Searching with Terms and Connectors
Retrieving Documents on Westlaw

The Terms and Connectors search method allows you to enter a query that consists of key terms from your issue and connectors specifying the relationship between those terms. For example, you can specify that your terms appear in the same sentence (/s) or the same paragraphs (/p). Terms and Connectors searching is available in all Westlaw databases.

Use the Terms and Connectors search method when you

- are searching for particular terms

- want to retrieve all available documents containing your search terms

- want to search a database for which Natural Language searching is not available

Complete these steps to search for documents using Terms and Connectors:

1. Formulate your query by choosing search terms significant to your issue and deciding which connectors to place between your terms. Consider using alternative terms such as synonyms and antonyms. To retrieve variations of terms, use the root expander (!) and the universal character (*). To retrieve a phrase, place quotation marks (" ") around the phrase.

2. Access a database or multiple databases. The Search page is displayed.

3. At the Search page, click the **Terms and Connectors** tab if it is not already selected.

4. Type your query in the *Search* text box and click **Search Westlaw**.

Figure 1. The Terms and Connectors tab on the Search page

Choosing Search Terms

Choose terms significant to your issue. Suppose, for example, that your issue concerns whether a judge has the authority to reduce a sentence. The terms *judge*, *authority*, *reduce*, and *sentence* are key parts of the issue, so these terms (along with variations and alternatives) should be included in your query, as in the following sample query:

> judge court /s discret! authori! /s reduc! lessen! /s sentence judgment

For assistance using Westlaw, call **1-800-WESTLAW** (1-800-937-8529).

For free reference materials, visit **west.thomson.com /westlaw/guides**.

PHRASES

To search for a phrase, place the phrase in quotation marks. Westlaw will retrieve documents that contain the search terms in the same order as they appear in the quotation marks. For example, to use the phrase *res ipsa loquitur* in a search, type **"res ipsa loquitur"**.

Phrase searching is most effectively used with the Terms and Connectors search method when the phrase is not likely to appear in alternative ways. For example, you might not want to use the phrase **"blood alcohol level"** in your query because some documents could express that idea as *the level of alcohol in the defendant's blood*.

COMMON TERMS

Some terms, such as *be* or *with*, are too common to be searched as single terms on Westlaw. If you enter such a term, Westlaw will display the term and the message *Your request contains term(s) too common to be searched*. If you receive this message, edit your query and leave out the common terms.

Common terms can be included in your query when they appear as either the first or last term in a phrase or term of art that is either hyphenated or enclosed in quotation marks. For example, if you type **at-will**, Westlaw will process your request and retrieve documents that include this phrase.

If a common term is embedded within a phrase or hyphenated term, the common term will serve as a placeholder only and will not be searched. Therefore, the phrase **"judgment with prejudice"** will retrieve documents in which phrases such as *judgment without prejudice* and *judgment would prejudice* appear.

ALTERNATIVE TERMS

After selecting the main terms for your query, consider adding alternative terms. You should consider both synonyms and antonyms as alternative terms. For example, if you are searching for *attorney*, you might also want to search for *counsel* and *lawyer*. If you are searching for *good faith*, you might also want to search for *bad faith* or, if you are searching for *admissible*, you might also include *inadmissible*.

You can also use the Westlaw thesaurus to add alternative terms to your Terms and Connectors query. After you type your query in the *Search* text box, click **Thesaurus**.

VARIATIONS OF WORD FORMS

When choosing search terms, consider the various forms they might take. When you search for the term *liable*, for example, you may also want to search for *liability*. If you do not search for all variations, you may miss relevant documents.

While Westlaw retrieves many word forms automatically, you can also retrieve other word forms by using special symbols, as shown in the table below.

To search for	Type	Westlaw retrieves documents that contain
Compound words such as *whistle-blower*	whistle-blower	*whistleblower, whistle-blower, whistle blower*
Abbreviations such as *FMLA*	f.m.l.a.	*F.M.LA., F. M. L. A., FMLA, F M L A*
Words with multiple endings such as *object*	object!	*object, objected, objection, objecting*
Words with variable characters such as *jury* and *withdraw*	jur** withdr*w	*jury, juror* (but not *jurisdiction*) *withdraw, withdrew*

PLURALS

If you enter the singular form of a term, Westlaw automatically retrieves the plural form as well; this is true for all regular and most irregular plurals. If you enter the plural form, only the plural is retrieved. For example, if you type **warrant**, you retrieve *warrant* and *warrants*; if you type **woman**, you retrieve *woman* and *women*; and if you type **summons**, you retrieve *summons* but not *summon*.

Choosing Connectors

In addition to choosing terms for your query, you must also choose connectors to specify the relationships between your search terms. Click a connector in the *Add Connectors or Expanders* list at the bottom of a database Search page to add the connectors to your query, or click **Help** next to *Add Connectors or Expanders* to view a list of connectors and brief explanations of their function in a search.

Connector	Type	Westlaw retrieves documents that contain	Example
AND	&	both search terms	narcotics & warrant
OR	a space	either search term or both terms	car automobile
Grammatical Connectors	/p /s +s	search terms in the same paragraph search terms in the same sentence the first term preceding the second in the same sentence	hearsay /p utterance design /s defect attorney +s fee
Numerical Connectors	/n	search terms within *n* terms of each other (where *n* is a number from 1 to 255)	personal /3 jurisdiction
	+n	the first term preceding the second by *n* terms (where *n* is a number from 1 to 255)	robert +2 stevenson
Phrase	" "	search terms appearing in the same order as in the quotation marks	"attractive nuisance"

Connector	Type	To exclude documents that contain	Example
BUT NOT	%	the terms following the percent symbol	r.i.c.o. % "puerto rico"

AND CONNECTOR

Use the AND connector (&) to retrieve documents containing two or more search terms anywhere in the document. For example, the query **seat-belt & mitigat!** requires that all forms of the compound term *seat-belt* and any word with the root *mitigat* appear in the document. Keep in mind that when you use the AND connector, the terms may appear on different pages. For this reason, you will often find it desirable to use more restrictive connectors.

OR CONNECTOR

Use the OR connector, represented by a space, to search for alternative terms. For example, the query **attorney lawyer counsel** retrieves any document containing at least one of these terms.

SAME PARAGRAPH CONNECTORS (/P, +P)

The same paragraph connectors require search terms to appear in the same paragraph in a document. If you are not sure which connector to use, try **/p** first. For example, the query **pit-bull bull-terrier /p attack!** retrieves documents in which forms of the terms *pit-bull* or *bull-terrier* appear in the same paragraph with any word with the root *attack*. You can use the +p connector to specify that the first term precede the second term within the same paragraph.

SAME SENTENCE CONNECTORS (/S, +S)

The same sentence connectors require search terms to appear in the same sentence in a document. For example, the query **design! /s defect!** retrieves documents in which any words with the roots *design* and *defect* appear in the same sentence. Documents containing phrases such as the following would be retrieved:

- liability for a *defectively designed* product

- resulting from alleged *design* and manufacturing *defects*

- the defendant negligently *designed* the *defective* safety latch

You can use the +s connector to specify that the first term precede the second term within the same sentence.

NUMERICAL CONNECTORS

Numerical connectors require search terms to appear within a specified number of terms of each other. A numerical connector can be any number from 1 to 255. For example, the query **attorney /5 fee** retrieves documents in which *attorney* appears within five terms or fewer of *fee*, as in the phrase c*aused the bank to incur attorney and trustee fees and expenses.*

To specify term order with numerical connectors, use the +n connector (where *n* is a number); the +n connector requires that the first term precede the second term by no more than the specified number of terms. For example, the query **hillary +3 clinton** retrieves documents in which *hillary* precedes *clinton* by three terms or fewer, as in a reference to Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The +n connector is especially useful when you are restricting your search to the citation field or searching for documents referencing a particular citation. For example, the query **20 +5 1080** retrieves documents in which *20* precedes *1080* by five terms or fewer, as in a reference to 20 U.S.C.A. § 1080.

BUT NOT CONNECTOR (%)

You can exclude documents that contain certain terms by using the BUT NOT connector (%). Westlaw excludes everything that follows the BUT NOT connector in your search. For example, to retrieve cases mentioning *multiple chemical sensitivity* while excluding cases with headnotes classified under West digest topic 413 (Workers' Compensation), you could use this query:

"multiple chemical sensitivity" % to(413)

Using Field Restrictions

Almost all documents on Westlaw are composed of several parts called *fields*. Rather than searching entire documents, you can use field restrictions to search for terms in specific parts of a document. The format for typing a field-restricted search is the same for all fields: type the field abbreviation immediately followed by key terms enclosed in parentheses. For example, in a case law database you can retrieve cases dealing with retaliation against whistle-blowers by restricting your search to the synopsis (sy) and digest (di) fields and typing **sy,di(retaliat! /p whistle-blow!)**. You can also add a field restriction to your query by selecting a field from the *Fields* drop-down list at a database Search page. The abbreviation for this field will be added to the *Search* text box. Type the terms you want included in the field restriction in the parentheses following the abbreviation. Connect the field restriction to the rest of the query with the AND connector.

Select an Option
Court - CO()
Words-phrases - WP()
Synopsis - SY()
Digest - DI()
Synopsis/Digest - SY,DI()
Background - BG()
Holding - HG()
Topic - TO()
References - RE()
Headnote - HE()
Judge - JU()
Attorney - AT()
Opinions - OP()
Full-text - FT()
Lead - LE()
Concurring - CON()
Dissenting - DIS()
Prelim - PR()
Notes - NO()
Docket-number - DN()
Panel - PA()
Title - TI()
Citation - CI()
Image - IM()

Figure 2. *Fields* drop-down list on the Search page

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