

Quick Tips: Basic Searching on JSTOR

JSTOR supports full-text keyword searching across all of the content on the site. The default setting for search results is to show matches for only content licensed or purchased by the library. A researcher may choose to change this setting for their own session.

There are two search forms on JSTOR.org, a **Basic Search** (on the main page at www.jstor.org) and an **Advanced Search** (www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch).

Using the Basic Search

- Place words within quotation marks to search for exact phrases (“to be or not to be”).
- Use Boolean operators to construct a better search (“tea trade” AND china).

Quick tips: Advanced Searching

Using the Advanced Search

- Use the drop-down boxes to limit search terms to the title, author, abstract, or caption text.
- Use the drop-down boxes to combine search terms using the Boolean operators, AND/OR/NOT and NEAR 5/10/25. The NEAR operator looks for the combinations of keywords within 5, 10, or 25 words places of each other. The NEAR operator only works when searching for single keyword combinations. For example, you may search for **cat NEAR 5 dog**, but not **"domesticated cat" NEAR 5 dog**.
- Use the “Narrow by” options to search only articles, include/exclude book reviews, search for content published during a particular time frame, or in a particular language.
- Focus an article search in specific disciplines and titles using checkboxes. [NOTE: discipline searching is currently only available for searching journal content. Selecting this option will exclude ebooks from the search.

JSTOR: Video Tutorial Basic Searching

- Link: <https://youtu.be/Ap5-owRQiHk>

JSTOR: Video Tutorial Advanced Searching

- Link: <https://youtu.be/IAIk2WH-mJY>

Quick Tips: Understanding Search Results

Search Results

The format and display of search results is the same for Basic and Advanced searches.

- Use "Academic Content" option to filter results by journal articles or ebook chapters.
- Use "Primary Source Content" option to filter results by the type of primary source.
- Use the "Publication Date" menu to limit results to a certain publication time period.
- Use the "Subject" menu to limit results to journals related to specific subjects.
- Use the "Access Type" menu to limit your results by type of access.
- Use the "Sort by" menu to view search results by relevance, oldest items, or newest items.
- Use the "Export Selected" menu to choose the export format

Search Relevance

Relevance on JSTOR is a combination of many things. Key elements include:

- More unique terms in the text result in higher scores when searches contain those terms. For example, the keyword "epistemology" gets a greater boost than "university" because it is less common.
- Phrase matches are boosted higher than just keyword matches. A search for "the quick brown fox" will assign higher relevance to a document containing the exact words "the quick brown fox" than a document containing "the brown fox is quick."
- More recent content is given a slight boost.