

## Searching with Boolean Operators

Boolean logic defines logical relationships between terms in a search. The *Boolean search operators* are **and**, **or** and **not**. You can use these operators to create a very broad or very narrow search.

- **And** combines search terms so that each search result contains all of the terms. For example, **travel and Europe** finds articles that contain *both* travel and Europe.
- **Or** combines search terms so that each search result contains at least one of the terms. For example, **college or university** finds results that contain *either* college or university.
- **Not** excludes terms so that each search result does not contain any of the terms that follow it. For example, **television not cable** finds results that contain television but *not* cable.

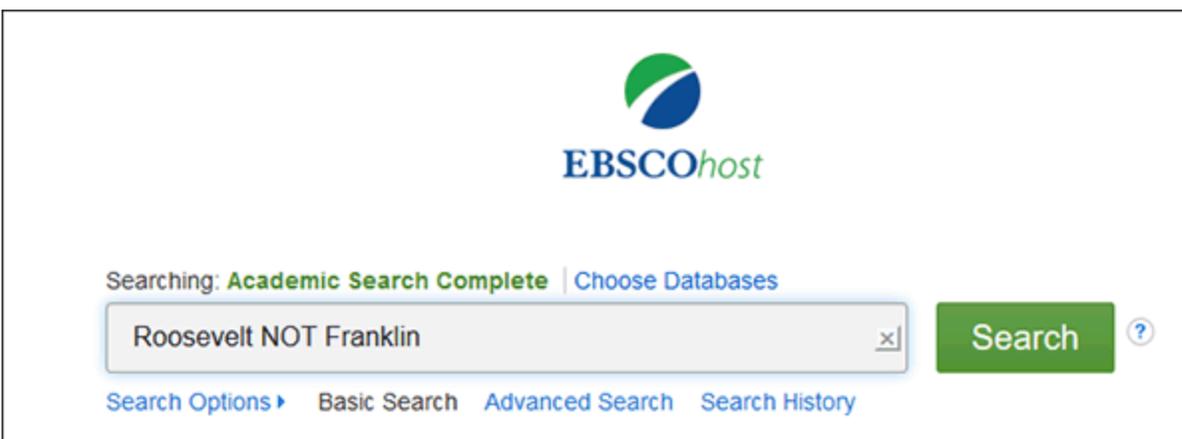
**Notes:**

- When executing a search, **And** takes precedence over **Or**.
- Boolean operators do not need to be capitalized

The following table illustrates the operation of Boolean terms:

And	Or	Not
Each result contains <b>all</b> search terms.	Each result contains <b>at least one</b> search term.	Results <b>do not contain</b> the specified terms.
The search <i>heart and lung</i> finds items that contain <b>both</b> <i>heart</i> and <i>lung</i> .	The search <i>heart or lung</i> finds items that contain <b>either</b> <i>heart</i> or items that contain <i>lung</i> .	The search <i>heart not lung</i> finds items that contain <i>heart</i> <b>but do not contain</b> <i>lung</i> .

When a single **Find** field is displayed, you can enter search terms in the **Find** field, and combine with AND, OR, and NOT. (For example, **Roosevelt NOT Franklin**.)



When Guided-Style **Find** fields are displayed, you can enter search terms in each **Find** field, and select AND, OR, and NOT from the Boolean drop-down lists.

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top, there are navigation links: "New Search", "Publications", "Subject Terms", "Cited References", and "More". On the right, there are "Sign In" and "Folder" options. The main search area includes the EBSCOhost logo, the text "Searching: Academic Search Complete | Choose Databases", and a search bar containing "Roosevelt". To the right of the search bar is a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are two rows of search terms with operators. The first row has "NOT" followed by "Franklin". The second row has "OR" followed by "Theodore". Each row also has a "Select a Field (optional)" dropdown menu. A "Clear" button with a question mark is located to the right of the second row. At the bottom of the search area, there are links for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", and "Search History".

With longer search strings, you can combine many terms in a search with the AND operator, which will narrow your search results. For example, **heart AND lung AND bypass AND artery** will provide a more focused search than **heart AND lung OR bypass OR artery**.

To make even better use of Boolean operators, you can enclose search terms and their operators in **parentheses** to specify the order in which they are interpreted. Information within parentheses is read first, and then information outside parentheses is read next. For example, **(heart OR lung) AND bypass** will return different results than **heart OR lung AND bypass**.

### Using Booleans and Parentheses

To make even better use of Boolean operators, you can use *parentheses* to nest query terms within other query terms.

You can enclose search terms and their operators in parentheses to specify the *order in which they are interpreted*. Information *within* parentheses is read *first*, then information *outside* parentheses is read *next*. For example,

When you enter **(mouse OR rat) AND trap**, the search engine retrieves results containing the word mouse or the word rat together with the word trap in the fields searched by default.

If there are nested parentheses, the search engine processes the *innermost* parenthetical expression first, then the next, and so on until the entire query has been interpreted. For example,

**((mouse OR rat) AND trap) OR mousetrap**

### Using Booleans When Phrase Searching

When Boolean operators are contained within a phrase that is enclosed in quotation marks, the operator is treated as a stop word. When this is the case, any single word will be searched for in its place.