Keyword search

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Keyword search is the default search type in your knowledge base.

To begin a keyword search, enter a word or phrase in the search bar.

Keyword searches:

- **Support an autosuggest search: As the reader enters words, up to 10 articles will automatically appear as suggestions below the search box. If a reader selects one of these articles, they navigate directly to it.**
- **Support a full search result page: If a reader enters a word or phrase and hits Enter or selects the search icon, they navigate to the full Search results page. This page provides more sorting, pagination, and filtering options. Each article displays with some metadata, including its location in the knowledge base, any tags added to it, and an Article blurb.**

Below, we walk through some of the finer points of keyword searches.

Autosuggest search

When you start typing a word or phrase into a search bar and the bar immediately suggests searches or resources, that's autosuggest search.

In your knowledge base, autosuggest search will suggest up to 10 articles based on the word or phrase you've entered.

The goal of autosuggest search is provide the reader with intelligent article suggestions based on what they've begun to search.

What's searched

To keep autosuggest working as quickly as possible, we only search within the article title, search phrases, permalink, and meta description. You can further limit these fields in the Search fields setting for your knowledge base.

How it works

We index N-grams, or continuous sequences of characters, from these search fields.

For example, if I have an article called "Owl habits", we would index a series of N-grams like "o", "ow", "owl", and so on. This way, the search can instantly suggest possible matches as the reader types.

We check through all the searchable fields for possible matches and calculate a relevancy score. The field with the best possible match gets a boost, but we also factor in other matching fields as well as any customized search weights.

Autosuggest doesn't require an exact match to suggest relevant articles, and you can choose to make it fuzzy (tolerant of typos).

Autosuggest results differ from full search results

Autosuggest and full search index differently fields and therefore score relevance differently. Refer to Autosuggest versus full search results for more information.

Full search results

Once you enter a search word or phrase and hit Enter or select the search icon, the full **Search results** page opens. The goal of full search results is to provide the reader with all of the relevant results.

These results are calculated using more search fields and their Search field weights than Autosuggest search.

Full search results use all the search fields that Autosuggest uses, but adds to those
- **The article's entire body (the full contents of the editor)**
- **The contents of any PDFs within the article**

As a result, it may return a different order of results than the autosuggest search. Refer to Autosuggest versus full text search for a more detailed explanation of the differences.

Many of the reader controls in **KB settings > Search and synonyms > General settings** impact the full search results display, including Pagination and Sorting.

Exact match searches

Turn a regular keyword search into an exact match search by surrounding your search term with "quotation marks."

Without quotation marks, the keyword search results:
- **Match articles with any of the words or phrases in them, in any order**
- **Apply the fuzzy search level of typo tolerance**

With quotation marks, the exact match search results:
- **Match articles with the exact phrase you enter, including any typos.**
- **For a multi-word phrase, match only articles containing the exact phrase in the exact order.**

For example, if Linus searches nocturnal owl without quotation marks, search results will include articles containing:
- **nocturnal**
- **owl**
- **nocturnal owl**

- owl nocturnal

If he searches `"nocturnal owl"` (with quotation marks), search results include articles containing only "nocturnal owl."

> **Full search results** only
> Exact match search doesn't apply to **autosuggest search** results.

Autosuggest versus full text search

Autosuggest search results don't show the same articles in the same order as the full search results.

Each search works a little differently:
- **Autosuggest**: When a reader starts typing into the search bar, search automatically suggests possible articles based on what they've typed.
- **Full text search**: When the reader hits Enter or selects the search icon, they're taken to a search results page which provides more detailed search results.

The reason these searches return different results is that they're optimized for different things and pull their results using different fields. Here's a breakdown of the differences:

Autosuggest	Full text search
Suggests below the search bar as you type	Displays on search results page after hitting Enter
Designed for speed	Designed for thoroughness
Can search title, search phrases, permalink, and meta description	Can search title, body, PDFs, search phrases, permalink, and meta description
Doesn't search synonyms	Searches synonyms
Limited to top 10 suggestions	Displays 20 results per page, may include pagination and sorting
Highlights matches in title	May highlight matches in article blurb