



## How to Find a UN Document Using a UN Document Symbol

### Introduction

A UN document symbol is a combination of numbers and letters which serves as a unique identifier for a United Nations document. This symbol is typically found in the upper right-hand corner of a document. Symbols are frequently referenced in other UN documents and academic works about the UN.



Symbols are frequently referenced in other UN documents and academic works about the UN. More information on symbols is available in the [United Nations Documentation: Research Guide](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### Official Document System of the United Nations (ODS)

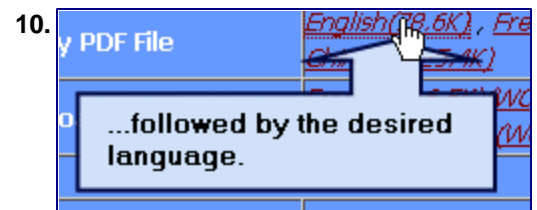
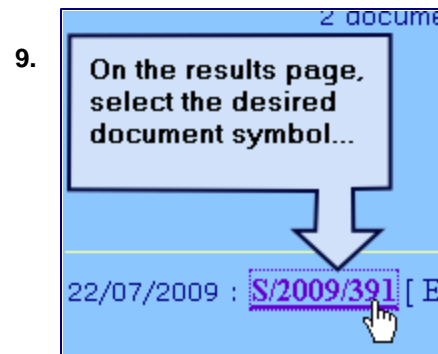
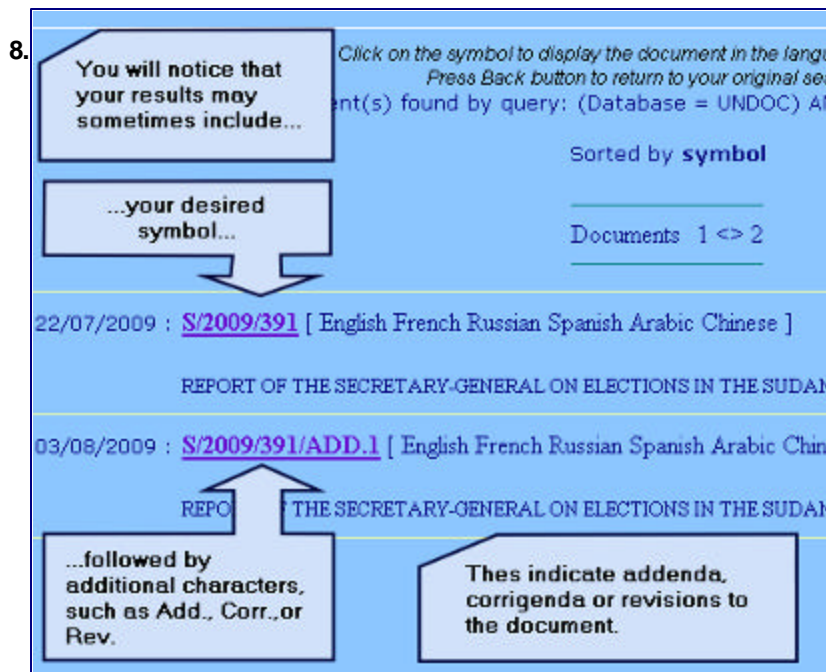
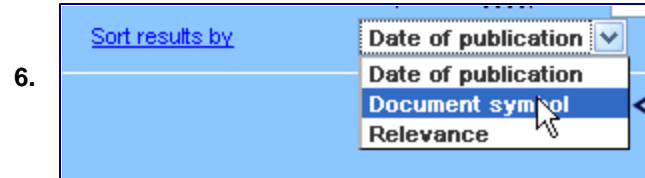
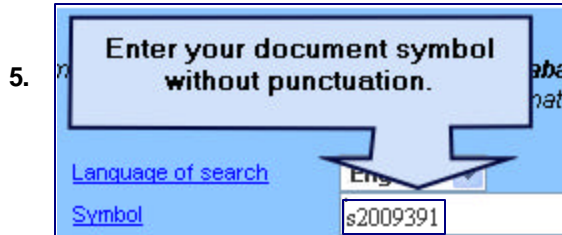
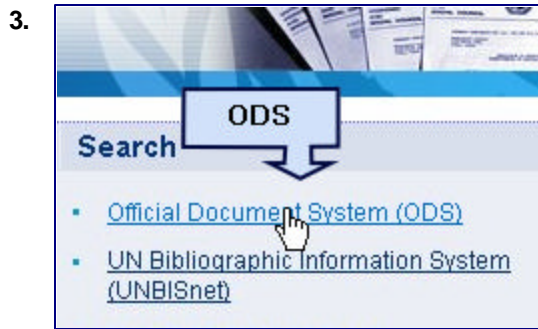
If you have a UN document symbol, e.g. **S/2009/391**, you can often locate the corresponding document using the **Official Document System of the United Nations (ODS)**<sup>2</sup>. The ODS contains the full-text of almost all documents issued since 1993 and select documents from earlier years.

You can access the [ODS](#) from the [Documents link](#)<sup>3</sup> on the [UN home page](#)<sup>4</sup>.



#### Show Me






# United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet)

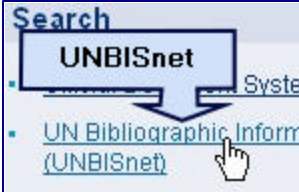
Sometimes, you will find that your desired document is not available in ODS, e.g. **E/CONF.85/L.33**. Generally, this is because the document is older and has not been scanned. In these cases, you may find it useful to search the **United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet)**<sup>5</sup>. UNBISnet provides bibliographic records for documents from roughly 1980 onwards that contain potentially useful information. Also, if a document is available in full-text, UNBISnet will provide a link to the various language versions.


You can access [UNBISnet](#) from the [Documents link](#) on the [UN home page](#).

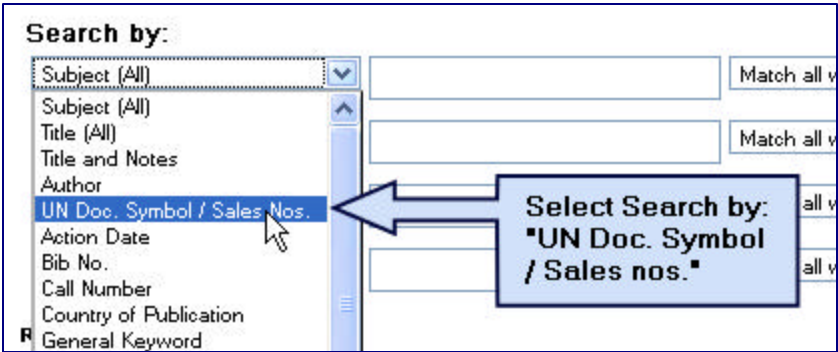


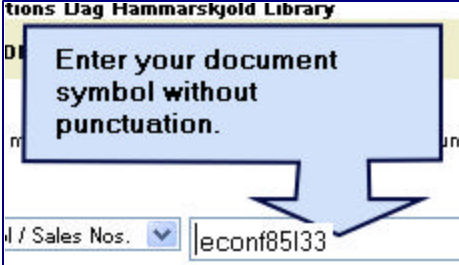
## Show Me


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1. Access the UNBISnet from the "Documents" link on the UN home
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2. Search UNBISnet
- 

3. Click "New Keyword Search" under Bibliographic Records.
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4. Search by: UN Doc. Symbol / Sales Nos.
- 

5. Enter your document symbol without punctuation.
- 

6. Click "Go."

The resulting record will give you title and subject information on the document. If you decide you want to retrieve the document, you can visit your nearest [depository library](#)<sup>6</sup> or contact the [UN Reference Team](#)<sup>7</sup>, which may be able to scan and send you the item.

## Take the Test

### Search for UN Document Using UN Document Symbol

1. What is the symbol of [this document](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/training/pdf/ccpr.pdf)? (<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/training/pdf/ccpr.pdf>)

- a) 16 February 2004
- b) GE.04-40395
- c) CCPR
- d) CCPR/C/ALB/2004/1

**2. Use ODS or UNBISnet and find the Document with the symbol: A/63/677.**

What kind of document is it?

- a) A General Assembly resolution
- b) A Secretary General Report
- c) Meeting Records of the General Assembly
- d) A letter from the Secretary General

**3. What is the title of the document: A/39/27?**

- a) Situation of human rights in El Salvador
- b) Report of the Conference on Disarmament
- c) Strengthening of security and co-operation in the region of the Mediterranean: report of the Secretary-General
- d) Disarmament Week: report of the Secretary-General

-----Key-----

- 1. (d)
- 2. (b)
- 3. (b)

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<sup>1</sup> **United Nations Documentation: Research Guide** - <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> **ODS** - <http://documents.un.org/>

<sup>3</sup> **Documents link** - <http://www.un.org/en/documents/>

<sup>4</sup> **UN home page** - <http://www.un.org/>

<sup>5</sup> **UNBISnet** - <http://unbisnet.un.org/>

<sup>6</sup> **UN Depository libraries** - <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/deplib/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> **UN Reference Team** – [reference@un.org](mailto:reference@un.org)