

Search Tips!

Keywords

It might help to start by writing a sentence on what you would like to search for, then highlighting the important words. For instance, if this is your question, what would you use to search?

'How has the UK textile industry developed since the 1960s?'

Well, the obvious choices are 'UK' 'textiles' and 'development'

But if you put these into a database they won't find you exactly what you are looking for. Does "UK" work for example, or should you be searching for "United Kingdom" as well? Should you be doing a phrase search for "textile industry" by putting quotation marks around the words? Do you need to specify which part of the textile industry you are particularly interested in? What about the timeframe, how will you narrow down to sources discussing development since the 1960s? Perhaps search using the phrase 'historical development'? Or maybe 'post-war development'?

Use a thesaurus to identify synonyms – different words that mean the same thing as your keywords

If you already have a relevant article, examine the text for words and phrases you could use in further searches.

Searching for a phrase?

Use "double quotation marks" around your phrase to return results where the exact phrase is searched for.

E.g. "Abstract Expressionism"

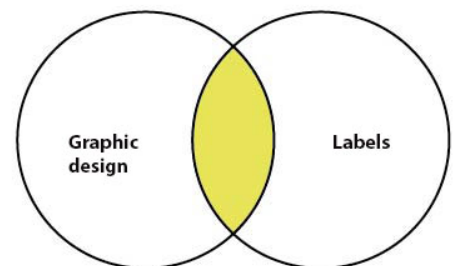
would give results for that specific phrase, not just where there is a mention of the word "abstract" and / or the word "expressionism"

Too many results?

To narrow your results down to something more specific and usable, try using AND to link keywords.

The results you get will be for resources where the two terms overlap (that means BOTH terms appear somewhere in the results list)

E.g. "Graphic design" AND "Labels"

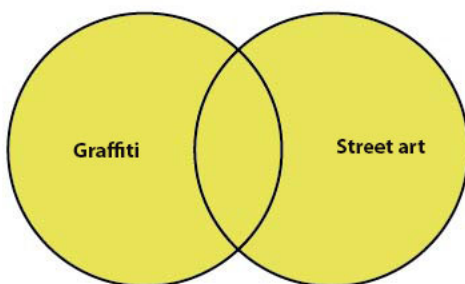


Too few results?

To broaden your search try using OR to get more results.

The results you get back will contain either the word 'Graffiti', or the words "Street art", or both!

E.g. "Graffiti" OR "Street art"



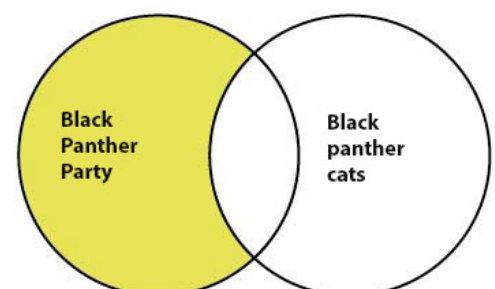
Strange results?

A search for "black panthers" may return results for large black cats, as well as the Black Panther movement founded in the 1960s.

If you want results for the Black Panther movement, you could try searching:

"Black Panther" NOT cats

to exclude any results relating to cats.



Research Report Proposal: Define your topic

What is your research idea/topic?

Step 1: Write down 2 or 3 keywords/concepts for your topic:

Step 2: Are there similar words, synonyms or concepts that could be used to search on your topic?

Step 3: Are there other terms which could make your search more precise? (e.g. place, period of time, theorist)

Step 4: Get searching! Using the words you've written down in the boxes above try searching on your topic.

Step 5: From your results, what other words might be useful to use to search on your topic?

Remember to save any resources you want to look at again in your folder on Discovery.