Searching with phrases

You can use ‘phrase searching’ to make sure the words you are searching are found together.

To understand how this works, let's use the following research question as a basis.

When you enter search terms into a search box, most databases treat the words separately.

Your search results will include articles and books etc. in which the words appear somewhere, not necessarily together.

You end up with a large numbers of search results – many of which may be irrelevant to your search.

To improve the relevance of your results, you may want the database to retrieve results that only contain certain groups of words together.

These are called phrases.

For example, ‘Electric Cars’ and “Environmental Impacts” are both phrases. To ensure groups of words are found together, just place quotation marks around the words.

This causes the database to search for articles containing those exact phrases so you end up with fewer results. This causes the database to search for articles containing those exact phrases so you end up with fewer results, but they are more relevant to your search.

Thanks for listening. Please explore our other Advanced Searching tutorials for more tips.