

Welcome to eLibrary® Canada's Search Tips. The following tips were designed to provide you with special hints and information to optimize your searching experience on eLibrary Canada. Use these tips as a guideline when performing your searches and before you know it, you will become an eLibrary Canada expert researcher. Good luck and remember to have fun!

Tip 1: Use Multiple Search Words

When constructing a search, think of the most important concepts and terms for your search. For example, if you want to find information the key issues surrounding the modernized Indian Act, consider using alternative terms such as First Nations People, Aboriginal People or Indigenous People and government or treaty.

For help with synonyms use the Reference Desk feature.

Tip 2: Ask a Question

Phrase your search just as you would ask a person. The system analyzes the search and weights the terms accordingly. It may be easier for you to come up with a question, than trying to analyze what keywords you are searching for.

Tip 3: Alternate Spellings and Terms

Remember that English usage differs. If you are searching non-Canadian sources remember to include alternate spellings. For example:

British	Canadian	American
Colour	Colour	Color
Theatre	Theatre	Theater
Aluminium		Aluminum

Tip 4: Phrase Searching

Enclose phrases in quotes to indicate that the words need to appear next to each other. To be found, a document must contain at least one occurrence of your phrase. Use quotes for exact phrase searches only.

Tip 5: Automatic Plurals Searching

The database will automatically search for the plural or singular version of a word. Ex. If you enter doctor it will search for both doctor and doctors.



TOO FEW DOCUMENTS FOUND?

Sometimes your search comes up with unexpected results – either no documents or just a few. If you are expecting to find more information than you retrieved, try some of these tips for improving your search:

- 1. Search restrictions might be left over from previous searches:** This is the most common problem. Before beginning a new search, click on the *Search* tab or ensure all boxes are cleared or reset.
- 2. Misspelled words:** If you have misspelled a word, the system will offer you alternative spellings. It will ask you “*Did you mean...?*” Click on the appropriate link provided, to retrieve those documents.

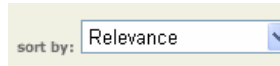
- 3. The search is too specific:** Are you including too many terms in a Boolean search? Are you searching for “acquired immunodeficiency syndrome” instead of the more common term AIDS; UN instead of “United Nations”?
- 4. Too few source types:** Make sure that you have not limited your search to source types unnecessarily. A search for *Transcripts* will be a much more restricted search than one that includes *Newspapers* and *Magazines* as well.
- 5. Date restriction:** If you have used the date restriction, make sure you entered the dates in the correct format – MM/DD/YYYY. You may want to include newspapers older than 90 days in your. Click on this option in the advanced search portion of the main search page.



TOO MANY DOCUMENTS FOUND?

The system offers several tools to help narrow down and focus a search:

- 1. Relevancy:** Be sure that your search results are being sorted by *Relevance*, rather than by *Date*, *Title*, *Publication*, etc. This ensures that, even with many retrieved items, the most relevant ones will be listed first. Focus on the items that have a higher relevancy score.



- 2. Choose specific sources:** Limit your search to the most likely source category. If you want to know what Bill Gates said in a television interview, you might want to try limiting your search to only *Transcripts*.
- 3. Use the Title field:** This is an extremely effective way of improving your search results. Include search terms or an exact title in the *title field*. This is a more restrictive search, but is a useful technique for finding a few good items on a subject.



NOTE: If you are searching by *title or by publication*, it is a good idea to include at least one search term in the main search box as well. Both of these fields also operate as stand alone search fields and will accept Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT in the Title field and OR, NOT in the Publication field).

- 4. Boolean search:** Switch to a Boolean search and include additional search terms such as the “AND” operator to narrow the search. Unlike Natural Language searching, a Boolean search will find a document only if all the terms are present (or not) as specified. You can create fairly complex logical relationships among the search terms.

AND	All terms appear in document
OR	At least one term appears in the document
AND NOT	Term must not be in the document
WITHIN	Terms must appear within # of one another
ADJ	Terms appear in the document in the same order that you have typed them within # of words from each other

- 5. Find additional search terms:** Review the most relevant items from your search and see what additional search terms you can use to focus your search. Is there a particular acronym or phrase that often appears in relevant articles? For example, articles about flu viruses often mention the word ‘immunization’ as well.

CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

Photos are always a great addition to any project!

Look for:	Put the following in publication field	Some examples to try:
Current Events	Magnum Photos	"Olympic Games", "Middle East Violence"
National Flags	MapQuest.com	Choose a nation of your choice
Historical Pictures	Archive Photos	"Christopher Columbus", "Thirty Years War", "French Revolution", "Apollo 11", "Marilyn Monroe"
Animals	Earth Life Forms	Crocodile, Frog, Eagle, Elephant, etc.
Historical/Canadiana	Canadisk/Canpix	"War of 1812", "Manitoba settlers"

Looking for some information on a specific country?

We have a lot of travel books that can provide you with demographic snapshots of a country (including GDP per capita, birth and death rates, top import and export partners, etc.).	
Put the following in publication field:	Frommer's, Countries of the World, Encyclopedia (this will include all encyclopedias in the database)



NOTE: To improve results it might help to put the country's name in the **Title Field** AND in the **Search Box**

Have an English assignment due? Check out...

Topic:	Put the following in publication field	Some examples to try:
Classics	Complete Works of Shakespeare	Any of Shakespeare's works
Margaret Atwood	Select all Magazines & Newspaper sources	"The Tent"
Lucy Maud Montgomery	Select Canadian Sources Only	"Anne of Green Gables"

Canadian/World Issues:

Topic:	Consider the following publications:	Sample Searches:
Canadian business	Canadian Business	Why is the communications industry cutting jobs? Are any dot coms profitable?
Canadian politics	Macleans, The Toronto Star, National Post, Ottawa Citizen	When will Canada have a majority government again? What is the Kyoto Protocol? What is the future of our health care system?
International Business & Politics	The Economist, Business Week, Fortune, Forbes Magazine, Agence France Presse, Jerusalem Post, The Independent (London), Xinhua News Agency	Will there be peace in the Middle East? Is the Euro good for Europe?
Science and Technology	Issues in Law and Medicine, Biotech Week, Maclean's	What is the medical significance of genetic cloning?
The Arts	Down Beat, The Canadian Encyclopedia, The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia	Who was Balanchine? What are the origins of jazz music?