Library Catalog
Searching Strategies

Not getting the desired results can be both a frustrating and overwhelming experience. The following tips will allow you to expand or narrow your search as desired.

• Too many Results?
  o Perform SUBJECT searches instead of KEYWORD searches. Keyword searches produce more results because they essentially are searching more parts of the catalog record. If you want a search that is focused and results that reflect the essence of your topic, perform subject searches first.
  o Try adding more search terms. It is crucial when searching to be as specific as possible. If you enter only one word, search results will abound, and more than likely, the results will not have anything to do with what you are researching. Remember to use the Boolean operators (and, or, not) and provide terms that completely reflect your search interest.
  o Use the Power Search feature. This allows you to create exact searches employing various limiters and search fields.

• No Results or Wrong Results?
  o Use synonyms or related terms. Think of other ways to describe your topic.
  o Adjust your terminology to the catalog’s. Try to identify appropriate subject terms using the Library of Congress Subject Headings manual or examine related catalog records to find desirable subject headings.
  o Perform KEYWORD searches instead of SUBJECT searches. This type of search increases the likelihood of matching your search terms.
  o Check for any misspellings or typos.
  o Do not enter long phrases.

• Additional Tips
  o If you find an article or document you like, you can find related articles by clicking on the appropriate subject(s) – sometimes also called descriptors.
  o Constructing an effective search is both a creative and scientific process. Search results are not random. They rely solely on the terms entered and the manner in which they were entered. Please be patient and explore all avenues.