

Research Guides

You will be expected eventually to read criticism (also called *secondary work*) on each of the poems and plays we examine. Although your first aim is to engage the literature itself (also called *primary work*), criticism will often help you to contextualize the literature, and to discover some of the major issues a literary work has raised in the past—since there's no need to reinvent the wheel.

Best resource: a librarian.

Take advantage of this most excellent resource: trained professionals at a major research library who *want* to help you.

A new service is Ask A Librarian (24-7) @ <http://www.library.umass.edu/ask/>

Computers. The internet is free. Library databases cost millions of dollars. Where will you put your trust?

Encyclopedias and Dictionaries: <http://www.library.umass.edu/catalog/dic.html>

BEST: Oxford English Dictionary (OED) online

Oxford Reference Online All the Oxford Guides to Everything (including the guide to literature). Search "Oxford Reference Online" in TITLE to connect.

Databases: <http://www.library.umass.edu/> → Databases

1. **MLA Bibliography** this is the database of the Modern Language Association. It lists most of the secondary work in literature and modern language study. Essential.
2. **Book review Digest.** Read what a book is about before spending an hour looking for it.
3. **JSTOR** tons of highly respected journals, full-text, and on-line.
4. **Contemporary Literary Criticism**
5. **Early English Books** images of books 1475-1700, full text search.
6. **Essay and General Literature Index**
7. **Grove Dictionary of Art**
8. **Historical New York Times**
9. **Humanities Index**
10. **Infotrac** includes lit. crit
11. **NetLibrary** sign up free, access to hundreds of e-books

There are dozens of others. Take some time to browse.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Not everything useful has been digitized. In fact, very little has. You will need to make use of real, live books.

All good libraries have general guides to topics and periods. Check pamphlet displays.

Note that the Library of Congress call numbers (e.g. PA 203) apply to both reference books and stack books. Poetry books can be found in the PN section on the 12th floor, poetry reference can be found in the Ref PN section in the basement. Browse!

Guides to Reference Books

Harner, James L. *Literary research guide : a guide to reference sources for the study of literatures in English and related topics.* ref Z2011 .h34 1993

Altick and Wright, *Selective Bibliography for the Study of English and American Literature* ref Z2011.A1 A47 1979

Bibliographic Index: A Cumulative Bibliography of Bibliographies 1988- present
ref Z 1002 .b595

Sheehy, Eugene P. *Guide to Reference Books.* ref Z 1035.1 s43

Literary Guides

Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics ref PN 1021 e5 [excellent resource]

Literary Criticism in Antiquity, 2 vols. ref PA 3015 .a8

Oxford History of English Literature, 12 vols., catalogued under author

Masterplots (official Cole's Notes) ref PN 44 .m35

Guides to Periods

Ask your professor for a list of the best books in the field (e.g. Romantics, 18th Century, Medieval, etc.), or check Harner.

Guides to Research in Specific Fields

Each field compiles an annual bibliography. These are reviewed in *The Years Work in English Studies* (YWES) ref Z 2001 .y4

Old English. *Old English Newsletter*, and *Anglo-Saxon England*
Renaissance. *Studies in Philology*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*

18th Century. *Philological Quarterly*, and see PR 1105 .e5 z99

Romantics. *ELH*, *Philological Quarterly*, and *English Language Notes*

Victorian. *Modern Philology* and DA 550

20th Century. *Twentieth-Century Literature* (Gale) and PR 1 s73

American. *American Literature* PS 1 .a6