

# How to make an advanced search

Use these keyboard symbols to narrow or expand your search within the search box.

## NEPAccess.org Search-Word Modifiers

The search engine ignores punctuation and extremely common words like articles, prepositions, and pronouns.

However, **AND**, **NOT**, and **OR** (all caps) are read as search term modifiers.

Search modifier	What it does	For example:
" "	Multiple words placed within double quotes only show results with that <b>exact phrase</b> .  The <i>Find within</i> dropdown menu in the search box does the same thing using the <b>exact phrase</b> option.	<b>"Landscape restoration"</b> → returns documents where these two words are <b>adjacent and in that order</b> .  <b>"Landscape restoration" "open pit mine"</b> → finds documents where these two phrases occur near each other.
<b>AND</b>	<i>This is the default search:</i> <b>AND or a word space are read as the same thing</b> . Since the system must find <b>all these words</b> in the same document, this will narrow your results.	<b>Recreation culture</b> → results must contain <b>both of these words</b> . <b>Recreation AND culture</b> → results must contain <b>both of these words</b> .
<b>NOT</b>	<b>Exclude</b> a word or phrase from a search. ( - does the same thing)	<b>Mining NOT copper</b> → mining but not copper
*	The * symbol placed after a word is a <b>multi-character wild card</b> —it will find all words or phrases that start with that word.	<b>Land*</b> → landscape, landlord, landfill, landmark, land bridge, <b>L*nd</b> → land, legend, Lakeland.
?	The ? symbol placed after or within a word is a <b>single-character wild card</b> —it looks for other words that match that search-word with the single character replaced.	<b>te?t</b> → text and test. <b>tes?</b> → test, TESP.
<b>OR</b>	This will find results related to <b>either</b> search word or to <b>both</b> . <b>This will expand your search</b> results and find multiple words that express the same idea. (   or    does the same thing)	<b>tribe OR tribes</b> → singular and plural <b>highways OR viaducts OR feeways</b> → any or all words.
~	Use the tilde, ~, symbol at the end of a phrase to do a <b>proximity search</b> , finding words that are within a specific distance from each other in the text.	<b>"mine Tribe"~20</b> → mine and Tribe within 20 words.
( )	Use <b>parentheses</b> to specify the <b>order of operations</b> and apply different modifiers to different phrases.	<b>("copper mining" ~10) AND ("desert tortoise" OR "desert toad")</b> → copper and mining within 10 words and → either <b>desert tortoise</b> or <b>desert toad</b> .
^	<b>Boost</b> the importance of a word or phrase by following it with a caret, ^, symbol and a number representing a boost factor. The default boost factor is ^1.	<b>"environmental justice" bridge^2</b> → documents that contain <b>both</b> search terms, but <b>"bridge" will be read as twice as relevant as "environmental justice"</b> .