BOOLEAN COMMANDS

A GUIDE

Boolean commands or operators allow you to link keywords together in various combinations to research complex topics.

1 AND
Allows you to combine keywords and tells the database to locate items containing both words.
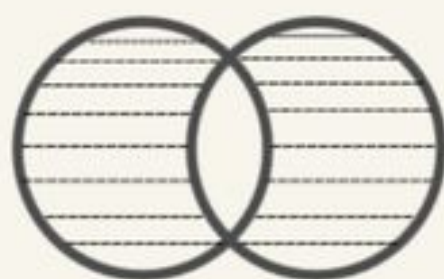
Narrows Search

Chinese AND Pottery

This command will locate records where both the words CHINESE and POTTERY appear.

2 OR
Allows you to search for items that contain either word. This command can be used to link synonyms.

Broadens Search

Pottery OR Ceramics

This command will locate items that contain either the word POTTERY or CERAMICS or both.

3 NOT
Allows you to excludes terms from your search that are implied by your search terms.

Narrows Search

Pottery NOT Ancient

This command will locate items that contain the word POTTERY but excludes any that also include the word ANCIENT.

4 TRUNCATION
Double click on the charts to customize your own chart

Broadens Search

Allows you to search for the root of a word with all possible endings. The asterisk (*) is often the symbol used for truncation.

child*

This will locate all endings of the word "child" including children, childlike, childish, etc.

5 NATURAL LANGUAGE
You may use natural language or everyday speech, when you do a keyword search. While many databases recognizes natural language, you will be able to improve your search results by using boolean commands.

6 BUILDING SEARCH STRINGS
The 'OR' and 'AND' commands can be used together to create effective search strings. Here's an EXAMPLE:

(pottery or ceramics) and Chinese

Using this search, the database will first look for records that contain the word "pottery," the word "ceramics," or both. After creating a set of your results, the database will then search for records that contain the word "Chinese" and create a second set of results. Next, the database will combine the results of the two sets.

SEARCH TIP

The 'OR' command generally requires the use of parenthesis () around each search phrase to work effectively.

(pottery or ceramics) and (Chinese or Asian)