

Print and Online Reference Sources

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William Rose Benet (1948):

Either my memory is at fault or there is one essay that neither Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, nor Christopher Morley ever wrote: one on Reference Books. The phrase for them, now cliché, has been “mines of information”. But a mine, at best, is a rather dark and dreary excavation – not to say *dank*, at times.

I prefer to think of the book before you as a cave like the famous one stumbled upon by Aladdin. I might go on from there to describe its revelation of treasure of so many varieties and kinds, yet each in its own particular bin. For the office of a reference book is, after all, to bring some order out of chaos. But it is also to present you a well-organized supplementary memory, in one volume.

The delights of such memory may be inexhaustible; the safaris of research it can initiate, endless; the urge to literary creation which it can supply, present on every page. And remember, that to enter this domain of learning and imagination you have not even to use the mysterious phrase, “Open Sesame!”

From Benet's reader's encyclopedia, 4th ed. 1996

What is a reference source?

- Book used to find information on a subject or topic
- Book used to identify other sources of information on a subject or topic
- More broadly, any title in the Reference location!
- You can tell a reference book by its call number (starts with “Ref.” or “Large”)
- Focus today on selected print resources and their companion electronic versions
- Resources available here at NYSL
- Print collection has 1700 volumes
- More e-resources are at public libraries
- List is a selection of titles, not all we have!

Many types of books....

- Dictionary
- Encyclopedia
- Bibliography
- Directory
- Almanac
- Yearbook
- Index
- Atlas

Anything else?

- Manual
- Local phonebook
- Tourist guidebook
- Map
- Concordance
- Local tools
(e.g. history of the Society Library)

Why use a reference book first?

- Help define vocabulary for a topic
- Overview and main issues of topic
- Currency of information
- Scholarly credibility of author(s)
- Reputable publishing company is behind it
- Suggested references to read further
(this can be a great time saver for you!)

A reference collection will reflect...

- Ways to access the local collection
- Membership of the institution
– > (e.g. literature, history, health)
- Questions asked at the NYSL desk
- Choices of the librarians / Library staff
- Budget and space that is available
- Are titles at another library nearby?

Where do outdated editions go?

- Some will be archived in the Library stacks or closed stacks
- “Latest edition only” in the Library catalog → we discard the previous one!
- Main Issue: the currency of information → the old information can be misleading

How to identify the right reference source?

- Reference and Circulation staff
- Browse using call number ranges

(handout: "Guide to the Stacks")

- Advice from people you know
("oh, just use the ANB for that!")
- References in other books
- Online catalog for the Library

Some Tips...

- Scan table of contents and scope of book
- You need to be in the right source!
> e.g. Current Biography vs. American National Biography (ANB)
- Index

Chronological coverage

- Paper supplements
> e.g. Fiction catalog, Reader's guide to periodical literature
- Ongoing volumes published

More Tips....

- Commonly referred to as....
> e.g. Peterson's; Sargent's; DNB; Bartlett's
- Older editions of reference books available in Stacks location
- "Split" years holdings
> some in Reference, some in Stacks
- Electronic versions of some titles
> e.g. Oxford Reference Online
- Notice something that we don't have?

Online reference sources

- Use in the Library (5th & 3rd floor, Stack 1)
- Can be used from home
- Email systems@nysoclib.org for your user name and "PIN"
- Ask at the reference desk for help
- Email mbartlett@nysoclib.org or call me at 212-288-6900 x. 201

Advantages of online reference sources

- Printing
- Emailing
- Search options, limiting

- Hyperlinks to other articles and websites
- Updating of content

Demonstration....

- American National Biography (ANB)
- Oxford Reference Online (ORO)

Questions and notes...

Print and Online Reference Sources in the New York Society Library:

May 25, 2006 - Instructor, Mark Bartlett, Interim Head Librarian (Head of Cataloging)

1. The reference books (call numbers starting with "Ref.") are held in the Library's reference room.
 2. Some heavily-used reference books are available at the Circulation desk.
 3. "Large" denotes that the book is in the Large Study Room; "LSR" shows in call number on the Library catalog.
 4. Normally, if a superseded edition of a reference book is kept by the Library, it will go to a "Stacks" location.
 5. Books marked * are available as electronic resources in the Library or from your home computer.
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1. ART & ARCHITECTURE

Dictionary of art. 34 vols.	Large 703 D.
* Dictionary of twentieth-century art.	Ref. 709.4 C.
Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs & graveurs (Benezit's).	CS 709.2 B.
Macmillan encyclopedia of architects. 4 vols.	Large 720.92 M.
Mantle Fielding's dictionary of American painters, sculptors & engravers.	Ref. 709.2 F.
Official museum directory (2003).	Ref. 069 C.
* Oxford dictionary of art.	Ref. 703 O.
Who's who in American art (2003-04).	Ref. 709.2 W.

2. ATLASES & GAZETTEERS

Atlas of the world (Oxford).	Large & Ref. 912
O.	
Columbia gazetteer of the world. 3 vols.	Ref. 910.3.
Oxford encyclopedic world atlas.	Large 912 O.
Road atlas : United States (2002).	Ref. 912 R.
Times comprehensive atlas of the world (2003).	Large 912 T.

3. ASSOCIATIONS & FOUNDATIONS

Encyclopedia of associations. 4 vols.	Ref. 060 E.
Foundation directory (2005).	Ref. 361 F.
New York state foundations (2001).	Ref. 361 N.

4. BIOGRAPHY

* American national biography. 26 vols.	Ref. 920 A5126 A.
Current biography / Current biography yearbook.	Ref. 920 C9763 C.
* Dictionary of American biography. 22 vols.	Ref. 920 D5442 D.
Encyclopedia of American biography.	Ref. 920 E964 E.

Notable American women. 5 vols.	Ref. 920 N8994 N.
* Dictionary of national biography - Oxford (2004). 60 vols.	Ref. 920 O986 O.
Scribner encyclopedia of American lives. 6 vols.	Ref. 920 S4342 S.

5. BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Standard & Poor's register of corporations, directors & executives (2005).	Ref. 338.7 S.
Morningstar funds 500: annual sourcebook (2005).	Ref. 332 M.

6. EDUCATION

Barron's profiles of American colleges (2005).	Ref. 378 B.
Handbook of private schools (a.k.a. "Sargent's") (2005).	Ref. 373 H.
Insider's guide to the colleges (2006).	Ref. 378 I.
International handbook of universities (2005).	Ref. 378 I.
Peterson's private secondary schools (2006).	Ref. 373 P.

7. ENCLYCLOPEDIAS - general

New encyclopedia Britannica. 15 th ed.- 32 vols.	Ref. 030 N.
Columbia encyclopedia (2000). 6 th ed.	Ref. 030 C.
Encyclopedia Americana. 30 vols.	Ref. 030 E.
Encyclopedia Britannica. 11 th ed (1910-11). 29 vols.	Large 030 N.
World book encyclopedia. 22 vols.	Juv-Ref. 030 W.

8. ENCLYCLOPEDIAS - subject oriented

Africana : encyclopedia of the African & African American experience.	Large 909 A.
Benet's readers encyclopedia.	Ref. 803 B.
Dictionary of the Middle Ages. 13 vols.	Large 909 D.
Encyclopedia of exploration (2003/2004).	Ref. 910.9 H.
Encyclopedia of Latin American history & culture. 5 vols.	Large 980 E.
Oxford encyclopedia of the Reformation. 4 vols.	Large 270.6 O.
Encyclopedia of the Renaissance. 6 vols.	Large 940.21 E.
Gale encyclopedia of Native American tribes. 4 vols.	Large 970 G.
New encyclopedia of the American West.	Large 978 N.
Oxford encyclopedia of ancient Egypt (2001). 3 vols.	Large 932 O.

9. FACTS & STATISTICS & DATES

Britannica book of the year.	Large 030 B.
Encyclopedia of American facts & dates.	Ref. 973.03 C.
Millenium, year by year (2000).	Ref. 902 M.
People's chronology : a year by year record of human events...	Ref. 902 T.
*Statistical abstract of the United States (2004-05).	Ref. 317.3 S.
World almanac & book of facts (2005).	Ref 317.3 W.

10. FILM

- Film encyclopedia (2001). Ref. 791.4 K.
Halliwell's film & video guide (2002). Large 791.4 H.
New biographical dictionary of film (2002). Ref. 791.4 T.

11. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

- * Biographical directory of the U.S. Congress 1774-1989. Ref. 973.3 U.
CQ's politics in America - 108th Congress (2004). Ref. 328.73 Q.
Congress & the Nation: a review of government & politics... Large 320.9 C.
Green book : the official directory of the City of New York (2003). Ref. 917.471 N.
*Official congressional directory (2003-04). Ref. 328.73 O.
The presidents: a reference history (2002). Ref. 973 P.
Statesman's yearbook (2006). Ref. 305 S.
* United States government manual (2004-05). Ref. 353 U.

12. HEALTH & MEDICAL

- Mayo Clinic family health book (2003). Ref. 613 M.
Medical directory of New York State (2005-06). Ref. 610.58 M.
Merck manual of medical information (2003). Ref. 616 M.
Official ABMS directory of board-certified medical specialists (2003). Ref. 610.58 O.
Patient's guide to medical tests. Ref. 616 P.
Physician's desk reference - PDR (2005). Ref. 615.1 P.
Top doctors - New York metro area (2002). Ref. 610.58 T.

13. HISTORY

- Dictionary of American history (2003). 10 vols. Ref. 973.03 D.
*Dictionary of British history (2001). Large 942 D.
Encyclopedia of African-American culture & history. 6 vols. Large 973 E.
Encyclopedia of American social history. 3 vols. Large 973 E.
Encyclopedia of Asian history. 4 vols. Large 950 E.
Encyclopedia of world history : ancient, medieval & modern (2001). Large 903 E.
Oxford companion to British history. Large 942 O.

14. LANGUAGE & DICTIONARIES

- American heritage dictionary of the English language (2000). Large & Ref. 423 A.
Cambridge guide to English usage (2004). Ref. 423 P.
Cassell's dictionary of slang (2000). Large 427 G.
Dictionary of American slang. Large 427 C.

Dictionary of slang & unconventional English (Partridge's). (2000)	Ref. 427 P.
Illustrated reverse dictionary.	Ref. 231 I.
New Oxford American dictionary (2001).	Ref 423 N.
Oxford dictionary of phrase & fable (2000).	Ref. 803 D.
*Oxford English dictionary - 2 nd ed. 20 vols.	Ref. 423 O.
Random House historical dictionary of American slang. 2 vols.	Ref. 427 R.
Roget's international thesaurus.	Large & Ref. 424
R.	
Note: NYSL also has many foreign language dictionaries (Spanish-English, Italian-English, German-English, Latin-English etc.)	

15. LAW

Black's law dictionary.	Ref. 340 B.
Dictionary of modern legal usage (2001).	Ref. 340 G.
Martindale-Hubbell law directory - NY & NJ (2004).	Ref. 340 M.

16. LIBRARY RESOURCES & GENERAL DIRECTORIES

American library directory (2005-06).	Ref. 021 A.
Bowker annual of library & book trade information information (2004).	Ref. 020 B.
Magazines for libraries (2004).	Ref. 016 M.
Subject collections (Ash's).	Ref. 026 A.
Ulrich's periodicals directory (2004).	Ref. 050 U.

17. LITERATURE & READING

African writers. 2 vols.	Ref. 896 A.
American writers. 22 vols.	Ref. 896 A.
British writers. 18 vols.	Ref. 820.9.
Cambridge bibliography of English literature. 4 vols.	Ref. 016.82 C.
Encyclopedia of world literature in the 20 th century. 4 vols.	Ref. 803 E.
European writers. 4 vols.	Ref. 803 E.
Fiction catalog.	Ref. 016.8 F.
Latin American writers. 4 vols.	Ref. 860.3 L.
Oxford companion to classical literature.	Ref. 880.9 O.
HarperCollins reader's encyclopedia of American literature.	Ref. 820.3 H.
Make mine a mystery : a reader's guide to mystery... (2003)	Ref. 016.82 N.
Oxford companion to English literature (2000).	Ref. 823 O.
Oxford companion to women's writing in the United States.	Ref. 820.9 O.
Reference guide to mystery & detective fiction.	Ref. 016.8 B.
Sequels: an annotated guide to novels in series.	Ref. 016.8 H.
Shakespeare A to Z.	Ref. 822.33 D.
Traveler's reading guide.	Ref. 016.9 T.
World authors. 11 vols.	Ref. 920 W1495
W.	

World historical fiction : an annotated guide...	Ref. 016.8 A.
18. NEW YORK CITY & STATE	
AIA guide to New York City (2000).	Ref. 974.71 A.
Encyclopedia of New York City.	Ref. 974.71 E.
Encyclopedia of New York State (2005).	Ref. 974.7 E.
Guide to New York City landmarks (2004).	Ref. 974.471 D.
Landmarks of New York (2005).	Ref. 974.471 D.
Manhattan block by block: a street atlas (2000).	Ref. 912 H.
New York chronology (2003).	Ref. 974.71 T.
New York City 5 borough atlas (2001).	Ref. 912 H.
19. PERFORMING ARTS (DANCE, MUSIC, THEATRE, ETC.)	
Definitive Kobbe's opera book.	Ref. 782.1 K.
Harvard dictionary of music (2003).	Ref. 780.3 H.
International encyclopedia of dance. 6 vols.	Large 792.8 I.
Lives & times of the great composers (2004).	Ref. 780.92 S.
New Grove dictionary of music & musicians (2001). 29 vols.	Large 780.3 N.
Oxford companion to American theatre (2004).	Ref. 792.03 B.
*Oxford dictionary of dance (2000).	Ref. 792.8 C.
Oxford history of western music (2005). 6 vols.	Ref. 780.9 T.
20. PERIODICAL & BOOK INDICES	
Biography index.	Ref. 016.92 B.
Book review digest.	Ref. 050 B.
Columbia Granger's index to poetry in anthologies.	Ref. 808.8 C.
Ottomiller's index to plays in collections.	Ref. 016.8 O.
Reader's guide to periodical literature.	Ref. 050 R.
Short story index.	Ref. 808.83 S.
21. PHILOSOPHY	
Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment (2002). 4 vols.	Large 940.25 E.
Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy. 10 vols.	Ref. 103 R.
Shorter Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy (2005).	Ref. 103 S.
22. PSYCHOLOGY & PSYCHIATRY	
Encyclopedia of psychiatry, psychology, & psychoanalysis.	Ref. 616.8 E.
Encyclopedia of psychology. 4 vols.	Ref. 150 E.
Penguin dictionary of psychology.	Ref. 150 R.
23. PUBLISHING & WRITER RESOURCES	
* Books in print.	Ref. 015 B.
Bowker annual of library & book trade information (2005).	Ref. 020 B.
Guide to literary agents (2006).	Ref. 070.5 G.

International directory of little magazines & small presses (2005-06).	Ref. 655.5 I.
International literary marketplace (2006).	Ref. 070.5 I.
Literary marketplace (2005).	Ref. 070.5 L.
Oxford American writer's thesaurus (2004).	Large 424 L.

24. QUOTATIONS

Anchor book of Latin quotations.	Ref. 808.8 D.
Columbia Granger's dictionary of poetry quotations.	Ref. 808.8 C.
Familiar quotations (a.k.a. "Bartlett's").	Ref. 808.8 B.
Oxford dictionary of quotations.	Ref. 808.8 E.
Oxford dictionary of literary quotations (2003).	Ref. 808.8 O.
Oxford dictionary of twentieth-century quotations.	Ref. 808.8 O.

25. RELIGION

Encyclopedia of American religions.	Large 291 M.
Encyclopaedia Judaica. 19 vols.	Large 909.4 E.
Encyclopedia of religion. 16 vols.	Large 203 E.
Encyclopedia of religion & ethics. 13 vols.	Large 203 H.
Merriam-Webster's encyclopedia of world religions.	Large 203 M.
Oxford companion to Christian thought (2000).	Ref. 203 A.

26. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Asimov's biographical encyclopedia of science & technology.	Ref. 509 A.
Chambers dictionary of science & technology.	Ref. 500 C.
Dictionary of scientific biography. 18 vols.	Ref. 509 D.
Grzimek's animal life encyclopedia. 12 vols.	Ref. 591.5 G.