Search for names, numbers, and year ranges

Learn how to search for names, numbers, and year ranges in FirstSearch.

**Search for names**

Enter names in Last(Family) First(Given) Middle format for most databases. Do not include a comma between the last and first name.

Use a phrase index when searching for common names. A phrase index contains groups of words or names exactly as they appear in the record. For example, an author phrase index will contain the exact phrase:

```
Bates John Louis
```

rather than the individual names as separate entries:

```
Bates and John and Louis
```

You can identify phrase indexes by the inclusion of the word "phrase" in the index title (Author Phrase).

When searching with a term index, FirstSearch will return results in which each name matches, regardless of the proximity. Thus, a term search for:

```
Bates John Louis
```

may return a result for a book written by:

```
Karen Bates, John Q. Allen, and Robert Louis Kim
```

A search with a term index works well if you are unsure of the order of names or the names are uncommon or contain accents or diacritical marks. Term indexes do not include the word "phrase" in the index title (Author).

**Search for numbers**

To search using a number (such as a Dewey Decimal Call Number) means you must have a specific number before you search. You can usually find that number more easily within a record rather than through a browse of the indexes. Numbers that can be used as search tools are most often used with other search terms to refine a search.

Certain number types such as the Dewey Decimal Call Number can produce results in a search, even though you may not have the full call number. A portion of the number may yield information on a group of items similar to the terms for which you are searching. If your search produces too many results, browse the index for a number that more narrowly defines your search topic.

Browse the online help glossary if you need an index definition. Use the Glossary link at the top of the help window to...
access the glossary.

**Search for a range of years**

To search for items dated within a range of years, use the mathematical symbols for "less than" < or "greater than" > with a year index. You can also combine the symbols with an equal sign to create an open date range ("less than or equal to" <=..."greater than or equal to" >=). When combining symbols, you must use the correct symbol order as shown in the table below.

To search for a closed date range, use a hyphen - between the start and end dates.

Larger ranges may result in a FirstSearch error. Reduce the size of the range to continue your search.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>REPRESENTS</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>From/to</td>
<td>yr: 1998-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>Greater than</td>
<td>yr: &gt;1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;=</td>
<td>Greater than or equal to</td>
<td>yr: &gt;=1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>Less than</td>
<td>yr: &lt;1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;=</td>
<td>Less than or equal to</td>
<td>yr: &lt;=1883</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each FirstSearch database has a unique set of indexes. For those that include the year index, year formats can vary. Some allow you to include month, others do not. See the list of indexes and examples for WorldCat at [Index labels and examples](https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/Search/Special_search_methods/Search_for_names...).