

Literature resources

Research authors and their works, movements of thought,
or intersections of philosophy and literature.

Start with these databases:

Salem Literature

Author and work overviews, plot summaries,
and explanations of literary categories

Scribner Writers Series

Author overviews around 20 pages long

Twayne's Authors Series

Context and critical analysis

Oxford Reference Online

Definitions and short articles

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.

To connect to online literature resources:

1. Go to <http://www.knoxlib.org>
2. Go to **Explore the collection** →
Subject guides
→ **Arts and literature**
→ **Literature**
3. Look under the Databases tab

Using 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 includes the Scribner and Twayne's resources; you may notice the overlap.

- **Advanced Search** helps you narrow the results you might get on an author. For example, if you want to zero in on articles that mention the philosophy of absurdism in the work of Edward Albee, enter his name with the Person-By or About field selected, and *absurd** with the Entire Document field selected. (The * wildcard stands in for various word endings.)
- In an advanced search, select the correct field from the field list. "Keywords" searches the title and author of the document, its abstract or first 100 words, and subject terms associated with it. "Entire Document" gives more results. Be aware of the various title and person fields.
- Search results are organized by content type, with additional limiters in the right column, so that you can easily begin with the kind of information you need.
- Look for **print** and **email** links for an article, or save articles in your Google Drive or OneDrive account.

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 (except for the ones that also contain criticism).

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. Some of these are in storage, so please ask the librarian to retrieve them.

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 *The Explicator Cyclopedia*

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*
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 Mast *Masterpieces of Latino Literature*

860.98 Camb *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*

d. Genre Literature

808.83 Sur *Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature*

809.3872 Murp *The Encyclopedia of Murder and Mystery*

809.7003 Snod *Encyclopedia of Satirical 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.

814 Ency *Encyclopedia of the Essay*

Considers different types of essay, major national traditions, individual writers, and significant individual essays.

Book reviews

Sometimes book reviews written at the time the book was published are helpful.

1. *Book Review Digest* (1905-2014)– in the Periodicals Room of Lawson McGhee Library
2. *Book Review Index* (1965-present)– in the Periodicals Room of Lawson McGhee Library
3. *New York Times Book Review*– search the online archive in the *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* database, at <http://www.knoxlib.org>, navigating to Explore the collection → Encyclopedias, magazines and newspapers → look under the Newspapers tab; ask at Lawson McGhee Library if you'd like to use the *New York Times Book Review Index* in print