

Westlaw® Canada

Quick Reference Card

Determining Your Best Search Method

To help make your online research as complete and efficient as possible, Westlaw Canada offers three search methods – Custom Search Templates, Terms and Connectors and Natural Language.

Which search method is best for your needs is determined by several factors including the type of information you are looking for or your expertise in using Westlaw Canada. *If you are not able to retrieve the documents you want with one method, you may want to try another.*

Custom Search Templates

These easy-to-use Custom Search Templates are designed to help you search frequently used information such as case law, legislation, The Canadian Abridgment, Canadian Encyclopedic Digest, Index to Canadian Legal Literature, policy documents and commentary. Custom Search Templates are customized by document type and accessible from the Home page. They contain pre-defined search fields, selection boxes and drop-down lists to help you refine your search and they all function in a similar way.

After selecting a Custom Search Template from the Home page, enter your search terms and, if you wish, limit your query by various fields or other restrictors. There is no need to know specific search syntax, Boolean connector symbols, or database identifiers.

1 Enter your search terms and select a connector from *The results must contain* drop-down list. *Alternatively*, enter your search terms and Boolean connectors in the **Search full text for** box and leave *The results must contain* drop-down list at its default of **Any of these terms**.

2 Restrict your query by using pre-defined fields, selection boxes and drop-down list.

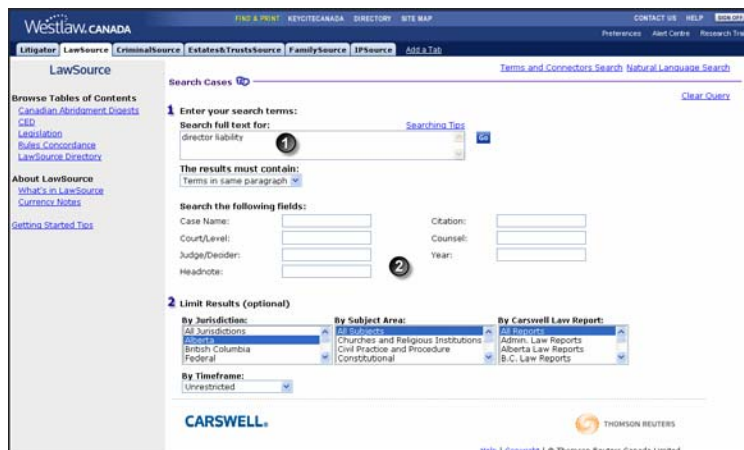


Figure 1

Terms and Connectors

The Terms and Connectors search method is based on Boolean logic. Enter a query consisting of key terms from your issue and connectors specifying the relationship between those terms. To access the Terms and Connectors search page, click the [Terms and Connectors](#) link located in the top right corner of any Custom Search Template or click a database name listed in the Database Directory.

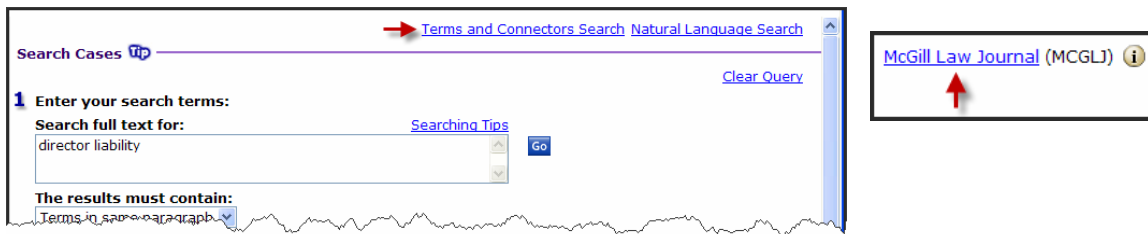


Figure 2

- 1 Database name and identifier.
- 2 Enter your search terms and Boolean connectors.
- 3 Use these drop-down lists to restrict your search.
- 4 Select any combination of these expanders/connectors for your search.

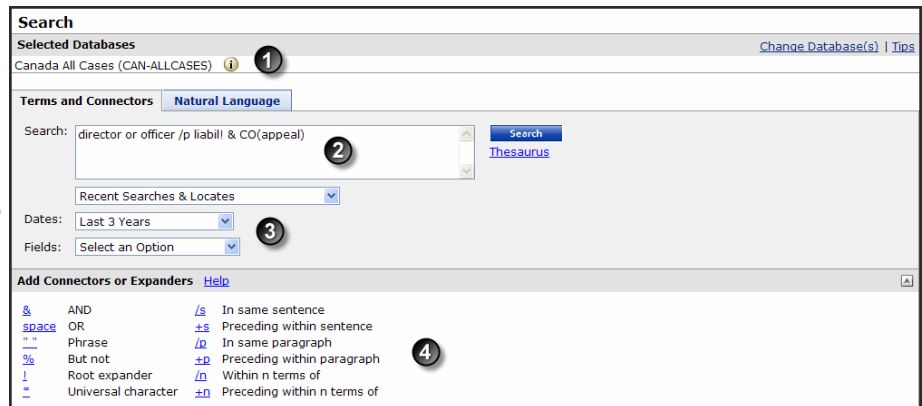


Figure 3

Natural Language

The Natural Language searching allows you to use plain English in your query to retrieve relevant documents within a specific database. You do not need to know specific search syntax or connector symbols. It is best used when you are searching broad concepts and your Custom Search Template or Terms and Connectors search is not retrieving the information you are looking for. Enter a description of your issue and Westlaw Canada will display a maximum of 100 documents that statistically best match the concepts in your description. Westlaw Canada identifies legal phrases in your description (such as *adverse possession* and *state of mind*), removes common terms (such as *is* and *for*), and generates variations of terms (such as *defamed*, *defaming* and *defamation* from *defame*). Natural Language searching is available in most databases. To perform a Natural Language search click [Natural Language Search](#) located in the top right corner of any Custom Search Template.



Figure 4

- 1 Use plain English for your query.
- 2 Restrict your search with the drop-down list and fields.

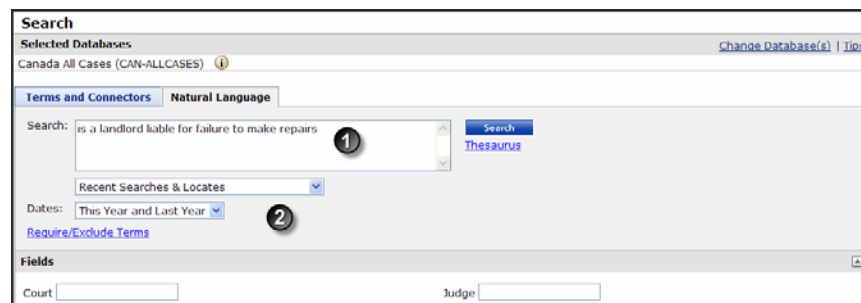


Figure 5