

Medline, CINAHL, Psychology &
Behavioural Sciences Collection

EBSCO

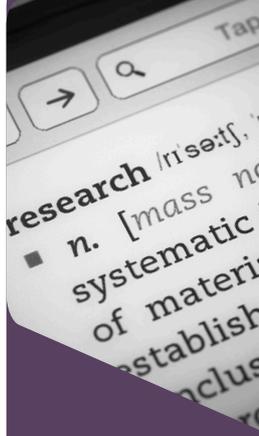
host

Full Guide



Searching for Evidence using EBSCOhost

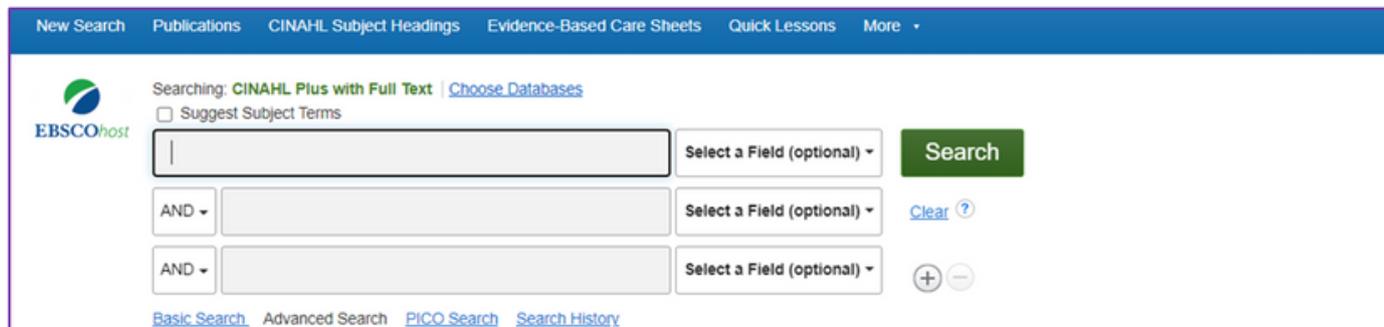
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What is EBSCOhost?

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EBSCOhost is a search platform that enables you to search a variety of medical databases including **CINAHL Plus** with full text, **MEDLINE Complete** and the **Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection**



The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'New Search', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Subject Headings', 'Evidence-Based Care Sheets', 'Quick Lessons', and 'More'. Below the navigation menu, the EBSCOhost logo is visible on the left. The main search area includes a search bar with the text 'Searching: CINAHL Plus with Full Text' and a link to 'Choose Databases'. There is a checkbox for 'Suggest Subject Terms'. Below the search bar, there are three rows of search options, each with a dropdown menu for 'Select a Field (optional)' and a 'Search' button. There is also a 'Clear' button and a '+'/- button. At the bottom, there are links for 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', 'PICO Search', and 'Search History'.

Databases that you can search with EBSCOhost:

CINAHL Plus with full text

CINAHL is the largest medical database. Produced by the US National Library of medicine it contains millions of citations from thousands of biomedical and life science journals. It covers allied health specialties, dentistry, nursing, medicine, pre-clinical sciences. In addition to this CINAHL Plus with Full Text provides full text for more than 770 journals indexed in CINAHL. This includes the full text for many of the most used journals in the CINAHL index, with no embargo. Full text coverage dates back to 1937.

MEDLINE Complete

MEDLINE Complete provides authoritative medical information on medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the health care system, pre-clinical sciences, and much more. MEDLINE Complete uses MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) indexing with tree, tree hierarchy, subheadings and explosion capabilities to search citations from over 5,400 current biomedical journals. MEDLINE Complete is also the world's most comprehensive source of full text for medical journals, providing full text for over 1,800 journals indexed in MEDLINE. Of those, more than 1,700 have cover-to-cover indexing in MEDLINE, and of those, over 900 are not found with full text in any version of Academic Search, Health Source or Biomedical Reference Collection. This wide-ranging file contains full text for many of the most used journals in the MEDLINE index - with no embargo. Coverage dates back to 1857 and full text back to 1865.

Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection

Psychology & Behavioural Sciences Collection is a comprehensive database covering information concerning topics in emotional and behavioural characteristics, psychiatry & psychology, mental processes, anthropology, and observational & experimental methods. This is the world's largest full text psychology database offering full text coverage for nearly 400 journals.

Accessing EBSCOhost

Go to the **Library website**



library.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk



Click on **Resources**

Followed by **Databases**

Select the **database** to wish to access

Choose from:

- Medline
- CINAHL
- Psychology & Behavioural Sciences Collection



You will be prompted to sign in using your **NHS Athens account**. If you don't have an account, you can register here openathens.nice.org.uk

Creating a Personal EBSCO Account

To enable full functionality (save searches and results) and allow access to your Folder (previous searches etc.), click the **Sign In** link on the top bar. You will automatically be signed in through Athens authentication.

Sign In



Folder

Preferences

Languages ▾

Help

Exit



It is important that you have a **clear idea of your question** before you start to search – what you get out of a database search is only as good as the question you put in.

The first thing to do is to identify the **key concepts or keywords** within your research question

Pick out your **main concepts**.

What are the most **important** aspects of your search?

This will ensure you do not miss out on any important information or research. These keywords will become the **basis** of your search strategy

It may be helpful to frame your research topic as a **question**, with a question mark at the end

PICO is a framework that can help with this.

PICO is a format for developing a good clinical research question prior to starting your research

It is a mnemonic used to describe the **four elements of a sound clinical question**

- P** Patient or Population
- I** Intervention or Treatment
- C** Comparison
- O** Outcome

Example: **In patients with osteoarthritis of the knee is hydrotherapy more effective than traditional physiotherapy in relieving pain?**

P Patient or Population

I Intervention or Treatment

C Comparison

O Outcome

Osteoarthritis and knee

Hydrotherapy

Physiotherapy

Pain relief

If PICO does not work for your question, other frameworks are available.

Once you have thought of your **question** and **search terms**, consider what **synonyms** and **alternative spellings** or **brand names** there might be for your terms. You will need to search for these too.

Example: aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid, ASA.

Carrying out a Thesaurus Search

A **thesaurus** is a list of terms (known as subject headings) that are used to label articles in a database. When you search using the thesaurus you will find **all the articles on the same topic no matter what text words you use**.

For example:

There are many possible phrases that could be used to search for articles on heart attacks, but the CINAHL subject heading for this condition is myocardial infarction. If you were to carry out a thesaurus search on CINAHL for this subject heading you would find all the articles on this subject regardless of whether they contain the phrase myocardial infarction, heart attack or cardiac arrest etc.

Tick the box to select **Suggest Subject Terms**

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top, there are navigation links: 'New Search', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Subject Headings', 'Evidence-Based Care Sheets', 'Quick Lessons', and 'More'. Below this, the search bar contains 'heart failure'. To the left of the search bar is the EBSCOhost logo. To the right of the search bar is a green 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there are three rows for advanced search options, each with an 'AND' dropdown and a 'Select a Field (optional)' dropdown. A 'Clear ?' button is located to the right of these options. At the bottom of the search bar area, there are links for 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', 'PICO Search', and 'Search History'. A purple box highlights the search bar and the 'Suggest Subject Terms' checkbox, which is checked.

Type in the subject headings you want to search for and click **Search**

You will be shown a list of headings that most closely match your search term. Sometimes this list can be quite long, other times there might only be one term that matches your search. If there is no close match there will be no headings listed – try to think of another term for your subject and try again. If you cannot find a relevant thesaurus term – carry out a **text word search** instead.

Click on the **heading** that most closely matches the subject you are searching.

The screenshot shows the CINAHL Subject Headings results page for 'Heart Failure'. At the top, there are instructions: 'Check box to view subheadings.' and 'Click linked term for tree view.' To the right of these instructions are three columns: 'Explode (+)', 'Major Concept', and 'Scope'. Below this, there is a list of headings. The first heading is 'Heart Failure', which is selected with a checkbox. Below it are four subheadings: 'Heart Failure, Congestive Use: Heart Failure', 'Heart Failure, Chronic Use: Heart Failure', 'Congestive Heart Failure Use: Heart Failure', and 'Chronic Heart Failure Use: Heart Failure'. The second heading is 'Equipment Failure'. Each heading has a checkbox, a 'Major Concept' column, and a 'Scope' column with a speech bubble icon. A purple box highlights the 'Heart Failure' heading and its subheadings.

You will then be taken to a page that shows **more detail** about the thesaurus term you selected.

You can find out more by clicking on the symbol on the right to see the **scope notes**.

Here we can see the hierarchy of the various related thesaurus headings. Heart Diseases is the **broader term** that we could select if we wanted to also include articles that covered heart disease more generally. We can also see **narrower terms** which we can select to look at more specific types of heart failure – e.g. Dyspnea, Paroxysmal.

Tick the **box to the left of the term** to select it.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cardiovascular Diseases
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heart Diseases
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arrhythmia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cardiac Output, Decreased
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cardiac Tamponade
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endocarditis
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heart Arrest
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heart Defects, Congenital
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heart Failure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dyspnea, Paroxysmal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heart Hypertrophy

Explode and Major Concept

Explode allows you to *expand* your search to include additional, more specific terms.

Major Concept will *limit* your search to only those articles in which the thesaurus term is the main subject of the article.

	Explode (+)	Major Concept	Scope
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

For example

Selecting **explode** for the thesaurus heading Heart Failure will find **all the articles about heart failure** in general, as well as all the articles under the heading Dyspnea, Paroxysmal.

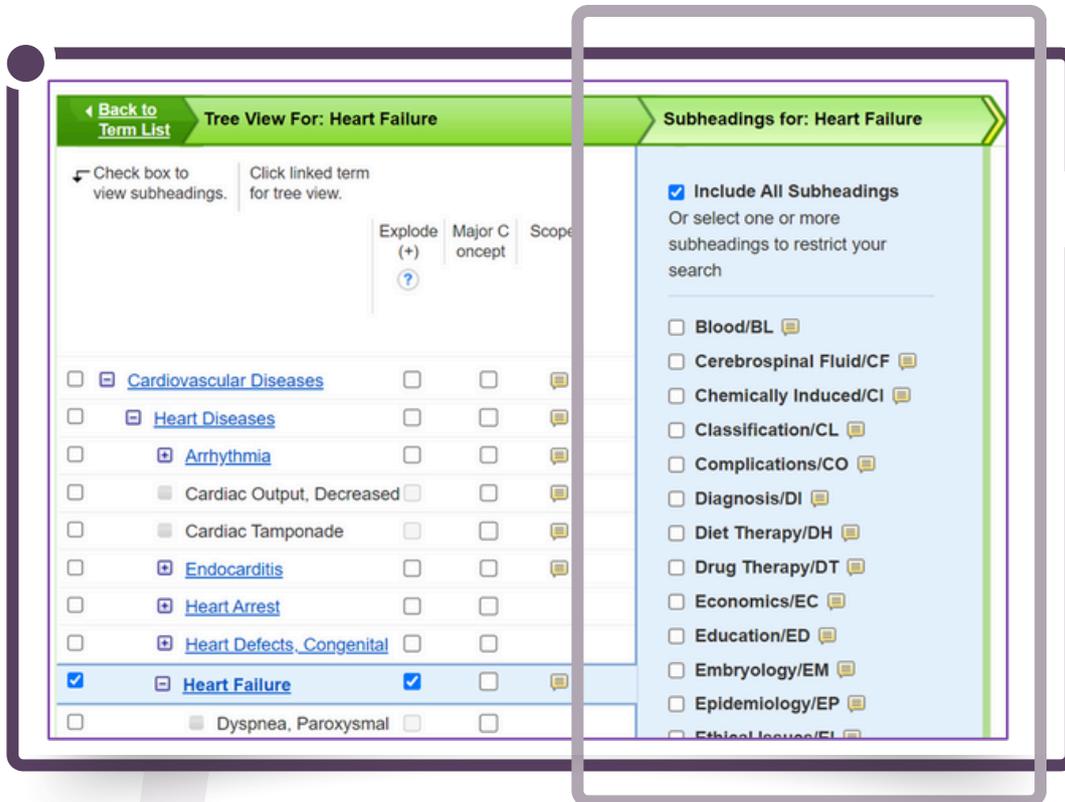
Note that you can use the Major Concept and Explode options **at the same time**.

Also note that you have to **select your term** using the **box on the left** before you are able to select the Explode and/or Major Concept options.

Subheadings

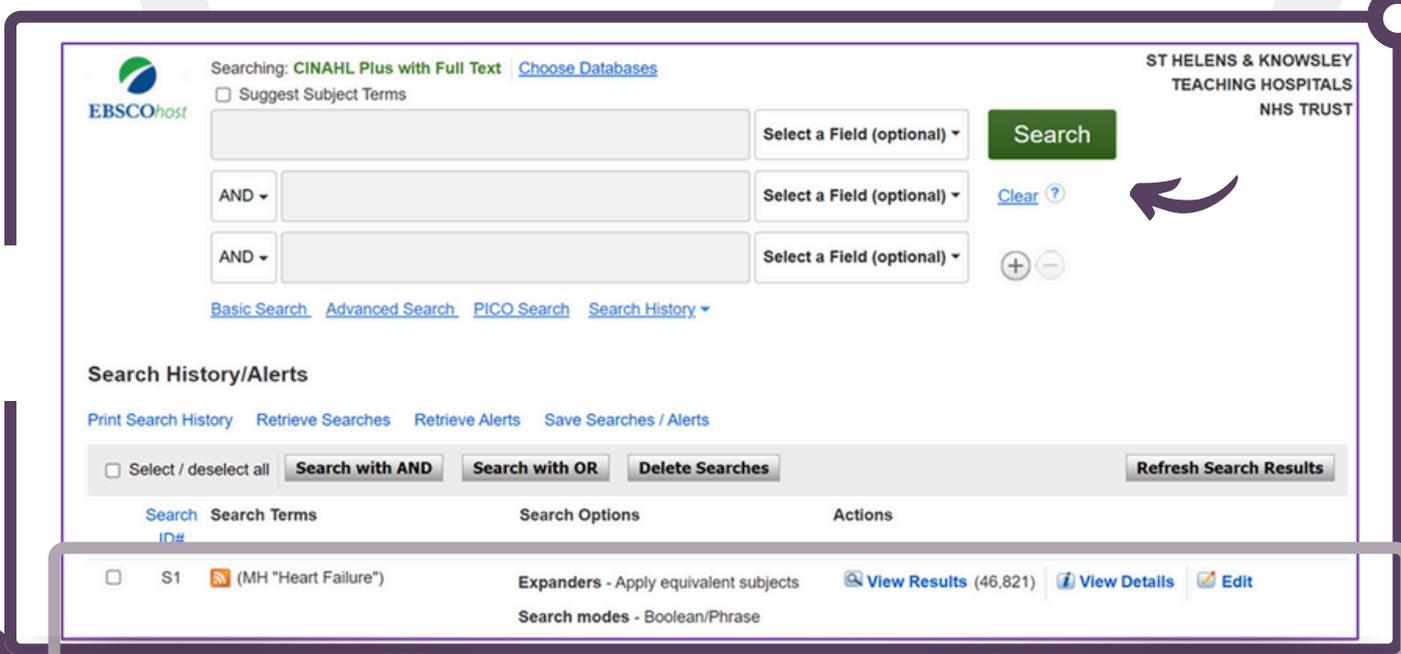
Once you have selected the term you wish to search you will also be given the option to restrict your search to **specific subheadings**. You can choose any number of relevant subheadings by clicking the appropriate boxes. If you do not want to limit your search to specific subheadings leave the default Include all subheadings option selected.

After selecting the headings click **Continue**



Once you've **selected the term you wish to search**, then chosen if you want to use **explode** or **major concepts**, and finally selected any **subheadings** you might want to use – click on the **green Search button**.

EBSCOhost will now run your search and you can see the **number of results** in your Search History



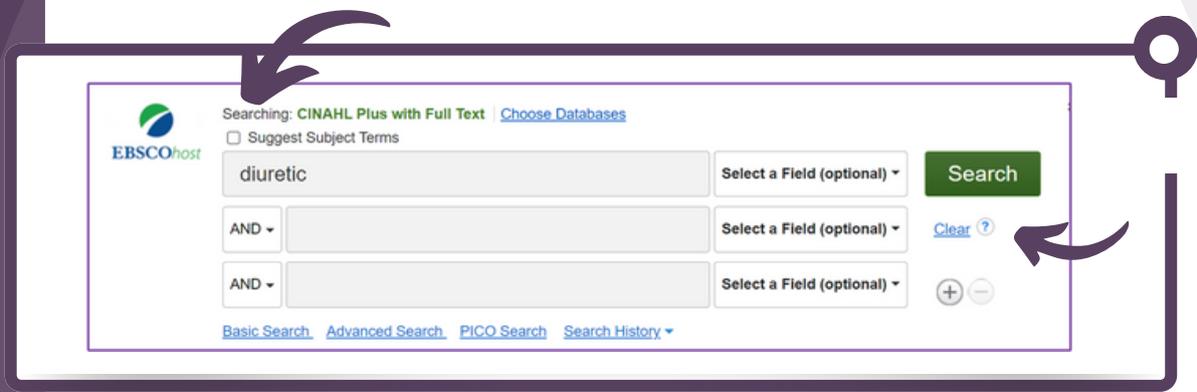
Carrying out a Text Word Search

This is also sometimes referred to as a **keyword search** or **free text search**.

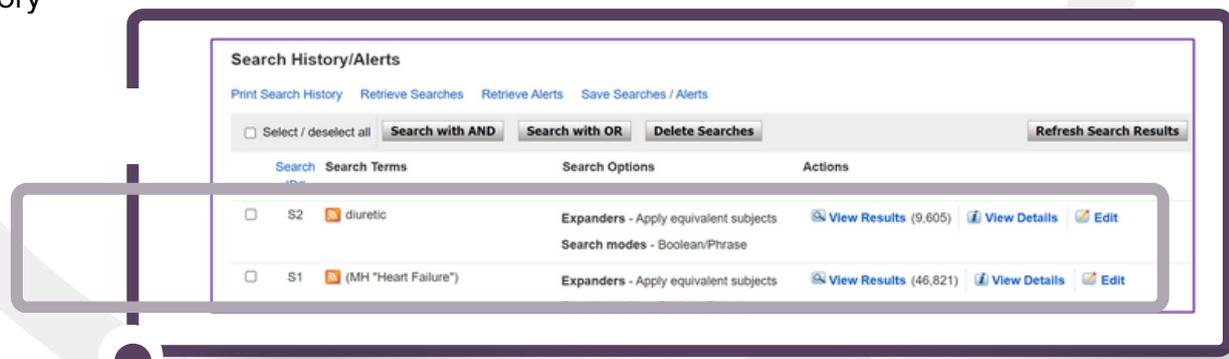
Type in the term you are looking for and EBSCOhost will look for records that **include that term**. It uses the **exact** term that you type in, so it is important to consider if there are **alternate** terms you should also be searching for.

Consider if your term has **alternative spellings** (anaesthetic, anesthetic) or synonyms (stroke, cerebrovascular accident) or abbreviations (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ADHD) or brand names (ibuprofen, neurofen).

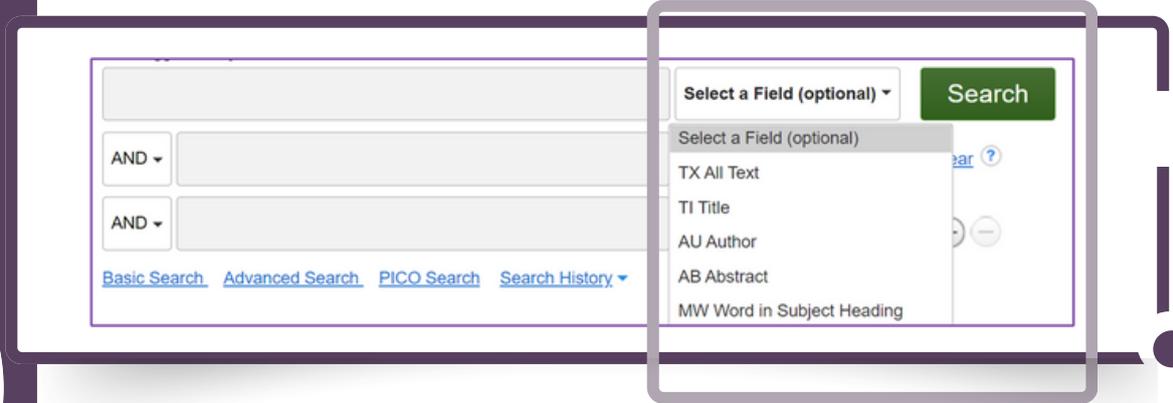
To carry out a text word search, **untick** the **Suggest Subject Terms** box before typing the term you are looking for into the search box and then clicking **Search**



EBSCOhost will now run the search and a **new search line** will be added to your search history



Note that EBSCOhost **defaults** to searching the title, author, abstract and subject heading for text word searches. If you would prefer to search other fields you can select the ones you want from the drop down list in the optional **Select a Field** box



Phrase Searching

If your term is made up of a phrase, rather than a single word, then using **phrase searching** will help. This is done by placing **parentheses** around the phrase you are searching for

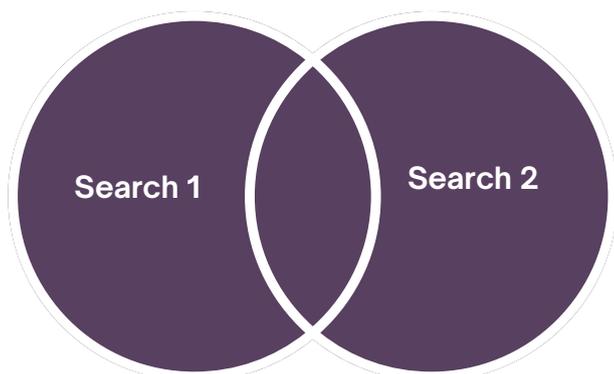
For example: entering the phrase “**mental health**” will only retrieve results that include the words **mental** and **health** when they are next to each other.

If you do not use parentheses you will retrieve **all** records where both the terms mental and health appear anywhere in the text (possibly with many other words between them) and in any order

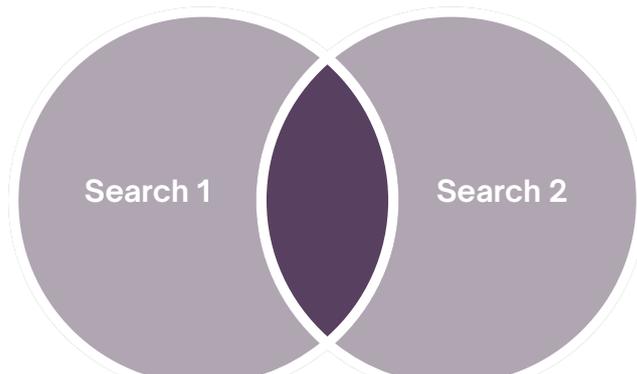
Combining Your Searches

To retrieve relevant articles you will need to **link** your various searches together. This is done by using **AND** or **OR** (known as Boolean searching)

OR searching broadens a search by looking for either



AND searching narrows a search by only looking for both terms in combination



For example. In the search below, we have searched using the thesaurus heading **anemia, sickle cell (S1)** and we carried out a keyword search for **penicillin (S2)**

We can combine them using **OR**, by **clicking in the box** next to the search lines to be combined and then selecting the **OR** option

Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S2	penicillin	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,992)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S1	(MH "Anemia, Sickle Cell")	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,657)

This gives us a new set of search results in our search history (**S3**), with **11,580** articles found.

Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/> S3	S1 OR S2	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (11,580)
<input type="checkbox"/> S2	penicillin	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,992)
<input type="checkbox"/> S1	(MH "Anemia, Sickle Cell")	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,657)

If we were to combine the two searches using **AND** we get only **69** results

<input type="checkbox"/> S3	S1 AND S2	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (69)
<input type="checkbox"/> S2	penicillin	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,992)
<input type="checkbox"/> S1	(MH "Anemia, Sickle Cell")	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,657)

Limits

If you are getting **too many results**, you can apply **limits** to narrow your search further. You can apply limits such as **Language**, **Dates** or **Age Group** to ensure the articles you retrieve are more likely to be relevant

First you need to be sure you are looking at the **right set of results**. You can do this by clicking on **View Results** on the relevant search line

Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/> S3	S1 AND S2	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (69)
<input type="checkbox"/> S2	penicillin	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,992)
<input type="checkbox"/> S1	(MH "Anemia, Sickle Cell")	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,657)

On the left of your screen you will be able to see the **Limit To** options.

Click on **Show More** to see all the limits that you can apply to your search

Limit To

Full Text

References Available

Abstract Available

From: Publication Date To:

[Show More](#)

Source Types

All Results

Academic Journals (62)

1. [Correlates of adherence to prophylactic penicillin therapy in children with sickle cell disease.](#)

(includes abstract) Witherspoon D, Drotar D Children's Health Care, Fall2006; 35(4): 281-296. 16p. (Journal Article - research, tables/charts) ISSN: 0273-9615

Research has found that prophylactic penicillin therapy greatly reduces the incidence of bacterial infections in children with sickle cell disease (SCD). This study describes the prevalence and a...

Subjects: Anemia, Sickle Cell Complications; Antibiotic Prophylaxis In Infancy and Childhood; Penicillins Therapeutic Use; Child: 6-12 years; Child, Preschool: 2-5 years; Infant: 1-23 months; Female; Male

Times Cited in this Database: (2)

[PDF Full Text](#)

Select the **limits** that you want to apply to your search and then click on the **yellow Search button**

In this example I have limited my search to **English Language only** and **2010 to 2022**

This will give you a **new search line** in your search history

By limiting our search to **English Language only** and articles **published from 2010 - 2022** we have gone from 69 results (S3) to **38 results (S4)**

Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions
S4	S1 AND S2	Limiters - Published Date: 20100101-20221231; English Language Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects	View Results (38) View Details
S3	S1 AND S2	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (69) View Details
S2	penicillin	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,992) View Details
S1	(MH "Anemia, Sickle Cell")	Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	View Results (5,657) View Details

Saving your Search Strategy

You may want to **save your search strategy**. This is a good idea if it is a search you might want to rerun at a later date or if you need a record of the search strategy to include in the write up of your search

The screenshot shows a search results page with a table of search results. At the top, there are buttons for 'Select / deselect all', 'Search with AND', 'Search with OR', 'Delete Searches', and 'Refresh Search Results'. The table has columns for 'Search ID#', 'Search Terms', 'Search Options', and 'Actions'. Four search results are listed, each with a checked checkbox in the 'Select / deselect all' column. The search terms are 'S1 AND S2', 'S1 AND S2', 'penicillin', and '(MH "Anemia, Sickle Cell")'. The search options include 'Limiters - Published Date: 20100101-20221231; English Language', 'Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects', and 'Search modes - Boolean/Phrase'. The actions column contains 'View Results', 'View Details', and 'Edit' links.

To save your search history, tick the **Select/deselect all** box and then click on **Save Searches/Alerts**

You also have the option here to **Print Search History**

You will then be prompted to create a **name** for your search. You can also add a **description** if you wish

Select the **database** that you carried out your search in (eg. CINAHL Plus with Full Text). You can then decide whether to save your search **permanently**, **temporarily** or save it **as an Alert**

Click on **Save** to save your search

The 'Folder List' dialog box contains the following fields and options:

- Name of Search/Alert:** A text input field.
- Description:** A text input field.
- Date Created:** 4/4/2022
- Databases:** A dropdown menu with options: Biomedical Reference Collection: Comprehensive CINAHL, CINAHL Plus with Full Text (selected), and eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).
- Search Strategy:** S1 AND S2
- Interface:** EBSCOhost
- Save Search As:** Radio buttons for 'Saved Search (Permanent)' (selected), 'Saved Search (Temporary, 24 hours)', and 'Alert'.
- Buttons:** 'Save' and 'Cancel'.

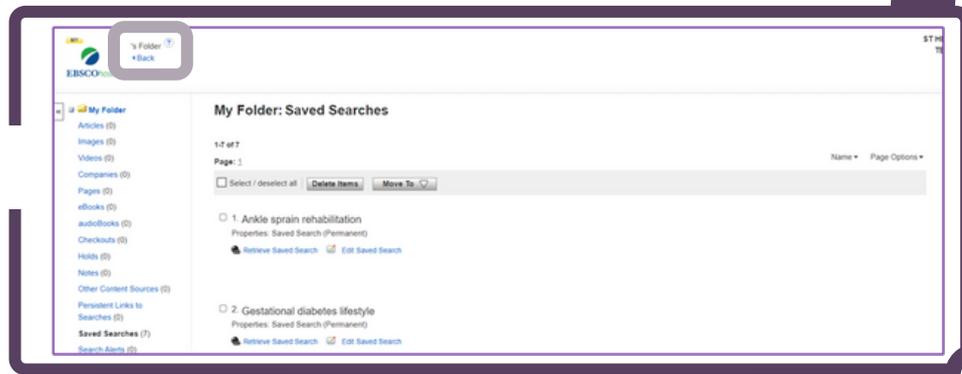
You will then get a message to say your search has been modified

Click on **Continue**

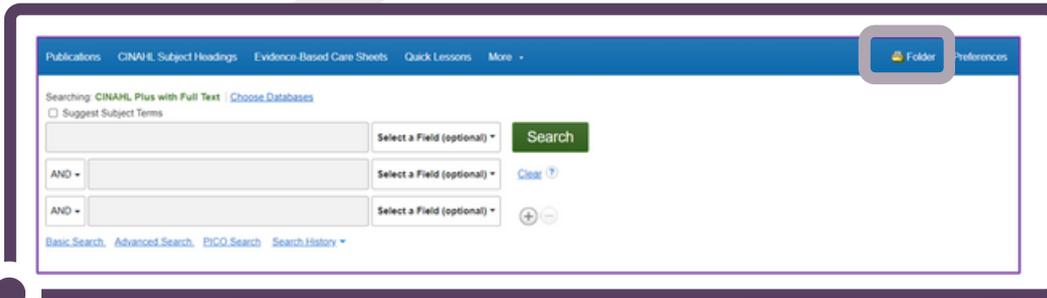
The confirmation message displays the following information:

- Your saved search has been modified**
- Search Name:** Practice on 4/4/2022 9:56 AM
- Database:** CINAHL Plus with Full Text
- Continue** button

Use the **Back** button to return to your search

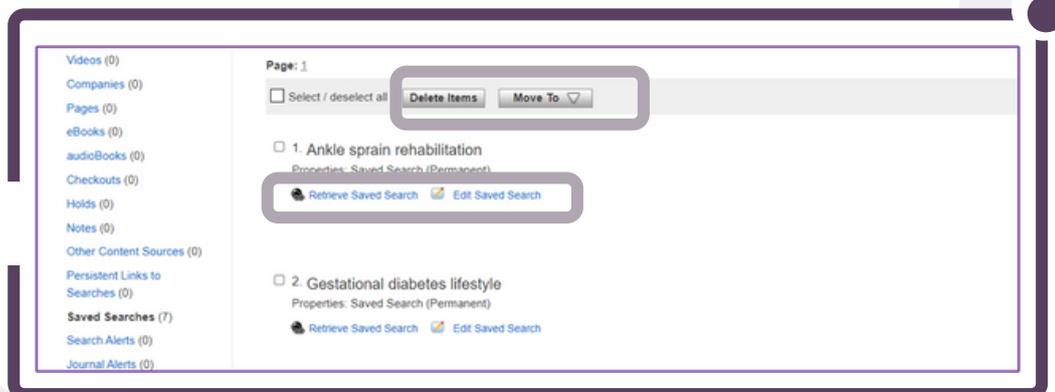


To view your saved searches, go to **Folder**



From here you can see all your saved searches

You can **delete the search, move it to a folder, retrieve the search and edit it** as needed



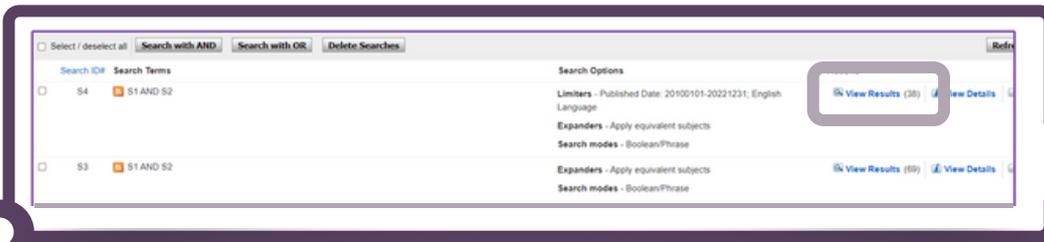
Viewing your Results

When you are happy that you have completed your search you can **look at the results** that you have found

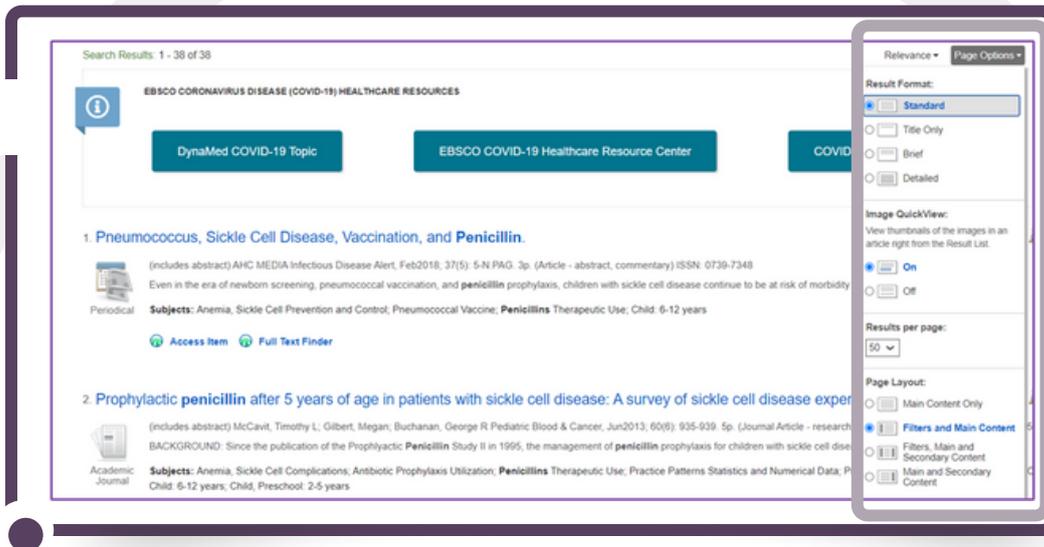
The results will contain the **citations** for **all the articles** that EBSCOhost has found

You can view the results, export them and save them in a range of different formats

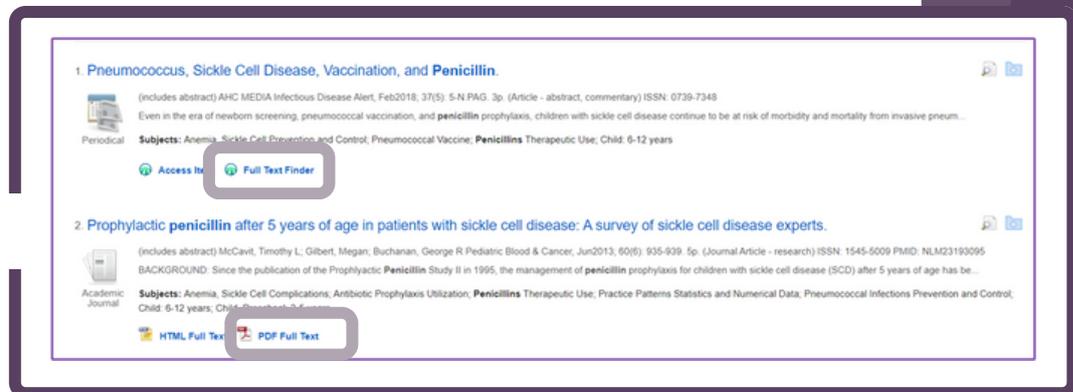
To view your results, click on **View Results** for the relevant search line and they will be displayed lower down the page



There are a number of options available to you at this point. You can change the **order of the results** (by author, source, relevance or date), the **number of results per page**, and **how much detail you see** for each individual result



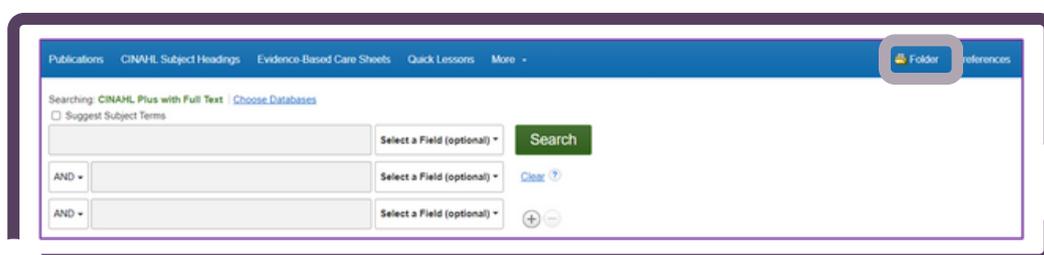
You will see a **Full Text** option under each article for **instant access to the PDF** or **to a form to request it** from the library



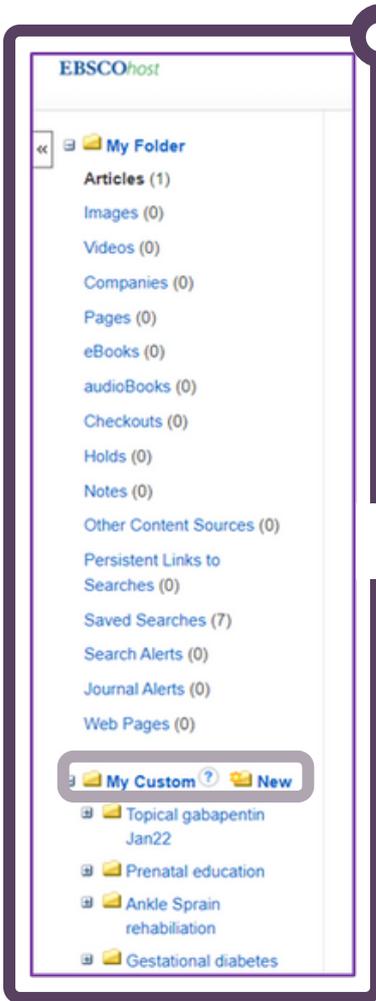
You may prefer to save your results to **review at a later time**

Saving your Results

Before you save your results, you will want to create a folder to save them into. To do this, click on **Folder** at the top right of the screen.



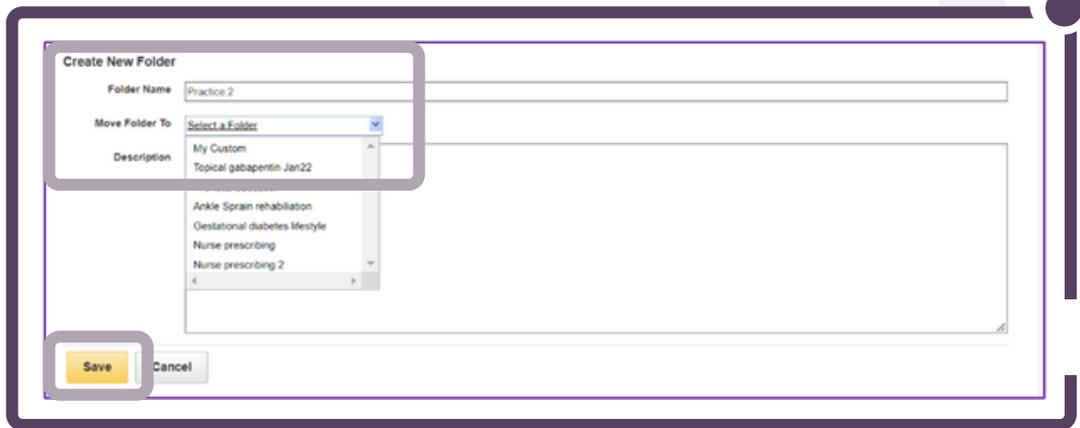
Now you need to **create your folder**



Scroll down the menu on the left of the page until you get to **My Custom** and then click on **New**

You will then be given the option to **name your folder**, give it a description and where to move it to – use **My Custom** (unless you want to create it as a sub folder of an existing folder you have already created)

Then click **Save**



Use the **Back button** to return to your search and results list



To save results, you can **select the records that you are interested in** by clicking on the **folder icon** to the right



Then select the **folder** you want to save the record to

If you have more than one page of results to look through, use the **Next** button at the bottom of the screen to move to the next page

Exporting, Saving or Printing your Results

Click on **folder** at the top of the screen to return to your folder page

Scroll down the menu down the side until you get to **My Custom**

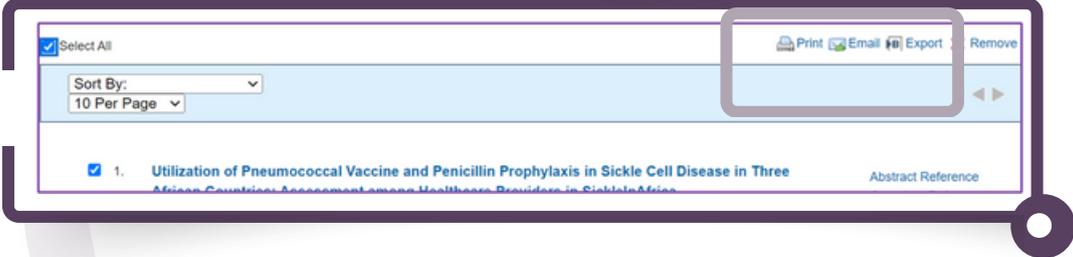
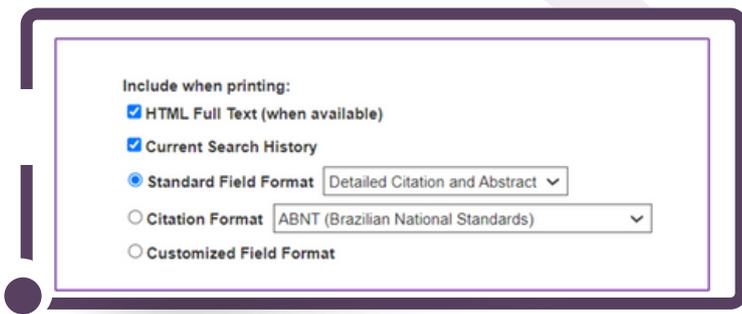
Click on the **folder you want to export results from**, and then click on **Articles**

Select the articles you want to export by **clicking on the box to the left of the article title**, or use the **Select/Deselect All** button if you want to export all the articles

You can now use the options on the right of the screen to **print, save, email** or **export** your results

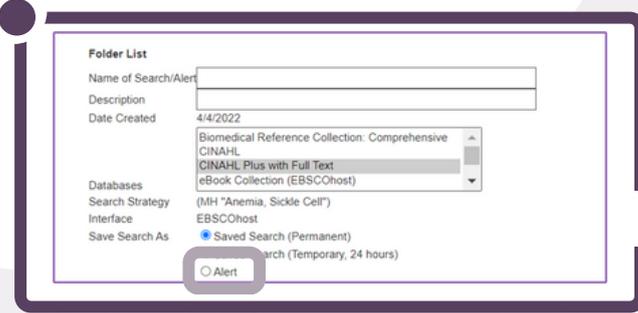


If printing your results, you can choose the **format** you want the results to appear in



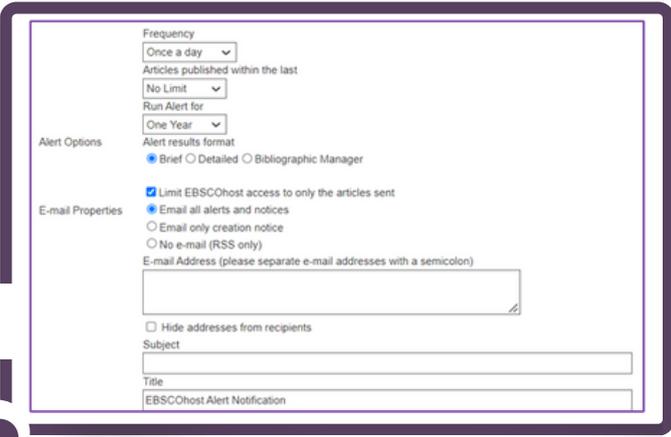
Alerts

When saving your search history you are given the option to save it as an **Alert**



If you choose this option, you will then be able to set up an **Alert**

You can set up a **schedule** for the Alert, deciding **how often you want it to run, how you would like the Alert to be delivered, and specify the email address** you want the alert to be sent to (if you want to receive the alert via email)



This workbook is designed to **demonstrate and explain how to carry out a successful basic search** using the EBSCOhost database. However, **further resources are available** if you wish to go into more detail about how EBSCOhost works or how to search for literature in general

We have links to a number of **guides and video tutorials** on our website [here](#)



Framing your questions (PICO and other search strategies). The following websites look at search strategies in **more detail**

[NYU Library - Identifying Core Search Concepts & Selecting Keywords](#)

[Leeds University - Search Concept Tools](#)

The Library and Knowledge Service also has a **number of books** available on how to carry out a literature search.



Search the Library Catalogue [here](#)

Contact Us & Help



If you have any questions or need further help, please contact us



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