

# Search strategy: How do I make the most out of a Google Search?



Simply typing in your search term will bring back thousands, sometimes millions, of *'hits'*. Be smart and reduce this number to get exactly what you want from your search.

You can use the modifiers below to make your searching more precise. Add one at the end of your search or between two different terms.

Search term  
*site:edu*

hits limited to educational websites, or *site:ac.uk* for uk websites only

Search term  
*filetype:ppt*

hits limited to Powerpoint presentations

Search term  
*OR*  
synonym

hits include results with either search term

You can use speech marks " " as a modifier. This keeps the phrases you want together and stops Google from looking at each word separately. For example:

Search term  
*regenerative animals*

1,950,000 hits  
*Mixed selection based on each word*

*"regenerative animals"*

2,410 hits  
*all deal with your subject*



Remember, the internet changes every day therefore the number of results may vary.

You can use the minus symbol to exclude words from your search. For example, if you were searching for 1960s British TV show, The Avengers, you would want to exclude any results relating to the Marvel films of the same name, *Avengers -Marvel*. This is a powerful tool and should be used with caution.

To only show results with that word in the title, you can use *intitle:word*.

*intitle:*

A search engine will not just search for the words that you put in. Google in particular will look for different spellings and similar words automatically. Choose your search words carefully and use alternative ones if the first ones are not bringing back enough useful results.



Use ctrl+F (Mac - cmd+F) to search for a particular word in the web page or document that you have found so that you can spot them in the text.



## REMEMBER

Google has lots more features; ask your librarian or teacher if you need support or guidance with your search strategy.