Refining Your Search with Boolean Operators

Boolean Operators are simple words (AND, OR, and NOT) used to connect and define the relationship between your search terms. When searching electronic databases, you can use Boolean operators to either narrow or broaden your search, resulting in more focused and productive results.

“AND” between the words will retrieve fewer records (and narrow the search). Each record will have both words. Use “and” between keywords with different meanings.

For example, education and technology finds articles that contain both words.

“OR” between the words will retrieve more records (and broaden the search). Each record will have at least one of the words, but not necessarily both. Use “or” between words that are similar or related.

For example, education or technology finds results that contain either word.

“NOT” between the words will retrieve fewer records and eliminate ones that are not relevant. (Use “not” carefully; it may eliminate some good records too!) Each record will contain the first keyword, but not the second.

For example, education not technology finds results that contain the word education but not the word technology.