

Annotated Survey of Reference Sources*

This brief survey provides background material for your reading and writing, especially for textual analysis. Use this survey as a starting place to explore the resources of your own library.

Finding Explanations of Literary and Rhetorical Terms and Literary Theory

Although their coverage varies, most dictionaries of literary and rhetorical terms will include, in alphabetical order, brief discussions of items such as these: (1) the major periods of literary history, such as the Renaissance, and literary movements or groups, such as Imagists; (2) literary genres, from broad forms, such as drama, to specific forms, such as the revenge tragedy, dream allegory, and comedy of intrigue; (3) terms commonly used in literary and rhetorical criticism, such as point of view, irony, metaphysical conceit; and (4) historical events, philosophical terms, and similar material seen as especially relevant to the study of literature. Works that explain terms from cultural criticism and literary theory will help you understand what is meant by *feminist criticism* and *postmodernist theory*, for example.

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th ed. Stamford: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2005.

Childers, Joseph, and Gary Hentzi. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1995.

* Compiled by Kevin Crandlemire; revised by Len Falkenstein (1993) and Kat Johnston (2002); updated 2007.

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Cuddon, J. A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Revised by C.E. Preston. 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Raman, Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th ed. New York: Longman, 2005.

Finding Information on Authors, Literary History, and Genres

General Guides to Literature in English

Evans, Denise, and Mary L. Onorato, eds. *Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism*. Detroit: Gale. This series of annual volumes, first published in 1981, collects excerpts from the year's work in 19th-century criticism.

Hawkins-Dady, Mark. *Reader's Guide to Literature in English*. Chicago: Fitzroy, 1996.

Narms, Brigham, and Deborah Stanley, eds. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Detroit: Gale. This series of annual volumes, begun in 1973, collects excerpts from the year's work in criticism of contemporary writing.

Parker, Peter. *A Reader's Guide to Twentieth-Century Writers*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.

Stringer, Jenny. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.

Specialized Guides to Literature

Literature by women

Blain, Virginia, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy. *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*. New Haven: Yale U, 1990.

Shattock, Joanne. *The Oxford Guide to British Women Writers*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

National literature

Benson, Eugene. *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Drabble, Margaret, ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Howatson, M. C., ed. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.

New, William H., ed. *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002.

Toye, William, ed. *The Concise Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2001.

Welch, Robert. *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.

Wilde, W. H., Joy Hooton, and Barry Andrews. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

Zell, Hans M. et al., eds. *A New Reader's Guide to African Literature*. 2nd, completely rev. and expanded ed. New York: Africana, 1983.

Children's literature

Carpenter, Humphrey, and Mari Prichard. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Drama

Though coverage will vary, most theatre handbooks will offer, in alphabetical order, information on topics such as these: (1) forms of theatre, such as Noh, puppet theatre, masque, and Kathakali; (2) important figures, including playwrights, characters, actors, directors, producers, patrons, and theatre owners; (3) technical terminology like *rake*, *grave trap*, and *cellar*; (4) famous theatres, such as the Strand, Imperial, and Phoenix; (5) histories of the theatre in various countries and the theatres and companies of those countries; and (6) the plays themselves.

Benson, Eugene, and L. W. Conolly, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1990.

Berney, K. A. *Contemporary American Dramatists*. London: St. James, 1994.

———. *Contemporary British Dramatists*. London: St. James, 1994.

———. *Contemporary Women Dramatists*. London: St. James, 1994.

Bordman, Gerald Martin. *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2004.

Hawkins-Dady, Mark. *The International Dictionary of Theatre*. Chicago: St. James, 1992.

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Film

Dictionaries of film will cover a wide range of topics, including discussions of (1) principal figures, such as actors, directors, critics, producers, and writers; (2) film genres, such as abstract film, *film noir*, and gangster film; (3) film techniques and processes like deep focus, diffusion, and VistaVision; (4) analytic terms used in film criticism (e.g., *mise-en-scène*); (5) organizations, such as DEFA, SFTA, and the British Film Institute; and (6) other aspects of film production, manufacture, and distribution.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. With tutorial CD-ROM. 8th ed. New York: McGraw, 2008.

Kuhn, Annette, and Susannah Radstone. *The Women's Companion to International Film*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1994.

Pendergast, Tom, and Sara Pendergast, eds. *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers*. 4th ed. Detroit: St. James, 2000.

Penney, Edmund F. *The Facts on File Dictionary of Film and Broadcasting*. New York: Facts on File, 1991.

Thomson, David. *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*. Expanded and Updated. New York: Knopf, 2004.

Poetry

Most handbooks of poetry will discuss (1) technical devices, such as rhyme and rhythm; (2) forms, such as the sonnet and haiku; (3) philosophies or schools, such as Imagist poetry and concrete poetry; and (4) the history and tradition of poetry.

Hamilton, Ian. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

Packard, William. *The Poet's Dictionary: A Handbook of Prosody and Poetic Devices*. 1st ed. New York: Harper, 1994. Apt, clever, and effective examples of techniques, forms, and principles.

Short stories

Haerens, Margaret, and Drew Kalasky, eds. *Short Story Criticism*. Detroit: Gale. A series of annual volumes, first published in 1988, containing criticism on selected short stories.

Biographical Dictionaries and Bibliographies

Most biographical dictionaries contain not only information about authors' lives but also bibliographies of their work and bibliographies of works written about them.

Brown, Susan W., ed. *Contemporary Novelists*. 5th ed. New York: St. James, 2004.

Dictionary of Literary Biography. Detroit: Gale. A multivolume series covering various literary periods.

Kirkpatrick, D. L., ed. *Contemporary Poets*. 4th ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1985.

Magnusson, Magnus, ed. *Cambridge Biographical Dictionary*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1990. Over 19 000 entries ranging from the classical to the current, from Socrates to Madonna. This is not a literary reference work; its range fills in the gaps left by works more closely focused on literature.

Rooney, Terry M., and Jennifer Gariepy, eds. *Contemporary Authors*. Detroit: Gale. This series of annual volumes, first published in 1967, collects short pieces of literary biography on selected writers.

Sutherland, John. *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989.

Identifying Allusions: Mythical, Religious, Symbolic, and Other References

Allusions are references to well-known figures, places, events, or sayings from mythology, religion, or literature. Often allusions work by describing a figure, event, or place in terms of a counterpart from the past. The decline of common knowledge of the Bible, of classical mythology, and of some standard texts like Shakespeare's means that the modern reader is likely to miss many allusions. These dictionaries and guides are thus invaluable resources.

Allusions—General

Cole, Sylvia, and Abraham H. Lass. *The Facts on File Dictionary of Modern Allusions*. New York: Checkmark, 2001.

Lass, Abraham. *Dictionary of Allusions*. London: Sphere, 1989. Short but invaluable guide that includes not only figures and events from mythology, literature, and the Bible but also well-known sayings, like "Inherit the wind."

Webber, Elizabeth, and Mike Feinsilber. *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Allusions*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1999.

Mythology, Religion, and Folklore

Dictionaries and encyclopedias of mythology, religion, and folklore will normally contain, in alphabetical order, discussions of (1) principal figures, both historical and mythical, including their origins, attributes,

feats, symbolologies, and relationships to the cultures with which they are associated; (2) important events, such as the biblical flood; (3) significant artifacts, such as the Golden Fleece of Greek mythology or the Ark of the Covenant of the Old Testament; (4) cities, temples, rivers, mountains, and other important places; and (5) significant philosophical principles, religious doctrines, superstitions, songs, and other aspects of a particular mythology or religion. Most works are copiously illustrated and many include maps and genealogies.

Achtemeier, Paul J., ed. *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. San Francisco: Harper, 1985.

Brunvald, Jan Harold. *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland, 1996.

Bulfinch, Thomas. *Complete Mythology*. London: Spring, 1989.

Hammond, N. G. L., and H. H. Scullard. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. London: Oxford UP, 1996.

Hinnells, John R., ed. *A New Dictionary of Religions*. Oxford: Penguin, 1995. Includes entries on African, Amerindian, Arctic, and other religions as well as the major world religions.

Jeffrey, David L., ed. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992.

Jones, Alison. *Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore*. Edinburgh: Larousse, 1995.

Larrington, Carolyne, ed. *The Woman's Companion to Mythology*. London: Pandora, 1997, © 1992. [Previous title: *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*]

Dictionaries of Symbols

Many things have traditional as well as personal symbolic significance: objects, whether natural or manufactured; properties, such as colour and taste; processes, such as journey and growth; and abstracts, such as dreams and emotions. A dictionary of symbols explains both the more common symbolic meaning of a word and the less obvious meaning that an individual writer or culture may attach to it.

Carr-Gomm, Sarah. *Dictionary of Symbols in Art: The Illustrated Key to Western Painting and Sculpture*. London: Duncan Baird, 2000.

Chevalier, Jean. *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Cirlot, Juan Eduardo. *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Trans. by Jack Sage. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002.

Dictionaries of Quotations

Dictionaries of quotations are designed to help you discover the source of a familiar quotation and its significance in its original context.

Andrews, Robert. *Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.

Bartlett, John G. *Familiar Quotations*. 15th ed. Boston: Little, 1980.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs. [Edited by] Jennifer Speake. 4th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.

Colombo, John Robert. *The Penguin Dictionary of Popular Canadian Quotations*. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2007.

Knowles, Elizabeth. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.

The New Beacon Book of Quotations by Women. [Comp. by] Rosalie Maggio. Boston: Beacon, 1996.

The New Penguin Dictionary of Modern Quotations. [Comp. by] Robert Andrews. 2nd Abridged ed. London: Penguin, 2004.

Dictionaries of Names

Dictionaries of names are generally arranged alphabetically and include the symbolic meanings of names, their origins, and their historical and/or literary significance.

Davis, J. Madison, and A. Daniel Frankforter. *The Shakespeare Name Dictionary*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Goring, Rosemary. *The Larousse Dictionary of Literary Characters*. Edinburgh: Larousse, 1993.

Rintoul, M. C. *A Dictionary of Real People and Places in Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Room, Adrian. *Cassell Dictionary of Proper Names*. New York: Cassell, 1994, © 1992. [Previous title: *Brewer's Dictionary of Names*]

Checking Word Meanings and Usage

Dictionaries of Specialized Terms

The specialized diction of art, music, theatre, medicine, law, and other fields is necessary for essays on these topics; this diction is also, of course, found throughout literature.

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- The Book of Jargon*. [Comp. by] Don Ethan Miller. New York: Macmillan, 1981. Divided into sections and subsections, such as Business–Advertising. Within these subsections the book is organized alphabetically and is quite comprehensive.
- Colman, Andrew M. *A Dictionary of Psychology*. 2nd Ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2006.
- Dictionary of Anthropology*. Ed. Charlotte Seymour-Smith. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
- Dictionary of Ecology and Environmental Science*. Ed. Henry W. Art. New York: Holt, 1995.
- Dictionary of Economics*. [Comp. by] Frank Livesey. UK: Pitman, 1993.
- Dictionary of New Information Technology: A Guide for Industry, Business, Education and the Home*. [Comp. by] A. J. Meadows. London: Chapman, 1987.
- Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*. [Comp. by] William L. Reese. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1996.
- Downing, Douglas, et al. *Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms*. 8th ed. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2006.
- The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. [Comp. by] Don Michael Randel. Cambridge, MA: Belknap-Harvard UP, 1986. Broad scope, including non-Western music, popular music, and musical instruments of all cultures.
- The New Penguin Dictionary of Science*. [Comp. by] Clugston, M.J. 2nd ed. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Pfaffenberger, Bryan. *Webster's New World Computer Dictionary*. 10th ed. Toronto: Wiley, 2003.
- The Prestel Dictionary of Art and Artists of the 20th Century*. New York: Prestel, 2000.
- The Random House Dictionary of Art and Artists*. [Comp. by] David Piper. New York: Random, 1988.
- Sadie, Stanley, and John Tyrrell, eds. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd ed. New York: Grove, 2001.

Dictionaries of Catch Phrases, Idioms, and Slang

Dictionaries of catch phrases, clichés, idioms, and slang contain terms that may not find entry into even the best unabridged dictionaries.

- Ayto, John. *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.

- Ayto, John. *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. 17th ed. New York: HarperResource, 2006.
- Brandreth, Gyles. *Everyman's Modern Phrase and Fable*. London: Dent, 1990. Traces origins and explains British, Australian, and American usage.
- Le Mot Juste: A Dictionary of Classical & Foreign Words & Phrases*. New York: Random, 1991.
- Partridge, Eric. *A Dictionary of Catch Phrases, American and British, from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day*. Rev. and updated ed. Ed. Paul Beale. New York: Stein, 1992.
- Random House Historical Dictionary of African-American Slang*. New York: Penguin, 1994.
- Rubinstein, Frankie. *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1995.
- Schur, Norman W. *British English, A to Zed*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Facts on File, 2001. Focuses on British usages that differ from American English, and gives American equivalents of English idioms, colloquialisms, and slang.

Dictionaries: Unabridged, Historical, and Etymological

An unabridged dictionary attempts to present a complete description of modern language usage. A historical dictionary traces the changing forms and meanings of a word through time. An etymological dictionary usually traces only the origins of a word.

- Avis, Walter S., et al. *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Rev. and expanded ed. Toronto: Gage, 1997.
- Barber, Katherine, ed. *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. 2nd Ed. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Canadian Dictionary of the English Language*. Toronto: Nelson, 1997.
- The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. 11th ed., rev. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. An abridged version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (below), it is nonetheless a very useful historical dictionary.
- Simpson, J. A., and Edmund S. C. Weiner. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. in 20 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. The most complete historical and etymological dictionary with over 2 400 000 quotations.

Thesauruses

Thesauruses are usually simple compilations of synonyms of everyday words. Unfortunately for the person who relies on a thesaurus, there are no exact synonyms in the English language. Any word has nuances and shades of meaning that make it distinct from any other word, and using a word without knowing those nuances is liable to undermine the effectiveness of your work. Have a dictionary at hand when you use a thesaurus.

Kipfer, Barbara Ann, ed. *Roget's International Thesaurus*. 6th ed. New York: HarperResource, 2001.

Checking Format and Documentation

Editor's Association of Canada / Association canadienne des rédacteurs-réviseurs. *Editing Canadian English*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Macfarlane, 2000.

Gibaldi, Joseph, ed. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003.

Harnack, Andrew, and Eugene Kleppinger. *Online! A Reference Guide to Using Internet Sources* with 2003 update. New York: St. Martin's, 2003. Updates: <<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/>>

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001.