

Google Tips for Genealogists

Google.com – Search General Tips:

- Search for an explicit phrase
Enclose the phrase in quotation marks.
Example: "Mary Lincoln"
- Exclude search terms
To exclude a word from the search, precede it with a minus sign.
Example: "Mary Lincoln" -Abraham
- Search a specific site that doesn't have its own search
Add "site:" after the search terms.
Example: tips site:rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cacvgg
- Look for a word and similar words or synonyms
Precede the word or phrase with a tilde.
Example: ~Genealogy
- Look for a specific document type
After the search term, add "filetype:" followed by the document type.
Example: "Azores Genealogy" filetype:pdf
- Look for this **or** that
Separate the search terms by "OR." The "OR" must be capitalized.
Example: Azores OR Faial
- Phone Listings
Precede the phone number with "phonebook".
Example: phonebook:555-555-1234
- Area Code Lookup
Just type "area code" and the code in the search box to find out the location.
Example: area code 414
- Range of numbers
To look for something within a certain range of numbers, including years, type two periods between the numbers.
Example: "James Buchanan" 1928..1940
- Definitions
Type "define:" followed by the word.
Example: define:genealogy

Google Toolbar Items

Images

Search by using words. Some of the above tips won't work for searching image.

- Search by uploading an image for comparison
- Search by providing the URL for an image.
- Refine the search using the filters in the left menu.

News

- You can search current news sources, as well as archives of newspapers.
- For old newspapers, click on "Archives" and limit your search by dates.
- Other filters appear on the left menu.

Books

Google has a large collection of digitized books.

- Searches can be refined by date ranges in addition to the terms. The listing will tell you what page in the book includes the search term.
- You can sort by relevance or by date.
- The books available include free books, print books, ebooks and books for sale.

Maps

Google doesn't have much on historical maps, but you can use Maps to see the current locations of sites, such as churches, that might be of interest to you. Google may also have pictures of the particular location, including sites around the world.

Explore the "More" button on Google for other interesting areas to search.