

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

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## 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>author</code>	search by author's name
<code>entry</code>	search by entry ID
<code>exact</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 website
<code>historical</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>manual</code>	search the entries in the <i>Stata Documentation</i>
<code>sj</code>	search the entries in the <i>Stata Journal</i> and the STB

## Menu

Help > Search...

## 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 user-written additions. From the results, you can click to go to a source or to install additions.

## 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 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 posted on the Stata website: <http://www.stata.com>. 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* and its predecessor, the *Stata Technical Bulletin*; 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

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 *User's Guide*, the *Base Reference Manual*, the *Data Management Reference Manual*, the *Graphics Reference Manual*, the *Longitudinal-Data/Panel-Data Reference Manual*, the *Multilevel Mixed-Effects Reference Manual*, the *Multiple-Imputation Reference Manual*, the *Multivariate Statistics Reference Manual*, the *Power and Sample-Size Reference Manual*, the *Programming Reference Manual*, the *Structural Equation Modeling Reference Manual*, the *Survey Data Reference Manual*, the *Survival Analysis and Epidemiological Tables Reference Manual*, the *Treatment-Effects Reference Manual*, the *Time-Series Reference Manual*, the *Mata Reference Manual*, 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 user-written FAQs and examples, and the articles in the *Stata Journal* and the *Stata Technical Bulletin*. 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 user-written additions to Stata, including, but not limited to, user-written additions published in the *Stata Journal* (SJ) and the *Stata Technical Bulletin* (STB). `search keywords`, `net` performs the same search as the command `net search` (with no options); see [\[R\] net search](#).

```
. search random effect, net
Web resources from Stata and other users
(contacting http://www.stata.com)
70 packages found (Stata Journal and STB listed first)
-----
st0156_1 from http://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj11-2
SJ11-2 st0156_1. Update: Multivariate random-effects... / Update:
Multivariate random-effects meta-regression / by Ian White / Support:
ian.white@nrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk / After installation, type help mvmeta and
mvmeta_make
st0201 from http://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj10-3
SJ10-3 st0201. metaan: Random-effects meta-analysis / metaan:
Random-effects meta-analysis / by Evangelos Kontopantelis, / National
Primary Care Research and Development Centre (NPCRDC), / University of
Manchester, Manchester, UK / David Reeves, / National Primary Care
sbe24_3 from http://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj9-2
SJ9-2 sbe24_3. Update: metan: fixed- and random-effects... / Update:
metan: fixed- and random-effects meta-analysis / by Ross J. Harris, Roger
M. Harbord, and Jonathan A. C. Sterne, / Department of Social Medicine,
University of Bristol / Jonathan J. Deeks, Department of Primary Care
(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 and STB inserts.

For instance, in [R] `kdensity` in this manual you will discover that Isaías H. Salgado-Ugarte wrote the first version of Stata's `kdensity` command and published it in the STB. Assume that you read his original insert and found the discussion useful. You might now wonder what else he has written in the SJ or STB. 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.

Actually, to find all entries written by Salgado-Ugarte, you need to type

```
. search Salgado-Ugarte, author historical
(output omitted)
```

Prior inserts in the SJ or STB that provide a feature that later was superseded by a built-in feature of Stata are marked as historical in the search database and, by default, are not listed. The `historical` option ensures that all entries are listed.

## 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?
http://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)
```

To generate a table of contents for the 26th issue of the STB, you would type

```
. search STB-26, entry historical
(output omitted)
```

The `historical` option here is possibly important. STB-26 was published in July 1995, and perhaps some of its inserts have already been marked historical.

You could obtain a list of all inserts associated with `sg53` by typing

```
. search sg53, entry historical
(output omitted)
```

Again we include the `historical` option in case any of the relevant inserts have been marked historical.

## 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.
```

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, and coeditor of the *Stata Journal* 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](#)