web page, the higher up it will appear on the results list.
2. How to narrow a search - by being as specific as possible you will get the results you need. The more words you use, the easier it will be to find what you are looking for.
3. How to use quotation (" ") marks to refine your search.
4. How to use the minus sign (-) to narrow your search.

#### Web search strategies: Google

The Google search engine has a number of useful features:

- Advanced Search
- Google Scholar and Google Books
- Google Advanced Search

This video gives a really good overview of what Google Advanced Search is and how it can be used:

[https://youtu.be/E\\_QHaWLxGX8](https://youtu.be/E_QHaWLxGX8)

## General search strategies

There are some other general search strategies to be aware of when finding information. Not all apply to search engines, but some can be used when searching the SSKS website, for example.

### Broadening your search

If you would like to broaden the scope of your search, an easy way to do this is to enter the first part or 'root' of a keyword, followed by a \* symbol.

#### Examples include:

femini\* - feminine, feminist, feminism  
child\* - children, childhood, childish

This is a quick way of finding information on lots of key words without having to type them all in separately.

### Narrowing your search

If you would like to narrow or refine the scope of your search, an easy way to do this is by placing speech (" ") marks around the key words or phrase.

For example, by placing quotation marks around "child protection", only results with that exact phrase will be returned.

If you remove the quotation marks and type in child protection, the search engine will return results where 'child' and 'protection' occur, which will return a lot more results.

Quotation marks are great for finding a specific book or article. If you place them around the words in the title - "Learning disabilities in young children", then it should bring back any results for that exact title.

## Using AND, OR and NOT

You can combine search terms using **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**.

**AND** broadens your search.  
**OR** broadens your search.  
**NOT** narrows your search.

### Examples:

crime **AND** justice.  
Broadens your search and will bring back results that include both crime and justice.

crime **OR** delinquency  
Broadens your search and will bring back results that include either crime or delinquency.

crime **NOT** adult  
This narrows your search and will bring back results that include crime but not adult.

You can also combine search phrases in quotation marks with AND, OR, and NOT:

"social work" and disability  
This will return results with the phrase social work (as an exact phrase) and disability.

**Note: Capital letters are used for emphasis and do not need to be used in searches.**



In Step 1 you drafted a search question to help you get to the information you needed. Using the information in this step, how could you make your search more accurate? Write down an example of how you could re-phrase your search and try it in one of the search engines. What difference did your re-phrase search make to the returns you got?

