



# Searching the Documentation

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# Searching the Documentation

To perform a simple search in InterSystems documentation, enter search terms in the **Search:** field near the top right of any page and then press **Enter**. This displays the search results on the advanced search page, which provides additional search options. You can then perform additional searches.

This article explains the search results and the search options. It covers the following items:

- [Explanation of the search results](#)
- [Overview of the advanced search page](#)
- [Default search rules](#)
- [The “Search type” option](#)
- [How to search for symbols and special characters](#)
- [Details on the URL parameters used by the search page](#)

**Important:** This search page does not support any special search syntax. For example, do not put quotation marks ( " ") around the search term unless they are, themselves, part of the search item. Also, whitespace and control characters are removed from the start and end of the search terms.

## 1 Explanation of Search Results

For any search, there can be results in two or three different categories, depending on the available documentation:

- **Results in text** — These are the results from an SQL query that runs against the table in which the database stores the documentation content. The results are grouped by the topic in which the search terms were found, and the first few search results are shown for each topic. A topic could be a chapter, an appendix, or an entry in a reference, such as this entry on [\\$PIECE](#).

The order of search results is primarily determined by the topic in which they are found. Each topic has an overall ranking, such that topics of more general interest appear before those that have a narrower scope. To a lesser degree, the number of matches in a given topic also affects the ranking of search results.

**Important:** This part of search examines the content paragraph by paragraph, which is how the content is stored internally. If you use multiple search terms, the default query returns only those *paragraphs* that contain *all* search terms. It is generally better to use fewer search terms and to use [other options](#) to refine the search.

This category of search results returns only the first 10,000 paragraphs that contain the search terms. As a result, if you search for a common word, such as `and` or `the`, the search may return fewer topics than you expected. If you are having difficulty finding a common word, try using other related terms that will return more specific results.

- **Results in index** — These are the results from looking in an index that is built after the content is loaded into the database. The index contains matches from headings and from special tagging added by the writers in order to guide the search.
- **Results in external files** — These are the results from searching the external files that contain content for InterSystems API Manager, if included in the set of documentation.

## 2 Options on the Advanced Search Page

When you perform any search, the advanced search page is displayed (with your search results). Note that you can also access the advanced search page by clicking the **Search:** label near the top right of any page, without entering any search terms.

The advanced search page provides the following search options:

The screenshot shows the advanced search interface. At the top left is the 'Search words' label above an empty text input field. To its right is the 'Search type' label above a dropdown menu currently showing 'Exact character match (except for case)'. Below these is the 'Optionally restrict the search' section, which contains two dropdown menus: the first is set to 'all books and articles' and the second to 'all tags'. At the bottom of the form are four teal buttons: 'Search', 'Reset', 'Search the Web', and 'Help'.

- **Search words** — Enter search terms in this field, referred to below as the *content field*. Previous search terms with the same spelling will appear in a drop-down list as you type, so you also may select one from the list if you would like to search for it again.
- **Find topics with** menu: choose **all words** or **any word**.  
The default setting is to find results that include all terms.  
If you do not know the exact term you are seeking, enter several synonyms and select **Find topics with any word** to determine which term the documentation uses. For example, if you are not sure whether to search for the word `transform` or the word `translate`, enter both into the content field and select the option **Find topics with any word**.
- **Search type** — Use the menu to choose **Word match (with word variations)**, **Exact character match (except for case)**, or **Exact character match (including case)**. See “[Search Type](#)” for more details.
- The **Search** button — Click to search.
- The **Reset** button — Click to clear the content field and return to default search rules.
- The **Search the Web** button — Click to use the terms specified in the content field for a Google search of the website [docs.intersystems.com](https://docs.intersystems.com).

In addition to the above elements, there are two optional menus with which you can restrict your search further. They include:

- **Books and articles** — Select the title of a book, or keep the default **all books and articles**. If you know which book contains the information you are seeking, use this to restrict the search to results within that book only.
- **Tags** — Select a tag from the list, or keep the default **all tags**. Tags are a useful way to narrow your search if you are looking for a topic that spans multiple books but also might return an unwieldy number of hits. For example, if you search for just `SQL`, the search will return hundreds of results. If you instead select the **SQL** tag and enter a related search term in the content field, the search returns only topics that are relevant to `SQL`, rather than any reference to it.

## 3 Default Search Rules

The following are the default rules for searches:

- A search can include one or more terms.
- The search engine returns results that contain all terms.
- The default search is not case-sensitive. For example, searches for `SET`, `Set`, and `set` yield the same results.

## 4 Search Type

The **Search type** drop-down list lets you control whether the search is case-sensitive and whether the case uses stemming.

The default search type is **Exact character match (except for case)**, which searches for an exact string but ignores the case of the search term.

If you do not know the case of a search term, the default is convenient. If you know the exact capitalization of a term, select **Exact character match (including case)** to further restrict results.

The option **Word match (with word variations)** is sometimes called a *stemmed search* or *free-text search*. This kind of search is based on an extensive list of related forms of words. For any word appearing in the list, the search engine takes the stem of each word provided and finds all matches associated with that stem. For example, `save`, `saving`, and `saved` all yield the same results. The order of the results is the same for all variants of a particular stem (for example, regardless of whether a search is for `save` or `saving`). Note that words that contain the same string are not necessarily stemmed variations of each other. For example, a stemmed search for the word “user” does not return results including `username`. For details, see the section “[Using Free-text Search](#)” in the chapter “*Querying the Database*” of *Using InterSystems SQL*.

## 5 Searching for Symbols and Special Characters

The free-text search will ignore non-alphanumeric symbols, with the exception of the special characters “\$” and “%,” which have special meaning in ObjectScript commands and keywords. If your search text includes non-alphanumeric symbols such as a caret (^), use exact character search to make sure they are included in the search query. For example, if you are searching for the routine `^DATABASE`, but you do not want to do a general search for the word `database`, use exact character search to narrow your results.

The search engine indexes words that include é as if they contained e; it also indexes words that include ñ as if they contained n. Hence, to search for the word “touché”, simply enter `touché` for the search; to search for the word “cache,” use `cache`. Similarly, use `Espanol` instead of `Español`.

**Note:** Do not put quotation marks (“ ”) around the search term unless they are, themselves, part of the search item.

## 6 URL Parameters

To help you create searches programmatically, the search page `DocBook.UI.SearchPageZen.cls` supports the URL parameters, which are as follows:

### **Keyword**

Specifies the search term or terms.

### **Op**

Corresponds to the first menu. For this parameter, the value AND corresponds to **Find topics with all words**. The value OR corresponds to **Find topics with any word**.

### **SearchType**

Corresponds to the Search Type menu. For this parameter, 1 corresponds to **Word match (with word variations)**, 2 corresponds to **Exact character match (except for case)**, and 3 corresponds to the **Exact character match (including case)**.

### **Book**

Corresponds to the books and articles menu. For this parameter, the allowed values are the internal identifiers of the books and articles. Note that the list includes these identifiers in parentheses for your convenience.

### **Tags**

Corresponds to the tags menu.

For the *Book* and *Tags* parameters, the allowed values depend upon what is present in the DOCBOOK database. Currently each of these parameters accepts only a single value.