Advanced Library Search Cheat Sheet

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What is Library Search?

Library Search is an online discovery tool that allows you to search for different types of library resources from one place. Library Search pulls together databases, electronic journals, eBooks, some digital archival collections, as well as physical materials from our shelves and those of the Northwestern University Library System.

Quick Simple Search

Library Search assumes that you are searching for all the words you type unless OR or NOT are specified between the words and phrases. (e.g., Film OR Jesus)

Example

Film Jesus

“Jesus in Film”

“Jesus Christ superstar a Really Useful Films production”

Advanced Search Screen

The Advanced Search screen allow you to use multiple search boxes to enter search terms and menus to limit and focus your search. This is a great place to start if you have a very specific item or search in mind.

Selecting Physical or Electronic

Filter your results to: Electronic Item, Physical Item
Narrowing Your Search Using Tabs

Select a search tab to limit your search to only that content type or location.

**NU Libraries:** Searches through all formats of materials, including electronic, across the entire Northwestern University Library System and beyond.

**Styberg Collections:** Searches through The Styberg Library’s physical collections and some of our archival digital collections and other electronic resources.

**Reserves:** Searches through all items currently on the reserve shelf at The Styberg Library.

**Articles:** Searches through the majority of the full-text databases to which we subscribe.

Searching for a Phrase

Use quotes to indicate that you’re interested in the entire phrase, not just both words independently. This will search only for the two words together, appearing side-by-side.

**Example**

“Pastoral Care”

“The Journal of pastoral care.”

“African American pastoral care.”

Excluding Words or Phrases

Use NOT before the word or phrase you’d like to exclude.

**Example**

Wesley NOT Charles

“John Wesley and the Methodists”
Searching Using Wildcards

Add wildcards (e.g., ? or *) to your search words to indicate a single or a multiple character wildcard search.

- ? Indicates a **single** character
- * Indicates a **multiple** character

**Example**

`wom?n`  
“Wom?n in French studies.”

“The wom?n worker”

`cultur*`  

“Chinese cultur?al relics.”

“Culturally-conscious worship”

Searching Groups of Terms

Use Parentheses to group search terms together.

**Example**

Shakespeare (tragedy OR sonnet)

[Searches for “Shakespeare” AND (“tragedy” OR “sonnet”)]

“Shakespeare’s sonnets: an original-spelling text”

“Shakespeare’s Festive Tragedy”

Limit Your Search

Use the drop-down menu to select a particular field to search.

[Default]