

The MLA search interface has a new feature called “Smarttext” searching. This will skew your results horribly because if your search term gets no hits, a script will go off and find a huge pile of items it thinks you might want.

This might be useful if you aren’t doing an exercise specifically to learn how to create complex search terms to refine your results (though its guesses sometimes are a bit weird)!

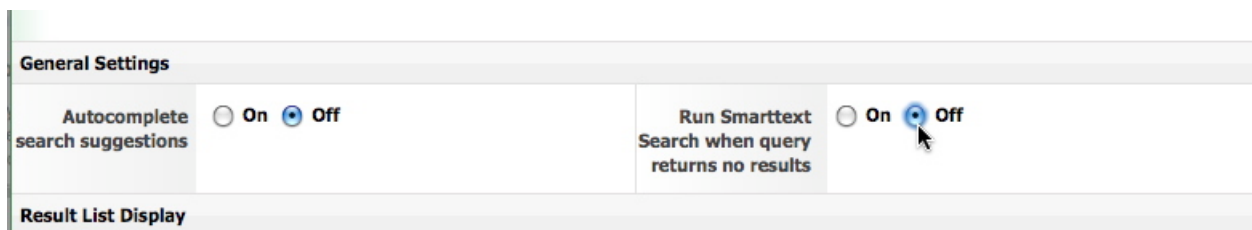
In any case, for the purpose of doing this exercise you’ll need to start by turning Smarttext searching off.

1. Click on Preferences:



The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top left is the EBSCOhost logo. The search bar contains the text "dashiell hammet". To the right of the search bar are buttons for "Search" and "Clear". Below the search bar are three rows of search criteria, each with a dropdown menu for "and" and "in". The "in" dropdowns are currently set to "Select a Field (optional)". Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Visual Search", "Search History/Alerts", and "Preferences >". A mouse cursor is pointing at the "Preferences >" link.

2. Click the radio button to turn Smarttext Search to “Off”:



The screenshot shows the "General Settings" section of the EBSCOhost preferences window. There are two radio button options: "Autocomplete search suggestions" with "On" and "Off" options, and "Run Smarttext Search when query returns no results" with "On" and "Off" options. The "Off" radio button for "Run Smarttext Search" is selected, and a mouse cursor is pointing at it.

3. Don't just close the window at this point — make sure you scroll down to the bottom of the screen and save your preferences for the session:



The screenshot shows the bottom of the EBSCOhost preferences window. There are two radio button options for "E-mail format": "Rich Text" and "Plain Text". The "Rich Text" radio button is selected. Below the radio buttons are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons. A mouse cursor is pointing at the "Save" button. At the bottom of the window is a footer that reads "Visit our EBSCOhost Support site for a Basic Search Tutorial".

4. I haven’t tested this, but you may need to turn it off again if you close your browser and come back to try again at a different time.