

The Online Catalog: Basic Search Tips

This document offers useful tips for successful searches in the Online Catalog. For a more detailed explanation of the Basic Search functions, please refer to documentation on the C/W MARS web site at <http://www.cwmars.org>.

The web address for the C/W MARS online catalog is <http://catalog.cwmars.org> .

1. In general, the SIMPLER you can make your search, the better.
2. Search with as FEW SEARCH TERMS as you can. When the catalog does a search for you, it will try to find records, that contain every single word that you put in the search box. The CATALOG IS VERY LITERAL. When it searches *pillows earth*, it will not return "Pillars of the Earth", *pillars earth* will. The catalog will not suggest that the search might have meant something else. A search for *toolkit* will return different results than a search for *tool kit*.
3. If a search fails when you use multiple search limiters, RETRY the search with FEWER LIMITERS.
4. Search TERMS can be entered IN ANY ORDER. *With the wind gone* will get the same results as *gone with the wind*. Author names can be entered in any order. *Mark twain* will get the same results as *twain mark*. No comma is necessary in an author name. APOSTROPHES, though, are important. The term *don't* will return different results than the term *dont*.
5. Enclosing words in QUOTATION MARKS will cause the catalog to search on a phrase. This may help you get a result sometimes but try the search without the quotation marks if the results aren't what you wanted. Use quotation marks if you're looking for a specific word. For instance, "*Kissinger*" will get results for the name Kissinger but *Kissinger* without quote will also get *kissing*, *kissed*, *kisser*, and so on.
6. CAPITALIZATION is IGNORED. *Little Miss Marker* will get the same results as *little miss marker*.
7. Words like AND and OR have NO SPECIAL MEANING for Basic Search. They are treated like any other word.
8. To EXCLUDE A TERM from a search, put a MINUS SIGN in front of it. *gone with the -wind* will get results that have *gone with the* but not *gone with the wind*. This can be helpful when narrowing a search. For instance, a search for Indian food will include both American Indian food and food from India. To narrow the search, enter *Indian food -American*. This will reduce the results quite a bit but you may still find something on Cherokee cooking. Further narrow the search by entering *Indian food -American -Cherokee*.
9. Some search TERMS will be EXPANDED in your search results. This is why a search for *dog* will get results that include *dogs*. A search for *amish quilt* will include results for *amish quilts* and *amish quilting*.
10. If you're not looking for a specific item but want to see what might be available on a topic, ENTER ANY SHORT, SIMPLE PHRASE in the search text box. For example, *spain hotels* will return materials about lodging in Spain; *china travel* will return materials on traveling in China; *spy thriller* will return spy thrillers.
11. Sometimes, after you've done a search, the SUBJECT LISTINGS on the left hand side of the search screen can be helpful in narrowing or extending a search. For instance, someone searching for *Saturn* will see *Saturn probes* listed there. Search terms are entered in this box. Other drop down boxes are used to help you limit your search with limiters like format, author, title, or specific library.