

Search Strategies

Boolean Searching

Boolean searching is a strategy that retrieves sources that are more tailored to your information needs. Boolean searching uses the following three operators: AND, OR, NOT. When creating your search use one, or combination of those operators, to connect keywords.

AND

Using AND as your Boolean operator will narrow the list of results you get. If you're researching Jewish women in labor camps during the Holocaust and you want results specifically related to Auschwitz, form your search like this:

Jewish Women AND Auschwitz

This would bring back resources that only contain Jewish women and Auschwitz as keywords

OR

Using OR as your Boolean operator will expand the number of resources your search will retrieve. Using the example from above, say you want results that relate to either Jewish women or Auschwitz you would form your search like this:

Jewish Women OR Auschwitz

This would bring back results that relate both subjects independently, giving you more sources to choose from but those sources will be less targeted to your exact information needs

NOT

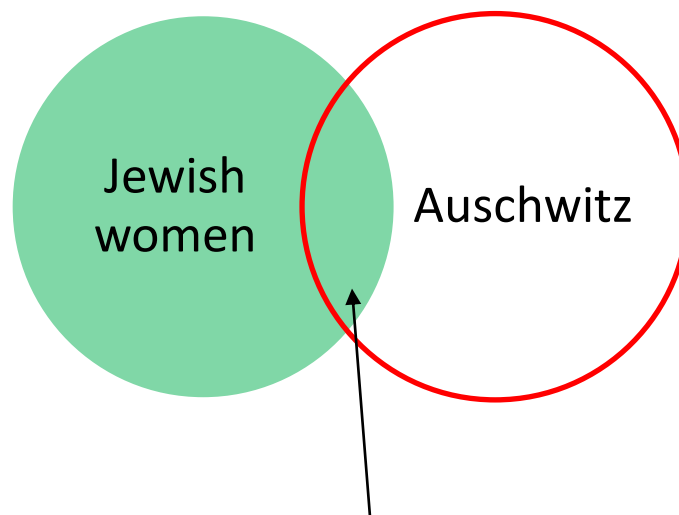
Using NOT as your Boolean operator will narrow your search results. Sticking with the example, if you want to research Jewish women in labor camps and you don't want to include Auschwitz in your results you would form your search like this:

Jewish women NOT Auschwitz

This search would bring back resources related to Jewish women outside of Auschwitz labor camp. Using NOT helps you eliminate sources that repeat a specific topic.

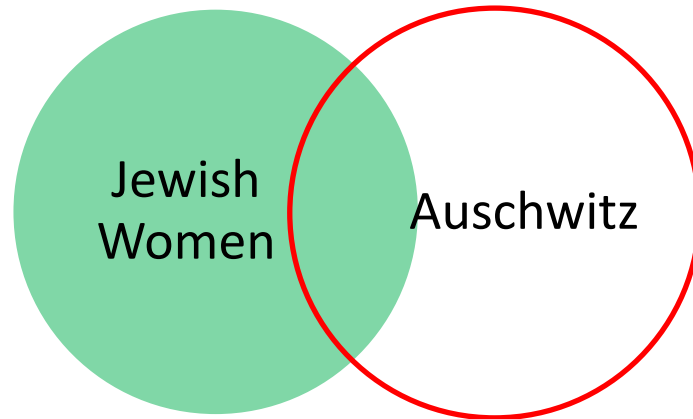
Here's a visual aid to help you see how Boolean operators affect your search results:

AND



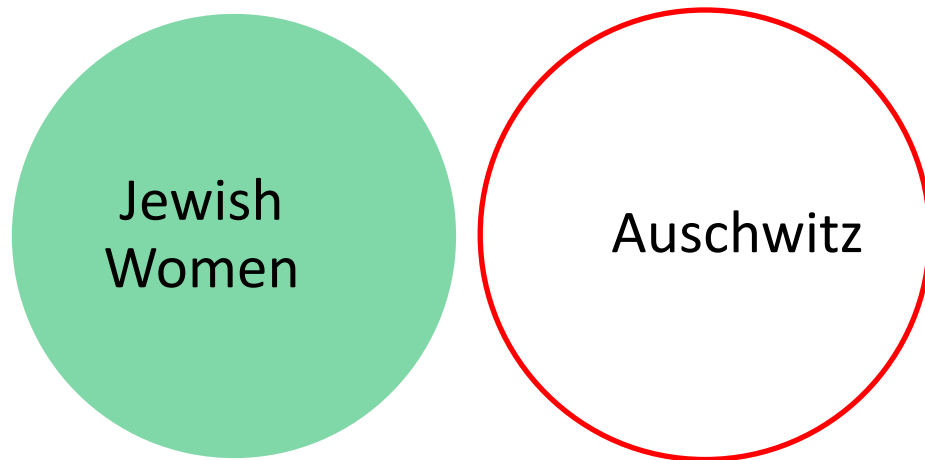
The space where these two circles overlap represents sources that include both keywords

NOT



The green area not overlapped by the red circle, represents sources that exclude the keyword Auschwitz

OR



Neither of these circles overlap demonstrating that using OR will bring back sources that relate to one topic or the other but not necessarily both topics