

Getting Started with Database Searching (Boolean Logic)

When starting, consider your topic first.

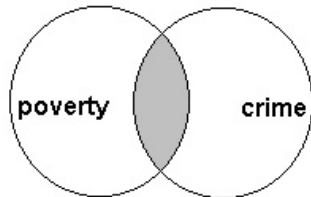
1. Identify your search ideas (e.g.: I need information on how the image of women has changed in American film)
2. Choose your search terms (American film, images, women, sexism, feminism, etc.)
3. Browse the indexes to verify spelling and format of key terms, especially if using names.
4. Consider relationships between terms to begin formulating the search.
5. Employ the Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT) to create a search string the database will understand (e.g.: images and women and American film)

More information about the Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT:

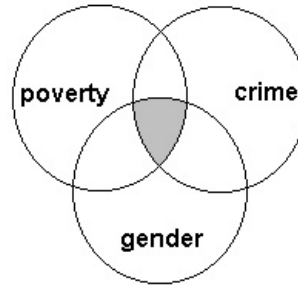
AND operator:

AND retrieves only records containing **all** search terms. It will narrow or refine a search, returning fewer results than if only one term had been used.

If you type: *poverty and crime* the database will search for only records that contain **both** *poverty and crime*



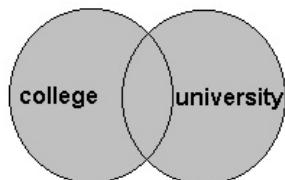
If you type: *poverty and crime and gender*, the database will search for only records that contain all three search terms: *poverty and crime and gender*



OR operator:

OR retrieves all records that contain one or the other or both (or all) of your search terms. Use **or** when there is more than one word that describes your topic, as in the example below. Use **Or** to expand a search, or get more results.

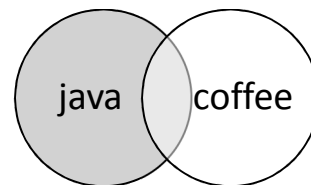
If you type: *college or university*, the database will search for records containing *college*, records containing *university*, and records containing both *college* and *university*



NOT operator:

NOT retrieves records that contain one of your search terms, but not the other. Use **NOT** to narrow or refine a search by leaving some aspect of your topic out.

If you type: *java NOT coffee*, the database will search for records containing *java*, but will leave out those containing *coffee*, even those that also contain *java*.



Be careful when using NOT, as it may exclude some records that do deal substantially with the term you actually do want.