

Advanced Searching

Tips for Ancestry

Library Edition

Use these recommended search tips to make the most of your ProQuest content.

1. Use truncation symbols to expand options or when you are unsure of a spelling
 - The asterisk (*) is a wildcard that matches zero or more characters
 - **Example:** a search on **'Sam*'** will bring back results that include **'Sam'**, **'Samantha'**, **'Samuel'**, etc.
 - You can search alternate spellings with the asterisk (*), which represents 0 to 5 unknown characters
 - **Example:** the query **'Johann*'** will search for **'Johann'** and **'Johannes'**
 - **Example:** the query **'Smel*er'** will search for **'Smeltzer'** and **'Smelzer'**, among others
 - **Note:** you cannot use an asterisk as the first, second, or third character of a search term
2. The question mark (?) acts as a single-character wildcard
 - A search for **'Eli?abeth'** will bring back results that include **'Elisabeth'** or **'Elizabeth'**
 - **Note:** you cannot use a question mark as the first character of a search term



3. You can combine the asterisk (*) and question mark (?) symbols in a search
 - A search for **'Eli?a*'** will return hits for **'Eliza'**, **'Elisa'**, **'Elizabeth'**, **'Elisabet'**, **'Elizabeth'**, and **'Elisabeth'**, as well as **'Elijah'**, **'Eilmar'**, etc.

4. Use quotations marks around two or more words when conducting a Keyword search for more accurate results
 - **Example:** "civil rights", "World War II"