



Using Keyword Modifiers with your Search Terms

Having a solid keyword list and strategy for your campaign is extremely important in order to maximize the ROI of any PPC campaign.

It's always best to begin a new campaign with a strong list of researched keywords and search phrases which are used throughout the buying process. This will help your audience find you when they search for your products.

Using keyword modifiers along with negative keywords and keyword/phrase variants is also wise. Just remember to do your keyword research first, and then you can get creative with the list you've generated.

Keyword modifiers are the "rules" that can be set for individual keywords in a campaign. These "rules" control which search terms will trigger your ads to appear in search results.

So what are the modifiers and how do they work??? Read on for the juicy details, along with a quick-reference chart to have on file!

Keyword Modifier #1: Broad Match

Broad match is the default match type that all your keywords are assigned to. Broad match allows search engines to display your ads for terms that are variations of the keywords in your account.

Your ads may show on searches that include misspellings, synonyms, singular/plural forms, related searches, and other relevant variations. By definition, broad match is going to match your selected keywords with the broadest possible searches.

It is important to note that broad match can waste valuable PPC budget by displaying your ad on irrelevant variations of your keywords.

For example, imagine that you own a clothing boutique that sells a wonderful variety of blue jeans at a shop in Orange County. If your selected keyword is "Blue Jeans Orange County," Google may interpret your keyword for these potential search matches:

"Orange County Ripped Levi Blue Jeans"

"Blue Jeans LA County"

"Orange Jeans Blue County"

Keyword Modifier #2: +Broad +Match +Modifiers

A broad match modifier is the big brother of the broad match type, which is a more responsible, cautious version of the broad match. And in our case, an older brother you can trust a bit more than broad match with your Google Ads budget.

As suggested by the name, a broad match modifier can be viewed as a middle ground between broad match and the other more restrictive match types.

This match type is relatively new to Google Ads and gives you more control than broad match but more freedom than phrase match.

Broad match modifiers allow you to specify certain search terms that must be included in order for your ad to be displayed.

Simply add the “+” sign in front of one or more words to modify your broad match keywords. We recommend that you only put the “+” sign in front of the words that are most closely define your product. Your keywords will appear in a user’s search in any order.

Example:

Match Type	Symbol	Keyword	Example Searches
Broad Match Modifier	+keyword	Blue +Jeans +Orange +County	Jeans Orange County Macy’s, Where to Buy Jeans in Orange County

Although broad match modifiers are similar to broad match, broad match modifiers can give you more visibility and control over how your ad budget is spent.

Broad match modifiers can be a much safer option than broad matches and even provide a higher click-through rate (CTR). This is because your ad will not be triggered on synonyms to your keyword or related searches.

Pros And Cons Of Modified Broad Match

Modified broad match also offers a wide variety of searches, which can provide you with valuable keywords you may have not considered before, will still trigger your ad.

If you add the modifier (+) to your broad match keywords, the relevancy of your ad traffic will increase because modified broad match generates better-targeted traffic.

However, self-proclaimed PPC-a-holic Susan Wenograd from Moz.com warns that modified broad match may still produce irrelevant searches. And since the search query can still include other words, you really have to stay on top of what you're showing up for.

Bryan Watson from PPC Hero, a blog that offers paid search advertising tips from industry experts, offers the advice that you should utilize this match types if you want to keep a high impression count, but also narrow down the irrelevance you typically get from broad match. This offers the exclusivity of phrase match without limiting the search query to the specific order in which the keywords are listed.

Keyword Modifier #3: "Phrase Match"

Phrase match helps eliminate the risky, and potentially unnecessary traffic than broad match and broad match modifiers produce.

When you use the phrase match type, your ad will appear in search results when a person searches your keyword phrase in the correct order. It can still display for searches that include additional words also.

An important distinction between phrase match and broad match (or modified broad match) is that phrase match will not include search terms that contain words in the middle of your phrase.

Phrase match can also be a great choice when the meaning of your keyword changes based on the order of the terms (such as "blue jeans Orange County" and "orange jeans Blue County"). Your keyword must appear in the order that you specify.

Enter your keyword phrase in quotation marks to use the phrase match option in Google Ads.

Example:

Match Type	Symbol	Keyword	Example Searches
Phrase Match Modifier	"keyword"	"Blue Jeans"	Men's Blue Jeans Price of Blue Jeans

This match type is essential because phrase match is more flexible than exact match and it allows Google to exercise more discretion than broad match or broad match modifiers.

Because you don't have to rely on exact matches, you can benefit from the wide audience that phrase match attracts. However, the opportunity still presents itself that your ad may be served to irrelevant traffic.

Certified Knowledge, a PPC marketing blog, explains that phrase match can be "incredibly useful when the word order matters. Word ordering doesn't always matter—but when it does, phrase match is an indispensable match type to employ to make sure you're reaching the correct searchers."

There will be an increase in traffic for the specific keyword that you choose, which means that your ad budget is paying for more relevant traffic.

Phrase match will typically not drive the same volume of traffic that broad match does. However, phrase match will drive more quality traffic with a higher chance of converting since the ad is more targeted to your niche.

Keyword Modifier #4: [Exact Match]

Exact match is the most restrictive out of the four PPC keyword. It puts strict limits on when your ad will be displayed. This match type will give you the highest relevance, but the lowest reach.

Exact match should be used if you want your ad to be served for a specific keyword.

When you choose exact match, your ad will only show to customers who are searching for your exact keyword, or a close variant.

Close variants of your keyword may include singular or plural forms, misspellings, abbreviations, accents, stemmings (e.g. walk and walking), additional prepositions and conjunctions, and reordered words with an identical meaning. What's important to note here is that close variants do not include synonyms.

To set an exact match type, all you need to do is put brackets around your keyword.

Example:

Match Type	Symbol	Keyword	Example Searches
Exact Match	[keyword]	[Blue Jeans]	Blue Jeans, Blue Jean, Jeans Blue

This match type will significantly decrease the amount of traffic your ad produces. It's also unlikely that it will generate as many impressions or clicks as the other match types.

However, the traffic that exact match produces is extremely targeted and has the highest chance of converting, since users are searching for the exact term related to what you're offering.

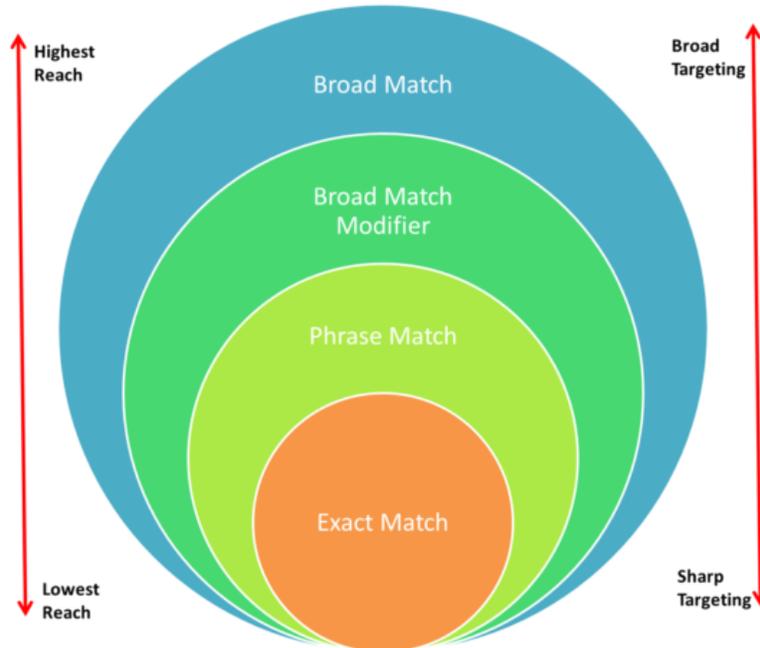
SEMrush, a world-leading competitive research service for online marketing, offers the advice that "if you want to increase the volume of traffic, you will have to add more keywords to your campaign. Still, the fact that the chances of conversion are highest means that even low traffic could boost your sales."

High intent, exact match keywords may also help indirectly improve your Quality Score, since exact match lowers the search term-to-keyword ratio.

Alex Carel, from digital marketing firm Pyxl, adds that "this ad group generates the highest click-through rates, but also the highest cost-per-click. At this point of your keyword development, you're no longer looking for campaign ideas, and have reached the most particular psychological ground for connecting to your persona."

Exact Match Risks

Since you're only paying for a very few, targeting clicks, exact match may contribute to reducing your overall costs. However, it is important to keep in mind that you're also risking missing valuable keyword-related traffic and you will not be able to capture long-tail data.



Top marketers say you should "try different keyword phrases, try different PPC keyword modifiers, and test! Definitely fiddle around with your campaigns, try new things and always keep trying to improve your keyword lists."

Key Takeaways on Keyword Modifiers

Choosing the correct modifier(s) is an important aspect of your PPC strategy. Now that you have an outline of the pros and cons of each match type, you can decide which is the best fit for your campaign. Here are the key points to consider for each match type:

- The match type determines how narrow or broad a search query will match to a keyword in your Google Ads account.
- Broad match is the default match type and it is going to match your selected keywords with the broadest possible searches. The audience for broad match is not as targeted and will have a significantly reduced chance of converting. However, it may be a good option for those who don't have time to invest in creating in-depth keyword lists.
- Broad match modifiers allow you to specify certain search terms that must be included in order for your ad to be displayed. These match types are useful for keeping a high impression count, but also narrow down the irrelevance you typically get from broad match.
- Phrase match type will trigger your ad when a person searches your keyword phrase in the correct order. However, it can still display for searches that include additional words. Phrase match is a great option when you've already narrowed in on a specific term you want to target or bid on so that you can utilize your ad budget for more relevant traffic
- Exact match will only show your ad to customers who are searching for your exact keyword, or a close variant. This match type will give you the highest relevance, but the lowest reach. This ad group generates the highest click-through rates, but also the highest cost-per-click.

Match type	Special symbol	Example keyword	Ads may show on searches that	Example searches
Broad match	none	women's hats	include misspellings, synonyms, related searches, and other relevant variations	<i>buy ladies hats</i>
Broad match modifier	+keyword	+women's +hats	contain the modified term (or close variations, but not synonyms), in any order	<i>hats for women</i>
Phrase match	"keyword"	"women's hats"	are a phrase, and close variations of that phrase	<i>buy women's hats</i>
Exact match	[keyword]	[women's hats]	are an exact term and close variations of that exact term	<i>women's hats</i>
Negative match	-keyword	-women	are searches without the term	<i>baseball hats</i>

Lastly...

Negative Keywords

Negative keywords can be used in conjunction with broad and phrase match types. Adding negative keywords will help improve your targeting, which can increase your ROI high when using broad match.

Designating a negative keyword prevents Google from ever displaying your ad in response to that keyword. You can easily create a negative keyword by places a minus sign in front of any term.

According to Kayrooya, a negative keywords tool for Google Ads & Bing ads, broad match negative keywords are a great way to block a large amount of irrelevant traffic. However, they warn that adding broad match negative keywords will limit your reach: "a broad match negative keyword restricts your reach more than phrase or exact match.

So, before adding a keyword as broad match you might want to reconfirm from your search query data, whether assigning a different match type would make a difference.