

How search works: the basics

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When you publish an article, or you save changes to an already-published article, we reindex that content for search. (We also do this for [Custom content categories](#) and [Topic display categories](#)!)

We will automatically index words entered in these fields:

- Title
- Permalink
- Body
- PDFs
- Meta description
- Search phrases



So as long as you are placing keywords in your article's title, permalink, body, or meta description, you don't need to do anything extra for that content to show up in search; it just does. 😊

When a reader interacts with your knowledge base, they'll see two main forms of search:

- **Autosuggest search:** As a reader types the phrase, a dropdown will appear below the search bar, showing up to 10 relevant articles.
 - These suggestions are ranked based on the title, permalink, meta description, and search phrases only.
 - We ignore body and PDFs here to keep the autosuggest search very responsive.
- **Full search:** Once a reader hits Enter or clicks the Search icon after typing in a phrase, they'll be taken to the full search results page.
 - These results support pagination and factor all of the indexed fields into a ranking algorithm.

Since autosuggest uses a shorter list of indexed fields, the results you see in autosuggest may differ from what you see in full search.

Here is a breakdown of the main differences between autosuggest and full search.

Autosuggest	Full search
Suggests below the search bar as you type	Displays on search results page after hitting enter
Searches title, search phrases , permalink, and meta description (no body or PDFs for speed)	Searches title, body, pdfs, search phrases , permalink, and meta description
Doesn't use synonyms	Uses synonyms
Limited to top 10 suggestions	Displays full results with pagination

Autosuggest	Full search
Highlights differences in title	Highlights matches in blurb

There's also a third search option:

- **Tags search:** Tags aren't one of the fields that we automatically index as part of main search.
 - The tags search is a separate search altogether, and will just pull a list of articles with the searched tag.
 - A reader can perform a tags search by beginning their search with a colon--the autosuggest list will suggest tags they can search for.

The screenshot shows the KnowledgeOwl search interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search for articles...". To the right of the search bar are links for "Release notes", "Status page", and "Contact support". Below the search bar, the heading "Search results..." is displayed. A search input field contains the text ":custom.html". Below the search bar, the text "Total results: 5" is shown. To the right of the results count, there is a "Sort by:" dropdown menu set to "Relevance". The search results are listed as follows:

- 1. Add ratings to individual articles**
Last Updated: 12/28/2022 in Features » Ratings
Tags: custom.html
- 2. Add ratings to all articles**
Last Updated: 12/28/2022 in Features » Ratings
Tags: custom.html
- 3. Add category icons to your homepage category panels**
Last Updated: 02/15/2023 in Look and feel » Homepage look and feel
Tags: custom.html
- 4. Update your article actions merge code**
Last Updated: 12/28/2022 in Look and feel » Article look and feel
Tags: custom.html
- 5. Remove the PDF, print, or email icon from all articles**
Last Updated: 12/28/2022 in Look and feel » Article look and feel
Tags: custom.html article-actions

Sample search for the "custom.html" tag