

## Modified from: Seven Steps Toward Better Searching Using Google

To become a web Jedi master, you need to become facile with at least one search engine... so facile that doing an effective search becomes completely automatic. This state will come fairly quickly as long as you practice frequently.

The first step is to bookmark and become familiar with the interface and help pages associated with each search engine you use. The most comprehensive engine out there at the moment seems to be Google.

Most people use a search engine by simply typing a few words into the query box and then scrolling through whatever comes up. Sometimes their choice of words ends up narrowing the search unduly and causing them not to find what they're looking for. More often the end result of the search is a haystack of off-target web pages that must be combed through.

You can become a better searcher by simply mastering several tricks in Google. To help you remember them, think of a sentence so goofy you'll never get it out of your mind:

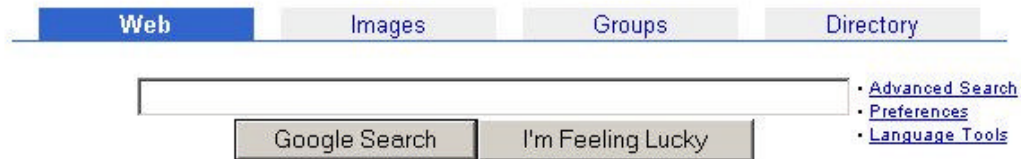
My pious  
owl  
quickly  
learning  
law

(Sometimes Tires)



What does it all mean? You'll know when you've completed the exercise that follows.

Go to Google and record the success of each search.



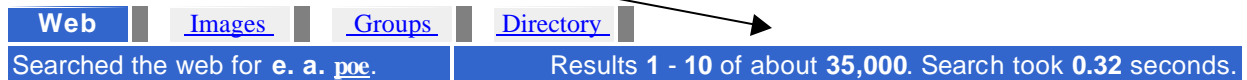
[Search or read your favorite catalogs using Google.](#)

[Advertise with Us](#) - [Search Solutions](#) - [News and Resources](#) - [Google Toolbar](#) - [Jobs, Press, Cool Stuff...](#)

[Make Google Your Homepage!](#)

©2002 Google - Searching 2,073,418,204 web pages

When you receive your results and need to record the number of sites you get from your search . Look here.



# Simple Search Practice

---

## Include and Exclude (+ and -)

---

**My pious** The first two basic tools to practice with the simple search are the use of + and - to include or exclude words. For example, if you wanted to find sites about George Washington, our president, and you wanted to eliminate all pages that were about George Washington, the university.

**Note:** There's no space between the + or - and the word, but there **is** a space between words.

Try each of the searches in the right column now, and record how many sites you find.

As you do each search, take note of what kinds of things turn up. Notice that the more specific the terms you include and exclude, the more focused your search.

Query	# Matches
George Washington	2,420,000
George Washington + university	
George Washington + president -university	
George Washington + president -university -revolutionary war	

Google and most search engines, now assume the + in front of the word.

If a common word is essential to getting the results you want, you can give it priority by putting a "+" sign in front of it. (Be sure to include a space before the "+" sign.)

---

## Use "OR"

---

**owl** Google supports the use of the upper case "OR" operator. To retrieve pages that include either word A or word B, use an uppercase OR between terms. For example, vacation spots in France OR Parris.

Query	# Matches
peanut butter	
jelly	
peanut butter +jelly	
peanut butter OR jelly	

---

## Use "Quotes" to Look for a Phrase

---

**quickly** If you type a sequence of words in as a query, Google will look for documents that contain any of those words. If you want the words to hang together as a phrase, you should put double quotes around them.

Try these:

Google and AltaVista have a phrase-guessing element to their algorithms. If you type a few words in, and those words are commonly found hanging together in their indexes, it will assume that you're searching for them as a phrase even if you don't put quotes around them. If you're looking for a phrase that is not common, though, you'll need the quotes.

And if you would like to further narrow down your search, quotes around the words will do that also.

Query	# Matches
San Diego	
"San Diego"	
merits of laziness	
"merits of laziness"	
"George Washington" + president -university	

*Another use for this feature: stamping out urban legends. Next time you get an e-mail warning you about a repressive new law about to pass or a vicious computer virus about to attack, check it out before passing on misinformation to others.*

*The ability to search for phrases can be surprisingly useful. If your teacher suspects that something a student turned in was plagiarized, or at least heavily borrowed without attribution, he/she can type in a phrase or two from the paper and see if it turns up elsewhere!*

*You can also check to see if your own work is being copied without your permission.*

---

## use lower case (usually)

---

**learning** Google and Altavista treat upper and lower case letters the same.

To maintain a certain capitalization, put the word in quotes attention to any capital letters you type into a query. If you search for Octopus, it will only find documents in which it's spelled that way. **In general, unless you're after a particular spelling, use all lower case.**

Try these:

Query	# Matches
Octopus	
octopus	
WebQuest	
webquest	
webquest*	
"george Washington"	
"George Washington"	

---

## Use the **link:** Tag to Find Pages Linked to Another Page

---

**law** Suppose you found the absolutely perfect page about life in Ancient Egypt, and it's located at <http://touregypt.net/Antiq.htm> You suspect that any other web pages out there that contain a link to that page would also contain things that would interest your students.

If you put all or part of the URL of the page after "link:", you'll get a list of pages that are linked to the one you found useful.

Query	# Matches
link: http://www.clpgh.org/cmnh/tours/egypt/walton.html	
link: edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html	

## Some Differences Using Altavista

### Use the Wildcard (\*) – using Altavista

---

**Sometimes** A common mistake people make is to inadvertently narrow their search too much by excluding variations on a word they're looking for. For example, if you typed in +mushrooms, you'd miss all those pages that just had the singular word mushroom on them.

The \* wildcard stands for any letter(s). The wildcard is also useful for catching other variations on a word such as different forms of a verb.

**In general, never search for the plural of a word.** Use the wildcard and get both the singular and plural forms.

Query	# Matches
mushrooms	
mushroom*	
surf*	
surf* -surface*	

---

### Use the **title:** Tag to Focus Your Search

---

**Tires** A simple search will find a word anywhere on the web page. To locate pages that are primarily about one thing, look for pages that have that thing in their title. The result is much more tightly focused.

**Note: There can be a space between title: and the next word or not. It doesn't seem to matter.**

Query	# Matches
frog*	
title:frog*	
webquest	
title:webquest	

Try these:

---

So, to recap... remembering this sentence will help you to remember the six techniques you just experimented with:

<b>My</b>	<b>pious</b>	<b>owl</b>	<b>quickly</b>	<b>learning</b>	<b>law</b>
<b>minus</b>	<b>plus</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>quotes</b>	<b>lower case</b>	<b>link:</b>
-exclude	+include	Or either of two words	"phrases in quotes"	case MATTERS	find pages linked