

Google Apps - Mail Search & Filter Tips



Quickly search through your email and google documents with just a few keystrokes using Google Mail's search functionality.

Getting Started

Simple Searches

- Move to the **Search Edit Box** near the top of the page next to the Gmail logo.



- Entering text and clicking **Search Mail and Docs** (or hitting enter) will display any emails that contain the word or combination of words you searched for below.

The defaults for searches are:

- All the messages in the All Mail folder are searched, that is, all the messages you're sent or received, but have not deleted. However, the Spam and Trash folders aren't searched.
- The matches are case insensitive
- The search words are matched against words in the subject, To, and From fields, and in the message text.

To perform more advanced searches, you can either use search operators in the text you enter into the search edit box, or you can use a form for entering various search options. These methods are described in the following two sections.

Advanced Searches

Search Operators

By default, words used for searching are matched against the words in all the fields of

the message and in the message text. Search operators allow you to specify a single field of the message for matching, and also other attributes of the message, for example whether it's been read, which folder it's in, etc.

Most of the operators are fairly straightforward, but the use of parentheses can be more difficult to grasp. The following sections give some simple examples, then some examples using parentheses, and finally the definitions of all the search operators.

Simple examples

- **is:unread**
 - Matches messages which are unread.
- **from:david**
 - Matches messages whose sender includes the name David.
- **from:pluto@disney.com**
 - Matches messages from the email address pluto@disney.com.
- **from:david subject:concert**
 - Matches messages whose sender includes the word david, and whose subject contains the word concert.
- **rock OR concert**
 - Matches messages which contain either rock or concert.
 - Note that OR must be spelled with capitals.
- **"audio books from librivox"**
 - Messages containing the exact phrase "audio books from librivox".

Examples using parentheses

Parentheses are used for grouping words to ensure that search expressions have the intended meaning. Here are some examples:

- **subject:(rock concert)**
 - Matches messages in which the subject contains both rock and concert. In the absence of the parentheses, it would match messages in which the subject contains rock, and in which concert occurred anywhere.
- **subject:"rock concert"**
 - Matches messages in which the subject contains the exact phrase "rock concert". Parentheses are not needed here, because the phrase acts as a single unit.

Examples using parentheses (Cont)

- **(rock concert) OR bananas**
 - Matches messages which either contain the words rock and concert, or contain the word bananas. Without parentheses the expression would match messages which either contain the words rock and concert, or contain the words rock and bananas.
- **from:((mickey mouse) OR (donald duck))**
 - Matches messages in which the from: field either contains mickey and mouse, or contains donald and duck. Note the need for both parentheses.

Definitions of all search operators

- **is:unread - is:read**
 - Messages which are unread or read respectively.
- **from:someone**
 - Specifies the sender. "someone" can be either one or more names, or an email address. Examples: from:susan, from:(mickey mouse), and from:pluto@disney.com.
- **to:someone**
 - Specifies the recipient. "someone" can be either one more names, or an email address.
- **subject:something**
 - Subject includes "something".
- **label:something**
 - Label is "something". If the label consists of more than one word, you have to put hyphens between the words, for example label:donald-duck.
- **has:attachment**
 - Messages with one or more attachments
- **filename:some filename**
 - Messages with the attachment "some filename", for example, filename:jokes.txt.
- **filename:some file type**
 - Messages with an attachment of the type "some file type", for example filename:pdf. OR matches something or something else. OR must be in capitals
- **quotes**
 - Matches an exact phrase, for example, "paris in the spring"
- **parentheses**
 - Used for grouping words, for example subject:(blues OR jazz).
- **Hyphen/minus sign (-)**
 - Not. For example, -bananas, messages which don't contain the word bananas.

Definitions of all search operators (Cont)

- **in:anywhere**
 - Messages anywhere in your account, including spam and trash which are excluded by default.
- **in:inbox, in:trash, in:spam, in:label**
 - Messages in inbox, trash, spam or label respectively
- **is:starred**
 - Messages which are starred
- **cc:someone, bcc:someone**
 - Specifies either cc: recipient or bcc: recipient. "someone" can be either one or more names or an email address.