

# Quicklaw® Cheat Sheet: Terms and Connectors

Discover how to use Boolean connectors and search symbols on Canada's leading online legal research service.

## Connectors

By default, the LexisNexis® Quicklaw® service searches two or more words as an exact phrase. As a result, it is not necessary to use quotation marks except to bypass certain connectors (e.g., “**search and seizure**” will disengage the **AND** connector). Use connectors to establish logical relationships between words and focus your search. If you use two or more of the same connector, they operate left to right, unless you insert parentheses, which will prioritize the connector(s) within. If the **n** (number) connectors have different numbers, the smallest number operates first. You cannot use the **/p** and **/s** connectors with the **/n** proximity connector. The most commonly used connectors are **OR**, **/n**, and **AND**.

Connectors operate in the following order of priority:

<b>or</b>	<b>lawyer or counsel</b> – finds documents in which either <b>lawyer</b> or <b>counsel</b> or both appear. Useful for synonyms, antonyms, alternative spellings, or abbreviations.
<b>/n</b>	<b>drug /5 abuse</b> – finds documents in which <b>drug</b> and <b>abuse</b> appear within five words of each other (n=any number from 1 to 255)*. Useful for closely related word searches.
<b>+n</b>	<b>summary + 3 judgment</b> – finds documents in which <b>summary</b> precedes <b>judgment</b> by three or fewer words. Useful where word order would markedly alter the phrase's meaning.
<b>NOT /n</b>	<b>trust NOT /2 charitable</b> – finds documents in which the word <b>trust</b> occurs but the word <b>charitable</b> is not within two words of it.
<b>/s</b>	<b>sanction /s frivolous</b> – finds documents in which the words <b>sanction</b> and <b>frivolous</b> appear in the same sentence**. Useful for finding close but not precise proximities.
<b>NOT /s</b>	<b>market NOT /s share</b> – finds documents in which the words <b>market</b> and <b>share</b> appear, but not within the same sentence. Will exclude close proximity terms only***.
<b>/p</b>	<b>age /p discrimination</b> – finds documents in which the words <b>age</b> and <b>discrimination</b> appear in the same paragraph. Useful for less close proximities of related words.
<b>NOT /p</b>	<b>cable NOT /p television</b> – finds documents where both words <b>cable</b> and <b>television</b> appear, but not within the same paragraph. Less exclusionary in proximity.***
<b>AND (&amp;)</b>	<b>land AND trust</b> – finds documents in which the words <b>land</b> and <b>trust</b> both appear at some point in the document. Useful for broad searching, with any word proximity.
<b>AND NOT</b>	<b>british AND NOT british columbia</b> – finds documents in which the word <b>british</b> occurs, but <b>british columbia</b> does not. This will exclude documents that mention <b>British Columbia</b> , so proximity connector <b>/n</b> may be more useful.

**Note:** Connectors are not case sensitive, but it is recommended to use the lowercase “or” to avoid it being searched as a source abbreviation for sources like *Ontario Reports*.

\* The connector **/n** only searches within the same segment. If you want to search within both the case name or summary and the body of the decision, use the **AND** connector.

\*\* The connector **/s** searches within one sentence ending with a period. Quicklaw cannot distinguish between a true period and the period following the *v* in case names such as *Hall v. Hebert*. To search for case names, use the **/n** connector (e.g., **Hall /3 Hebert**).

\*\*\* The **NOT /s** and **NOT /p** commands will locate documents that exclude those terms in at least one instance. The terms may still appear in the same sentence or paragraph elsewhere in the document.

## Truncation and Wildcards

Truncation and wildcards are used to expand search terms.

!	acqui!	Finds variations on the term <b>acquire</b> (e.g., <b>acquiring</b> , <b>acquisition</b> )
	M!Isaac	Finds both <b>M!Isaac</b> and <b>Ma!Isaac</b>
*	Sp**gel	Finds both <b>Speigel</b> and <b>Spiegel</b>

## Singular and Plural

With this box checked, Quicklaw automatically finds the plural form of words, including those that end in **us**, **is**, or other irregular forms. For example, **bonus** also finds **bonuses**, and **child** also finds **children**.

## Terms

A term is the basic unit of a search. It is a single character or group of characters, alphabetic or numeric, with a space separating it from other terms. A hyphen is treated as a space, so a hyphenated term is treated as two terms.

A period is treated like a space except when:

- The period is preceded and followed by a number (e.g., **99.9** is one term).
- The period is preceded by a space and followed by a number (e.g., **.999** is one term).
- The period is preceded by only one alphabetic character and followed (with no spaces in sequence) by any number of single letters, each of which is followed by a period (e.g., **C.R.A.** is one term; **C. R. A.** is three terms because of the spaces after the periods).

## Phrases

Two or more consecutive words (terms) are considered a phrase. You do not normally need to enclose them in quotation marks. If you want results that contain two terms located anywhere in the document, you must use the **AND (&)** connector.

### Examples:

- **age discrimination** finds the exact phrase “age discrimination”
- **age and discrimination** finds separate occurrences of the words **age** and **discrimination** within the same document

## Advanced Terms and Connectors

To construct a Quicklaw search, start with terms or phrases that reflect ideas essential to your research. Then, include connectors (e.g., **OR**, **AND**, **/n**) to determine how each word relates to each other. Next, add synonyms and, finally, insert truncation and wildcard symbols to search for word variations.

**Example** (using **OR**, **AND**, **/n**):

<b>Step 1:</b>	<b>Choose your search terms (based on your search concepts).</b>	
Search:	<b>ISP user history privacy</b>	Finds ISPs that provide access to user history as it relates to privacy concerns
<b>Step 2:</b>	<b>Choose your connectors (to indicate how close your words should appear in a document).</b>	
Search:	<b>ISP /20 history /10 user &amp; privacy</b>	Finds ISPs as they relate to the user history, with the term <b>privacy</b> appearing anywhere in the document
<b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Include synonyms of terms (use the OR connector between synonyms).</b>	
Search:	<b>ISP OR I.S.P. OR service provider /20 history OR records OR documents /10 user OR client OR subscriber &amp; privacy</b>	Finds synonyms of terms or other related words that may have been used in the document
<b>Step 4:</b>	<b>Use truncation (!) and wildcard (*) symbols (to include other endings or spellings).</b>	
Search:	<b>ISP OR I.S.P. OR service provider /20 history OR record! OR document! /10 user OR client OR subscriber &amp; privacy</b>	Includes other forms of truncated words in your results ( <b>record!</b> also searches for <b>recorded</b> , <b>recording</b> , etc., and <b>document!</b> also searches for <b>documented</b> , <b>documentation</b> , etc.)



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