

Searching with Wildcards in EBSCOhost

You can use wildcard and truncation symbols to create searches with unknown characters, multiple spellings or various endings.

- The asterisk (*) matches multiple characters.
- The hash sign (#) matches one optional character.
- The question mark (?) matches exactly one character.

1. Asterisk Wildcard

The asterisk (*) wildcard, also known as the **truncation** wildcard, is generally used to find word endings. Enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with the asterisk (*). For example, type **comput*** to find the words **computer, computers, computing, computation**.

The asterisk can be used **within** words to find multiple characters. For example, a search for **hea*one** will match words beginning with “**hea**” and ending with “**one**.” For example, **headphone, headstone, hearthstone**.

The asterisk (*) can be used **between** words to match any single word. For example, a search for **midsummer * dream** will match the phrases **midsummer night’s dream** and **midsummer day’s dream**.

Search Term	Example Matches
comput*	computer computers computing computation computations computational . . .
hea*one	headphone headstone healthone hearthstone heartstone heatherstone . . .
midsummer * dream	midsummer night’s dream midsummer day’s dream

2. Hash Wildcard

To use the # wildcard, enter your search terms and place # where an alternate spelling might contain an extra character. For example, type **colo#r** to find all records containing **color** or **colour**. Type **p#ediatric** to find all records with **pediatric** or **paediatric**.

3. Question-Mark Wildcard

To use the ? wildcard, enter your search terms and replace the unknown character with a ?. For example, type **ne?t** to find all records containing **neat, nest** or **next**.

Question marks **at the end** of words or character strings are **not** treated as wildcards. They are automatically removed from a query. For example, the question marks in the search terms below are ignored when searched:

Search term with trailing question mark	Interpretation
Appendicitis: is surgery the best option?	Appendicitis is surgery the best option
Whose Justice? Which Rationality?	Whose Justice Which Rationality
z????	z

To use a question mark as a wildcard at the end of a word, you need to put a # before the ? character. The hash before the trailing question mark indicates that the question mark should be treated as a wildcard to find exactly one character at the end a word. For example, a search for **Monday#?** will match **Mondays** but not **Monday**.

4. Combining Wildcards

Wildcards can be combined in a search term. For example, the following searches are allowed.

Search Term	Example Matches
colo#r*	colorblind coloring colorings colorization colorize colorized colouring colourings colourisation colourization colourize colourized colourizing . . .
p#ediatric*	pediatric pediatrics pediatrician pediatricians paediatric paediatrics paediatrician paediatricians . . .

5. Restrictions When Using Wildcards

- Wildcards are **not** allowed as the **first** character in a search term.
- If there is only **one** leading character before a wildcard then, there must be at least **one additional** literal character within the **first four** characters.
 - **f#r*** (allowed because two literal characters are within the first four characters)
 - **f??*** (**not** allowed because only one leading character within the first four characters)
- When using **any wildcard** in a search term, the plural or possessive forms and any synonyms for the word will **not** automatically be searched. For example; when searching for **colo#r**, the plural words "**colors**" and "**colours**" are **not** searched.
- Wildcards do **not** work with Chinese (中文), Japanese (日本人), and Korean (한국어) languages.