

Google Tips for Better Search Results

Google's search results are generated by an algorithm that does not read English (or any language for that matter). As such, it cannot place words in context. When you conduct a search, it simply looks for all of the words you've placed in the search box and tries to give you the most relevant or popular results. Our students don't seem to understand that "no one is home at Google."

Here are some tips to help you and your students get better results...

1. Use quotes

- If you want to find an exact word or phrase, put that exact word or phrase in quotes.
- For example, if your students type *John Adams* without quotes, they will get results for any page that has the word *John* or *Adams*. A better search would be "John Adams" and "United States president".

2. Understand and use the site: command.

- Many people don't understand that website domain name extensions really matter.
 - .com – a commercial or for-profit organization
 - .org – a nonprofit organization (that anyone can apply for)
 - .net – a public or private network
 - .gov – a government agency
 - .k12 or .edu – a school or academic institution
- The site command allows you to limit your searches to one domain extension. For example, if looking for medical research, you might want to begin your search with *site:edu* or *site:gov*.

3. Use Google's Advanced Search feature.

- Advanced Search allows you to customize your search for sites and documents that contain a collection of specific words/phrases, or that eliminate specific words/phrases.
- It also allows you to find results from a specific time period, like within the last week, month, year, etc.
- It even allows you to find results from a specific region, which allows you to home in on unique perspectives. For example, you might want information about the Revolutionary War that comes only from the UK, then compare that to information that comes only from the US.

