

Literature and Literary Criticism

Online Databases (they're not websites)

Our online databases are the best place to start with your research. You can use these from home with your library card, saving your in-library time for the resources that exist only on our shelves.

Some teachers place limits on how much of your research can come from websites. These databases are not websites—they are online versions of reference books and periodicals. They are free for use by our library patrons but are not part of the free, open Web. We've paid for your access.

Salem Literature

This is a great place to look for an overview (or, in some cases, an in-depth treatment) of an author or a work. You can also find explanations of categories of long fiction, such as the postmodern novel or the Southern novel.

Scribner Writers Series

Use this database for an overview of an author's life and work. The articles are typically around 20 pages long.

Twayne's Authors Series

You'll probably find a book about your author in the Twayne's database. A Twayne's book usually provides more critical analysis than the articles in the Scribner and Salem databases.

Oxford Reference Online

The reference books in this collection offer short articles, appropriate for looking up quick answers to questions that may come to you while you read the longer article in other sources.

Gale Literary Sources

This is a huge database and search results can be overwhelming, even with the divisions that group your results by type of resource. If you get more than you can deal with, try adding concepts to your search. For example, instead of just searching *Othello* as a work, go to Advanced Search and enter *Othello* as a work and another word or phrase as a keyword, such as *fate*. This assumes you've thought about something in the work that you want to focus on, which is why we recommend that you start with the Salem, Scriber and Twayne's resources that provide thorough overviews.

Gale Literary Sources also includes all of the Scribner and Twayne's resources, so if you did begin with those collections, you may notice the overlap.

Catalog

Find books to check out by using the catalog. In the search box with “words or phrase” selected, type the name of the author you are researching, the word *and*, and the word criticism. For example: *emily dickinson and criticism*. Searching in this manner omits the works *by* the author.

Biographies of writers sometimes contain literary criticism. In the search box with “words or phrase” selected, enter the author’s name followed by *and biography*. For example: *jack kerouac and biography*

If you need additional sources, in the search box with “words or phrase” selected, enter only the author’s name. An introduction or forward to a volume of the author’s work can be a valuable source of criticism.

Reference books

These are some of the best sources outside of our databases; there are many more that you’ll find nearby on the shelves of the Reference section of Lawson McGhee Library, in call number order. The call numbers precede the title.

General Literature

803 Gal *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

809 Lite *Literature Criticism From 1400 to 1800* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

809 Nine *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

809.04 Cont *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

920 Dict *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

810.9 Mode *Modern American Literature*

Abridged criticism on 20th century authors

810.3 Oxfo *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature*

Discussions of authors, notable works, themes, literary movements, periods, institutions, etc.

813.509 Beac *Beacham’s Encyclopedia of Popular fiction*

Criticism and social context; entries are listed by title of work

Literary Forms

809.2 MacG *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama*

809.132 Epic *Epics for Students* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

809 Shor *Short Story Criticism* (excerpted in Gale Literary Sources)

820.9 Crit (in storage) *The Explicator Cyclopedica*

From *The Explicator* 1942-1962; specific poems are analyzed

Special Interest**a. Women's Writing****809.89287 Mast *Masterpieces of Women's Literature***

Analysis and critical context; arranged by title of work

809.89287 Mode *Modern Women Writers*

International author entries, abridged from other sources

920 Ency *Encyclopedia of British Women Writers*

Contains short criticism by author entry

920 Grea *Great Women Writers*

Authors' achievements, biography, and detailed analysis

b. American Diversity**809.8 Mode *Modern Black Writers* (2-volume set)**

Author criticism excerpted from other sources; Caribbean and African writers included

810.3 Oxfo *Oxford companion to African American Literature*

Entries by author, title of work, themes, and literary movements

810.9896 Mast *Masterpieces of African-American Literature*

Brief analysis and critical context on specific works

810.9 Gree *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*

Analysis of individuals and movements; overviews of the literary contributions of various groups

920 Amer *American Diversity, American Identity*

Author entries are grouped by ethnicity, gender, or region of the country; an excellent source for criticism and biographies of Native American, Jewish American, Southern writers, etc.

c. World Literature**803 Ency *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century*****860.9 Fos *Modern Latin American Literature* (2-volume set)**

Excerpts of criticism of authors from books and periodicals

860.9 Mast *Masterpieces of Latino Literature***d. Genre Literature****808.83 Sur *Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature***

810.9 Comp *The Companion to Southern Literature*

Explains the historic, cultural and geographic context of Southern literature and examines the common themes, types and stereotypes encountered.

Book Reviews

Sometimes book reviews written at the time the book was published are helpful. All these indexes are in the Periodicals Room of Lawson McGhee Library.

1. *Book Review Digest* (1905-2014)
2. *Book Review Index* (1965-present)
3. *New York Times Book Review Index* (1896-1970; for more recent coverage, use the *New York Times Index*)