How do reader groups work?

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We're often asked if it's possible to have content for different readers in the same knowledge base. For example, maybe you have both internal support documentation as well as customer-facing product documentation in the same knowledge base. Or, you might have a knowledge base that contains categories for different departments or teams in your organization.

If you'd like to segregate content--or display different content to different readers--you can do this by using Reader Groups and the Restrict to Groups option in the content itself.

There are three basic steps in this process:
- **Create reader groups**
- Assign readers to those reader groups (set their **Reader Group Access** by **creating/editing an individual reader**, **bulk-creating** new readers, or **bulk-editing** existing readers)
- **Restrict content to reader groups**

Let's say I have a category of documentation called KO Product Support, and that category is restricted to a reader group called KO support.

If I'm a member of KO support, I'll see this content in the table of contents, search, etc.

If I'm **not** a member of KO support:
- I won't see the KO Product Support category in the table of contents or on the homepage
- If I type to search, the typeahead search won't show me any of the articles in KO Product Support
- If I complete a full search, the search results won't show me any of the articles in KO Product Support
- If someone gives me the direct link to an article in KO Product Support, I'll only see a message that I don't have access to that content

In short, the content isn't something I can find or discover on my own, and even with a direct link, I can't access it.

Can I set reader group restrictions for an entire category?

Yes! If you restrict a category to certain groups, all of that category's content (subcategories + articles) will automatically inherit the reader group restrictions you set. We call these **Inherited Reader Groups.** Any reader groups that an article or subcategory is inheriting are shown in the **Inherited Restrictions** section.

There's also an up arrow icon in the **Restrict Viewing to Reader Groups** list to identify inherited groups:

Inherited Reader Groups will have an up arrow in the Add More Restrictions

> **Topic articles may require extra work**
> If you're using inherited reader groups and topic articles, you may need to specifically check the boxes in the **Add More Restrictions** section to have topic articles display in PDFs. Refer to Reuse an article within another article for more information.

Can I override restrictions inherited from a category?

No. You can add additional groups in the **Add More Restrictions** section, but you can't remove any of the inherited reader groups.

If you do add a group in the **Add More Restrictions** section, a reader must belong to that group as well as the **Inherited Reader Groups**. Refer to the following section for more information on that behavior.

If an article or category has multiple group restrictions selected, what happens?

The short answer is: it's a little complicated.

You might have multiple groups selected by having:

1. Multiple groups displayed in the **Inherited Reader Groups** section.

2. Multiple checkboxes selected in the **Restrict Viewing to Reader Groups** section.

3. One or more groups in the **Inherited Reader Groups** AND the **Add More Restrictions** section.

For the first two scenarios, the behavior depends on your knowledge base's **Reader group logic** settings.

To view and update this logic:

1. Go to **Security and access > Security settings**.

2. The **Reader group logic** is in the **Reader options** section.

Two Reader Group Logic options are supported: Inclusive and Exclusive.

> **Use inclusive**
> Inclusive is the KnowledgeOwl default. We recommend using this setting.

- **Inclusive:** Readers can see content when they belong to at least one designated group (multiple groups are treated like an "or")

- **Example:** An article is restricted to groups "Apples" and "Bananas".
  - Reader in Apples group only: sees the article
  - Reader in Bananas group only: sees the article
  - Reader in both Apples and Bananas group: sees the article
  - Reader in the Pineapples group: won't see the article
- **Exclusive:** Readers must belong to all designated groups (multiple groups are treated like an "and")

  - **Example:** An article is restricted to groups "Apples" and "Bananas".
    - Reader in Apples group only: won't see the article
    - Reader in Bananas group only: won't see the article
    - Reader in both Apples and Bananas group: sees the article
    - Reader in the Pineapples group: won't see the article

For the third scenario:
- Having one or more groups in the **Inherited Reader Groups** AND the **Add More Restrictions** section

The Inclusive/Exclusive logic still applies within each of those sections, but the sections are treated as a combination: a reader must belong to at least one of the **Inherited Reader Groups** AND one of the **Add More Restrictions** groups.

Example: An article has **Inherited Reader Groups** for the KO Authors Only group and has the Owlcademy MC Students group checked in the **Add More Restrictions** section:

- Reader in KO Authors Only group only: won't see article
- Reader in Owlcademy MC Students group only: won't see article
- Reader in both KO Authors Only and Owlcademy MC Students groups: sees the article
- Reader in KO Authors Only and Contractor groups: won't see the article