

Library Lingo

Abstract – A short summary of an article or book.

Audiovisual materials – Materials found in the library in something other than print format.

Bibliography – The references used by an author while researching an article or book.

Call number – The unique number given to each book or audiovisual item in the library.

Citation – The complete information about an item. For a book, this information is usually the author, title, place of publication, publisher and copyright. For an article, the author, title of the article, title of the periodical, volume number, date of the issue and page numbers.

Controlled vocabulary – Standardized subjects or descriptors used to allow for more focused searches.

Database – An electronic collection of information.

Indexes – A list of magazine or journal articles arranged by subject and/or author and/or title.

Interlibrary loan – Borrowing a book or getting a copy of an article not owned by our library, but owned by another library.

Keyword searching – The default search strategy in most electronic databases.

Journal – Scholarly articles written by professors, researchers or experts in a subject area.

Magazine – A periodical intended for general public use rather than for research purpose.

Periodicals—Another term for magazines and journals.

Online catalog – ODIN is the library's online catalog and is to be used for locating books & audiovisual materials owned by our library as well as the other libraries in the North Dakota system.

Reference materials—Encyclopedias, dictionaries, subject encyclopedias & dictionaries.

Reserve materials – Materials set aside by a professor for use by a particular class.

Boolean connectors

When using more than one word in a search, each word may be linked to any others with Boolean connectors:

AND Narrows search results to records containing both words

OR Broadens search results to records containing either word

NOT Excludes records that contain the word following NOT

Searches are done from left to right, so any OR should usually be entered before any AND.

To find information on the topic:

backpack camping

backpacking but not camping

either backpacking or camping

Type this:

backpacking AND camping

backpacking NOT camping

backpacking OR camping

In some databases you can use these same boolean connectors to combine search sets.

Truncation

Most databases allow for some kind of truncation (substituting a character for a letter or letters) which is helpful if you are unsure of the spelling of a word or if you want to get variations of a word or phrase. The symbols used for this truncation vary from database to database so use the online help to see exactly what you should type. These symbols can include ?, #, +, or even the \$. These symbols can substitute for one character (as in looking for plurals) or will substitute for many characters (as in variations of a word). When utilizing truncation in ODIN, use either the # sign or a ?. The question mark (?) will substitute for plurals (car? will find car and cars). The pound sign (#) looks for all variations of a word (child# will find child, child's, children, childhood, etc.) When using Academic Search Premier, the asterisk (*) substitutes for multiple letters and the question mark (?) for a single character.