How To Do Quick Searches Online

Use the following basic tricks to get the search results you want:

1. **Enter a single word:**
   Typically if you enter a single word, you'll get too many results. But if your topic is very specific or unusual, this can be a way to limit your results, such as a company name or movie title.
   [e.g. cantaloupe]

2. **Entering several words:**
   By default, most search engines will assume you want results that contain ALL the words in your search, so the results will be a hodge-podge of those words, in any order. The best tactic is to limit your word lists to the main ideas of your topic. Search engines typically ignore single words and "structural" words such as 'where', 'when', '1', etc.
   [e.g. cantaloupe from south America 2011]

3. **Enter a phrase in quotes:**
   This is the BEST way to limit your results to *just* what you're after. Most search engines will return results with your exact phrase with the words in the same order. This also forces search engines to exclude words that might otherwise be included with the topic, and include words that might otherwise be excluded.
   [e.g. "CATS Broadway play"]

4. **Use + to require specific words to be considered:**
   If you want to force the search engine to include common words, numbers and characters it would typically exclude, put a plus sign (+) in front of them within a quoted phrase.
   [e.g. "repair parts Frigidaire+new+freezer"]

5. **Use - to exclude key words associated with unrelated topics:**
   If you are getting too many results, you can use the (-) sign around words in a quoted phrase to limit the results by excluding words you don't want considered.
   [e.g. "virus -computer"] – would return results *only* about biological viruses, not computer viruses

6. **Limit search to certain sites:**
   If you are getting too many ".com" sites and you're looking for a ".org", use that in your search by typing "site:.org" after the search word(s). [e.g. administration site:.edu]
   Common types of sites:
     - .org (non-profit organizations)
     - .edu (education sites)
     - .gov (government sites)
     - .nm.us (sites in New Mexico)

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