

What is the best way to make an online search effective?

The internet contains a wealth of information but you have to be able to find it! There are several ways you can make your search more effective.

Start by framing the specific question you want to answer. This will help you decide the key words to use in your search. Focus on the '5Ws':

Where? What? When? Why? Who?

Understand the limitations of the search engine you are using. Google can be a great research tool, but be aware that:

- **Not everything is on Google.** Academic articles may be behind pay walls, but a Library may have a subscription.
- **The top search results are often adverts.** Some sites may pay to appear higher in listings.
- **Google tailors your search results** based on your past history.

A word on Wikipedia

Use Wikipedia with caution. Because anyone can edit it, any mistakes, biases or hoaxes can, in theory, be corrected quickly. In reality, this doesn't always happen and inaccuracies can remain online for years. Always follow up references to check they are real. Always cite primary sources in your work, not Wikipedia entries.

Further information

Ask your teacher or a librarian for recommendations.

Have a look at some alternatives to Google: Yahoo: uk.yahoo.com/ DuckDuckGo: duckduckgo.com/

Watch this video: [How to Google Like a Pro!](#)

Find out more about hoaxes on Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_hoaxes_on_Wikipedia

Effective Searching tips:

These search engine shortcuts will help you refine your search:

__ AND __	Returns results containing both words (many search engines do this automatically).
__ NOT __ (or__ - __)	Excludes a meaning of a word. For example 'Bass -Fish' gives results on music, not fish.
__ OR __	Returns results containing either one word or the other.
__*	Returns results with any suffix or variation. E.g. Sculpt* gives sculpt, sculpting, sculptor, etc.
Define: __	Returns a definition of the word.
__ . . __	When used with numbers, returns a range E.g. 1..10, 110mm..50mm, 2015..2020
"__ __ __"	Returns only results with all the words in that order.

In Google, you can also find these options by clicking on **Settings** and **Advanced Search**.