

## Boolean Operators: AND, OR, NOT

Use the Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT to make your search more effective and to find more sources on your topic.

AND is useful for combining keywords representing different concepts. For example, imagine we wanted to find literature on "women's roles in medicine during the renaissance."

By combining the key concepts of "women," "medicine," and "renaissance" with AND, the database will only retrieve results that specifically mention these terms.

This will reduce the overall number of results retrieved, but also make those retrieved more relevant to your topic because all of your keywords will be included in each result.

OR is useful for searching synonyms of concepts or similar terms because the database will retrieve results that mention at least one of the keywords.

So if we search "medicine OR healthcare OR medical care," we will retrieve more results. They are still relevant to our main concept because we're retrieving results that refer to the same concept using different words.

Adding terms with OR also ensures your search is more thorough, because if you had only typed "medicine," you would have missed sources with the terms "healthcare" or "medical care."

NOT tells the database to eliminate terms from the retrieved results.

So, if we wanted to specify in our search that we did not want results mentioning "Italy during the renaissance," we would search: renaissance NOT Italy.

This way, the database will only retrieve results that mention renaissance and exclude any results that mention renaissance and Italy. But use this operator with caution, as it may exclude articles relevant to your search.

When using the operators AND, OR, and NOT with multiple keywords, it's useful to also use parentheses. Parentheses help the database determine in which order to interpret your keywords.

Any terms and operators in parentheses are interpreted first and are most useful for final search strategies.

If we search: (medicine OR healthcare) within parentheses and follow it with: AND women AND renaissance, the database will first find results that mention either “healthcare” or “medicine,” then find results that also mention “women” and “renaissance.”

This results in two types of retrieved results with those mentioning “healthcare,” “women,” and “renaissance,” and those mentioning “medicine,” “women,” and “renaissance.”

By including a combination of these Boolean operators in your search, you’ll be able to effectively find a wider range of more relevant results.