



Searching in Web of Science

Web of Science contains records describing literature across areas of study from the sciences, medicine and health, social sciences, and arts and humanities. Web of Science is searched using keywords as it does not have its own subject headings.

Keywords

Keywords find a term in an article record, not the full text. Synonyms, alternate spellings, and related terms should be included in a Web of Science search to ensure that your search is comprehensive.

Advanced search syntax

This table contains advanced search syntax that can be incorporated into a Web of Science search to improve its accuracy and increase the number of results.

Syntax	Symbol	Example	Function
Phrase search	"..."	"ethanol production"	Searches for an exact phrase
Truncation	*	therap* <i>Finds therapy, therapies, therapeutic etc.</i>	Replaces any group of characters including no character
Mandated wildcard	?	wom?n	Replaces 1 character
Optional wildcard	\$	behavio\$ral	Replaces 0-1 characters
Proximity	NEAR/x	health NEAR/3 wellbeing	Find a word within a specified limit of another word in any order
Nesting	(...)	health AND (wellbeing OR "well being")	Group similar items in a search
Nested proximity	(a OR b) NEAR/x (c OR d)	(breast OR skin) NEAR/3 (cancer* OR tumo?r* OR neoplasm*)	Finds terms combined with OR within a specified number of words from another group of terms combined with OR

Building advanced searches

- Some searches require complex combinations of search lines. First, search for your key concepts using the basic search, so they are added to your search history.
- Then, select 'Advanced Search' from the home page. Combine the queries in your search history by ticking the relevant searches. Select 'AND' or 'OR' from the 'Combine Sets' drop-down menu.

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search' interface with a list of three saved queries:

- Query 3: wellness OR "quality of life" OR "well being" OR wellbeing (All Fields) - 754,696 results
- Query 2: "art therap*" OR "creative arts therap*" OR "art activit*" (All Fields) - 6,266 results
- Query 1: alzheimer* OR dementia (All Fields) - 438,515 results

At the top, there are controls for 'Combine Sets' (set to '3/3'), 'Export', and 'Clear History'. Each query entry includes a checkbox, the search text, the result count, an 'Add to query' button, and icons for linking, editing, and notifications.

3. Your combined search will now appear in the Query Builder. Select 'Search' from the 'Add to history' drop-down menu below the Query Preview box to see the results of your combined search.

Query Preview

#3 AND #2 AND #1

+ Add date range

× Clear

Search ▾

Query #3

wellness OR "quality of life" OR "well being" OR wellbeing (All Fields)

Edit

Query #2

"art therap*" OR "creative arts therap*" OR "art activit*" (All Fields)

Edit

Query #1

alzheimer* OR dementia (All Fields)

Edit