DATABASE SEARCH TIPS  
(ADAPTED FROM EBSCO & PROQUEST HELP FILES)

The following information should help you conduct more effective searches in the Frederick Douglass Library’s databases. We have over 100 databases which may be used from on or off campus. It is important to remember that you must use Research Port to access the databases from off-campus. To do this you must have registered your UMES I.D card with the Library.

ALWAYS check the Help or Search Help screens for detailed information on whether or not the database allows Boolean searches, as well as proximity operators, truncation, wildcards, and so forth.

Databases search from left to right across the search fields unless you specify otherwise. It is often more effective to use the advanced search screens as they allow you to focus your search to specific fields such as subject, descriptor, author, journal/publication titles, words in the citation or abstract, and so forth. Always check the drop down box to see which options are available. They vary from databases to database.

Most databases also allow you to narrow searches to full-text only, specific dates, and/or scholarly publications.

EBSCO Databases
1. The EBSCO databases use AND, OR, and NOT in the advanced search feature.
2. Use the wildcard and truncation symbols to create searches where there are unknown characters, multiple spellings or various endings. Neither the wildcard nor the truncation symbol can be used as the first character in a search term.
   - The **wildcard** is represented by a question mark ? or a pound sign #. To use the ? wildcard, enter your search terms and replace each unknown character with a ?. For example, type ne?t to find all citations containing neat, nest or next.
   - To use the # wildcard, enter your search terms, adding the # in places where an alternate spelling may contain an extra character. For example, type colo#r to find all citations containing color or colour.
3. Truncation is represented by an asterisk (*). To use truncation, enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with an *. For example leader* to find leader, leaders, or leadership. You may also use the * to search for words which are part of a phrase. For example Miller’s * Test to find Miller’s Analogy Test
4. Proximity operators are used to search for two or more words that occur within a specified number of words. Proximity searching is used with a keyword or Boolean search. Use N to specify a word must be found within a certain number of words. For example, this search will find the words if they are within five words of the word on either side of the number.
   - type **tax N5 reform** to find results that would match **tax reform** as well as **reform of income tax**.
If you want to find words within a certain number of words and in a specific order use W (Within Operator). For example:

- type tax W8 reform to find results that would match tax reform but would not match reform of income tax.

5. Use parentheses to control how your search is executed. Without parentheses, a search is executed from left to right. Words that you enclose in parentheses are searched first. For example:

First Search
- (organizational leadership) and (performance or change)

Second Search
- organizational leadership and performance or change

The first search will find only articles about performance or change that refers to organizational leadership. The second search will retrieve everything on organizational leadership and performance as well as articles on change even if they are not related to organizational leadership.

ProQuest Databases
1. When searching the ProQuest databases use quotation marks to search exact phrases.
2. Use truncation, wildcards, and Boolean to focus your search.
   - Truncation features include the following: An asterisk * is used as a right-handed truncation character only; it will find all forms of a word. For example, searching for econom* will find "economy", "economics", economical", etc.
   - Wildcards are denoted through the use of a question mark. ? is used to replace any single character. For example, searching for "wom?n" will find "woman" and "women." Searching for "t?re" will find "tire", "tyre", "tore", etc. either inside the word or the right end of the word. NOTE: ? cannot be used to begin a word.

If you need assistance with your searches, using the databases or finding sources, call a Reference Librarian. During the regular academic year, a reference librarian is available during the following hours:

- Sunday: 3:00 p.m. to midnight
- Monday through Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to midnight
- Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The telephone number for the Reference desk is 410-651-7937.

You may also work with us via email either by contacting the Reference Desk using the Ask a Librarian link which will send an email to the Reference desk: (refuser@umes.edu)