

# EXPLORE THE BRITISH LIBRARY: ADVANCED SEARCH

<http://explore.bl.uk>

## Advanced search

An Advanced search allows you to perform a more specific search. From the Home page, select **Advanced search**:

BRITISH LIBRARY

## EXPLORE THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Search, view and order from our catalogues & collections

bl.uk Explore Home Feedback Tags Basket Request Other Items My Reading Room Requests Help

Main catalogue Our website Explore Further

Everything in this catalogue Search **Advanced search**

Alternatively you can bookmark Advanced search; the bookmark to use is:  
[http://explore.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?mode=Advanced](http://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?mode=Advanced)

From Advanced Search there are a number of search options available to you:

- You can choose whether to carry out your search in the 'Main catalogue', 'Our website', or the 'Explore further' tab:

Main catalogue Our website Explore Further

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Anywhere contains jane austen

Anywhere contains

Anywhere contains

Search Simple search

**Note:** Results are displayed below the search input box; you may have to scroll down to see all results.

A search of the 'Main catalogue' will find records of those items in the Library's collection that match your search term.

A search of 'Our website' will find records of those British Library web pages that match your search term.

A search of 'Explore further' will find records of those scholarly items that match your search term.

- You can choose specific indexes; use the drop-down arrow to see the choice:

Index	Searches for your term
Anywhere	Anywhere in the catalogue record.
Author	As an author's name.
Subject	As a subject; you can include personal names here, too. Note that many records do not include subject details. This index is best used for material published over the last 30 years or so.
Main title	As an ordinary title.
Other title	As series titles, uniform titles, etc.
Description	In a notes field. Particularly useful for Bibles.
Place name	As a geographical place where a newspaper or periodical is published. Use in conjunction with the Newspaper catalogue.
Map Scale	Use when searching for maps.
Abstract	If there is an abstract in the item record, you can search for words within it. NB: Most records do not contain abstracts; they are only found in some article records.
Publication year	Items published in a particular year.

**Note:** Use indexes with care: some of these may only find results in the 'Main catalogue' tab.

- You can specify whether you want to search for your term(s):
  - Within the record details/specific index – **contains**
  - As an exact phrase – **is (exact)**
  - At the beginning of a title – **starts with**

**Note:** **Starts with** can only be used in conjunction with the **Main title** index and, for a **Starts with** search you **MUST** enter your search term in **lower case**. We recommend using lower case letters for all searching otherwise stop words (AND, OR NOT) in a capitalised search will cause problems. Note too that '**is (exact)**' matches your search string as a phrase but doesn't perform an 'is exactly only the search word(s) entered' search.

- You can combine your search terms with more than one index:

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Author	contains	jane austen	Material type:	All items
Main Title	contains	emma	Start Date:	Year
Anywhere	contains		End Date:	Year
			Search scope:	Everything in this catalogue

Date range searching is available only for Newspapers.

[Search](#) [Simple search](#)

**Note:** 'Explore the British Library' assumes you wish to search for all the terms you enter, so there is no need to include AND between your terms. If you want to narrow your search down, use NOT and OR and enter these in capital letters. For example: **Pride NOT prejudice, Pride OR prejudice.**

- You can combine your search terms with either, or both a **Material type** limit:

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Anywhere	contains	jane austen	Material type:	All items
Anywhere	contains	emma	Start Date:	All items
Anywhere	contains		End Date:	Archived Websites
			Search scope:	Articles

Date range searching is available only for Newspapers.

[Search](#) [Simple search](#)

**What is Explore the British Library?**  
With Explore the British Library you can search, view and order items from our main catalogue of nearly 57 million records, or search the contents of the Library's website.

**Notices**  
Sunday 16 February: Post  
Explore the British Library  
lunchtime on Sunday whilst  
We explore the contents of this website...

**Note:** Use Material type with care: some of these types may only find results in the 'Main catalogue' tab.

And/or a **Search scope**, to restrict your search to certain parts of the catalogue:

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Anywhere	contains	jane austen	Material type:	All items
Anywhere	contains	emma	Start Date:	Year
Anywhere	contains		End Date:	Year
			Search scope:	Everything in this catalogue

Date range searching is available only for Newspapers.

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**Note:** You should only use the Search scope 'Remote supply' when searching the 'Main catalogue'.

- If you are searching the 'Main catalogue' for Newspapers you can use limit by **Date** range:

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Main Title	is (exact)	evening standard	Material type:	Newspapers
Anywhere	contains		Start Date:	1950
Anywhere	contains		End Date:	2000
			Search scope:	Everything in this catalogue

Date range searching is available only for Newspapers.

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**Note:** The search does not try to match the start or end date of the title; it looks for titles that have **any** coverage within the date range entered. Date range searching will be available for other types of material in the near future.

## Search tips

### Searching for exact phrases

Enclose your search terms in quotation marks, for example:

**"pride and prejudice"**

**"global warming"**

### Wildcards

Use ? to replace one character	wom?n will search for <b>woman</b> and <b>women</b>
Use * to replace more than one character	cultur* will search for <b>culture</b> , <b>cultural</b> and <b>culturally</b>

### Words and phrases

You can use a combination of words and phrases in a simple search, for example:

**Shakespeare (tragedy OR sonnet)**

### Searching for hyphenated words

Replace the hyphen with an em dash:

**Wide—awake** instead of wide-awake.

### Items, other than Newspapers, published in a specific year or range of years

Combine your search term with **Publication Year**. You can enter the exact year of publication, or you can use a wildcard to search for a decade or century:

Enter <b>1760</b>	to search for items published in that year
Enter <b>176?</b>	To search for items published between 1760 and 1769
Enter <b>17??</b>	To search for items published between 1700 and 1799

To search for items published between a range of years spanning more than a decade, search for each decade within the range you require and combine with decades with **OR**:

Enter **176?**  
**OR 177? OR**  
**178?**

To search for items published between 1760 and 1789  
(OR must be entered in capital letters; you need to search for each decade within the range you require)

e.g. to restrict to items on 'global warming' published between 2000-2009:

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Anywhere	is (exact)	global warming
Publication Year	contains	200?
Anywhere	contains	

Material type: All items  
Start Date: Year  
End Date: Year  
Search scope: Everything in this catalogue  
**Date range searching is available only for Newspapers.**

**Search** Simple search

e.g. to restrict to items on 'newton' published between e.g. 1770 - 1799:

**Advanced search** Note: Search terms must be in lower case

Anywhere	contains	newton
Publication Year	contains	177? OR 178? OR 179?
Anywhere	contains	

Material type: All items  
Start Date: Year  
End Date: Year  
Search scope: Everything in this catalogue  
**Date range searching is available only for Newspapers.**

**Search** Simple search

**Note:** You cannot enter a date range in the format 1770-1800 or 1770->1800.

### Suggested spellings

If you misspell a search term, 'Explore the British Library' will suggest an alternative:

Main catalogue Our website Explore Further

environment Everything in this catalogue **Search** Advanced search

**Did you mean environment?**

Click on the underlined suggested spelling to carry out the search.

More tips on searching can be found in [How do I search for ...?](#)