Terms and Connectors Searching

At the WestlawNext home page, you can search for documents by typing a Terms and Connectors query or terms describing your issue in the text box at the top of the page. WestlawNext recognizes whichever search format you use.

Using Terms and Connectors

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 paragraph (/p). Type your query in the text box at the top of the home page, change the jurisdiction if necessary, and click Search (Figure 1).

Use the Terms and Connectors search method when you
- are searching for particular terms
- want to retrieve all available documents containing your search terms

Choosing Search Terms

To run a Terms and Connectors search, choose terms significant to your issue. After selecting the terms for your query, consider adding alternative terms. For example, if you are searching for attorney, you might also want to search for counsel and lawyer.

Phrases

To search for a phrase, place the phrase in quotations marks. For example, to use the phrase res ipsa loquitur in a search, type “res ipsa loquitur”.

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.
Root Expander
To search for words with multiple endings, use the root expander (!). For example, type object! to retrieve object, objected, objection, and objecting.

Universal Character
To search for words with variable characters, use the universal character (*). For example, type jur*r to retrieve jury and juror (but not jurisdiction); type withdr*w to retrieve withdraw and withdrew.

Choosing Connectors
In addition to choosing terms for your query, you must also choose connectors to specify the relationships between your search terms.

Grammatical Connectors
/p the search terms must appear in the same paragraph (hearsay /p utterance)
+p the first search term must precede the second term in the same paragraph (ti(burke +p burke))
/s the search terms must appear in the same sentence (design /s defect)
+s the first search term must precede the second term in the same sentence (attorney +s fee)

Numerical Connectors
/n the search terms must appear within n terms of each other, where n is a number from 1 to 255 (personal /3 jurisdiction)
+n the first search term must precede the second term by n terms, where n is a number from 1 to 255 (elena +2 kagan)

And Connector
Use the AND connector (&) to retrieve documents containing two or more search terms anywhere in the document. For example, the query narcotics & warrant retrieves both terms anywhere in the document.

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.

BUT NOT Connector (%)
You can exclude documents that contain certain terms by using the BUT NOT connector (%). WestlawNext excludes everything that follows the BUT NOT connector in your search. For example, the query “multiple chemical sensitivity” % to(413) retrieves cases that mention multiple chemical sensitivity while excluding cases with headnotes classified under West digest topic 413 (Workers’ Compensation).

Using Field Restrictions
Documents on WestlawNext are composed of several parts called fields. For example, in case law documents, the names of the parties, the name of the judge, and the names of the attorneys are each contained in a separate field. Other fields contain exclusive West editorial enhancements, such as the synopsis field, which contains the summary of a case, and the digest field, which contains the headnotes in a case. Rather than searching entire documents, you can use these fields to search for terms in specific parts of a document.
Searching with Terms and Connectors

When you type a search in the text box at the top of the page, special rules govern which searches are processed as Terms and Connectors searches. A search is processed as a Terms and Connectors search if it includes a grammatical, numerical, or BUT NOT connector; a root expander or universal character; or a field restriction.

However, a search is processed as a descriptive terms search if it includes only AND or OR connectors or phrases in quotation marks, e.g., “fraudulent transfer” & contract. To process it as a Terms and Connectors search, include a grammatical, numerical, or BUT NOT connector, e.g., fraudulent +1 transfer & contract; a root expander or universal character; or a field restriction. Or use the Advanced Search page (Figure 2).

Using the Advanced Search Page

To search content using the Advanced Search page, complete these steps:

1. Click advanced next to Search at the top of any page.
2. At the Advanced Search page, type your terms in the appropriate text boxes.
3. Click the arrow under Jurisdiction if you want to change the jurisdiction.
4. Click Advanced Search.

While viewing the search result, click advanced again to edit your search.

Using the Find Documents that have section

You can use the text boxes at the top of the page under Find documents that have to do any of the following:

- If you want all of the terms included in your retrieved documents, type them in the All of these terms text box.
- If you want any of the terms included in your retrieved documents, type them in the Any of these terms text box.
- If you want an exact phrase included in your retrieved documents, type it in the This exact phrase text box.
Using the Exclude Documents that have section

If you want to exclude documents that contain certain terms, type the terms in the These terms text box.

Using the Document Fields section

The Advanced Search page enables you to easily restrict your search to specific document fields. The fields displayed at an Advanced Search page vary by content category. For example, if you click advanced at the home page, the Advanced Search page displays a date, citation, and name/title field. If you click advanced at the Cases page, the Advanced Search: Cases page displays fields such as party name, synopsis, digest, judge, and attorney (Figure 3). If you click advanced at the Statutes and Court Rules page, the Advanced Search: Statutes and Court Rules page displays fields such as caption, statutory text, and annotations.

You can use multiple fields in a search.

Viewing a Search Result

After you run your Terms and Connectors search, the result page is displayed. If an overview of your search result is displayed, click a content category in the left column, e.g., Cases, to display the result page for that content category. By default, documents are ranked by relevance. To change the default ranking, choose an option, e.g., Date, from the Sort by drop-down list at the top of the center column. A link to additional relevant documents, e.g., Additional Relevant WestSearch Cases, may be displayed at the top of the result list. Click the link to view the additional documents, then click Back to Boolean Terms and Connectors to return to your search result.

Narrowing a Search Result

You can narrow your search result by typing terms in the Search within results text box under Narrow in the left column and clicking Search. You can use any connectors, including the AND or OR connector.

For assistance using WestlawNext, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378). For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.