



HARVARD LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY

LEXISNEXIS & WESTLAW CONNECTORS & EXPANDERS

LexisNexis and Westlaw connectors and expanders allow you to specify a logical relationship between your search terms. With a complex search statement, you must consider the order in which connectors are processed. Processing does not run from left to right. Connectors are processed in the following order of priority:

- LexisNexis: or; /n; pre/n; not/n; /s; /p; /seg; and; and not
- Westlaw: space (or); +n; /n; +s; /s; +p; /p; &; %

When in doubt, use parentheses to group terms & connectors in your search statement.

Selected LexisNexis & Westlaw Connectors & Expanders		
To Retrieve Documents with:	LexisNexis	Westlaw
Search terms as a phrase ¹	Quotes not necessary	""
Either or both search terms in the same document	or	[a space] <i>or or</i>
The first search term preceding the second by “n” terms	pre/n	+n
Search terms within “n” terms of each other	/n	/n
The first term preceding the second within the same sentence	No equivalent	+s
Search terms in the same sentence	/s	/s
The first term preceding the second in the same paragraph	No equivalent	+p
Search terms in the same paragraph	/p	/p
Search terms in the same segment (any segment)	w/seg	No equivalent
Search terms in the same document	and or &	& or and
Search terms in the same document but not within “n” terms of each other	not/n	No equivalent
To exclude documents containing a term (use extreme caution; place at end of search statement)	and not	% or but not
Root Expander: search terms beginning with the same root	!	!
Universal Character: use an asterisk within a term as a single character wildcard, use one or more asterisks at the end of a term to specify the term’s maximum length ²	*	*
All forms of a compound or hyphenated word	No equivalent	Use the hyphenated form
All forms of an abbreviation or initialism	No equivalent	Use the form with periods but no spaces (f.b.i.)
Search term appearing at least “n” times in document	atleastn(term)	atleastn(term) ³
Search only the plural or singular form of a term ⁴	plural(term), singular(term)	Use the plural form, #term

¹ With Westlaw, a phrase must be in quotes otherwise the space between terms is interpreted as an “or” connector.

² For example, use the search term dr*nk to locate drink, drank, drunk, etc.; use the search term bank*** to locate bank, banker, banking, etc. but not bankruptcy

³ The Westlaw *atleast* command may not be available in all databases. See also the *Term Frequency* feature.

⁴ With LexisNexis, use any form of a noun to automatically locate its singular, plural, and possessive forms (only works when plural form is regular). With Westlaw, use the singular form to automatically locate the plural and possessive forms (works with most irregular plurals). With Westlaw, the plural form retrieves only the plural form. Use # in front of a term to locate only its singular form.