Search Tips:

Phrase Searching

At the end of this module you will know how to effectively search for a phrase.

Phrase searching is used to make your search more precise by using quotes around a phrase, so that it looks for words in that exact order. Pet therapy finds the words “pet” and “therapy” anywhere in a record. “Pet therapy” finds those two words in this exact order in a record.

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In this example, I’m using the library database, Academic Search Complete, to begin my research on pet therapy with humans. I got a lot of hits...

...but it's not until I see the fourth hit that I see anything having to do with what I was thinking about. I'm going to put my phrase in quotes to make my search more efficient. I dramatically reduced the number of results I get, but they are much more targeted. Another cool thing about phrase searching is that it works in Google searches too.
Almost every database you search will have an “advanced search” screen and a Help page. It is worth the time to read the Help tips in databases to make you a more efficient researcher.

You should now know how to use phrase searching as part of your search strategy.