Quick Reference Guide: Search Tools

Combining terms - Boolean operators

**AND** - both (or all) terms present

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**OR** - either (or both) terms present

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**NOT** - removes a term

NOT - removes a term

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Advanced Search can also be used for more sophisticated searches. Typing (1 and 3) not 2 would "and" together your 1 and 3 search sets while omitting results contained in your #2 search set.
Combining terms - adjacent terms and phrases

**ADJ** - ADJ5 terms are within five words of each other (and ADJ3 within three, ADJ4 within four, etc.)

```
Keyword  Author  Title  Journal
biodegrad* ADJ3 packag*
```

This search brings back results for biodegradable packaging, biodegradable active packaging, packaging which is biodegradable and more.

Ovid ignores this short list of **stopwords**: and, as, for, from, is, of, that, the, this, to, was, were. This is why "packaging which is biodegradable" will be a search result for ADJ3 even though the search words are 4 rather than 3 words apart.

**Phrase search** - "straight quotation marks" around two or more words

```
Keyword  Author  Title  Journal
"lactose intoleran**
```

This search returns results that have either the phrase lactose intolerant or lactose intolerance in them.

**Note**: Ovid will return an error message if curled quotation marks are copied into the search box from a word document.

**Truncation and wildcards**

* or $ - unlimited characters at the end of a word

- toxi* = toxic
toxicity
toxicities
toxin
toxins
toxicology
toxicological
toxicologist
toxigenic
toxigenicity
toxicglycosides
toxicokinetics...

*2 or $2 - two characters after a word

- toxi$2 = toxin
toxins
toxic
toxics

? - one or zero characters at the end of or within a word

- flavo?r = flavor
flavour

# - one variable character

- organi#ation = organization
organisation

**Note**: Mix and match search tools to build an effective search strategy.

The **FSTA thesaurus** also captures international spelling variants when a word like flavor/flavour is a key concept in an article. Learn more [here](#).