

Search tips & connectors for law databases

LexisLibrary, 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 lots of 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.

If you would like to learn more, search tips and connectors are covered in the Lexis and Westlaw Advanced Searching workshop. This one-hour session runs several times a semester and is open to any Oxford Brookes student. Find out more and book your free place at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law>

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. All of these tools work in LexisLibrary, Westlaw and HeinOnline

Controlling 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 in Westlaw to search for words in the same sentence i.e. **jury /s bias**

w/s Use this in LexisLibrary to search for words in the same sentence i.e. **jury w/s bias**

/p Use this in Westlaw to search for words in the same paragraph i.e. **retirement /p pension**

w/p Use this in LexisLibrary to find words in the same paragraph i.e. **retirement /p pension**

/n Use this in Westlaw to search for two terms within a certain number of words of each other i.e. **airport /4 noise** will only find results where those two terms are within 4 words of each other

w/n Use this in LexisLibrary to search for two terms within a certain number of words of each other i.e. **airport w/4 noise** will only find results where those two terms are within 4 words of each other.

As you can see, LexisLibrary and Westlaw have slightly different rules for this. Happily, any of these 6 rules will work in HeinOnline.

Variations of words

- * Use this in Westlaw or LexisLibrary 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 LexisLibrary 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.

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>

If you need any help with finding or using library resources for law, please contact Charlie Brampton, the Academic Liaison Librarian for Law:

Email: c.brampton@brookes.ac.uk

Tel: 01865 483077

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