Google for academic research Part 5: Some search techniques
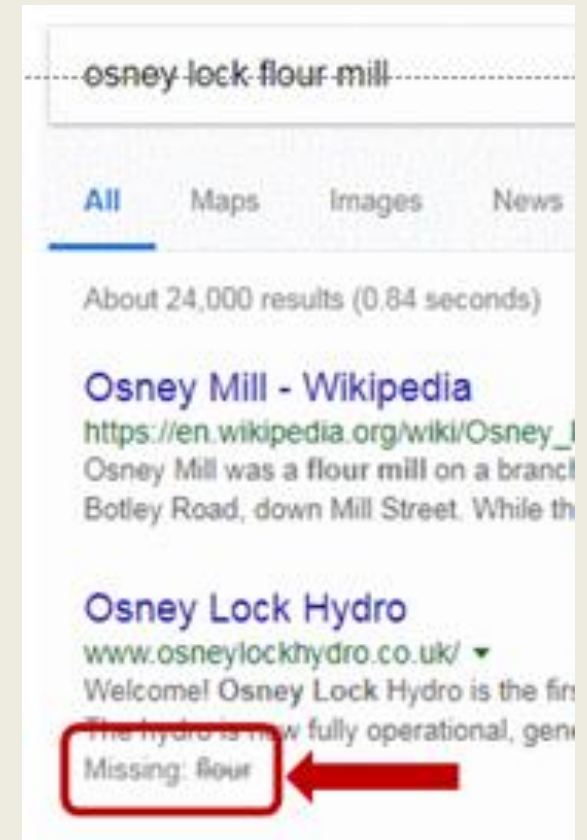
Although it is a good idea to apply some of the search techniques from library literature databases to your Google search be aware that Google will not always respect your search strategy.

For example, adding in further terms to narrow down your topic is a good idea, but:
- Google will ignore terms if it thinks you do not have enough results.
  - Most of the time it will tell you by noting the missing word/s underneath each result (but it doesn't always!)

Exact phrase searching is useful in Google as it is in the library literature databases. Use:

- "…" around terms, phrases, names, titles of documents, etc.

(but it doesn't always work!)

Google will automatically look for:
- Variations of words you have used
  - e.g. prevent, prevents, prevented, prevention
- Synonyms of words you have used
  - e.g. prevent, stop, avert, block, halt, arrest, intercept

But you won't know which variations and synonyms it is using, and it gives you different numbers of results and differently ranked results depending which synonym you use.

You may be used to using * to truncate your search terms.
The asterisk * is used very differently by Google (because it is already truncating for you).
Google uses * to stand in for one or more words:
- e.g. european * policy picks up:
  - european education policy, european health policy, european privacy policy etc.