

# Database Search Operators: Quick Reference Guide

| Database:<br>(links to guide)                          | EBSCO                  | Engineering Village:<br>Compendex    | Factiva                                | JSTOR | LexisLibrary                  | Westlaw                         |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Stop words:<br>words that are filtered out             | EBSCO <b>stop list</b> | Engineering Village <b>stop list</b> | Factiva does not use <b>stop words</b> | n/a   | LexisLibrary <b>stop list</b> | Thomas Reuters <b>stop list</b> |
| Phrase searching: a string of words in the exact order | " "                    | " " or {}                            | " "                                    | " "   | " "                           | # or " "                        |
| Truncation: variations on a root word                  | *                      | *                                    | *                                      | ~     | ! or *                        | !                               |

|   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Wildcard:<br/>single<br/>character</b>   | <b>? for zero or<br/>one<br/>characters</b><br><br><b># for one<br/>character</b> | <b>?</b>   | <b>?</b>   | <b>?</b>                                       | <b>?</b>  | <b>*</b>   |
| <b>Wildcard:<br/>multiple<br/>characters</b>                                      | <b>*</b>  | <b>*</b>   | <b>\$x</b><br><br>(Where x<br>represents a<br>number)                    | <b>*</b>                                       | <b>? for each<br/>character</b>   | <b>*</b>   |
| <b>Proximity or<br/>adjacency:<br/><br/>(Where x<br/>represents a<br/>number)</b> | <b>Nx for near,<br/>Wx for within<br/>a set number<br/>of words</b>               | <b>NEAR/x for<br/>maximum number<br/>of words between<br/>the two words in<br/>the query</b> | Factiva has<br><b>multiple<br/>different<br/>proximity<br/>operators</b> | <b>NEARx</b><br><br><b>~x</b><br><br><b>^x</b> | LexisLibrary<br>has <b>multiple<br/>different<br/>proximity<br/>operators</b> | <b>/x or +x</b><br><br>Westlaw also<br>uses<br><b>'grammatical<br/>connectors'</b> |

| Database<br>(links to<br>guide):                                   | OVID (Medline, PsycINFO, Embase,<br>Cochrane, etc., full list)  | ProQuest                                      | Web of<br>Science   | Scopus  | PubMed  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stop words:<br>words that<br>are filtered<br>out                   | OVID <b>stop list</b>   | ProQuest<br>does not use<br><b>stop words</b> | Web of<br>Science <b>stop<br/>list</b>                        | Scopus <b>stop<br/>list</b>   | PubMed <b>stop list</b>                           |
| Phrase<br>searching: a<br>string of<br>words in the<br>exact order | Search terms are searched as<br>phrases automatically, only use “ ”<br>for phrases with stop words or<br>special characters | “ ” or “{ }”                                  | “ ” (WoS<br>also has an<br><b>exact search<br/>function</b> ) | “ ” for loose<br><b>phrases, { }</b><br>for exact<br><b>phrases</b> | “ ” PubMed also<br>uses a <b>phrase<br/>index</b> |
| Truncation:<br>variations on<br>a root word                        | *   | *   | *   | *   | *   |

|  |   |                                       |  |                 |                          |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Wildcard:<br>single<br>character                         | ? for zero or one characters<br># for one character | ?                                     | \$ for zero or one characters<br><br>? for one character | n/a             | *                        |
| Wildcard:<br>multiple<br>characters                      | *x  | [*x]<br>(Where x represents a number) | *  | N/A             | *                        |
| Proximity or adjacency:<br>(Where x represents a number) | ADJx  | Near/x,<br>Pre/x, or<br>Exact()       | Near/x, or<br>Same                                       | W/x or<br>Pre/x | "search terms"[field:~x] |

For more information on searching these databases and others, see [‘Getting results: Guides to searching databases’](#) and [‘A-Z list of databases’](#).

If you are looking for information on MeSH (Medical Subject Headings), see [‘Making use of MeSH and Suggested Subject Terms’](#)