

GOOGLE

Pocket Guide



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*Tara Calishain,,
Rael Dornfest & DJ Adams*

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Google Basics

Whenever you search for more than one keyword at a time, a search engine has a default strategy when it comes to handling and combining those keywords. Can those words appear individually anywhere in a page, or do they have to be right next to each other? Will the engine search for both keywords or for either keyword?

Phrase Searches

Google defaults to searching for occurrences of your specified keywords anywhere in the page, whether side-by-side or scattered throughout. If you specifically want words to appear together on a page for a match to be made, let Google know by enclosing them in quotes, turning your keyword search into a *phrase search*, to use Google's terminology.

On entering a search for the keywords:

to be or not to be

Google will find matches where the keywords appear anywhere on the page. If you want Google to find you matches where the keywords appear together as a phrase, surround them with quotes, like this:

"to be or not to be"

Google will return matches only where those words appear together. (Not to mention explicitly including stop words like "to" and "or"; see the section "Explicit Inclusion" a little later.)

Phrase searches are also useful when you want to find a phrase but aren't quite sure of the exact wording. This is accomplished in combination with wildcards, explained later in "Full-Word Wildcards."

Basic Boolean

As to whether the engine searches for all keywords or any of them, the answer is called a Boolean default; search engines can default to Boolean AND (it'll search for all of your keywords) or Boolean OR (it'll search for any of your keywords). Of course, even if a search engine defaults to searching for all keywords, you can usually give it a special command to instruct it to search for any keyword. But the engine has to know what to do if you don't give it instructions.

Google's Boolean default is AND; that means if you enter query words without modifiers, Google will search for all of your query words. For example, if you search for:

```
snowblower Honda "Green Bay"
```

Google will search for all the words. If you prefer to specify that any one word or phrase is acceptable, put an OR between each:

```
snowblower OR snowmobile OR "Green Bay"
```

If you particularly want one term along with one of two or more other terms, group them with parentheses, like so:

```
snowblower (snowmobile OR "Green Bay")
```

This query searches for the word "snowmobile" or phrase "Green Bay" along with the word "snowblower." A stand-in for OR borrowed from the computer programming realm is the | (pipe) character, as in:

```
snowblower (snowmobile | "Green Bay")
```