

# ADVANCED SEARCH

## Tips and Tricks

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## Introduction

Are you having trouble finding what you need in our catalog? This guide will:

- Help you choose good search terms;
- Introduce you to subject searching;
- Introduce you to advanced search;
- Provide an overview of Boolean searching;
- Help you identify what information you'll need to supply staff if you have questions about an item.

Please see [our research guides page](#) for information on searching our resources including:

- Basic Search: Getting Started Searching our Catalog;
- Is It Online? Remote Research Options;
- Research in Person: Appointment Guide.

Keep in mind that the catalog is only one of our many access points, if it is relevant to your research, you should also consult:

- Our secondary databases (available remotely online):
  - [California Information File II](#)
  - [City Directory Database](#)
  - [Phonebook Database](#)
  - [Gladding McBean Collection Architecture Database](#)
- Our paper card files (available on-site only):
  - California Information File
  - Photo File
  - Map File

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us using our [ask-a-librarian service](#) or via an email to [cslcal@library.ca.gov](mailto:cslcal@library.ca.gov)

Enjoy your research!

## Basic Search Quick Start

Follow the steps below to get started with our catalog. For detailed start-up instructions, consult our “Basic Search” guide on [our research guides page](#).

- Go to the [library catalog](https://catalog.library.ca.gov): <https://catalog.library.ca.gov>
- Change your search default:
  - Click on the dropdown to the right of the search box on a desktop or above it on a mobile (circled on visual)
  - Select “Library Catalog”
- Search:
  - Type your search term into the search box (pointer on visual)
  - Hit enter or click on the magnifying glass (boxed on visual)

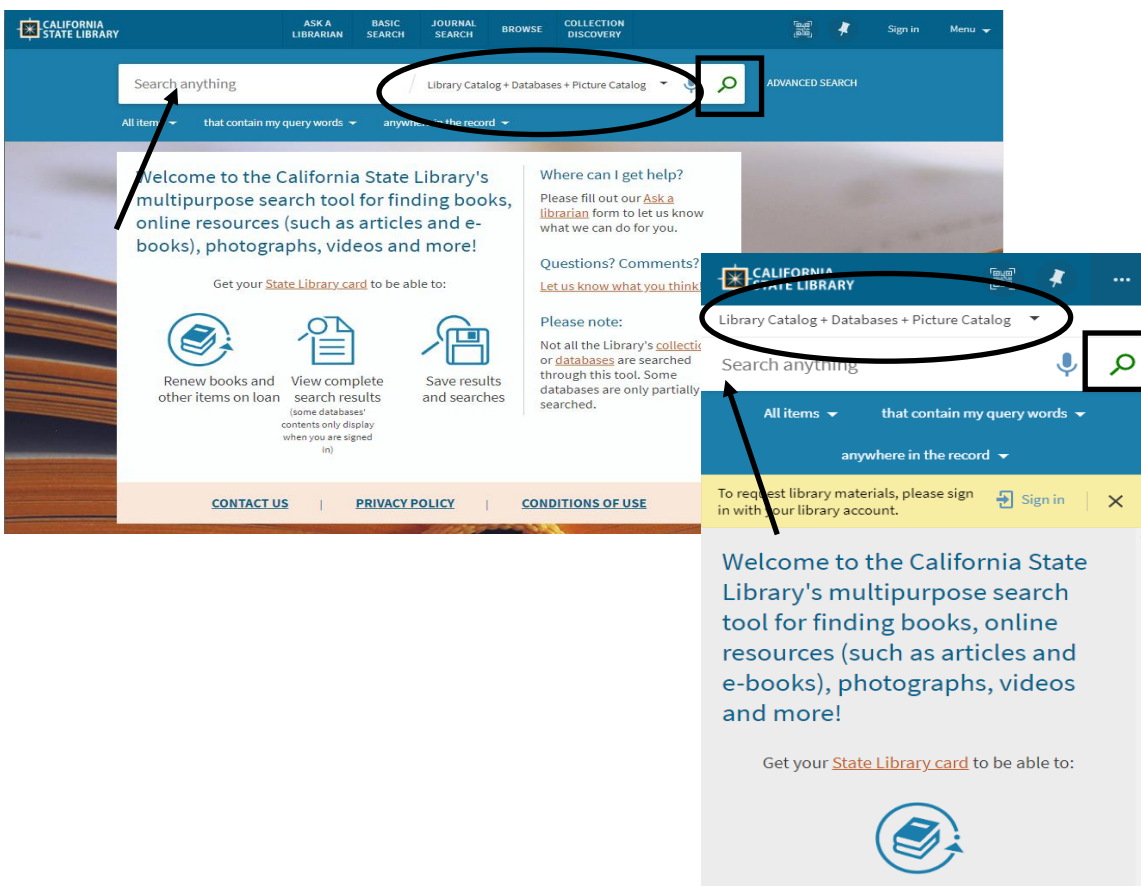


Figure 1: Desktop and mobile views of the library catalog, with the search default dropdown and search bars highlighted.

## Choosing Good Search Terms

If you are getting too many (or too few) results from your search, you may need to change your search terms. For example, using the search term “water,” here are some suggestions for how you can modify your search:

- **Geography:** If you are only interested in a certain area, add it to your search string.
  - **Example:** *Water Owens Valley* instead of *Water*
- **More specific search terms:** Choose a term likely to appear in items you are looking for, but not necessarily in more general items.
  - **Example:** *Groundwater* instead of *Water*
- **Broader search terms:** If you are not seeing results, consider a more general search.
  - **Example:** *Water Sacramento County* instead of *Water Elk Grove*
- **Quotation marks:** These tell the catalog to look for a whole phrase instead of individual words.
  - **Example:** *Water “Sacramento River”* instead of *Water Sacramento River*

### Still Stumped?

- Read an article on your topic to find keywords to use as search terms.
- Don’t just search for person or place names. Look for general publications like county histories or collections of vital records.
- Use [cslcal@library.ca.gov](mailto:cslcal@library.ca.gov) or our [ask-a-librarian](#) service to ask for help.

## Using Subject Headings

These pre-selected categories accompanying individual item records act like “Find similar items” searches in online shopping. Here is how to use them in your research:

- Find a relevant item in the catalog using the instructions on page 3
- Open the Item Record by clicking on the title
- Scroll down to the “Item Details” section (circled item on visual)
- Locate the “Subject” subsection (pointer on visual)
  - Look for a relevant subject heading and click on it.
- **Example:** Select “Sacramento River (Calif.) – History” from the record for the book: *The River That Never Was* to pull up more results on the Sacramento River

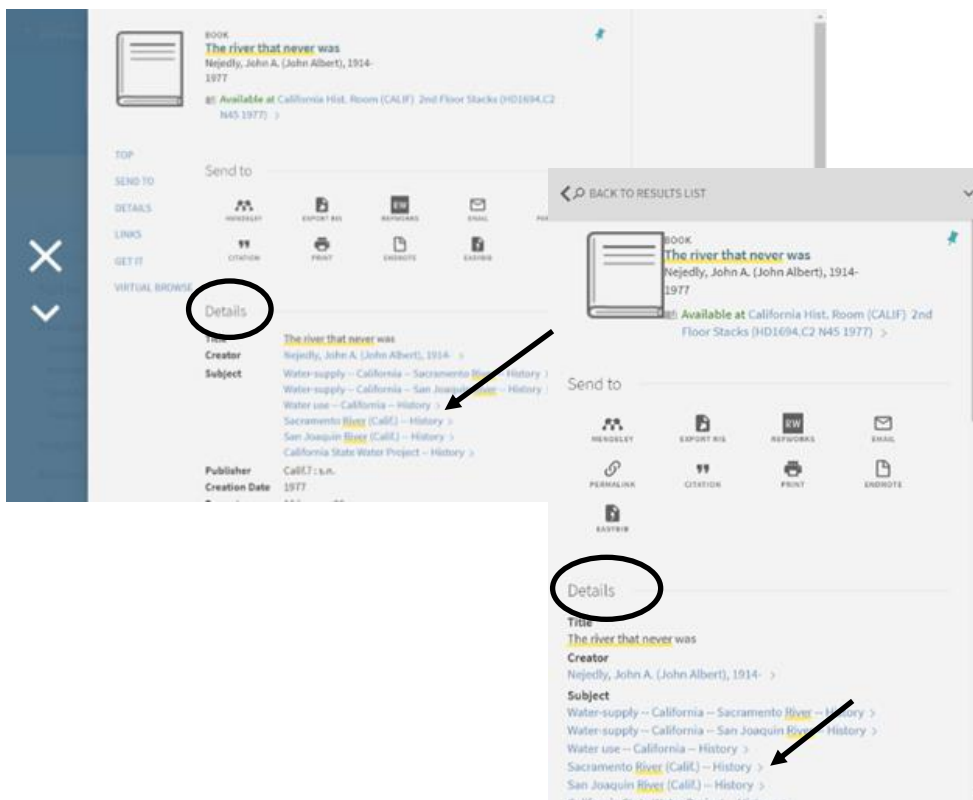


Figure 2: Desktop and mobile views of an item record with subject headings highlighted.

## Getting to Advanced Search

You can combine subject, keyword and even author searches using Advanced Search. Here is how to get to it:

### On a Desktop:

- Select “Advanced Search” to the right of the search box (circled on visual)

### On a Mobile:

- Tap the triple dot dropdown in the upper right corner (circled on visual)
- Select the “Advanced Search” option (pointer on visual)

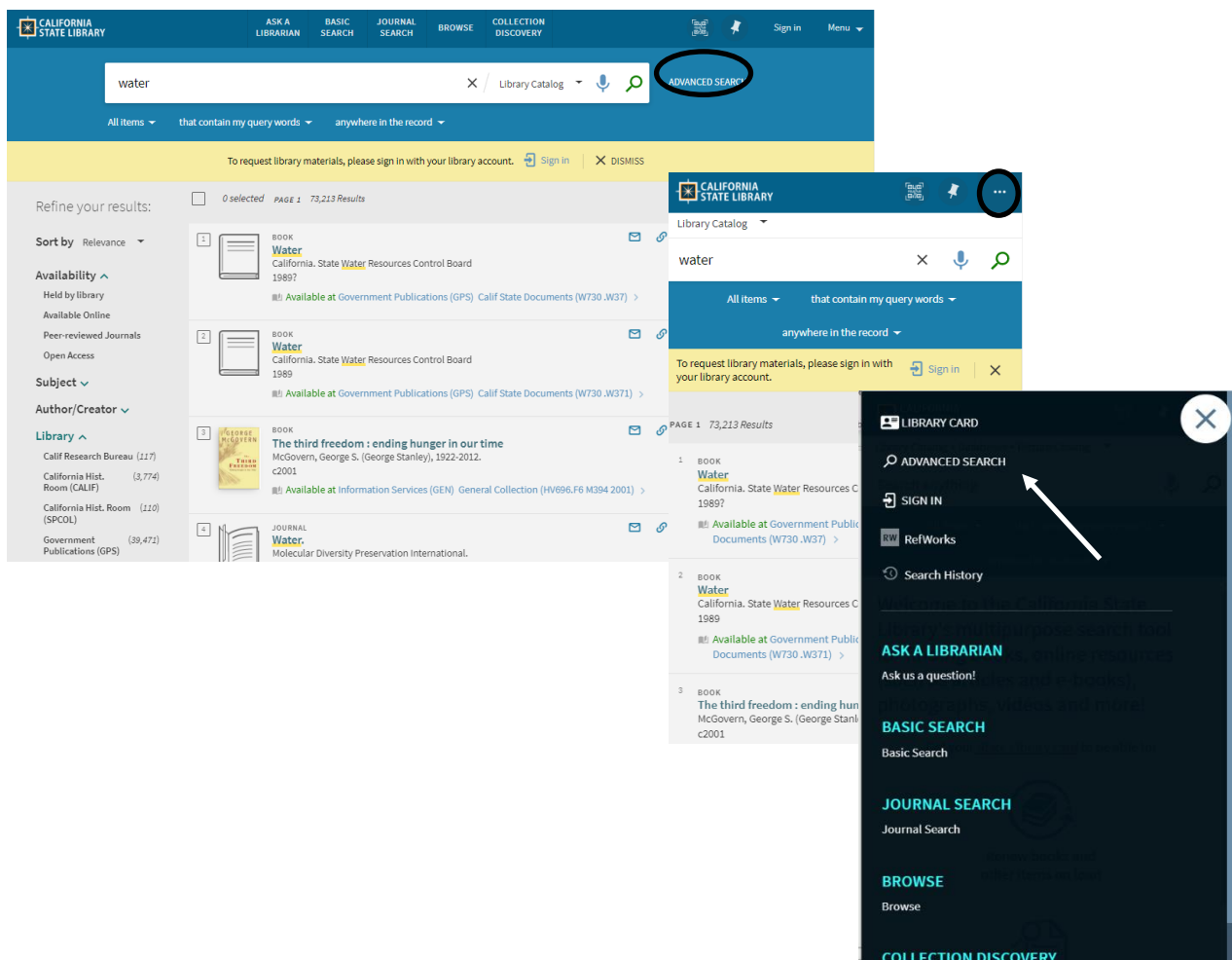


Figure 2: Desktop and mobile views of a search results list with the advanced search option highlighted. The pop-up for mobile is also shown.

## Advanced Search Parameters

To get the best results with advanced searching, you will need to adjust the search parameters. Here is how:

- **Search Profile (pointer on visual):**
  - Set this to “Libraries”
- **Two Main fields (circled on visual):**
  - Select the type of search you want to do (Keyword, title, subject etc.)
  - Select the level of precision (exact phrase or containing all the words)
  - Select the Boolean operator you want to use (AND, OR, or NOT)
  - Type in your search terms
- **Material type etc. fields (boxed on visual):**
  - Use these as desired by selecting from the dropdowns
- **Click Search**

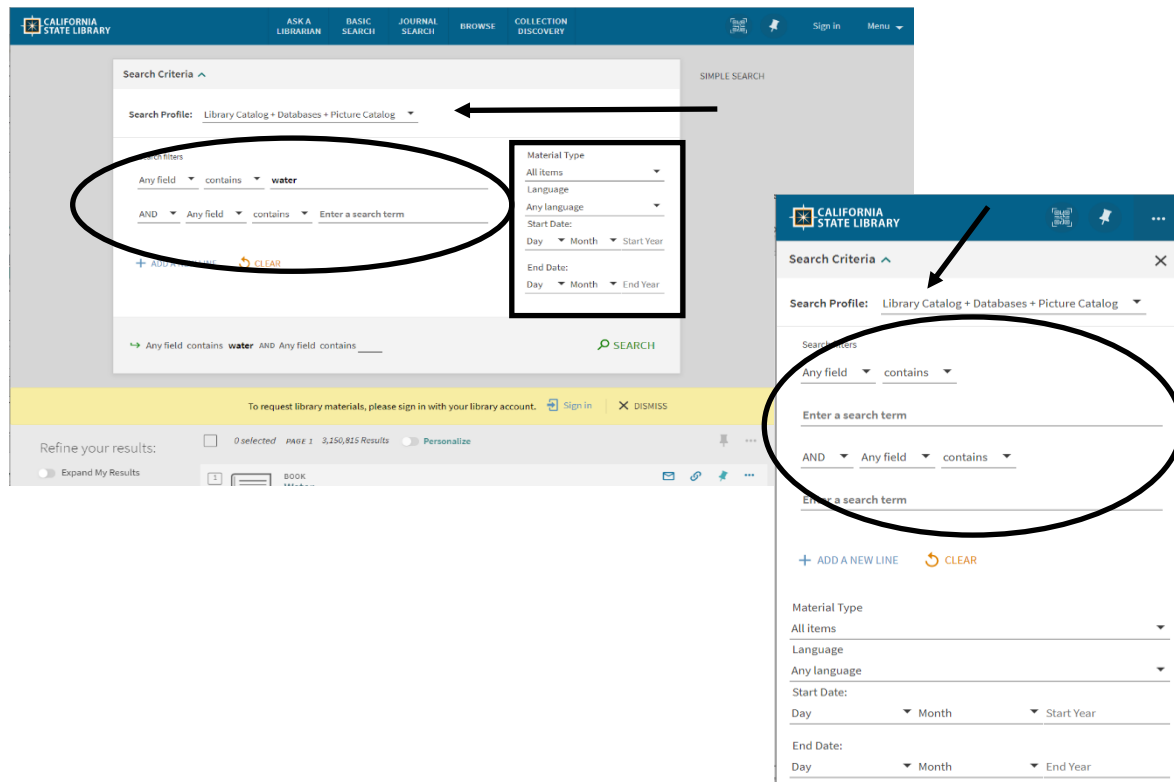


Figure 3: Desktop and mobile views of advanced search with the search profile and main search fields highlighted.



## Using Boolean Searching

The Advanced Search page allows you to change how your search functions by selecting different Boolean operations. Here is how to use them:

### Selecting Booleans

Use the left dropdown in the Advanced Search main fields to select a Boolean operator

### Boolean Types

- **AND:** You want all keywords in a record
- **OR:** You want either one keyword or the other (or both) in a record
- **NOT:** You don't want a keyword to appear – Be careful when using NOT, because it may exclude relevant results

### Order of Operations

- **By Default:** The catalog searches for terms in the order you type them
  - **Example:** “Water AND Power OR Electricity” = Everything with both “Water” and “Power” and everything with “Electricity” but not necessarily with “Water” or “Power”
- **Parentheses:** You can use parentheses to change the catalog's search order
  - **Example:** “Water AND (Power OR Electricity)” = Everything with both “Water” and “Power” and everything with “Water” and “Electricity”

Need help?

Please reach out via [ask-a-librarian](#) or [csllcal@library.ca.gov](mailto:csllcal@library.ca.gov)

## Contacting the Library About an Item

Do you want to see an item? Contact us via [cslcal@library.ca.gov](mailto:cslcal@library.ca.gov) or our [ask-a-librarian service](#) to explore access options. Please provide:

- Item Titles
- Call Numbers
- Permalinks

### To Find

- Pull up a detailed item record (click on the item title in the results list)
- **Title:** This appears in bold at the top of the item record. (Circled on visual).
- **Permalink:** Click on the chain symbol listed under “Send to” and labeled permalink. (Pointer on visual).
- **Call Number:** Scroll to locations. The call number is listed on the second line in the white box after the word “available.” (Boxed on visual).

### Special Note:

If you are trying to determine if something is online, consult our “Is It Online: Remote Research Options” guide on [our research guide page](#). If you are planning to see the item in person and are unsure of your next steps, consult our “Research in Person: Appointment Guide” also on [our research guide page](#).

Visuals on Following Page

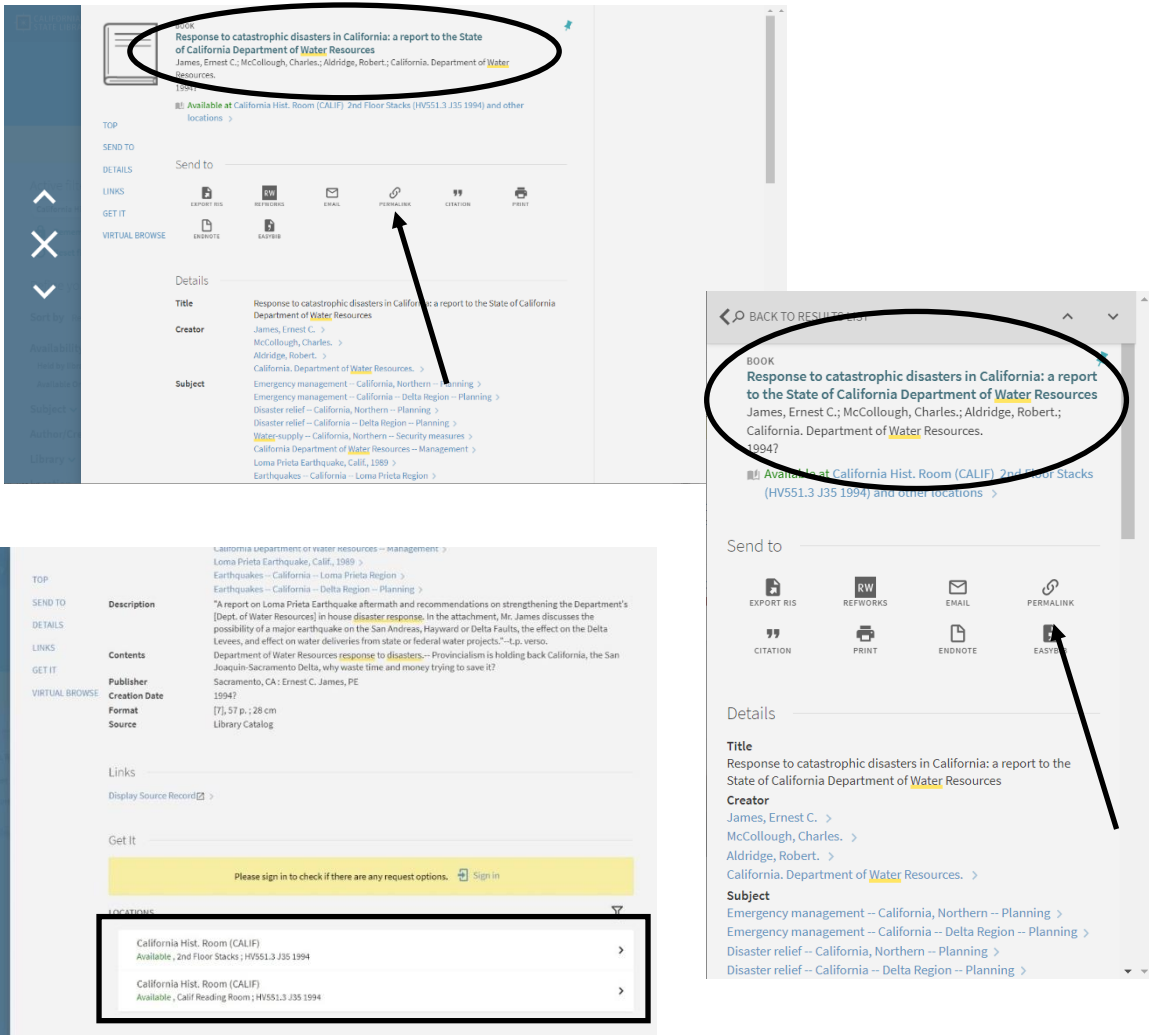


Figure 5: Desktop and mobile views of an item record with titles, permalinks, and call numbers highlighted.



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<http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/>

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