Tips for using the online Middle English Dictionary

by Dr Heather Mitchell-Buck (Hood College) & Dr Andrew Albin (Fordham University)

The Middle English Dictionary is an indispensable resource, but it can be a bit tricky for new users. Here are our top five tips for navigating the MED like a pro:

1. From the landing page, click "Lookups," then select "Headword and forms" from the dropdown menu when you search.
2. Use wildcard characters (*) to help locate dictionary entries. Remember, Middle English vowels are especially unstable. A good rule of thumb is to replace all vowels with asterisks and reduce double to single consonants. Lop off suffixes, too -- if you're searching for a verb, the entry will appear in the infinitive form ending with -(e)n.
3. Note the use of uppercase T for thorn and uppercase Y for yogh.
4. If you're searching on a device that autocapitalizes (like an iPhone or iPad), make sure the first letter of your search term is in lowercase or you will likely get zero results!
5. If you really want to dig into the MED, from the landing page click "Search the MED entries" then "Boolean search," and chose from among the expanded search options in the dropdown menu.