

Getting Started with Encyclopædia Britannica Online

To access Encyclopædia Britannica Online

Go to <http://search.eb.com> If you are asked for a username and password please contact Britannica at (02) 9923 5600 or email bol@britannica.com.au for assistance.

Guided Tour

Before using the site, please take the time to go through this document and also review the guided tour on the *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* site. This tour can be accessed from the top bar of the home page.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* includes the following references and materials:

Encyclopædia Britannica	Journals and Magazines
Britannica Student Encyclopedia	Video & Media
Britannica Elementary Encyclopedia	Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus
Britannica Internet Guide	



Encyclopædia Britannica Online Content

When you search for a keyword or phrase in *all* Britannica, we sift through all of this content for answers (Dictionary/Thesaurus searches are separate). Your search results can come from three encyclopedias, magazine articles, the Internet Guide, and Videos & Media. All results are ordered by relevance: how closely the content matches your search word(s) depends upon your search technique. For more information read Search Tips on the site.

Encyclopædia Britannica

High School Level and above—More information for more knowledge.

With over 73,000 articles, Encyclopædia Britannica is one of the most complete information sources in the world. It contains both short and book-length articles on every subject. Every time you click Go, we search the entire encyclopedia. Look in the Encyclopædia Britannica column on your search results page for links to this encyclopedia.

Britannica Student Encyclopedia

Lower comprehension level—Plenty of information for most needs.

Britannica Student Encyclopedia is a reference for everyone, from Primary levels and up. It makes the authoritative content of our main encyclopedia lively and easy to read. If you are searching all content, Student Edition articles appear in the second column on your search results page.

Britannica Elementary Encyclopedia

Britannica Elementary Encyclopedia has been created especially for intermediate readers at a lower comprehension level. Thousands of shorter articles cover subjects from nations of the world to animals and sports. If you are searching all content, Elementary Edition articles appear below the Student Edition articles on your search results page.

Journals and Magazines

A search of all of *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* content includes selected journals and magazines. If articles from these magazines are related to your search, a link will appear in a column on your search results page. Magazines are divided into K-5 and 6-12 grade levels. You can also link to related magazines when you go to an encyclopedia article.



Britannica Internet Guide

We sift through thousands of Web sites for you. When you search the Britannica Internet Guide, you search a vast index to quality Web sites, with each Web site having been reviewed by Britannica editors. The Internet Guide column on your search results page lists Web sites that match your search. Use Search to access the Internet Guide.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus

More than 215,000 entries with definitions, pronunciation guides, word histories, synonyms and antonyms are available through the dictionary and thesaurus. You can search this resource using the Merriam-Webster Search on the home page, or, when you discover an unfamiliar word, simply double-click on it at any time to see the appropriate dictionary entry.

Video & Media

In addition to encyclopedias, magazines and Web sites, there are hundreds of video clips and media presentations. You can search Video & Media for a keyword, such as *zebra* and when you click a video link, the video plays in a separate window and you can select which media player to use. You can also find links to Video & Media from certain encyclopedia articles.

Look up Information

To learn more about a topic, use the search box. It's at the top of every page. Just type words in the box and click Go. When you get results, click a link to read information. You can search all *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* or choose one type of content to search.

Look up Words

To find spellings, meanings and word choices for writing, use the Merriam-Webster search. Double-click any word on any page to look it up in the dictionary. Switch instantly from the dictionary to the Merriam-Webster Student Thesaurus.

Browse for Information

To explore a general idea, try the Browse options. In Alphabetic Browse, you can explore a complete encyclopedia from A-Z. In World Atlas, you focus on geography and facts about places by wandering through maps.

Spotlights

The multimedia Spotlights are like Web sites that cover a variety of topic areas (Shakespeare, Dinosaurs, Roller Coasters). We update and change the Spotlights from time to time.

Setting Up Your Computer:

To play the audio and video clips included in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, the following software plug-ins are required. These plug-ins are generally included with your operating system or browser, or can be downloaded from the Internet for free.

- Microsoft Media Player™
- Apple QuickTime™
- RealPlayer™





Search Tips

Searching *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* can lead you to a wealth of information. When you search for a keyword or phrase, we scour the entire text of three encyclopedias as well as thousands of Web site reviews written by our world-class editors.

To Search

Type a keyword or phrase in the search box. Choose a type of content to search, if you wish. If you do not choose, you get results from all content.

Click **Go** to begin the search.

If you have trouble finding what you want, read the Tips for Better Results below.

Tips for Better Search Results

Use the following tips to improve your searches and get better results.

Choose Your Results

You can search *all* Britannica content or limit your search results to one type of content. If you search all content, your results appear in several columns across the search results page. If you choose one content type (for example, Britannica Student Encyclopedia), you get fewer results in one column. Use the drop-down menu next to the search box-or the check boxes on the home page-to make your choice.

Check Spelling

Click to check "Unsure of the spelling?" next to the search box if you do not know how to spell a word or name. This tells Britannica to find words similar to the words you type. You can also use this checkbox to correct errors. For example, if you type *helicopter* instead of *helicopter*, you may not get results. Just click "Unsure of the spelling?" and then click Go again to get results on "helicopter."

Uppercase or Lowercase?

Type your search words in uppercase or lowercase—it doesn't matter. Changing the case of the letters in your query will not affect search results in any way. For example, the word *AIDS* gives you the same results as the word *aids*.

Singular or Plural?

You can use either singular or plural words in encyclopedia searches. However, use singular words to search the dictionary/thesaurus.

Exact Match Search

Use quotation marks around words or phrases if you want them to appear word for word in your search results. For example, if you are interested in researching information about Civil Law and you do not want to see results for other types of Law, type "Civil Law" in the Search Box.

Natural Language Search

You can use ordinary language to find information in an encyclopedia. Sometimes natural language questions give you the best results. We strip out common words for you and return results that contain the most occurrences of the keywords in your query.

For example, you can type *what is the third longest river in the world?* The top results contain the words "third," "longest," "river," and "world." If these keywords appear more, the results are closer to the top of the list.





Abbreviations

Using abbreviations in your query can make a dramatic difference in your search results. Many abbreviations are used by Britannica's content sources. If you want to use an abbreviation in your search, or to understand an abbreviation in an article, check this abbreviation list.

Punctuation

There are only three types of punctuation marks that will affect search results:

(1) Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks around words or phrases if you want them to appear word for word in your search results. See [Exact Match Search](#).

(2) Parentheses

Use parentheses in Boolean operator formulas to separate and group words or phrases. See [Advanced Search: Boolean Operators](#).

(3) Hyphens

Only use hyphens in hyphenated words and names. For example, *Epstein-Barr virus*

Wildcard Search

A "wildcard" stands for any letter or letters. Britannica supports the asterisk (*) as a wildcard character. Use the asterisk (*) before or after your search word(s) to find closely related words and phrases.

For example, to learn about types of law, you could type **law*. Your results might include "marriage law," "business law," and so on.

Wildcards are helpful when you can spell only part of a word. For example, type *Niet** to get results on "Nietzsche."

Advanced Search: Boolean Operators

Boolean operators are little words that can make a big difference in your search results. You can create rules for the search to follow using these three Boolean operators:

AND: Use the AND operator to specify that you want all of your search words to appear in the results. *German AND shepherd*

OR: Use the OR operator to receive search results that contain any one or all of the words in your multiple word query. *Yugoslavia OR Bosnia*

NOT: Use the NOT operator to exclude words from your search results. *Mouse NOT Mickey*

You can use these three Boolean operators in any combination by breaking your query into a formula using parentheses.

EXAMPLE: *cherokee AND (language or alphabet) NOT sequoyah*

This search finds results about the Cherokee language or alphabet, but not Sequoyah.

British Spellings:
Because Encyclopædia Britannica is of British origin, many of the articles use British spellings. If your query is an American spelling of a word that has a British equivalent, you may receive a greater number of results by using the British spelling. To determine if an alternative spelling exists for your query, consult the list of [British spellings](#).

Abbreviations:
Using abbreviations in your query can make a dramatic difference in your search results. Many abbreviations are used by Britannica's content sources. If you want to find a specific abbreviation to use in your query, search this extensive [abbreviation list](#).

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