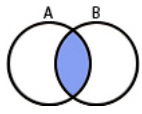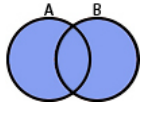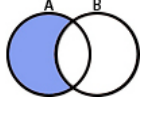# Find Articles Faster: Boolean Operators

What are Boolean operators? They are used to combine search terms:

Boolean Operator	Examples	Results
AND A B	children **AND** poverty	AND combines different terms when both must be present. Use AND to **narrow** a search
OR A B	teenagers **OR** adolescents	OR combines terms when at least one must be present. Use OR to **broaden** a search.
NOT A B	Java **NOT** coffee	NOT eliminates terms from a search. Use NOT when you want to **exclude** all results that contain a certain term.

You use Boolean operators to combine your search terms when you're looking for articles in a database. Say you're writing a paper about the rainforests. If you search for the keyword *rainforests*, you're likely to get thousands of results. However, if you change your search to *rainforests AND French Guiana*, your results will be limited to articles specifically on rainforests in French Guiana.

AND is the default operator in most databases. However, in a few databases, like PubMed, you'll need to type in the Boolean operators yourself.

AND is good for narrowing your search, but what if you're not getting enough results and want to make your search broader? For that, use OR. For example, a search for *work therapy* might give you very few results, but a search for *work therapy OR occupational therapy* will increase your results drastically.

You can also use OR if your topic has a commonly used synonym; for example, *teenagers OR adolescents*.

The last Boolean operator is NOT. Use NOT to exclude terms from your search. For example, to find articles on classroom management that don't examine behavior, enter *classroom management NOT behavior*. Now your results will be limited to articles that focus on methods of instruction rather than children's behavior in the classroom.

NOT is also handy when your search term has more than one meaning. For example, *Turkey NOT bird*.