Booleans

Boolean logic defines logical relationships between terms in a search. The *Boolean search operators* are *and*, *or* and *not*. You can use these operators to create a very broad or very narrow search.

- **And** combines search terms so that each search result contains all of the terms. For example, *travel and Europe* finds articles that contain *both* travel and Europe.
- **Or** combines search terms so that each search result contains at least one of the terms. For example, *college or university* finds results that contain *either* college or university.
- **Not** excludes terms so that each search result does not contain any of the terms that follow it. For example, *television not cable* finds results that contain television but *not* cable.

**Note:** When executing a search, **And** takes precedence over **Or**.

The following table illustrates the operation of Boolean terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>And</th>
<th>Or</th>
<th>Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each result contains <strong>all</strong> search terms.</td>
<td>Each result contains <strong>at least one</strong> search term.</td>
<td>Results <strong>do not contain</strong> the specified terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The search <em>heart and lung</em> finds items that contain <em>both heart and lung</em>.</td>
<td>The search <em>heart or lung</em> finds items that contain <em>either heart or</em> items that contain <em>lung</em>.</td>
<td>The search <em>heart not lung</em> finds items that contain <em>heart but do not contain lung</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Using Booleans and Parentheses**

To make even better use of Boolean operators, you can use *parentheses* to nest query terms within other query terms.

You can enclose search terms and their operators in parentheses to specify the *order in which they are interpreted*. Information *within* parentheses is read *first*, then information *outside* parentheses is read *next*. For example,

When you enter *(mouse OR rat) AND trap*, the search engine retrieves results containing the word mouse or the word rat together with the word trap in the fields searched by default.

If there are nested parentheses, the search engine processes the *innermost* parenthetical expression first, then the next, and so on until the entire query has been interpreted. For example,

*(mouse OR rat) AND trap* OR mousetrap

**Using Booleans When Phrase Searching**

When Boolean operators are contained within a phrase that is enclosed in quotation marks, the operator is treated as a stop word. When this is the case, any single word will be searched for in its place.
Searching Tips and Tricks

"" Quotes

Using " " surrounding a natural language phrase will make the search engine or database search for those terms as a phrase.

Example: To find special education
Use "special education"

*Hint: Do not put quotes around sentences. Only use " " around groups of words or phrases that have special meaning when they are found together.*

Wildcards

Using an asterisk * in a keyword search when a keyword can have multiple word endings

Example: To find parent, parents, parental
Use parent*

*Hint: Add the asterisk * directly after the last common letter, no spaces.*

OR

Use () and OR to search multiple synonymous or conceptually related keyword terms.

Example: To find computers, technology
Use (computers OR technology)

*Hint: You must enclose the keywords in parentheses, and you must capitalize the word OR*