

Episode 13: How to phrase your search

Don't see what you're looking for in your search results? Here are some basic tips and tricks to help you find just what you want every time.

Please remember that it is not possible to give general rules for searching in findit.lu as each database can respond slightly differently, depending on how its system for searching is configured. You may need to try a number of the alternatives shown below to get the best out of searching from within findit.lu.

Also, please note that searching a database from within findit.lu may not give you the search capabilities that you will find on the native interface of the database itself.

If you wish to make a comprehensive search we suggest you compare results with a similar search on the native interface of the database itself and also investigate the other search facilities that may be available on the native interface of the database.

What kind of terms should I enter?

First of all: Keep it simple! Start by typing the name of a thing or concept that you're looking for.

Examples: *Parkinson disease, expressionism or European Union.*

On the first try you will obviously get a lot of search results.

Narrow the search results with the provided filters or / and add relevant words if you don't see what you want after doing a simple search.

Examples: *expressionism* (first try) -> *expressionism Germany* (more precise) -> *expressionism Germany literature*

Searching Findit.lu

Findit.lu combines keyword and phrase search features. The term that you enter in a search query has a significant effect on the results that will be found.

Searching for single words

When asked to enter a term, you can enter a single word, a single letter or part of a word followed by a question mark (?). A question mark truncates a word, which means that it matches any value.

For example: you can type *optim?* to find records containing *optimal, optimize or optimum*. Note that that using truncation within a word, e.g. *colo?r* will fail.

Searching for multiple words or phrases

When asked to enter a term, you can also enter more than one word, as follows:

- **Keyword Search:** To search for documents that contain all of the specified words, enter the list of words without quotation marks.
For example: *education children* returns all documents containing both the word *education* and the word *children* (keyword search). It is the same as a Boolean AND.
- **Phrase Search:** To search for a phrase, enter the phrase in quotation marks.
For example: *"education of children"* returns all documents containing this exact phrase.

Do not put terms in quotation marks unless you want to perform a phrase search!
In general, you should avoid punctuation when entering single or multiple words.

Further Hints

- Avoid using words such as *a*, *an* and *the* in your search. The more search terms used, the more specific, and fewer the results.
To broaden your search results, use synonyms or truncate words with a question mark.
Remember that using truncation within a word, e.g. *colo?r* will fail
- *color* OR *colour*
Should find results that mention *color* OR *colour* (or both of these words).
- *churchill, winston*
For many databases, like on findit.lu, you will need to use the Multi-field search option to search for an author, selecting the 'Author' field.
The standard format for authors' names is Last, First. However, due to variations of the standard, it may be best to try variations on the name, or to truncate it, as in *churchill, w*, *churchill, wls*, *churchill, w?*

Note that each database on findit.lu supports different search phrases and may or may not support Boolean terms. Please check the respective Help-functions for optimal results.