

Googling Guide #2 Getting the Most from Google's Fuzzy Thinking

Boolean Operators		
COMMAND:	SUGGESTED USES:	EXAMPLES:
OR (capitalized)	Singulars, plurals, and other endings not covered by Google's stemming	• parent OR parents OR parenting
	Equivalent or synonymous terms	• parent OR guardian
	Misspellings	• librarian OR librarian
- (to exclude, like "not")	Streamline results by eliminating undesirable words or phrases	• librarian -academic

Punctuation and Special Characters		
COMMAND:	SUGGESTED USES:	EXAMPLES:
Google ignores most punctuation, including , . ; ? [] () @ / # and * (unless * is within quotes). Important exceptions follow:		
" " (forced phrase search)	Create unique search terms from common words Require words to appear together in documents retrieved (as opposed to somewhere)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "public libraries" • "critical thinking" skills • critical "thinking skills"
' (apostrophe or single quote)	Different results with/without ' Use OR to search with and without.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its differs from it's • peoples OR people's OR peoples'
- (hyphen) between words	Hyphen in a word searched as hyphen, as one word without hyphen, and as two words Always hyphenate a word that might even occasionally be hyphenated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • same-sex matches same-sex, samesex, and same sex • same sex also gets same-sex but not samesex • samesex matches only samesex
accent marks over letters	Accented letters match exactly unless the search is restricted to languages that use the same accent(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • éléphant does not retrieve elephant (and vice versa) • If searching French pages, both match

Fuzzy Search Features		
COMMAND:	SUGGESTED USES:	EXAMPLES:
~ (synonyms)	Let Google "think" of synonyms	• ~food finds pages with recipes, nutrition, cooking
. . (number ranges)	Shop for a range of prices	• DVD player \$250..350
	Search pages with a range of dates	• "babe ruth" 1919..1924
	Find number ranges associated with any recurring word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.5..6 megapixels • printer 1200..1500 dpi
	Can be open-ended in either direction (more than & less than)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD player \$250.. • DVD player ..\$250
stemming (automatic and unpredictable)	Google finds pages with variant endings "when appropriate" Does not work on single word searches Does not work within quotes	• reading plan finds pages with read, reading, reads and plan, plans, planning
* (full-word wildcard within quotes)	Find variants of expressions or expressions you are unsure of	• "it's all in the *"
	Proximity searches: The number of * represents any intervening words; reversible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "bush * iraq" (within 1) • "bush * * iraq" (within 2) • "irag * * bush" (within 2 reversed) • "bush * * * iraq" (within 3)
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