Essential tips for searching Google

Google is not always the best place to search for academic literature. But it can be a good place to find information from **government departments** and organisations such as **charities** and **universities**.

So, here are some techniques you can use to help make your Google searches more effective.

Use more specific search terms

When you search using only a single term such as *dementia*, you often get too many results for it to be useful. We can narrow down the results by using more **specific search terms**.

For example, instead of searching for *dementia*, try searching for *dementia treatment*.

Search exact phrases

Using more specific search terms can help, but you are still likely to get too many search results. So, we can add **quotation marks** to search for the exact phrase. This will focus your results a lot more.

For example, instead of searching for *dementia treatment*, try searching for *“dementia treatment”*.

Exclude unwanted words

We can focus our search even further by **excluding terms** that we’re not interested in. We can do this by adding a minus symbol (-) before the words we want to exclude.

For example, searching for *“dementia treatment” –parkinson’s* will not include any pages that mention Parkinson’s.

Search within sites or domains

We can also limit the results we see to a specific **website or domain**. To do this, simply type *site:* followed by the site or domain you’d like to search.

For example, *site:gov.uk* will only search within government sites in the UK.

Other domains you could search include:

* **.ac.uk** – academic sites (UK)
* **.edu** – academic sites (US)
* **.gov** – government sites
* **.nhs.uk** – National Health Service sites
* **.org** – non-profit organisations

Search by file types

If you are looking for documents you can search for specific **file types**. To do this type *filetype:* followed by the type of file you are looking for.

For example, if you are looking for PDF documents, you would type *filetype:pdf.*

Search by page title

Another way to focus your results is to search only within **page titles**. To do this type *intitle:* followed by your search terms.

For example, searching for *intitle: “dementia treatment”* will only return pages that contain the phrase “dementia treatment” in the title.

Use date ranges

To find pages based on when they were published, use the **date range** options. To do this:

1. Click **Tools**
2. Click the **Any Time** drop-down box
3. Choose **Custom range** from the options listed
4. Enter your dates into the fields provided or use the calendar picker
5. Click **Go**

Now the results will only show pages that were published between the specified dates.

The Advanced Search page

If all of the above seems too much to remember, you can just use the **Advanced search** page. Click the **Settings** link then choose **Advanced search**.

Simply enter your search terms into the fields provided then narrow your search by selecting from the options underneath.

More information

If you require further help or information, just ask in your library or contact your [Subject Librarian](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/libraries/subject-support/subject-librarians).