

Search tips & connectors for law databases

Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline are useful tools for law students, or for anyone else interested in finding legal materials. They all contain a lot of resources, so you often get too many results when you search for something.

If you're searching for several words or concepts, it can be helpful to think about how you join those words together. This guide summarises the most helpful search tips, along with some examples of each one.

To access any of our law databases, or to learn more about using them, visit

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law?acc=faq-0#faq-0-link>

Connecting words together

- AND** Use this to search for multiple terms i.e. evidence AND admissibility will produce documents that contain both terms
- OR** Use this to search for either one of a pair of similar terms i.e. ship OR vessel OR boat will produce documents that contain any of these terms
- NOT** Use this to exclude a term from a search i.e. discrimination NOT gender will produce documents that only contain the first term, but not the second.

You can use these connectors in Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline.

Specifying how close words are to each other

AND is really helpful, but it will still retrieve documents where one term is used then second term is only mentioned 10 pages later. If you specify that you want the terms closer together, it may make your results more focused and relevant.

- /s** Use this to only get results where your search words are in the same sentence e.g. **overtime /s compensation**
- /p** Use this to only get results where your search words are in the same paragraph e.g. **retirement /p pension**

/n Use this to specify how close your words are to each other in the results, e.g. **airport /4 noise** will only find results where those two terms are within 4 words of each other.

You can use these shortcuts in Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline.

Variations of words

- * Use this in Westlaw or Lexis+ to find variations of a word i.e. **globali*ation** will find both globalization and globalisation
- ? Use this in HeinOnline to find variations of a word i.e. **globali?ation** will find both globalization and globalisation
- ! Use this in Westlaw or Lexis+ to find words that share a beginning, but have a different ending i.e. **employ!** will find *employ*, *employee*, *employer* and *employment*
- * Use this in HeinOnline to find words that share a beginning, but have a different ending i.e. **employ*** will find *employ*, *employee*, *employer* and *employment*.

NB You may not need to use ! In Lexis+, as Lexis+ will automatically search for all forms of a word.

Getting help and finding out more

More information and support can be found on the law page of the library website:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law>