How do I search GOOGLE effectively? Part I
From University of Washington Libraries

Expert Google Searching Part 1: Using Boolean operators and phrase searching
[Image of google.com search box]

Audio: How can you make Google work better for you when you're searching? Here are a few tips and tricks to get you started. Let's say we're doing research on the impact of multiracial people & culture in America. We're just getting started, so we'll type "multiracial" into the Google search box.

[Image of search results: Results 1-10 of about 1,620,000]

Audio: Notice that we are getting all kinds of results using this search -- from Wikipedia, to a site called "blackflix.com," to even some government websites thrown in there. We can do better. Let's try adding some keywords to narrow our search -- I'll try multiracial AND culture

[Image of search results: Results 1-10 of about 548,000]

Audio: When you type multiple words into the search box, Google will look ONLY for those results that have ALL of your keywords. In fact, Google does this by default so you don't even have to type "AND" if you don't want to. Even just adding one keyword has given us way fewer results (even though there are probably still more than we want). You can keep experimenting with different keywords in different combinations to see how Google will work for you. You can also broaden your search by asking Google to look for synonyms or related ideas using the word "OR." Instead of just "multiracial," I'll try looking for "multiracial" OR "biracial."

[Image of search results. (multiracial or biracial) and culture]

Audio: This search will find anything that has either the word "multiracial" OR "biracial" (or both) AND also "culture." Notice that by adding this alternate term, we have cast a wider net and so we are getting more results than our last search.
Lastly, you can use Google to search for more complicated words and phrases using quotation marks to conduct a "phrase search." Let's try using the specific phrase "multicultural identity" in our search this time.

[Image of search results: Results 1-10 of about 9,500]

Audio: Ok, so this search found results that have the both the word "culture" AND the exact phrase "multiracial identity" -- it will not find instances of the word "multiracial" in one part of the website, and the word "identity" somewhere else! This is a handy search for compound words, names, or phrases, but remember that once you put quotation marks around it, Google will look for that EXACT string of letters -- it will not find misspellings of that phrase for you, like it usually would in
other searches. So when using phrase search, make sure you double check your spelling! Try experimenting with different combinations of AND, OR, and phrase searching to make the most of your Google search.

[Image of UW Libraries homepage]

Audio: Remember, if you get stuck or have any questions, contact a UW Librarian by clicking on the "Ask Us" link on the UW Libraries homepage.