



Databases: Keyword and Phrase Searching Transcript NAIT Library

Hello and welcome to the NAIT Library tutorial on keyword and phrase searching in the library databases.

Databases provide online access to articles in magazines, academic journals, and newspapers. Some may also provide access to reports, company financial data, and even e-books. Often, you can read the complete article online.

Start at the NAIT Library homepage www.nait.ca/library; click on the **Find Articles & More** tab, then **Choose database by category**.

Remember: Although you can use the same general techniques to search most databases, each database is unique and may offer different search options. If you have any questions or don't get the results you expect, consult the help section in the database or see the Quick Tips guide beside each database name.

This tutorial demonstrates searching in a multi-subject database. Select the **Multi-Subject** databases category to choose a database. For this demonstration, we'll use the database **Academic Search Complete**. From the description of the database, click the title to open. You'll be asked to authenticate or login by entering your student ID number and last name. You can search databases for resources on your topic in a number of different ways. One effective method is a keyword search.

A keyword is a significant word in the article or its database record. It could be from the title, author, subject headings, abstract or within the article itself.

For example, if you're researching the benefits of antioxidants, a keyword search for the word **antioxidants** will retrieve all sources that have the word **antioxidants** anywhere in the article or database record.

Enter **antioxidants** in the search box and click **Search**. Scroll down the page to review the results.

The total number of results is indicated in the top left-hand corner. If too many results are retrieved, add additional keywords to both narrow your search and increase the relevance of the results for your topic.

Let's go back to the **antioxidants** search and add the term **benefits** in the second search box. We want **each result** to include **both** the term *antioxidants* **and** the term *benefits*, so we'll leave the drop-down beside benefits as **and**.

Let's **click on** the title of the **second** result to see the full record (*Antioxidant properties of commercial, regular- and whole-wheat spaghetti*). **Scroll down** to see all the citation elements of this article including the Author, Title, Journal Name, Year, Volume & Issue Number, and Database Name. The **Subject Terms** assigned to this article are listed as well as a brief **Abstract**, or summary, of the article. Note that the search terms are bolded in the Abstract.

A variation of the keyword search is a phrase search. Quotation marks around the words you enter indicate that these words must appear together in each result in the exact order you typed them.

For example, if you're looking for information about the airline company, Air Canada, place both terms within quotation marks. This will retrieve only results with **Air Canada** together and in that order. Without quotation marks, you'll find articles with the word *air* and the word *Canada* somewhere in the record. Results could include those about the airline company but also those about air quality in Canada. The phrase search technique is an excellent way to focus your search and increase the relevance of your results.

If you have questions about searching the library databases, or want to know more about our services and resources, please use one of the **Ask Us** options listed on the library website. Thank you.