Limiting your search

Even with a search strategy and key words in place, you can get an overwhelming number of results. Limiting your search using a few simple techniques is a great way to get straight to the information you need, because it makes your searching more specific.

- Use quotation marks ("_____") around a phrase to limit your search to results using those words in that order. For example, if you search for “Anzac legend” would leave out results that featured “Yesterday, Mum made Anzac biscuits and I finished reading Legend by Marie Lu”
- Use AND or a + sign to add terms to your search. For example, “Australian society” +Gallipoli
- Use NOT or a – sign to exclude terms from your search. For example, Anzac NOT recipe
- Use OR when you aren’t sure which term will be used. For example, “World War I” OR “First World War”
- Use a wildcard (usually *, but it depends on the site) to fill in gaps. For example, World War * would bring up results for both World War I and World War II, along with many other results. It can also be used to search for different endings to a word. A search for histor* would bring up results for history, historian, historiography, histories, historically, historical and so on.
- You can group these together to make your search even more specific. For example, “Australian society” AND Gallipoli OR Anzac NOT biscuits

An easy way of limiting your search is to use the advanced search function.