

# Understanding the Search Results Page

The search results page lists your results by relevance, with each underlined item linked to the associated page.

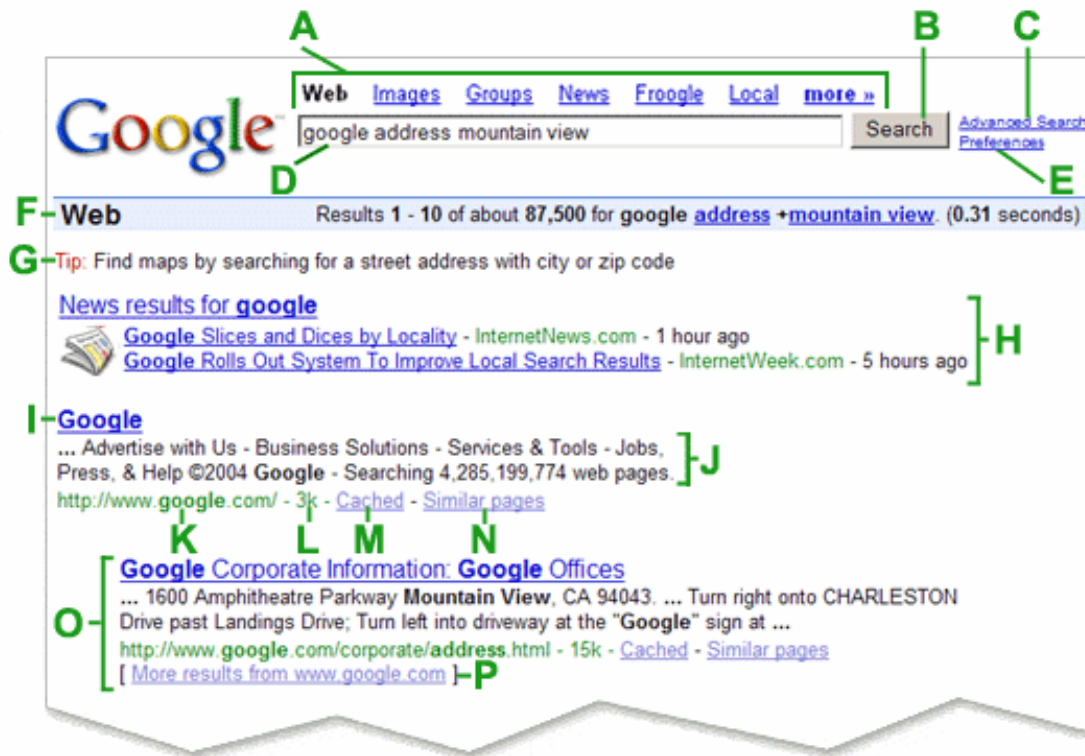


Image from Google Help Center

We'll describe the various parts of the Search Results Page here:

**(A) Top links:** Lists the links for the Google search services you want to use.

**(B) Google search button:** After entering any search criteria in the search field, you'll click this button or simply hit the enter key.

**(C) Advanced search:** Click this link to bring up a fill-in form to perform an [Advanced Search](#) with many options.

**(D) Search field:** This is where you had keyed the search criteria.

**(E) Preferences:** Link to the [Preferences Page](#) from which you can set personal search preferences such as your language, filtering, number of search results per page and more.

**(F) Statistics bar:** This tells you the how many results the search found, the search criteria and a link to a definition if it is in the associated dictionary/encyclopedia with whom Google has partnered.

**(G) Tip:** There may or may not be a tip for searching more efficiently.

**(H) OneBox results:** Google's search technology finds many sources of specialized information. Those that are most relevant to your search are included at the top of your search results. Typical onebox results include news, stock quotes, weather and local websites related to your search.

**(I) Page title:** Title of the web page listed. If the page has no title or has not yet been indexed by Google, it will show the URL.

**(J) Text below the title:** This snippet is an excerpt from the result page, with your query terms bolded. If Google has expanded the range of your search using stemming technology, the variations will also be bolded. If not yet indexed, there will be no snippet.

**(K) URL of result:** Web address of the returned result.

**(L) Size:** The size of the text portion of the web page. The size gives you an idea of how long it will take to load. Pages not yet indexed by Google will not show a size.

**(M) Cached:** Sometimes a page will not load due to either a server problem or a page that no longer exists. However, Google stores the last indexed version of the page in cache. Clicking on this link will show the cached page.

**(N) Similar pages:** When you select the Similar Pages link for a particular result, Google automatically scouts the Web for pages that are related to this result.

**(O) Indented result:** When Google finds multiple results from the same website, the most relevant result is listed first, with other relevant pages from that site indented below it.

**(P) More results:** If more than two results are found from the same site, the remaining results can be accessed by clicking on the "More results from..." link.

## Setting Your Preferences

Before you get started using Google, you should check your preferences. You can do this by going to the main Google search page at [Google.com](http://Google.com), and clicking on the *Preferences* link to the right of the search field.

**Google** Preferences [Preferences Help](#) | [About Google](#)

Save your preferences when finished and return to search.

**Global Preferences** (changes apply to all Google services)

**Interface Language** Display Google tips and messages in:    
If you do not find your native language in the pulldown above, you can help Google create it through our [Google in Your Language program](#).

**Search Language**

Search for pages written in any language ([Recommended](#)).

Search only for pages written in these language(s):

<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Indonesian	<input type="checkbox"/> Romanian
<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian	<input type="checkbox"/> Estonian	<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> Russian
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalan	<input type="checkbox"/> Finnish	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Serbian
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese (Simplified)	<input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Slovak
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese (Traditional)	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Latvian	<input type="checkbox"/> Slovenian
<input type="checkbox"/> Croatian	<input type="checkbox"/> Greek	<input type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Czech	<input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew	<input type="checkbox"/> Norwegian	<input type="checkbox"/> Swedish
<input type="checkbox"/> Danish	<input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian	<input type="checkbox"/> Polish	<input type="checkbox"/> Turkish
<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch	<input type="checkbox"/> Icelandic	<input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese	

<b>SafeSearch Filtering</b>	<a href="#">Google's SafeSearch</a> blocks web pages containing explicit sexual content from appearing in search results. <input type="radio"/> Use strict filtering (Filter both explicit text and explicit images) <input checked="" type="radio"/> Use moderate filtering (Filter explicit images only - default behavior) <input type="radio"/> Do not filter my search results.
<b>Number of Results</b>	Google's default (10 results) provides the fastest results. Display <input type="text" value="10"/> results per page.
<b>Results Window</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Open search results in a new browser window.

Save your preferences when finished and [return to search](#). Save Preferences

Here you will be able to change the the settings that will define your Google Web Search user experience.

**Interface Language:** Set the language in which you want the interface to communicate with you. Pretty self-explanatory. Note that the Google programmers had a little fun here and included the Elmer Fudd and Klingon languages. :)

**Search Language:** While English pages are the most prevalent, web pages are written in all languages. By default, Google will search without regard for language. It's not going to translate a search word to search pages in another language, but it will look for the search term in any web pages written in any language. To keep this default selection make sure that *Search for pages written in any language* is selected.

Google recommends searching all languages, but why clutter up your search results page with site you won't be able to read. I prefer to select only the languages I know how to read. You may select any number of languages here.

**SafeSearch Settings:** As everyone is aware, there are an overwhelming number of sites on the web that are not appropriate for kids, or most people for that matter. A search without safeguards in place can surely give you an unexpected eyeful.

Google's SafeSearch setting lets you set up a safeguard to stop the inclusion of such sites in your search. Your choices are:

- *Moderate filtering* excludes most explicit images from Google Image Search results but doesn't filter ordinary web search results. This is your default SafeSearch setting; you'll receive moderate filtering unless you change it.
- *Strict filtering* applies SafeSearch filtering to all your search results (i.e., both image search and ordinary web search).
- *No Filtering*, as you've probably figured out, turns off SafeSearch filtering completely.

**Number of Results:** Set how many results you wish to see per page.

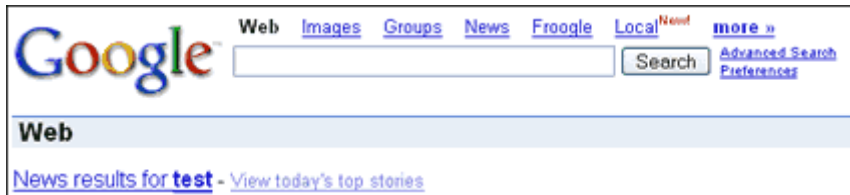
**Results Window:** Set whether or not to open search results in a new browser window. Default is no.

## Building A Basic Search Query

Running a Google query means entering your search criteria into Google's search field and requesting the search results. This search field is found either on the main [Google](#) page:



or on the Search Results page:



In addition, you might find a search field on some web sites. Wherever you find it, you can use the same query for the same results (be aware that some web sites may have “site-flavored” search boxes which limit your search to certain pre-selected categories).

### What criteria to use for the Search Query?

Your natural inclination is to enter whatever word you think might match up with the sites you are looking for. This word is called a *keyword*. After pressing enter, the search results page will display all the sites that contain the keyword you entered. The keyword could be in the text, title URL or hidden META tags. Note: that capitalization is ignored.

Unless this keyword is unique (which is difficult with gazillions of web page indexed), you are going to have a very long list of search results. For example, searching for [[supercalifragilisticexpialidocious](#)] resulted in 43,300 pages! Obviously, you need to narrow it down. Imagine if you keyed in a more popular word. Let's say you are a golf enthusiast and key in [[golf](#)]. That will give you 147,000,000 results.

Now if you just wanted the most popular, general sites for golf, you could find some in your results list because the most popular pages rise to the top. Our search brought up [golf.com](#), [golfweb.com](#), [golfchannel.com](#), [golddigest.com](#) and more on the first page. If that's the type of popular site you need to find, that might work for you. But, usually you need to look deeper than that. So how do you do that?

### Multiple Keywords

You can start by entering more than one keyword. If you key more than one, all keywords must be found on the page. To get technical, this is called a *logical AND*. Returning to the subject of golf, let's say you want to find out about the golf scene in Boise, ID. Perform the search with the query [[golf Boise](#)]. This returns 1,100,000 results.

You get the basic idea. You can keep adding more keywords to narrow down the list. You might add words like *spa* and *country club* to try to find exactly the type of place you are looking for. Don't let the huge number of pages that come up scare you; remember, the list is sorted in order of relevance. Google will display the most popular sites first. At the tail end of the results listing you might find pages in which people simply mentioning it in their family blog or something.

Keep in mind that Google gives higher priority to pages with search terms that are found in the same order as you structured them in your query, and if the words on the page are close in proximity.

### Compound Words

There are quite a few compound words that are sometimes found combined into one word, sometimes separated into multiple words and sometimes connected together with a hyphen. If you are searching for one of these words, is it important which format you use to search? You bet it is, if you don't want to miss anything.

First off, let's make sure we all understand the types of conditions I'm talking about. I don't know about other languages, but the English language can be very confusing in its seemingly arbitrary spelling of compound words and phrases. A word phrase can be spelled as a solid compound, a hyphenated compound or spaced words. Do you spell it database, data base or data-base, website, web site or web-site, fundraiser, fund raiser or fund-raiser? There are hundreds of words and phrases that are like this.

And then there are the acronyms or made up sets of letters/words that have an irregular use of the hyphen. Take for example the Apple operating system OS X. Or is it OSX or OS-X? There is obviously one preferred usage, developed by Apple, but it doesn't mean everyone spells it that way.

So, how do you search for these? You don't want to miss anything, and you certainly don't want to perform three searches. You also don't want to have to take the time to build a query with the OR operator.

If you were to perform the search as spaced words, such as [\[left handed\]](#), you'll get pages with 'left handed' and 'left-handed', but no 'lefthanded'. If you search for [\[lefthanded\]](#) you'll only get 'lefthanded'.

But, if you search for [\[left-handed\]](#) you get it all!

ANSWER: Always search for compound words with the hyphen and you'll pull up pages that may use all three variations..

### **Automatic Exclusion of Common Words, Punctuation and Special Characters**

Google ignores common words and characters such as "the" and "how", as well as certain single digits and single letters. This is done because they are virtually omnipresent and therefore slow down and expand your search without improving results. If Google considered any of your words to be common words it will note this in a message just below the search field.

If a common word is essential to getting the results you want, you can include it by putting a "+" sign in front of it. (Be sure to include a space before the "+" sign.) Enclosing multiple words in quotes to form a phrase (more on that later) does the same thing.

Other than the special characters you'll learn about later that have special relevance to Google, most punctuation will be ignored. There is an exception, and that is the apostrophe since it is used in contractions.

### **Word Variations (Stemming)**

Google uses something called stemming technology. When it considers it appropriate, it will search not only for your search terms, but also for words that are similar to some or all of those terms. What it does, essentially, is match other versions of a word by chopping it down to its basic form and matching different endings. Take the word "runs". Its most basic form is "run". Stemming will match run, runs, running, runner and runners. These stemmed words are assigned less relevance because they aren't an exact match. But they are still considered a match.

## **Adding Basic Operators**

Google supports powerful operators which can be special characters or words that modify the search query. In this section we'll look at the basic—not to be confused with *weak*—operators which include the OR operator and the special character operators:

- OR word or "|" character
- Double Quotation Marks (" ")
- Plus sign (+)
- Minus sign (-)
- Tilde (~) character

- Asterisk (\*) character
- Double Periods (..)
- Parenthesis (())

As I'm explaining these, I'll be tempted to use advanced operators (which I'll describe later) to improve them, but I can't until we get to that chapter. So, as you are reading, know that there are often better ways to do what I'm showing you and you'll soon learn how.

## The OR Operator

When you build your search with multiple keywords, Google searches for these as logical ANDs. This means that *all* of the keywords must be satisfied. For example, search query [\[red blue\]](#) means pages with *both* red and blue will be selected. But what if you wanted to search for *either* of the words? Do this by placing an OR between the words like this: [\[red OR blue\]](#). The OR operator must be in caps; a lower case OR will be considered one of the stop words and ignored. Better yet, if you want to save a keystroke and not take the chance of keying it in lowercase, you can use the pipe character "|" instead of the word OR. These are both valid OR queries:

[\[Uranus OR Neptune\]](#)  
[\[Uranus | Neptune\]](#)

OR sets the *either or* condition between the element preceding it and the element following it. It does *not* perform an OR between multiple words on either side of it (unless they are a phrase or group, which you'll read about in a moment). So, the following query does *not* search for either "red couch" or "blue sofa". What it does instead is search for "red" *and* "sofa" *and* either "couch" *or* "blue." You'll end up with pages that have "red", "couch" and "sofa" or "red", "blue" and "sofa"—not what you are looking for.

[\[red couch | blue sofa\]](#)

So, how would you request either "red couch" or "blue sofa"? By using phrases, up next...

## Double Quotation Marks for Exact Phrase Search

When you enter multiple keywords, Google searches for all of those keywords. It gives precedence to finding the keywords together just as they are keyed, and those in close proximity, but it will also pull up pages having the keywords anywhere in the page.

But, you can search for only the *exact* set of keywords, in the order you keyed them, by enclosing them in quotation marks. The words within the quotes are called a *phrase*. In addition, enclosing the search terms in quotation marks will stop word stemming (finding variations of the word, not to be confused with synonyms). For this reason, you could use quotation marks to enclose a single word simply to find that exact word without Google word-stemming it.

Here is an example of using a phrase to better find pages with Crater lake Lodge in them:

[\[Crater Lake Lodge\]](#) 151,000 pages, not all about the Crater Lake Lodge  
[\["Crater Lake Lodge"\]](#) 6,550 pages virtually all referencing the Crater Lake Lodge

Getting back to the "red couch" or "blue sofa" query we did earlier, you can now do that with this query that uses phrases:

[\["red couch" | "blue sofa"\]](#)

## Using the "+" Sign to Force a Search on a Word

Google ignores certain "common words" (called stop words) because they appear too frequently in pages and would thus pull up too many pages that would not satisfy the search request properly. Using the "+" sign will force Google to treat the word following it (without a space in between) as a valid search term.

Frankly, there are not many situations that using this does any more than enclosing a word or words in quotation marks. For example, Google tells you that if searching for *Star Wars Episode I* you should use [\[Star Wars Episode +I\]](#). Well, it would be better as [\["Star Wars" "Episode I"\]](#). This way you won't get someone who wrote "I sure love

that episode of Star Wars, the second one." (I created two phrases in my search in case there was any punctuation between *Star* and *Episode*.)

There are valid situations in which you will need the "+" sign, and you'll know it when you come across it.

### Omitting Pages with Certain Keywords by using the "-" Sign

This special character is much more useful than the "+" sign. It tells Google to omit pages that have a particular word or phrase in it. Often words have multiple meanings and you end up with results that include pages that have nothing remotely to do with what you were interested in.

For example, let's say that you were interested in learning about alternative energy, with the exclusion of solar energy since you already know about that. The following would satisfy that search:

[\[alternative energy -solar\]](#)

### Powerful Synonym Search with the "~" Sign

Now this is a great search operator! By placing a "~" sign (called a tilde) right in front of a word (no space in between), you are instructing Google to search not only for the word following the tilde, but also its synonyms. Without doing this in certain types of searches you will miss many valuable sites. Let's say that you want to find sites that offer a primer on alternative energy. You know that the word "primer" is not the only way to say "an introduction to" or "the basics of" but you don't want to try to think up all the synonyms and build a massive OR query. So, you use the tilde like this:

[\["alternative energy" ~primer\]](#)

You should execute this query by clicking the link to study the results. Looking at just the first page, you'll see pages that use the words, "tips," "basics," "review" and "introduction." Although not "primer", the sites appear to be what we are looking for. Using just one word like "primer" would have missed many sites of interest.

### Wildcard Search with the Asterisk

You can use the asterisk "\*" as a wildcard in your search query. It's not the type of wildcard people are used to. It's really more of a placeholder for a single word. It means that wherever there is an asterisk, the search will accept *any* word.

This works well if you know a phrase but forgot one of the words. For example, let's say you know there is a story called Little *something* Riding Hood, but for the life of you, you cannot remember what that missing word is. You can search for it like this:

[\["little \\* riding hood"\]](#)

Oh yeah, it was Little *Red* Riding Hood!

Use multiple asterisks for multiple wildcard words. For example, the following looks for pages that have the words "brown" and "cow" with three words in between them:

[\["brown \\*\\*\\* cow"\]](#)

I don't think this is extremely useful. A traditional wildcard would have been better. But, it's there if you need it.

### Grouping with Parenthesis

Another very powerful operator is the parenthesis characters, used for grouping. It means that the operator (including the always assumed invisible AND operator) is to perform its operation on the group within the parenthesis. This is primarily used with the OR operator.

Let's say that you wanted to search for pages that were about silver *or* gold coins. You could do [["silver coins" | "gold coins"](#)] but using grouping is better if the query becomes more complicated. The following search query looks for pages that deal with silver, gold or platinum dimes or quarters. This would be too unwieldy with just OR's.

[\[\(silver | gold | platinum\) \(dimes | quarter\)\]](#)

Now that is cool!

## Adding Advanced Operators

We've been through the basic operators that tell Google *what* to search for. Now we look at the advanced operators that instruct Google *where* in the pages or site, or even in which site, it should look to execute the query. These are essential in fine-tuning your search query.

You'll identify these operators easily because they are a word ending with a colon. Here is a list of the operators:

- site:
- inurl:
- allinurl:
- intitle:
- allintitle:
- intext:
- allintext:

Do not include a space between the operator and the word following it. Sometimes a space will work, but no space always works.

Note that all the operators that start with "all" cannot be mixed with other operators in a query, and cannot be preceded with a "-" sign.

### Specify Site to Include (or exclude) with site:

The site: operator tells Google to search only within a particular site, or within sites with a certain Top Level Domain (domain suffix).

Let's say you want to see only pages about Gmail help only in the Google site:

[\[gmail help site:google.com\]](#)

Maybe you'd like to see what tips (actually synonyms of tips) that sites besides Google have:

[\[gmail ~tips -site:google.com\]](#)

How about educational sites that discuss political correctness:

[\["political correctness" site:.edu\]](#)

Multiple sites require multiple site: 's—one per operator.

### Specify Word in URL to Include (or exclude) with inurl:

With this operator you can restrict the results to pages that contain a word in the URL. The word can be anywhere in the URL, not just in the domain name. The following finds pages that contain "UCLA" in the URL, "prerequisites" anywhere on the page, but are not from UCLA's own site:

[\[inurl:ucla prerequisites -site:ucla.edu\]](#)

Putting inurl: in front of every word in your query is equivalent to putting allinurl: at the front of your query.

#### **Specify Multiple Words in URL with allinurl:**

Allinurl: works similarly to inurl: except that it can be followed by multiple words. The search will be restricted to pages that contain all of the query words in the url. For example, the following query will return pages that have either "UCLA" and "Bruins" or "UCLA" and "Football" in the URL:

[\[allinurl: ucla bruins | football\]](#)

#### **Specify Word in Site Title with intitle:**

Web sites insert a title in each of their pages. This is what you see in the title bar of your browser. These titles are chosen carefully so that the search engines will index their site in the way which best represents its contents. So, being able to search only the title is a very, very powerful search. The operator intitle: performs this search.

Let's say you are looking for pages that have "Anaconda" in the title, do not have "movie" in the title (Anaconda was the name of a movie) and have the word "danger" anywhere in the page:

[\[danger intitle:anaconda -intitle:movie\]](#)

#### **Specify Multiple Words in Site Title to Include with allintitle:**

Operator allintitle: is to intitle: as allinurl is to inurl. It will do what intitle: does, but *all* the words that follow it must be in the title. For example, the following search query will find all pages that have the words "fish", "taco" and "recipe" in the title. This will give us a better chance at finding pages that actually have the recipes in them, rather than pages that merely mention them.

[\[allintitle: fish taco recipe\]](#)

#### **Specify Word in Site Text with intext:**

This operator looks for pages that have the word in just the text only, and not anywhere else in the page (URL, title, META keywords). I don't really see much use for it; you might as well do a regular search. Here's the format:

[\[intext:stupid\]](#)

#### **Specify Multiple Words in Site Text with allintext:**

I'll bet you guessed what this does. It does what intext: does, but with multiple keywords. Here's the format:

[\[allintext:really stupid\]](#)

## **Searching within a Number Range**

Google has many interesting ways that it handles numbers. We've already discussed how it treats specialized numbers in our article, [Specialized Number Search](#). And, we've discussed how you can turn Google into a calculator in the article, [The Amazing Google Calculator — Hidden in Plain Sight](#). Now, we're going to talk about how you can search Google using a *range* of numbers.

Essentially, you can tell Google that you want it to search for a range of numbers within the text, or wherever else you want with the [advanced operators](#). It will find numbers equal to, or within the range, and understands numbers it finds on pages that have commas and decimal points in them. To tell Google to do a number range search, place two periods between to numbers, with no spaces, like this:

low\_number..high\_number

Let's say you were trying to figure out who was president between 1800 and 1804. You could perform the following search:

[\[1801..1804 president\]](#)

You can search with decimal points in the lower or higher number, but it gets confused with commas. For example:

[\[15,000..30,000 miles\]](#) confuses it.

but [\[3.1..3.9 liters\]](#) does not.

You can also leave off one of the numbers to do a equal or greater than or less than or equal. For example, the following will search for numbers greater than or equal to 50000000 miles.

[\[50000000.. miles\]](#)

You are supposed to be able to search dollar amounts, but it did not work for me, as it also pulled up numbers within the range that were not dollar amounts.

## Using Page Specific Web Search Operators

Now we look at the site specific search operators. These don't serve the same purpose as the other operators but three out of four are useful nonetheless.

- info:
- link:
- related:
- cache:

Make sure that there is no space after any of these operators.

### Retrieve Page Information with info:

The operator info: will present some information that Google has about the web page whose URL you specify in its value. For example, the following query will show information about the Google homepage.

[\[info:www.google.com\]](#)

Boring. Doesn't show anything of value. Maybe Google has some future plans for this.

This functionality is also accessible by typing the web page URL directly into a Google search box.

### Search the Saved Cache Page with cache:

Google stores on its servers a cached copy of each page it has indexed. So, if a site is down, or the page has ceased to exist, you will be able to still view the cached version of the page. This is done with the cache: operator.

Start your query with cache: followed by the page whose cache you wish to view. For example, the following will show the cached page of drudgereport.com:

[\[cache:drudgereport.com\]](#)

You can include words that you want Google to highlight in the cached page by listing them after the web page name. For instance, adding "population" will show the cached content with the word "population" highlighted.

[\[cache:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California\\_population\]](#)

This functionality is also accessible by clicking on the "Cached" link for any page listed on Google's search results page.

### **Search for Pages with Links to a Web Page**

The link: operator will list web pages that have links to the specified web page. For instance, the following query will list web pages that have links pointing to the brainboost.com homepage.

[\[link:www.brainboost.com\]](#)

### **Search for Similar Pages**

The related: operator will list web pages that are *similar* to a specified web page. For instance, the following will list web pages that are similar to the e\*trade homepage.

[\[related:www.etrade.com\]](#)

This functionality is also accessible by clicking on the "Similar Pages" link on Google's results page.

## **Using the Advanced Search Form**

WHAT! THERE'S A FORM FOR ALL THIS? NOW HE'S TELLING ME!

Sorry.

It was good to learn how to use them free-form in the search field, but for more complicated queries you can save time by going right to Google's [Advanced Search](#) page. It has the power of most of the query operators built in to a more convenient interface for easier use.

To get to the Advanced Search page follow the link the right of the search box on the Google home page.

It lets you search for pages that:

- contain ALL the search terms you type in
- contain the exact phrase you type in
- contain at least one of the words you type in
- do NOT contain any of the words you type in
- are written in a certain language
- are created in a certain file format
- have been updated within a certain period of time
- contain numbers within a certain range
- are within a certain domain, or website
- don't contain "adult" material



<b>Find results</b>	with <b>all</b> of the words	<input type="text"/>	10 results	Google Search
	with the <b>exact phrase</b>	<input type="text"/>		
	with <b>at least one</b> of the words	<input type="text"/>		
	<b>without</b> the words	<input type="text"/>		
<b>Language</b>	Return pages written in	<input type="text" value="any language"/>		
<b>File Format</b>	<input type="text" value="Only"/> return results of the file format	<input type="text" value="any format"/>		
<b>Date</b>	Return web pages updated in the	<input type="text" value="anytime"/>		
<b>Occurrences</b>	Return results where my terms occur	<input type="text" value="anywhere in the page"/>		
<b>Domain</b>	<input type="text" value="Only"/> return results from the site or domain	<input type="text"/>	e.g. google.com, .org	<a href="#">More info</a>
<b>Usage Rights</b>	Return results that are	<input type="text" value="not filtered by license"/>		<a href="#">More info</a>
<b>SafeSearch</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No filtering <input type="radio"/> Filter using <a href="#">SafeSearch</a>			

### Page-Specific Search

<b>Similar</b>	Find pages similar to the page	<input type="text"/>	Search
		e.g. www.google.com/help.html	
<b>Links</b>	Find pages that link to the page	<input type="text"/>	Search

**Find Results:** The blue *Find Results* area is the heart of your search. You can fill in just one field or up to all four. These field relate to the [basic operators we discussed](#) a few chapters back.

**Language:** Use the Language selection to list only web sites in your language. This has been useful for me because for some reason I'm always coming up with German web pages in my searches.

**File Format:** The file format selection can include or exclude one file type.

**Date:** The Date option is extremely useful if you are looking for timely information (and who isn't?). Let's say that you are searching for the latest precautions on a medication—do you really want to risk reading a seven year old report on the subject? Set the Date selection to a recent time frame. The most recent time frame page you can specify is three months.

**Occurrences:** I really like this option that lets you select *where* the search terms must be located. There are several choices, but if you really need to find pages that are created in line with your search terms, asking to find the words in just the title will find the most relevant. (The title is not necessarily what you see on the header of the web site; it is what the web designer carefully crafted and placed in a "Meta" keyword in the "code" that tells the search engine what the site title is.)

All the choices relate directly to the [advanced operators we discussed](#) ina previous lesson. Read that page for details how each choice works. *Anywhere on the page* runs the query without any of the "where" advanced operators, *in the title of the page* is equivalent to allintitle, *in the text of the page* doesn't have an equivalent, *in the URL of the page* is equivalent to allinurl, and *in links to the page* is equivalent to allinanchor.

**Domain:** The domain selection offers a way to do a search that either searches *only* within a particular site or *avoids* a particular site. This is equivalent to the insite: operator.

**Safe Search:** If you are going to search for anything other than porn, turning on the Safe Search is a good idea. This uses the preferences you set in the [Search Preferences](#) page.

**Page Specific:** The two options here mimic the related: and link: operators. *Similar* will list pages that Google feels are similar to the page you enter. *Link* will list pages that link to the page you enter.

# Google Search Tips 2005

Here are some search syntax basics and advanced tricks for [Google.com](http://Google.com). You might know most of these, but if you spot a new one, it may come in handy in future searches.

- A **quote**/ phrase search can be written with both quotations ["like this"] as well as a minus in-between words, [like-this].
- Google didn't always understand certain **special characters** like [#], but now they do; a search for [C#], for example, yields meaningful results (a few years ago, it didn't). This doesn't mean you can use just any character; e.g. entering [t.] and [t-] and [t^] will always return the same results.
- Google allows **32 words** within the search query (some years ago, only up to 10 were used, and Google ignored subsequent words). You rarely will need so many words in a single query – [just thinking of such a long query is a hard thing to do, as this query with twenty words shows] – however, it can come in handy for advanced searching... especially as a developer using the Google API.
- You can find **synonyms** of words. E.g. when you search for [house] but you want to find "home" too, search for [~house]. To get to know which synonyms the Google database stores for individual words, simply use the minus operator to exclude synonym after synonym (they will always show as bold in the SERPs, the search engine result pages). Like this: [~house -house -home -housing -floor].
- To see a really large **page-count** (possibly, the Google index size, though one can only speculate about that), search for [\* \*].
- Google has a lesser known **"numrange"** operator which can be helpful. Using e.g. [2000..2005] (that's two dots inbetween two numbers) will find 2000, 2001, 2002 and so on until 2005.
- Google's **define-operator** allows you to look up word definitions. For example, [define:css] yields "Short for Cascading Style Sheets" and many more explanations. You can trigger a somewhat "softer" version of the define-operator by entering "what is something", e.g. [what is css].
- Google has some exciting back-end AI to allow you to find just the facts upon entering simple questions or phrases like [when was Einstein born?] or [einstein birthday] (the answer to both of these queries is "Albert Einstein – Date of Birth: 14 March 1879"). This feature was introduced April this year and is called Google **Q&A**. (See some of the various [working Q&A sample queries](#) to get a feeling for what's possible.)
- Google allows you to find **backlinks** by using the link-operator, e.g. [link:blog.outer-court.com] for this blog. The new [Google Blog Search](#) supports this operator as well. In fact, when Google's predecessor started out as Larry Page's "BackRub" in the 1990s, finding backlinks was its only aim! However, not all backlinks are shown in Google today, at least not in web search. (It's argued that Google does this on purpose to prevent reverse-engineering of its PageRank algorithm.)
- Often when you enter a question mark at the end of the query, like when you type [why?], Google will advertise its pay-for-answer service [Google Answers](#).
- There a "sport" called **Google Hacking**. Basically, curious people try to find insecure sites by entering specific, revealing phrases. A special web site called the [Google Hacking Database](#) is dedicated to listing these special queries.
- Google searches for all of your words, whether or not you write a "+" before them (I often see people write queries [+like +this], but it's not necessary). Unless, of course, you use Google's **or-operator**. It's an upper-case [OR] (lower-case won't work and is simply searching for occurrences of the word "or"), and you can also use parentheses and the "|" character. [Hamlet (pizza | coke)] will find pages containing the word (or being linked to with the word) "Hamlet" and additionally containing at least one of the two other words, "pizza" or "coke".
- Not all Google services support the same syntax. Some services don't allow everything Google web search allows you to enter (or at least, it won't have any effect), and sometimes, you can even enter more than in web search (e.g. [insubject:test] in Google Groups). The easiest thing to find out about these operators is to simply use the advanced search and then check what ends up being written in the input box.
- Sometimes, Google seems to understand "natural language" queries and shows you so-called **"onebox"** results. This happens for example when you enter [goog], [weather new york, ny], [new york ny] or [war of the worlds] (for this one, movie times, movie rating and other information will show).
- Not all Googles are the same! Depending on your location, Google will forward you to a different **country-specific version** of Google with potentially different results to the same query. A search for [site:stormfront.org] from the US will yield hundreds of thousands of results, whereas the same search from Germany (at least if you don't change the default redirect to Google.de) returns... zilch. Yes, Google does at times agree to country-specific censorship, like in Germany, France (Google web search), or China (Google News).
- Sometimes, Google warns you about its results, especially when they might seem like promoting hate sites (of course, only someone misunderstanding how Google works could think it's *them* promoting hate sites).

Enter [jew], and you will see a Google-sponsored link titled "Offensive Search Results" leading to [this explanation](#).

- For some search queries, Google uses its own ads to offer jobs. Try entering [work at Google] and take a look at the right-hand advertisement titled e.g. "Work at Google Europe" (it turns out, at the moment, [Google Switzerland is hiring](#)).
- For some of the more popular "**Googlebombed**" results, like when you enter [failure] and the first hit is the biography of George W. Bush, Google displays explanatory ads titled "[Why these results?](#)".
- While Google doesn't do real Natural Language Processing yet, this is the ultimate goal for them and other search engines. A little [What-If Video \[WMV\]](#) illustrates how this could be useful in the future.
- [Some](#) say that whoever turns up first for the search query [president of the internet] is, well, the President of the internet. (I'm applying as well, and you can feel free to support me with [this logo](#).)
- Google doesn't have "**stop words**" anymore. Stop words traditionally are words like [the], [or] and similar which search engines tended to ignore. Sometimes, when you enter e.g. [to be or not to be], Google even decides to show some phrase search results in the middle of the page (separated by a line and information that these are phrase search results).
- There once was an easter-egg in the [Google Calculator](#) that made Google show "42" when you entered [The Answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything]. As I've been alerted in the forum, the easter egg only works lower-case.
- You can use the **wildcard operator in phrases**. This is helpful for finding song texts – let's say you forgot a word or two, but you remember the gist, as in ["love you twice as much \* oh love \* \*"] – and similar tasks.
- You can use the wildcard character *without searching for anything specific at all*, as in this phrase search: ["\* \* \* \* \* \* \*"].
- Even though [www.googl.com](#) is nothing but a "typosquatter" (someone reserving a domain name containing a popular misspelling) and search queries return very different results than Google, the site is still getting paid by Google – because it uses Google AdSense.
- If you feel like restricting your search to university servers, you can write e.g. [c-tutorial site:.edu] to only search on the "edu" domain (you can also use [Google Scholar](#)). This works for country-domains like "de" or "it" as well.