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SEARCH SYNTAX CHART FOR LEGAL DATABASES

	WestlaweCarswell	Quicklaw	Law News Online	CanLII
What is the default connector?	defaults to implicit OR	defaults to phrase search	defaults to phrase search	defaults to implicit AND
Is boolean searching available?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Is non-boolean or template searching available?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Is proximity searching available?	/n (where n is a number) /s (within the same sentence) /p (within the same paragraph)	/n (where n is a number) /s (within one sentence) /p (within one paragraph)	wn (where n is a number)	/n (where n is a number) /s (within the same sentence) /p (within the same paragraph)
How do I search for a phrase?	use quotation marks	quotation marks not required; defaults to phrase search	quotation marks not required; defaults to phrase search	use quotation marks
Can searches be restricted by date?	yes	yes	yes	yes
What is the truncation symbol?	! replaces 0 to many characters	! replaces 0 to many characters	* replaces 0 to many characters	* replaces 0 to many characters
What is the universal character?	*	*	not available	*

For further explanation of the functions listed above, and examples, see other side.

What is the default connector? Every search engine has a default method of reading search terms. Examples:

- Where the default connector is an implicit AND (a space between search terms), the search terms **injury damages** will retrieve documents containing both **injury** and **damages** (CanLII)
- Where the default connector is an implicit OR (a space between search terms), the search terms **landlord tenant** will retrieve documents containing either **landlord** or **tenant** and documents containing both **landlord** and **tenant** (WestlaweCarswell)
- Where the default connector is a phrase search, the search terms **civil procedure** will retrieve documents containing the phrase **civil procedure** (Quicklaw, Law News Online)

Is boolean searching available? Boolean searching involves adding connectors (AND, OR, NOT) between search terms to narrow a search. Some databases use characters to represent the connectors AND, OR, NOT:

WestlaweCarswell: use **&** to represent AND; use **a space** to represent OR; use **%** to represent NOT

Quicklaw: use **&** or the term **AND**; use the term **OR**; use the term **AND NOT**

Law News Online: use **&** to represent AND; use **/** to represent OR; use **!** to represent NOT

CanLII: use **a space** or the term **AND**; use the term **OR**; use the term **NOT**

Is non-boolean or template searching available? Instead of using boolean connectors, some databases provide templates to simplify the search process. The search templates vary among the databases.

How do I search for a phrase? Use quotation marks to retrieve documents containing search terms that appear in the same order as in the quotation marks (WestlaweCarswell, CanLII). There is no need to use quotation marks in Quicklaw or Law News Online as the search engine assumes a phrase.

Is proximity searching available? A proximity connector searches for a term within a specific proximity of another search term. The syntax for proximity searching varies among the databases. Examples:

- **marketable /p title** searches for instances of **marketable** within the same paragraph as **title** (WestlaweCarswell, Quicklaw, CanLII)
- **priority /s claims** searches for instances of **priority** within the same sentence as **claims** and results may include **priority of claims, priority over claims, priority to all other claims** (WestlaweCarswell, Quicklaw, CanLII)
- **sex /5 discrimination** searches for instances of **sex** within five words of **discrimination** and results may include **sex discrimination, discrimination because of sex, discrimination on the basis of sex, discrimination on the ground of sex, discrimination by reason of sex** (WestlaweCarswell, Quicklaw, CanLII)
- **question w5 law** searches for instances of **question** within five words of **law** and results may include **question of law, question of mixed fact and law, question of mixed law and fact** (Law News Online)

Can searches be restricted by date? Searches can be restricted to a particular date or range of dates. The date range function varies among the databases.

What is the truncation symbol? A truncation symbol is a type of root expander and is used to find various endings of a root word. Examples:

- **object!** (WestlaweCarswell, Quicklaw) or **object*** (Law News Online, CanLII) will find **object, objected, objectors, objection, objectives, objectively, objecting**, etc.

What is the universal character? A universal character or wild card searches for a variable character and can be placed within a term or at the end of a term. Examples:

- **kn*w** (WestlaweCarswell, Quicklaw, CanLII) searches for **knew** or **know**