Google is one of the largest search engines. A search engine automatically finds, stores and indexes websites using computer software. Google indexes billions of websites.

Although Google is large, it does not cover all of the Web, and it selectively indexes the sites that it does cover. It is not usually a good idea to rely on Google exclusively when you are searching for information. There is no filter for quality of information.

Google searches a range of types of website, including academic and educational sites, commercial and organisation sites, personal web pages, news sites, other databases or catalogues, etc. It ranks the results that you get, trying to put the best sites that match your search terms at the top of the results list.

Google Scholar aims to find results from 'scholarly', or academic sources. This can help to focus your search, or can be useful if you are searching for peer-reviewed material, for your course work or dissertation. Results may include journal articles, papers, theses, books, abstracts, etc.

The full-text may be available directly via Google Scholar, or you may need to find the full-text documents elsewhere. Google Scholar does not currently provide information on what is included, or not included, in its database.
Google – the basics...

An example of a search for information on whether HIV positive mothers in Kenya should be advised to breastfeeding.

Choose some search terms that describe your main concepts and type them into the box and click on search, e.g.

**breastfeeding hiv transmission Africa**

Try not to type in terms that are too general. Google is a very large search engine and you will get a lot of results.

![Google search result]

202,000 webpages found

Results are ranked – Google tries to put the most relevant at the top of the list.

The web address (or URL) can give you clues about the nature of a web page.

Click on a title to go to that web page.

You may want to refine your search by using Google’s ‘advanced search’ page at http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en
Some features of Google that can help you to get better results…

OR – searching for similar words or synonyms
You can use the word ‘OR’ to search for web pages that include any of the words, e.g. vaccines OR immunisations

Automatic stemming – searching for variants of a word
Google will automatically look for similar words to the ones that you have typed in, e.g. typing the word vaccines will also find results that contain the word vaccinations or vaccination.

Alternative spellings
Google may suggest alternative spellings for the words that you have typed.

Searching for a phrase
If you want to use an exact phrase, you can enclose it in quotation marks, e.g. “millennium development goals”

Excluding a word
You can use ‘-’ to exclude a word, e.g. Gulf States –United States (if you are wanting to search for the Persian Gulf States)

Numerical ranges
You can use ‘…’ to search for a range of numbers (can be used to search for date ranges, although not very accurately). e.g. 2002…2006

Searching within a particular web site
You can type ‘site:’ to search a particular site, e.g. disability site:www.who.int to search for disability information on the World Health Organization (WHO) website (Warning – Google selectively indexes web sites. If you use this option, you may not actually be searching the whole web site.)

Finding how many other websites link to a particular site
You can type ‘link:’ to find out how many other websites have linked to the site you are looking at, e.g. link: www.who.int shows that around 3,720 million sites link to the WHO site. This can indicate how important the site is (although a large number of links doesn’t guarantee the quality of the site - it could contain controversial information, for example).
Google Scholar

Google Scholar can be searched in a similar way to Google.

You can set up Google Scholar to link through to all the online resources that are paid for by UCL Library Services:

Click on **Settings** at the top of the screen

![Google Scholar Settings](image)

Click on the **Library links** tab and search for UCL. Tick the check box next to UCL (University College London).

**Scholar Settings**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Search results</th>
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**Show library access links for (choose up to five libraries):**

e.g., Harvard

- UCL (University College London) - SFX@UCL - Fulltext
- Open WorldCat - Library Search

Then, once you have run a search in Google Scholar, click on the **SFX@UCL** links, next to each search result, to access online resources paid for by UCL Library Services, or to find the printed publication in one of UCL’s libraries.

Click on the title to get brief details of the article, or other work, (often including an abstract). You may also be able to get to the full-text from the ‘brief details’ page by clicking on a link to ‘full text’ or ‘PDF’.
The screenshot below shows the search that was previously run in Google.

Google Scholar also has an ‘advanced search’ page which can be accessed from the drop-down menu at the right of the search bar:

Click ‘Cited by’ for a list of articles, or other works, that have cited this article

Click ‘Related articles’ to search for other articles on a similar subject

Click on SFX @UCL to find out whether you have full-text online access, or to check print holdings in UCL or other library