



# Basic authentication

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Some third-party tools, especially AI-based tools or crawlers, prefer to use basic authentication (basic auth). Basic auth uses an email address and a password, similar to [readers](#) set up directly in KnowledgeOwl.

Basic auth can be useful if you have your knowledge base access restricted in one format, but you'd like to give a third-party tool its own reader account to authenticate with. We see this most often used for tools that crawl your knowledge base for various purposes (such as Amazon's [Kendra](#) or other chatbot/search integrators).

To enable basic authentication in KnowledgeOwl, you need to enable the overall setting in **Security and access > Security settings** and then configure an individual reader account to use basic auth. Your third-party tool can then use those reader account credentials and a special basic login page ( `/basic-login` ) to more easily crawl your knowledge base. Refer to the more detailed instructions below.

## Knowledge base setup

First, enable basic authentication for your knowledge base overall:

1. Go to **Security and access > Security settings**.
2. In the **Authentication settings** section, check the **Allow basic authentication** box to **Enable designated readers to log in via basic access authentication**:

Check the box to Enable designated readers to log in via basic access authentication

3. **Save your changes.**

Basic auth is now turned on for your knowledge base and the `/basic-login` page is now available.

## Reader setup

Once you have basic auth enabled for the knowledge base as a whole, designate a reader account to use that authentication:

1. Go to **Security and access > Readers (or Account > Readers)**.
2. Choose whether you want to [create a new reader account](#) to use with basic auth or edit an existing reader account to use as your basic auth account. Be sure the reader account is set up with a self-administered password.

3. Once you're in the **Edit Reader** screen viewing the details of the reader account you'd like to use, check the **Basic Authentication** box to **Allow this reader to log in via basic access authentication**:

Check the box to Allow this reader to log in via basic access authentication.

4. Be sure the reader has access to the appropriate knowledge base(s) and/or **reader group(s)**.
5. **Save your changes.**

Your basic auth reader account exists. To test it, go to your knowledge base homepage and add `/basic-login` to the URL. For example, here on our Support KB, our homepage URL is `https://support.knowledgeowl.com/help` so we'd use `https://support.knowledgeowl.com/help/basic-login` . Enter the basic auth reader's email address and password. Once you've confirmed you can login, follow the instructions in the next section to use basic auth.

## Use basic auth

To use your basic auth reader account, set up your third-party tool using these settings:

- **Account:** Add the basic auth reader account's email address and password as the username and password for your tool.
- **Login URL:** Instead of using our built-in reader login page or any SSO or remote authentication login pages, copy your knowledge base's homepage URL and add `/basic-login` to the URL. For example, here on our Support KB, our homepage URL is `https://support.knowledgeowl.com/help` so we'd use `https://support.knowledgeowl.com/help/basic-login` .

We recommend using this basic-login URL instead of other login URLs because many HTTP libraries that use basic auth expect an initial 401 response and a specific set of header responses that our other login options don't support. The basic-login page applies special logic to return the 401 response and use the "Authorization: Basic..." request header on all subsequent responses, which should ensure your third-party tool can properly crawl your knowledge base.



### Basic auth reader required

The `/basic-login` page only works if you have basic auth turned on in your knowledge base and you use a basic auth reader's credentials. Other reader accounts or SSO accounts can't use this login page.