

Better searching using AND, OR, NOT

You will get better search results if you know how to use AND, OR, NOT.

These words are Boolean operators. You can use them to combine keywords in your search to get different search results. Here's how they work.

You are researching coffee, especially espresso, and university students.

If you search the Omni catalogue for coffee OR espresso, your results will each include *at least one* of these terms: **either** coffee **or** espresso, but not necessarily both together.

If you use AND, your search will find items that contain **both terms**, coffee and espresso. Since both terms need to be in every result, you will get many fewer results than using OR.

If you use NOT, as in coffee NOT espresso, your search will retrieve items that contain the term coffee, but will **exclude** any items that include the term espresso.

You can combine multiple operators in your search. If you search for the 3 terms coffee, students, and espresso, you can combine the operators differently between the 3 terms to get different results.

For example, if you search for coffee AND students AND espresso, you get a small number of results that contain all 3 search terms.

If you search for coffee OR espresso AND students, you get results that have both the term students, and either the term coffee or the term espresso.

Most search tools let you combine multiple operators. For example in Omni's Advanced Search enter coffee OR espresso in the first box. Then, choose NOT from the dropdown menu beside the search box in the next row. Each of the search results will contain either the term coffee or the term espresso but should all exclude the term beans.

If you have any questions, ask us at library.wlu.ca/help/askus.