

About keyword matching options

Keywords are words or phrases that are used to match ads with the terms people are searching for. The keyword match types dictate how closely the keyword needs to match with the user's search query so that the ad can be considered for the auction. For example, you could use broad match to serve your ad on a wider variety of user searches or you could use exact match to hone in on specific user searches.



Tip

Broader match types capture all the queries of narrower match types, plus more. This means that a phrase match keyword will match all the searches as the same keyword in an exact match. Similarly, a broad match keyword will match all the searches of equivalent phrase and exact match keywords, plus additional related searches. Therefore, you get the same benefits of multiple match types in one broad match type without needing to repeat keywords.

Keyword match types

 For the keyword 'lawn mowing service', we can match the following queries– 1. Broad match (comprehensive matching)– Ads may show on searches that relate to your keyword such as "lawn aeration prices". Notation for inputting keywords– lawn mowing services (without any brackets or inside quotations). 2. Phrase match (moderate matching)– Ads may show on searches that include the meaning of your keyword such as "lawn mowing service near me", "hire company to mow lawn", or "landscaping service to cut grass". Notation for inputting keywords– "lawn mowing services" (keyword in quotations). 3. Exact match (tight matching)– Ads may show on searches that are the same meaning as your keyword such as, "lawn mowing service" or "grass cut service". Notation for inputting keywords– [lawn mowing services] (keyword within square brackets).

Broad match

Ads may show on searches that are related to your keyword, which can include searches that don't contain the direct meaning of your keywords. This helps you attract more visitors to your website, spend less time building keyword lists, and focus your spending on keywords that work. Broad match is the default match type that all your keywords are assigned because it is the most comprehensive. That means you don't have to specify another match type (like exact match, phrase match, or a negative match type).

The syntax for broad match is to simply input the keyword. Below is an example of how broad match works:

 For a broad match keyword such as, low-carb diet plan, ads may show on search terms like "carb-free foods", "low-carb diets", "low calorie recipes", "mediterranean diet books", or "low-carbohydrate dietary program".

To deliver relevant matches, this match type may also take into account the following:

- The user's recent search activities
- The content of the landing page
- Other keywords in an ad group to better understand keyword intent

Note: It's critical to use Smart Bidding with broad match. This is because every search query is different, and bids for each query should reflect the unique contextual signals present at auction-time. Smart Bidding uses these signals to ensure that, for all of the relevant searches you could reach with broad match, you're only competing in the right auctions, at the right bid, for the right user. [Learn more about how to grow your Smart Bidding campaigns with broad match](#)

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**Tips**

- Adding very similar keywords, such as “red car” and “car red” isn’t recommended, as only one keyword would match both searches. However, doing so won’t affect your costs or performance in any way. For example, the broad match keywords “red car” and “car red” will be recognized as duplicates and the one with the higher Ad Rank will be used. Even though all your similar keywords may be eligible to serve on the same search, you’ll have only one bid in the ad auction. [Learn more About similar keywords in a Google Ads account](#)
- Check out the [Search Automation technical guide](#) to learn more about the signals Google uses, how queries match to keywords, how Google's AI makes keyword matching more effective, and what you can do to improve performance.

Phrase match

Ads may show on searches that include the meaning of your keyword. The meaning of the keyword can be implied, and user searches can be a more specific form of the meaning. With phrase match, you can reach more searches than with exact match and fewer searches than with broad match, only showing your ads on the searches that include your product or service.

The syntax for phrase match is to put quotes around your keyword, such as “tennis shoes”. Below is an example of how phrase match works:

 For the phrase match keyword such as, “tennis shoes”, your ads may show on searches for “shoes for tennis”, “buy tennis shoes on sale”, “red tennis shoes”, or “comfortable tennis sneakers”. However, your ads won’t show on searches for “tennis rackets and training shoes”, or “can you wear running shoes for tennis”.

Exact match

Ads may show on searches that have the same meaning or same intent as the keyword. Of the 3 keyword matching options, exact match gives you the most steering over who views your ad, but reaches fewer searches than both phrase and broad match.

The syntax for exact match is to use square brackets, such as [red shoe]. Below is an example of how exact match works:

 For the exact match keyword such as, [shoes for men], your ads may show on searches for “shoes men”, “men shoes”, “men shoe”, or “shoes for a man”. However, your ads won’t show on searches for “mens tennis shoes”, or “shoes for boys”.

**Tip**

Use Smart Bidding with all match types to optimize for your performance objectives. Smart Bidding works best with broad match because the wide set of searches allows it to learn what works best for you. [Learn more About Smart Bidding](#)

Negative keywords

You can use negative keywords to exclude your ads from showing on searches with that term. For example, if you’re a hat company that doesn’t sell baseball hats, you could add a negative keyword for baseball hats.

Note: Negative keyword match types behave differently from positive match types. [Learn more about negative keyword match types](#)

How Performance Max works with Search campaigns and keywords

Performance Max complements existing Search campaigns and respects your keyword targeting. If the user's search query is identical to an eligible Search keyword of any match type in your account, the Search campaign will be prioritized over Performance Max. If the query isn't identical to an eligible Search keyword (including the spell-corrected search term), the campaign or ad with the highest Ad Rank, which considers creative relevance and performance, will be selected. [Learn more About Performance Max campaigns](#)

At times, you may find existing keywords showing in Performance Max instead of Search campaign due to ineligibility factors. Here are a few reasons why a Search keyword isn't eligible to trigger an ad:

- All campaign or ad group targeting isn't met.
- All creatives or landing pages for the ad group are disapproved.
- It has low search volume status.
- The campaign is limited by budget.

Related Links

- [Your guide to Broad Match](#)
- [Your guide to AI-powered Search ads](#)
- [How to steer AI-powered Search ads](#)
- [Search Automation technical guide](#) 

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