

Tips for using Google

How to search?

- Gradually add search terms: start with something simple then gradually get more complicated. First try: *indent in Word* / Second try: *how to indent in Word* / Third try: *how to indent a paragraph in Word 2013*
- Use correct jargon/terms where possible (*headache* rather than *hurting head* – *indent* rather than *shift over*)
- Use important words. Instead of *Where can I find a Chinese restaurant that delivers* try *Chinese restaurants near Totnes*
- Consider what words/phrase the websites you want may use: *I have a flat tyre* could be replaced by *repair a flat tyre*
- Be precise (e.g. what version of Word are you using)
- Use quotes to search for a fixed phrase - "*south Brent*" will not include any results with just *south* or just *Brent* in
- Use a hyphen to exclude words (e.g. *mustang* = cars and horses / *mustang -cars* = just horses)

In compiling this, I noticed similarities between doing a Google search and playing the quiz game "Pointless"!

Lots of results! ...

How to pick the best?

- Scan the results rather than read each one in detail (it's how young people do it!)
- Look for excerpts that seem to be about what you need, and that are at your level/in a language you can understand.
- YouTube videos can be very useful. Many of us find it quicker and clearer to see it happening, rather than reading a long description of what to do. But quality varies.
- Official sites often aren't the best option: (e.g. Microsoft help – support.office.com etc.) Their main business is designing and selling the software. Not helping people use it. They tend to provide rather cold, technical documentation, rather than friendly how to guides. There are many other sites whose main business is to explain stuff to people and, in particular, lay people (e.g. the "dummies" guides).
- Avoid Ads if you're looking for advice or reviews. They've paid to have their results appear near the top of the list.

How to check out the results

Method 1 – one at a time / backwards and forwards

1. Click on first result that looks likely.
2. If no good press the back button to go back to the search
3. Click on next

Can be slow getting back to the original search if you go through a few pages

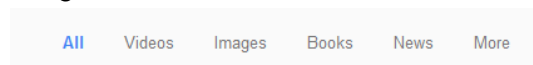
Method 2 – use Tabs in your browser

1. Right-click on first result that looks likely and choose 'Open in new Tab'
2. Right-click on next result that looks likely and choose 'Open in new Tab'
3. Open a few this way
4. Then go to each in turn and shut them down if no good – your original search remains open in the first tab

Extra tip: Ctrl+Tab cycles round tabs

Extra tips

Use the extra options at the top (see image) to look for just images or videos etc.



Google's spell checker automatically uses the most common spelling of a given word, whether or not you spell it correctly.

Dictionary: Put *define* in front of any word to see its definition.

Unit conversions: Enter any conversion, like 3 dollars in euros.

Wikipedia: useful for a first stab at a definitive information on a subject.