

Case Sensitivity

It is important to know that some web search tools are case sensitive. This means that when you search using upper case letters in your query, the search engine will only find results that are displayed in upper case letters. If you capitalize the first letter in your search, (i.e. Miller) this is the only version of the spelling that will be searched. However, if you use all lower case letters, even in acronym and proper noun searches, the search tool will find and display all case variations. Upper and lower case mixes can be used to limit searches.

Search Example:

african american women

Retrieves:

African American women and children
Employment opportunities for African American women

Will Not Retrieve:

Adult Education

Adult Education tips

Beginning adult education
Academic Adult education

Most of our research databases are not case sensitive. However, it is good to get in the habit of using lower case letters to search. Punctuation can also be ignored as a rule. Search for “st james” instead of “St. James”.

Phrase Searching

Phrase searching retrieves a series of words (and only those words) in the exact order you type them. If any words are missing, not in the order typed, or have various spellings, the search will not retrieve them. Phrase searching greatly limits searches, but it is sometimes too strict of a search that misses many other valuable resources. Phrase searches must be enclosed in quotes for most search tools.

Search Examples:

“beck depression inventory”

Retrieves:

Using the Beck Depression Inventory

beck depression inventory - screening for patients with Parkinson's disease

Will Not Retrieve:

Estate inventory of Captain John Beck during the Great Depression.

Inventory: Beck Depression

“stephen king”

Stephen King

King, Stephan
Stephen L. King

Helpful Hints: You **must** use quotes when you want to perform a search that uses stop words such as – AND, NOT, OR, NEAR, SAME. An example would be searching for the phrase “Black And White.” Some search tools may even require you to type the search in as “black “and” white.” Remember to read the help file if you are unsure.