



## How to Search JSTOR ([jstor.org](http://jstor.org))

### OVERVIEW

JSTOR supports full-text keyword searching across all of the content on [jstor.org](http://jstor.org). JSTOR generally includes all the content from articles, books, and pamphlets, cover to cover. This makes it possible to search front matter and back matter, letters to the editor, advertisements, and other types of material along with scholarly articles and book chapters. The default setting for search results is to show matches for only content licensed or purchased by the library, but a researcher may choose to change this setting for their own session.

There are two search forms on JSTOR.org, a Basic Search (on the main page at <http://www.jstor.org/> and at the top of most pages) and an Advanced Search ([www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch](http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch)). This guide will cover each of these forms, as well as how to understand search results.

### BASIC SEARCH

#### Quick Tips

The Basic Search form appears on the main page of [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) and also at the top of most content pages on the site. You can type any search terms into the Basic Search box and JSTOR will search for those terms across all of the content licensed or purchased by the library. Here are a few things you can do to easily improve your search results:

- Place words within quotation marks to search for exact phrases (“**to be or not to be**”).
- Use Boolean operators to search for alternate terms (**microcredit OR microfinance**).
- Use ti: to search for the title of an article or book (**ti:"body ritual among the nacirema"**)

While we call the simple search form a "Basic Search," you can perform fairly complex queries with it using special codes and Boolean operators. These options are explained in more detail below.

## Combining Search Terms & Boolean Logic

You may combine search terms and fields using AND, OR, and NOT (Boolean logic).

**AND:** When you combine search terms with AND in a full-text search, your results contain everything in which both terms appear. Combining search terms makes your search results more precise. You can explicitly denote AND in the following ways: **cat AND dog, cat && dog, +cat +dog, (cat dog)**

**OR:** Using OR between search terms allows to you find all items that contain either term. Using OR will search for items that contain either the word "cat", the word "dog", or both. For example: **cat OR dog**

**NOT:** Searches using NOT will only find items that do not contain the search term following it. NOT must be capitalized. To find all items with the word cat that do not contain the word dog, search for: **cat NOT dog, cat -dog** (Be sure to include a space before the dash, but not after).

## Grouping Combined Search Terms

Parentheses allow you to determine the order in which terms are combined. The search **"currency reform" AND (russia OR "soviet union")** will search for items that contain the phrase currency reform and that contain either russia or soviet union. Without grouping parentheses, the search is interpreted as "currency reform" AND russia OR "soviet union," which returns items containing either both currency reform and russia or containing soviet union. By using parentheses, you may control the grouping of search terms. Additional examples:

- **(finch OR sparrow) AND exotic** will search for items that contain the word exotic and either the word finch or the word sparrow
- **(birds OR butterflies) NOT sparrow** will search for items that contain either the word birds or butterflies and do not contain the word sparrow
- **birds NOT (sparrow AND robin)** will search for items that contain the word birds but do not contain both the words sparrow and robin
- **birds NOT (sparrow OR robin)** will search for items that contain the word birds but do not contain either the word sparrow or the word robin

## Searching for an Exact Phrase

If you want to include more than one term in a field search, use parentheses ( ) to enclose your search terms, or quotation marks ( " ") to search for an exact phrase. The example above (**"american revolution"**) searches for the exact phrase "american revolution" rather than treating it as a phrase search (american AND revolution).

## Refining Your Search

### *Proximity Searching*

JSTOR search allows you to find terms that are within a set number of words of each other using the tilde (~) symbol. In this example ("**debt forgiveness**"~**10**), you will only get results with the terms debt and forgiveness within ten words of each other.

### *Boosting Term Relevance*

You may increase the importance of any term in your search by using the caret (^) symbol followed by a number that represents the rise in relevance. In the example above (**cat**<sup>**7**</sup> **dog**), an occurrence of the word cat in an item is seven times more important than the word dog.

### *Using Field Abbreviations*

You can narrow search results to a variety of item or journal information. This is possible because JSTOR uses fields for categorization of metadata. Each field is represented in a search by its abbreviation. The example above (**au:smith**) will find all items for which Smith is listed as an author. Appending ty:fla to a search ("**great gatsby**" **ty:fla**) will limit a search to full-length articles, and ty:brv will limit a search to book reviews.

Other frequently used field abbreviations are:

Code	Returns results from:	Example
jo:	Journal title field	jo:econometrica
ta:	Article title field (does not search books title field)	ta:modernism
ab:	Item abstract field (please note that only about 10% of	ab:microfinance
ca:	Illustration caption field	ca:rembrandt
vo:	Journal Volume field	vo:134

Other less commonly used field abbreviations include:

**cty:(book)** = book

**cty:pamphlet** = pamphlet

**rt:** title of a reviewed work

**so:** or **jo:** journal title

**no:** issue or number

**sn:** or **in:** International Standard Serials Number (ISSN).

### *Limiting a Search to Content in a Specific Language*

JSTOR uses the Library of Congress's three letter MARC language codes in our metadata. You can append these codes to a search to limit the results to content in a specific language. An example: **camus la:fre**

la:ara = Arabic

la:chi = Chinese

la:dut = Dutch

la:eng = English

la:fre = French

la:ger = German

la:gre = Greek Modern

la:heb = Hebrew

la:ita = Italian

la:jpn = Japanese

la:lat = Latin

la:por = Portuguese

la:rus = Russian

la:spa = Spanish

la:swe = Swedish

la:tur = Turkish

### Searching for Multiple Spellings of a Term

#### *Using the tilde symbol*

You can find words with spellings similar to your search term by using the tilde (~) symbol at the end of a search term. For example, **ti:dostoyevsky~** helps find items with dostoyevsky in the item title field, as well as variant spellings such as dostoevsky, dostoievski, dostoevsky, dostoyevski, dostoevskii, dostoevski, etc. Note: This way of searching encompasses a very large number of words. Narrowing this kind of search to the item title or another field is recommended. The first letter always remains the same.

#### *Wildcards*

Wildcards take the place of one or more characters in a search term. A question mark is used for single character searching. An asterisk is used for multiple character searching.

Wildcards are used to search for alternate spellings and variations on a root word. Wildcard characters cannot be used in place of the first letter of a word or within an exact phrase search. For example:

**wom?n** finds the words woman, women, womyn,

**bird\*** finds bird, birding, birdman, birds, and other words that start with bird

**organi?ation** finds organization or organisation

**behavior\*** searches for behavior, behavioral, behaviorist, behaviorism, or behaviorally

You can combine search terms containing wild cards (**wom?n AND "science education"**) and they may be used in a field search: **au:sm?th or ti:shakespeare\***

## ADVANCED SEARCH

### Limiting a Search to a Specific Field

Use the drop-down boxes to limit search terms to the title, author, abstract, or caption text. Important to know:

- If you limit your search to the abstract field, you will search only a subset of the journal content on JSTOR. JSTOR doesn't create abstracts for content that was published without them; abstracts exist for only about 10% of the articles. Abstracts tend to be more common in certain disciplines (social sciences, sciences) and in more recently published content.
- Captions are searchable for much, but not all of the image content on JSTOR. Some images do not contain captions.

### Combining Search Terms

Use the drop-down boxes to combine search terms using the Boolean operators, AND/OR/NOT and NEAR 5/10/25. The NEAR operator looks for the combinations of keywords within 5, 10, or 25 words places of each other. Important to know: The NEAR operator only works when searching for single keyword combinations. For example, you may search for **cat NEAR 5 dog**, but not **"domesticated cat" NEAR 5 dog**.

### Narrowing a Search

Use the "Narrow by" options to search only articles, include/exclude book reviews, search for content published during a particular time frame, or in a particular language.

### Limit an Article Search to a Specific Discipline(s)

Focus an article search in specific disciplines and titles using checkboxes. Important to know: Discipline searching is currently only available for searching journal content. Selecting this option will exclude ebooks from the search.

## UNDERSTANDING SEARCH RESULTS

### Organizing and Filtering Search Results

The format and display of search results is the same for Basic and Advanced searches.

- Use the tabs to filter results by journal articles, ebook chapters, and pamphlets.
- Use the sorting options to view search results by relevance, oldest items, or newest items.
- Use the “Display” option to view more results on a single page.
- Change the “Show” option to “All Content” to see results across all content on JSTOR, not just the content licensed/purchased by the library.
- Select citations from the search results and use the "Export Selected Citations" feature to email or export citations in a variety of formats.

### Search Relevance

Relevance on JSTOR is a combination of many things. Key elements include:

- More unique terms in the text result in higher scores when searches contain those terms. For example, the keyword “epistemology” gets a greater boost than “university” because it is less common.
- Phrase matches are boosted higher than just keyword matches. A search for "the quick brown fox" will assign higher relevance to a document containing the exact words "the quick brown fox" than a document containing "the brown fox is quick."
- More recent content is given a slight boost.