

PARSIPPANY HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
American Literature: Selected Sources for Literary Research

Biographical Sources

1. Black Women in America (REF 920.72 BLA) 2 volumes. A comprehensive picture of black women in America, from seventeenth-century to contemporary figures we see on our televisions. Includes both biographical slave women essays on individual women and broad topical essays on such subjects as slavery, religion, civil rights, law, etc.
2. Chamber's Biographical Dictionary (REF 920.02 CH). A good small dictionary covering the great people of all nations throughout history.
3. Contemporary Authors (REF 928 CON). Open series. Use the latest cumulative index. Within each volume the arrangement is alphabetical by author. Brief, factual articles give biographical information and lists of works for current authors.
4. Dictionary of American Biography (REF 920.073 DIC). 10 Vols. 10 Supplements. Biographies of important Americans who are deceased. Signed articles many of which are documented with primary source materials.
5. Dictionary of Literary Biography - Browning (REF 928 BRO). Covers in a single volume the entire range of English and American literature from the earliest times through the 50's. Includes the "low brows" and "best sellers" alongside the established classics.
6. Dictionary of World Biography (REF 920.02 DIC) 10 volumes.
Covers the lives of important personages from the ancient world through the twentieth century.
7. Encyclopedia of World Biography (REF 920.02 MCG) multi-volume. Signed articles on persons important to social and cultural history. Includes a brief biographical synopsis with portrait followed by a short bibliography.
8. Webster's New Biographical Dictionary (REF 920.03 WEB). Brief entries of people both living and dead and of all nations. Living persons, whose biographies are virtually impossible to keep up-to-date in a book of this nature, are not included. See Current Biography.

Bio-Critical Sources

1. African American Writers (REF 810.9 AFR). Complements American Writers. The main text is devoted to a survey of the subjects' principal writings and an assessment of the work as a whole. Brief biographical information is provided.
2. American Women Writers (REF 928.073 AME) 5 volumes. Articles range from 400 to 5,000 words. Each writer's work is assessed, basic biographical data is given as well as a complete bibliography, comprehensive data on writer's names, includes all pseudonyms, aliases, parents' names and husbands' names.
3. American Writers (REF 810.9 AME) 4 volumes and supplements. Biographical essays on American writers from colonial times to the present - with 75% of the authors being from the 20th century. Essays chronicle the subject's literary career and are followed by a selected bibliography.
4. Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction (REF 809.3 BEA) multi-volume. Provides essays on and study activities for the works of authors of popular fiction. Includes biographical data, publishing history, and resources for the author of each analyzed work. Twelve appendices are designed to help readers identify titles, authors, and themes they want to research.
5. Cyclopedia of World Authors (REF 928 CYC) 5 volumes. Entries give biographical details, critical evaluations, and a list of each writer's principal works.
6. Dictionary of Literary Biography (REF 810.9 DIC). Open, multi-volume series. The series is

organized by topic, period or genre. Encompasses all who have contributed to the greatness of literature in America, England, and elsewhere. Most entries deal with the subject's life, major works and critical reputation: i. e., the author's relationship to the social concerns and literary movements of the times. USE THE INDEX IN THE **LAST VOLUME WITH CUMULATIVE INDEX ON SPINE** or Gale's Literary Index (see online resources)

7. Dictionary of Literary Biography : Documentary Series (REF 810.9 DIC) Open series. Supplements the DLB (Dictionary of Literary Biography). Provides key documents on which the essays in DLB are based. Each volume concentrates on the major figures of a particular literary period, movement or genre.
8. Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century (REF 803 ENC) 4 volumes. Articles on individual writers, major genres of literature, and the history of literature – alphabetically arranged. There are two sets on the shelves – one is a newer edition. Check both editions.
9. Great American Writers: Twentieth Century (REF 810.9 GRE) 13 volumes. Highlights the lives and works of 90 authors from the United States and Canada, including poets, novelists, and dramatists
10. Great Writers of the English Language: Novelists (REF 809.3 VIN). An extensive and authoritative guide to the important figures writing in English since the Old English period. It provides biographical, bibliographical and critical information.
Similar: Great Writers: Poets (REF 809.1 VIN)
Great Writers: Dramatists (REF 809.2 VIN)
11. Literature and Its times. (REF 809.93). Arranged chronologically from ancient times to the present. Relates history to literature; includes novels, short stories, plays, poems, biographies, essays, speeches and documents.
12. Modern American Women Writers (REF 810.9 MOD). Critical and biographical essays of about forty-one representative women writers who have published in the United States since the 1870s.
13. Popular Contemporary Writers (REF 810.9 POP) 11 volumes. A collection of signed articles on 96 contemporary writers. Arranged in 10 volumes in A-Z format with additional index volume. Sections include: The Writer's Life, The Writer's Work, The Reader's Guide to Major Works (critical analysis of two or more works), List of Published Works, and a critical bibliography.
14. World Authors 1900-1950 (REF 928 WOR). 4 volumes. Incisive accounts of writers' lives and works, including critical responses and bibliographies.
Similar: You may use the Index to Wilson Authors Series (REF 928 IND).
World Authors 1950-1970
World Authors 1970-1975
World Authors 1975-1980
World Authors 1980-1985
World Authors 1985-1990
15. Writers For Young Adults (REF 809.3 WRI) 3 volumes. Articles discuss the author's life and the importance and meaningfulness of his most popular and enduring titles.

Sources For Literary Criticism

A. Bibliographies and Indexes

1. Anatomy of Wonder: A Critical Guide to Science Fiction (REF 016.808 ANA). Each major era in science fiction writing is discussed, accompanied by a comprehensive, annotated bibliography of the novels and anthologies for each period.
2. Granger's Index to Poetry (REF 808.81 GRA). An index to individual poems in collections of poetry. It has three indexes: one by author, a subject and a title and first line index. The title index is the main entry and includes a symbol for the collection of poetry in which the poem will be

found. A key to the symbols is located in the front of Granger's
Similar: Short Story Index (REF 808.83 SHO) No cumulative index.
Play Index (808.82 PLA) No cumulative index.

3. Magill's Bibliography of Literary Criticism (REF 809 MAG). 4 volumes. Arranged alphabetically by author, then by title, then by authors of citations. Citations are from many sources – magazine, newspapers, parts of books and entire books.
Similar: Twentieth Century Short Story Explication (REF 016.808 TWE)
Drama Criticism Index (REF 016.809 BRE)

B. General Critical Sources

1. American Literature (REF 810.9 AME). 30 volumes. Bound volumes of the journal from 1929-1959. Scholarly reviews and articles on writers and their works. Use index volume.
2. Contemporary Literary Criticism (REF 809 CON) Open, multi-volume series. A companion series to Contemporary Authors. Excerpts from critical articles or reviews on the works of authors who are now living or who have died since January 1, 1960.
Similar: Twentieth Century Literary Criticism (REF 809 TWE)
Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism (REF 809.04 NIN)
3. The Critical Temper - Tucker (REF 820.9 CRI). 4 Vols. Designed to complement Moulton's Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors by providing 20th century comment and criticism on the same Anglo-American authors, 680 - 1904.
4. Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors - Moulton (REF 820.9 MOU). 8 Vols. Chronological by literary period. Brief biographical data plus selected quotations or excerpts from criticisms of each author's work. Critical material is chronological by date of publication. Covers the years 680 - 1904.
5. Library of Literary Criticism: Modern American Literature - Nyren (REF 810.9 NYR) 5 volumes. Excerpts criticism of important American authors from the early 1900's through 1985. Includes recent critical studies of older and neglected writers.
Similar: Library of Literary Criticism: Modern Black Writers (REF 809.889 MOD).
Modern Women Writers (REF 809.89 MOD)

C. Genre Critical Sources

1. Columbia Companion to the Twentieth-century American Short Story (REF 813.01 COL) Part I is comprised of articles on stories that share a particular theme. Part II contains more than one hundred pieces on individual writers and their work. Each essay offers a brief biographical sketch, an overview of the author's career and major motifs, and analyses of at least two stories.
2. Critical Survey of Drama: English Language Series (REF 809.2 Mag). 7 Vols. Articles review a dramatist's work identifying the themes and characteristics. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author in volumes one through five. Volume six includes a glossary of terms, and essays covering historical periods, dramatic theory, staging and techniques, and an annotated bibliography.
3. Critical Survey of Long Fiction: English Language Series (REF 809.3 CRI). 8 volumes. Covers classical and contemporary novelists from the United States and abroad. Arranged alphabetically by author. Volumes one to seven present essays analyzing important aspects of each writer's life and work. Volume eight is a collection of essays discussing the history and different types of novels and novellas.
4. Critical Survey of Mystery and Detective Fiction (REF 809.3 CRI) 4 volumes Presents critical studies of more than 290 authors from around the world dating from the mid-eighteenth century through 1988.
5. Critical Survey of Poetry: English Language Series. (REF 809.1 CRI). 9 Vols. Arranged alphabetically by author. Contains essays on individual poets, the historical and critical background essential for reading poetry, and exhaustive indexing of poets by

their given and pen names, titles of collections, titles of poems discussed, critical terminology, and literary movements. An 8 volume revised edition is also on the shelves.

6. Critical Survey of Short Fiction (REF 809.3 MAG). 8 Vols. For works longer than a short story. Author essays are arranged alphabetically by author and provide in-depth overviews of short story writers. Volume 7 contains overview essays including those devoted to theory and world cultures. Two older sets are also on the shelf.
7. Encyclopedia of Allegorical Literature (REF 908.915 LEE). Concise articles covering all aspects of literary allegory: the device wherein characters, situations, and actions stand for ideas. Essays on the works include a brief overview of the work itself as well as an analysis of how closely it adheres to the definition of allegory. Extensive bibliographies.
8. Encyclopedia of Apocalyptic Literature (REF 809.933 ZIM). Discussions of the major authors whose work is based on ideas and motifs found in apocalypses – the universal battle between good and evil, the instances of supernatural intervention, and the ultimate judgment of humanity after death.
9. Encyclopedia of Satirical Literature (REF 809.7 SNO). Commentary of some of the best and most influential satirical works from throughout history and around the world. Organized alphabetically, entries for individual works feature plot summaries and analyses of satirical content. Author entries include glimpses of colorful lives and masterly achievements.
10. Encyclopedia of Utopian Literature (REF 809.933 SNO). Concise summaries and insightful analyses of major titles. Provides biographical plus definitions of themes and terms as they pertain to utopian ideals.
11. Facts On File Companion to the American Short Story (REF 813.01 FAC) Author entries include dates, biographies, lists of stories and their critical reception. The Companion also contains individual entries on literary terms, themes, historical events, locales, influential magazines and critics, and major short story prize awards. With few exceptions, the authors (19th and 20th century) were either born in the U.S. or made or make their home there.
12. Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Poets and Poetry (REF 811 GRE) Includes more than 900 essays on poets as well as topical entries on key schools, movements, poetic theories, practices, and terms. (5 Vol. Set)
13. McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama (REF 809.2 McG). 5 Vols. A comprehensive bio-critical guide to all aspects of world drama. Articles range from African theater to Yugoslav drama. Entries on major dramatists include biographical data, an assessment of his/her creative achievements, synopsis of major plays, bibliographies.
14. Mystery and Suspense Writers: the Literature of Crime, Detection, and Espionage. (REF 809.3 MYS). 2 volumes. Furnishes both a look at the author's background and a genuine critical analysis of the major novels and stories.
15. Reader's Companion to the Short Story in English (REF 813.01 REA) The stories discussed in this volume were, with one exception, written in the latter half of the twentieth century. Each chapter contains biographic material, a brief review of existing criticism, a lengthier analysis of specific works, and a selected bibliography. There is also a detailed introduction to the short-story genre itself.
16. Short Story Criticism (REF 809.3 SHO) Presents excerpts from criticism of the world's greatest short story writers and provides supplementary biographical and bibliographical materials.
17. Short Story Writers (REF 809.3 SHO) 3 volumes. Surveys the most important authors of short fiction. Essays are arranged alphabetically by author. Includes achievements, biographies, and analysis of various works. Volume three includes a glossary and techniques commonly used in the study of short fiction.

18. Survey of Science Fiction Literature - Magill (REF 809.38 Sur). 5 Vols. Essay reviews of outstanding science fiction novels and short story collections. Entries are arranged alphabetically by title and provide the author, publication dates along with the time and location of the action, brief description of the work and list of main characters. Bibliographies included. Similar: Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature – Magill (REF 808.8 Mag)
19. Supernatural Fiction Writers: Fantasy and Horror. (REF 809.3 Sup). 2 Vols. Critical survey of major writers of supernatural fiction from Greco-Roman times to the present. The articles include biography, description and interpretation of major works, critical evaluation, and assessment of the author's historical position. Bibliographies conclude each article. Similar: Science Fiction Writers - Bleiler (REF 809 Sci).
Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers (REF 809 Twe).

D. Support References

1. Masterplots - Magill (Media Center Office) (REF 808.8 Mag). 12 Vols. Organized alphabetically by title. Critiques and critical evaluations of world literature to 1956. Entries contain plot summaries and a list of characteristics. Use only for supplemental purposes. Author index in volume 12. A revised edition extends the range of the set from Antiquity to the 1990's. Similar: Masterplots II: American Fiction Series (REF 809.3 MAS)
Masterplots II: Drama Series (REF 809.2 MAS)
Masterplots II: Poetry Series (REF 809.1 MAS)
Masterplots II: Short Story Series (REF 809.3 MAG)
2. Survey of Contemporary Literature - Magill (REF 809.04 M). 12 Vols. Alphabetical by title. Sequel to Masterplots covering titles between 1956 to 1976. Unlike Masterplots, this series contains no summaries of works - only criticism.
3. Magill's Literary Annuals (REF 809.04 MAG). Continues the series from 1976 to the present.

E. In-Depth Criticism

(Accessed through the online catalog: **Library World Explorer**)

1. Bloom's Major Short Story Writers - Biographical, critical, and bibliographical information on the author's best-known or most important short stories.
2. Greenhaven Press Literary Companion Series - comprehensive literary analysis and criticism.
3. Greenwood Press "Literature in Context" Series - places literature in the historical, social, and cultural context of its time.
4. Modern Critical Interpretation Series - comprehensive analysis of a specific work.
5. Modern Critical Views - comprehensive analysis of a specific writer.
6. Norton critical series - Complete text with notes and critical essays.
7. Twayne author series - Comprehensive analysis of a specific author and his/her work.
8. Twayne's Masterwork Studies - comprehensive analysis of a specific work
9. Twayne's Studies in Short Fiction Series - concise, sensitive surveys of the works of important writers of the short story.
10. Twentieth Century Views Series - Comprehensive analysis of a specific writer.
11. Twentieth Century Interpretations Series - Comprehensive analysis of a particular work. Individual books of criticism (period, genre, person).

F. Histories

1. Cambridge History of American Literature (REF 810.9 C) 3 Vols. in one. Indexes are at the ends of each section. A survey of the life of the American people as expressed in their writings from the colonial period to the 20th C.

G. Handbooks

1. Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature (REF 810.9 BEN). Concise entries deal with a vast variety of authors, topics, and titles from Colonial days to the present.
2. Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary American Poetry (REF 811.09 MAL). Alphabetically arranged entries provide information on author's works, moments, terms and related cultural subjects of the period after 1940.
Similar: Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary Drama (REF 809.2 CRO).
3. Dictionary of Literary Terms - Cuddon (REF 803 CUD). Alphabetical listing of brief explanations of the words and phrases peculiar to the study of literature.
4. Oxford Companion to American Literature (REF 810.9 HAR) A one-volume guide to American literature, arranged alphabetically in a dictionary format.
5. Oxford Companion to American Theatre (REF 792.0973 BOR). Alphabetically arranged entries provide information about the American stage from its beginning to the present day - playwrights, plays, actors, directors, producers, songwriters, famous playhouses, and dramatic movements.
6. The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama - Gassner (REF 809.2 GA). A one-volume book with emphasis on drama as literature. Information on plays and playwrights from all countries.

Book Reviews

Book Review Digest (REF 015 Boo). Excerpts of and citations to reviews of current fiction and non-fiction in the English language.

IMPORTANT: You must know the publication date of your book in order to retrieve the information. Use the verso side of title page or card catalog to find the year of publication.

Online Subscription Databases.

1. Infotrac Gale Database-
Discovering Collection -multiple databases offer illustrated biographies of authors and criticisms of their works.
Contemporary Authors – biographical information on current writers, as well as the most-studied literary figures of the early 20th century, and authors from around the world whose works have been translated in English.
2. EBSCOhost
Provides access to full text articles published recently in important scholarly publications such as Literary Review, New England Quarterly, Latin American Literary Review, Essays in Criticism (Oxford), and Yale Journal of Criticism.
3. Curriculum Links - English links to sites supporting literary research