

Google Basic Search

1. **Search is simple:** just type whatever comes to mind in the search box, hit **Enter** or click on the Google Search button, and Google will search the web for pages that are relevant to your query. Most of the time you'll find exactly what you were looking for with just a basic query.
2. **Every Word Matters:** Generally, all the words you put in the query will be used. There are some exceptions. Search is always case insensitive. Searching for [new york times] is the same as searching for [New York Times]. With some exceptions, punctuation is ignored (that is, you can't search for @#\$%^&*()=+[]\ and other special characters).
3. **Exceptions to 'Every Word Matters':** Words that are commonly used, like 'the,' 'a,' and 'for,' are usually ignored (these are called stop words). But there are even exceptions to this exception. The search [the who] likely refers to the band; the query [who] probably refers to the World Health Organization -- Google will not ignore the word 'the' in the first query. Synonyms might replace some words in your original query. A particular word might not appear on a page in your results if there is sufficient other evidence that the page is relevant. The evidence might come from language analysis that Google has done or many other sources. For example, the query [overhead view of the bellagio pool] will give you nice overhead pictures from pages that do not include the word 'overhead.'
4. **Punctuation That is NOT Ignored:** Punctuation in popular terms that have particular meanings, like [C++] or [C#] (both are names of programming languages), are not ignored. The dollar sign (\$) is used to indicate prices. [nikon 400] and [nikon \$400] will give different results. The hyphen - is sometimes used as a signal that the two words around it are very strongly connected. (Unless there is no space after the - and a space before it, in which case it is a negative sign.) The underscore symbol _ is not ignored when it connects two words, e.g. [quick_sort].
5. **Guidelines For Better Search - Keep it Simple:** If you're looking for a particular company, just enter its name, or as much of its name as you can recall. If you're looking for a particular concept, place, or product, start with its name. If you're looking for a pizza restaurant, just enter pizza and the name of your town or your zip code. Most queries do not require advanced operators or unusual syntax. Simple is good.
6. **Think How the Page You are Looking For Will be Written:** A search engine is not a human; it is a program that matches the words you give to pages on the web. Use the words that are most likely to appear on the page. For example, instead of saying [my head hurts], say [headache], because that's the term a medical page will use. The query [in what country are bats considered an omen of good luck?] is very clear to a person, but the document that gives the answer may not have those words. Instead, use the query [bats are considered good luck in] or even just [bats good luck], because that is probably what the right page will say.
7. **Describe What You Need With as Few Terms as Possible:** The goal of each word in a query is to focus it further. Since all words are used, each additional word limits the results. If you limit too much, you will miss a lot of useful information. The main advantage to starting with fewer keywords is that, if you don't get what you need, the results will likely give you a good indication

of what additional words are needed to refine your results on the next search. For example, [weather cancun] is a simple way to find the weather and it is likely to give better results than the longer [weather report for cancun mexico].

8. **Choose Descriptive Words:** The more unique the word is the more likely you are to get relevant results. Words that are not very descriptive, like 'document,' 'website,' 'company,' or 'info,' are usually not needed. Keep in mind, however, that even if the word has the correct meaning but it is not the one most people use, it may not match the pages you need. For example, [celebrity ringtones] is more descriptive and specific than [celebrity sounds].
9. **How to Read Search Results:** Google's goal is to provide you with results that are clear and easy to read.



10. **Search Results:**

- (1) The title: The first line of any search result is the title of the webpage.
- (2) The snippet: A description of or an excerpt from the webpage.
- (3) The URL: The webpage's address.
- (4) Cached link: A link to an earlier version of this page. Click here if the page you wanted isn't available.

All these features are important in determining whether the page is what you need. The title is what the author of the page designated as the best short description of the page.

11. **Information Source:**

- (1) <http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html>
- (2) Click on links under "Web Search Help Center" in left margin
- (3) <http://www.missionoakscomputerclub.org/links.html> - "Education" section