

**search** — Search Stata documentation and other resources

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## Description

`search` searches a keyword database and the Internet for Stata materials related to your query.

Capitalization of the words following `search` is irrelevant, as is the inclusion or exclusion of special characters such as commas and hyphens.

`set searchdefault` affects the default behavior of the `search` command. `all` is the default.

`search`, `all` is the best way to search for information on a topic across all sources, including the system help, the FAQs at the Stata website, the *Stata Journal*, and all Stata-related Internet sources including community-contributed additions. From the results, you can click to go to a source or to install additions.

## Quick start

Search local keyword database and materials available via Stata's `net` command for all words (`word1`, `word2`, and `word3`)

```
search word1 word2 word3
```

Same as above, but match any word (`word1`, `word2`, or `word3`)

```
search word1 word2 word3, or
```

Search for *Stata Journal* articles about new commands like `regress`

```
search regress, sj
```

Search the manuals for entries about `tabulate` and related commands

```
search tabulate, manual
```

## Menu

Help > Search...

## Syntax

```
search word [word ...] [, search_options]
```

```
set searchdefault {all|local|net} [, permanently]
```

<i>search_options</i>	Description
<code>all</code>	search across both the local keyword database and the <code>net</code> material; the default
<code>local</code>	search using Stata's keyword database
<code>net</code>	search across materials available via Stata's <code>net</code> command
<code><u>a</u>uthor</code>	search by author's name
<code><u>e</u>ntry</code>	search by entry ID
<code><u>e</u>xact</code>	search across both the local keyword database and the <code>net</code> materials; prevents matching on abbreviations
<code>faq</code>	search the FAQs posted to the Stata and other select websites
<code><u>h</u>istorical</code>	search entries that are of historical interest only
<code>or</code>	list an entry if <i>any</i> of the words typed after <code>search</code> are associated with the entry
<code><u>m</u>anual</code>	search the entries in the <i>Stata Documentation</i>
<code>sj</code>	search the entries in the <i>Stata Journal</i>

## Options for search

`all`, the default (unless changed by `set searchdefault`), specifies that the search be performed across both the local keyword database and the `net` materials. The results of a search performed with `all` and no other options will be displayed in the Viewer window.

`local` specifies that the search be performed using only Stata's keyword database. The results of a search performed with `local` and no other options will be displayed in the Viewer window.

`net` specifies that the search be performed across the materials available via Stata's `net` command. Using `search word [word ...]`, `net` is equivalent to typing `net search word [word ...]` (without options); see [R] [net search](#). The results of a search performed with `net` and no other options will be displayed in the Viewer window.

`author` specifies that the search be performed on the basis of the author's name rather than keywords. A search with the `author` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`entry` specifies that the search be performed on the basis of entry IDs rather than keywords. A search with the `entry` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`exact` prevents matching on abbreviations. A search with the `exact` option is performed across both the local keyword database and the `net` materials, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`faq` limits the search to the FAQs on the [Stata](#) and other select websites. A search with the `faq` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`historical` adds to the search entries that are of historical interest only. By default, such entries are not listed. Past entries are classified as historical if they discuss a feature that later became an official part of Stata. Updates to historical entries will always be found, even if `historical` is not specified. A search with the `historical` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`or` specifies that an entry be listed if any of the words typed after `search` are associated with the entry. The default is to list the entry only if all the words specified are associated with the entry. A search with the `or` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`manual` limits the search to entries in the *Stata Documentation*; that is, the search is limited to the *User's Guide* and all the reference manuals. A search with the `manual` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

`sj` limits the search to entries in the *Stata Journal*; see [R] `sj`. A search with the `sj` option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

## Option for set searchdefault

`permanently` specifies that, in addition to making the change right now, the `searchdefault` setting be remembered and become the default setting when you invoke Stata.

## Remarks and examples

[stata.com](https://www.stata.com)

Remarks are presented under the following headings:

*Introduction*  
*Internet searches*  
*Author searches*  
*Entry ID searches*  
*Return codes*

## Introduction

See [U] [4 Stata's help and search facilities](#) for a tutorial introduction to `search`. `search` is one of Stata's most useful commands. To understand the advanced features of `search`, you need to know how it works.

`search` has a database—files—containing the titles, etc., of every entry in the *Stata Documentation*, undocumented help files, NetCourses, Stata Press books, FAQs posted on the Stata website, videos posted on the Stata YouTube channel, selected articles on StataCorp's official blog, selected community-contributed FAQs and examples, and the articles in the *Stata Journal*. In these files is a list of words, called keywords, associated with each entry.

When you type `search xyz`, `search` reads the database and compares the list of keywords with `xyz`. If it finds `xyz` in the list or a keyword that allows an abbreviation of `xyz`, it displays the entry.

When you type `search xyz abc`, `search` does the same thing but displays an entry only if it contains both keywords. The order does not matter, so you can `search linear regression` or `search regression linear`.

Obviously, how many entries `search` finds depends on how the search database was constructed. We have included a plethora of keywords under the theory that, for a given request, it is better to list too much rather than risk listing nothing at all. Still, you are in the position of guessing the keywords. Do you look up normality test, normality tests, or tests of normality? Well, normality test would be best, but all would work. In general, use the singular, and strike the unnecessary words. For guidelines for specifying keywords, see [U] 4.6 **More on search**.

`set searchdefault` allows you to specify where `search` searches. `set searchdefault all`, the default, indicates that both the keyword database and the Internet are to be searched. `set searchdefault local` restricts `search` to using only Stata's keyword database. `set searchdefault net` restricts `search` to searching only the Internet.

## Internet searches

`search` with the `net` option searches the Internet for community-contributed additions to Stata, including, but not limited to, community-contributed additions published in the *Stata Journal* (SJ). `search keywords`, `net` performs the same search as the command `net search` (with no options); see [R] **net search**.

```
. search random effect, net
```

**Search of web resources from Stata and other users**

```
(contacting https://www.stata.com)
```

```
# packages found (Stata Journal listed first)
```

```
-----
```

```
(output omitted)
```

```
st0468_1 from http://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj18-4
```

```
  SJ18-4 st0468_1. Update: Estimate hybrid and... / Update: Estimate hybrid  
  and correlated random- / effects and Mundlak mixed-effects models for /  
  linear and nonlinear outcomes / by Reinhard Schunck, GESIS --  
  Leibniz-Institute / for the Social Sciences, Cologne, Germany / Francisco
```

```
st0543 from http://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj18-4
```

```
  SJ18-4 st0543. Fit dynamic random-effects probit... / Fit dynamic  
  random-effects probit models with / unobserved heterogeneity / by Raffaele  
  Grotti, / Department of Political and Social Sciences / European  
  University Institute / San Domenico di Fiesole, Italy / Giorgio Cutuli,
```

```
(output omitted)
```

```
(end of search)
```

## Author searches

`search` ordinarily compares the words following `search` with the keywords for the entry. If you specify the `author` option, however, it compares the words with the author's name. In the search database, we have filled in author names for all SJ inserts.

For instance, in the *Acknowledgments* of [R] **kdensity**, you will discover the name Isafías H. Salgado-Ugarte. You want to know if he has written any articles in the SJ. To find out, you type

```
. search Salgado-Ugarte, author
```

```
(output omitted)
```

Names like Salgado-Ugarte are confusing to many people. `search` does not require you to specify the entire name; what you type is compared with each "word" of the name and, if any part matches, the entry is listed. The hyphen is a special character, and you can omit it. Thus, you can obtain the same list by looking up Salgado, Ugarte, or Salgado Ugarte without the hyphen.

## Entry ID searches

If you specify the `entry` option, `search` compares what you have typed with the entry ID. The entry ID is not the title—it is the reference listed to the left of the title that tells you where to look. For instance, in

```
[R] regress . . . . . Linear regression
(help regress)
```

[R] `regress` is the entry ID. This is a reference, of course, to this manual. In

```
FAQ . . . . . Analysis of multiple failure-time survival data
. . . . . M. Cleves and I. Canette
07/09 How do I analyze multiple failure-time data using Stata?
      https://www.stata.com/support/faqs/statistics/multiple-failure-
      type-data/
```

“FAQ” is the entry ID. In

```
SJ-7-1 st0118 . . A survey on survey stat.: What is and can be done in Stata
. . . . . F. Kreuter and R. Valliant
Q1/07 SJ7(1):1--21 (no commands)
discusses survey issues in analyzing complex survey
data and describes some of Stata's capabilities for
such analyses
```

“SJ-7-1” is the entry ID.

`search` with the `entry` option searches these entry IDs.

Thus you could generate a table of contents for the *User's Guide* by typing

```
. search [U], entry
(output omitted)
```

You could generate a table of contents for *Stata Journal*, Volume 1, Issue 1, by typing

```
. search sj-1-1, entry
(output omitted)
```

## Return codes

In addition to indexing the entries in the *User's Guide* and all the *Reference* manuals, `search` also can be used to search return codes.

To see information on return code 131, type

```
. search rc 131
[P]      error . . . . . Return code 131
        not possible with test;
        You requested a test of a hypothesis that is nonlinear in the
        variables. test tests only linear hypotheses. Use testnl.
(output omitted)
```

If you want a list of all Stata return codes, type

```
. search error, entry
(output omitted)
```

## Acknowledgment

We thank Nicholas J. Cox of the Department of Geography at Durham University, UK, who is coeditor of the *Stata Journal* and author of *Speaking Stata Graphics* for his contributions to the `search` command.

## Also see

[R] [help](#) — Display help in Stata

[R] [net search](#) — Search the Internet for installable packages

[U] [4 Stata's help and search facilities](#)

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For suggested citations, see the FAQ on [citing Stata documentation](#).