

AMERICAN LITERATURE RESEARCH GUIDE

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Find Books

Library Catalog: Find Books and E-Books

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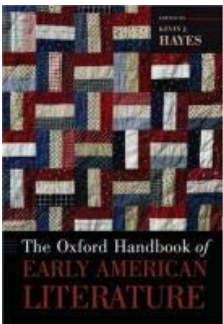
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The library's e-books can be checked-out and downloaded to an iPad, PC, or other personal device. To download e-books, install an e-reader such as Adobe Digital Editions, select a book from the library catalog, and then check-out and download the book to your device.

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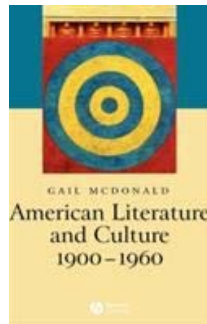
Featured Titles



The Oxford handbook of early American literature

Kevin J. Hayes,
editor

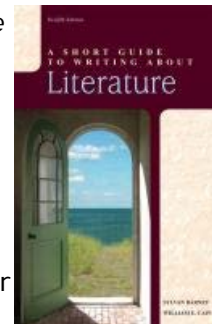
PS185 .O94 2008
Vernon



American literature and culture, 1900-1960

Gail McDonald

PS221 .M394 2007
Century City Center



A short guide to writing about literature

Sylvan Barnet,
William E. Cain

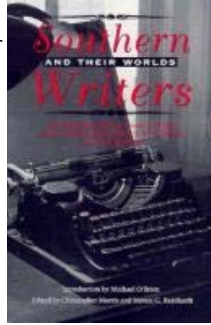
PE1479.C7 B3
2012
Century City Center



A literary history of the American West

Western Literature Association

PS271 .L58 1987
Vernon



Southern writers and their worlds

Christopher Morris and Steven G. Reinhardt, editors

E-book



A literary history of New England

Perry D. Westbrook

E-book

Reference Books: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.

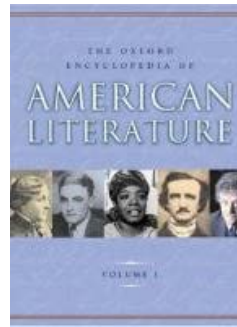
Reference materials offer background information and broad overviews of topics. This information is often helpful in narrowing and selecting a specific area of the topic to explore further. Reference materials on literature may provide literary timelines, author biographies, and/or overviews of specific literary works.



Gale contextual encyclopedia of American literature

Anne Marie Hacht and Dwayne D. Hayes, editors

REF PS21 .G36 2009
Vernon



The Oxford encyclopedia of American literature

Jay Parini

REF PS21 .O94 2004
Century City Center

Browse the Shelves

Books are arranged according to the Library of Congress Classification System. Materials on American literature are found under the subclass PS.

PS 1-3626	American literature	PS 301-326	Poetry
PS 126-138	Biography, memoirs, letters, etc.	PS 330-353	Drama
PS 147-152	Women authors	PS 360-380	Prose
PS 163-173	Treatment of special subjects, classes	PS 501-689	Collections of American literature
PS 185-195	17th-18th centuries	PS 700-3626	Individual authors
PS 201-217	19th century	PS 700-893	17th-18th centuries
PS 221-228	20th century	PS 991-3390	19th century
PS 229-231	21st century	PS 3500-3549	1900-1960
PS 241-286	Special regions, states, etc.	PS 3550-3576	1961-2000
		PS 3600-3626	2001-

Find Articles

Scholarly, peer reviewed articles are available online through the library's databases. All databases are accessible off-campus from any Internet connection. The following databases are good sources to consult for literary criticism and other topics related to American literature.

OFF-CAMPUS ACCESS TO DATABASES:

To search databases off-campus:

- Select **Articles** from the Library Homepage.
- Click on the **Literature/Arts** category.
- Select a database such as **JSTOR**.
- Log-in with your new VC Colleague Student ID number and PIN (last four digits of your ID Number). Do not include "Chaps#" with your PIN Number.

[JSTOR](#): JSTOR offers considerable journal coverage in literature and is a good resource to consult for literary criticism.

[Literature Resource Center](#)

The Literature Resource Center offers convenient, online access to full-text literary criticism, topic and work overviews, and author biographies from all time periods and regions of the world. Features include a citation generator in the formatting style of your choice, the ability to highlight text and insert notes, and the option to download your markups into your Google Drive or OneDrive.

[Gale Academic OneFile](#) is the library's multidisciplinary database that offers full-text access to numerous scholarly journals in literature. Students can enter their search term to search hundreds of journals at once for articles on their topic.

Features also include the ability to:

- Automatically generate a citation in the formatting style of your choice.
- Highlight text and insert notes.
- Download your markups into your Google Drive or One Drive.
- Filter your results by publication date, document type, and more.

[Twentieth Century American Poetry](#): Twentieth Century American Poetry contains the poetry of over 300 poets, including Adrienne Rich, Andrei Codrescu, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Denise Levertov, Wallace Stevens, Langston Hughes, Lucille Clifton, and Cathy Song.

Suggested Websites

ipl Literary Criticism

<https://www.ipl.org/div/litcrit/>

The ipl Literary Criticism Collection contains critical and biographical websites about authors and their works that can be browsed by author, by title, or by nationality and literary period.

Voice of the Shuttle, American Literature

<http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2739>

Managed by the University of California, Santa Barbara, English Department, this website provides a structured and briefly annotated guide to online resources. VoS emphasizes both primary and secondary resources, and defines its audience as people who have something to learn from a higher-education, professional approach to the humanities.

Project Gutenberg

<https://www.gutenberg.org/>

Project Gutenberg is a library of over 60,000 free eBooks. You will find the world's great literature here, with focus on older works for which U.S. copyright has expired.

Library of Southern Literature

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/>

This digital collection includes over eighty titles of the most important works of Southern literature published before 1920. This site is part of the Documenting the American South Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Citing Sources

Citation Style Guides

- OWL: Purdue Online Writing Lab
[OWL MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)

The Research Process

The Research Process

- 1) Select a topic that you find interesting and appropriate for the assignment.
- 2) Review reference sources such as encyclopedias for background information to help focus or narrow the search.

For example, students interested in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* may consult the Encyclopedia of American literature for ideas in narrowing the focus of the search to a particular area of interest such as how Stowe presents the incompatibility of slavery with the Christian ethic of love and tolerance.

- 3) Restate the topic as a question. Inquiry is at the heart of the research process, a quest to locate information which answers questions and leads researchers to a greater understanding of the topic.

Restating the topic as a question will help in:

- Locating information that is useful and relevant to the primary focus or thesis of your research.
- Identifying the keywords or phrases to use in the search statement.

Example: In what ways does **Stowe** present the incompatibility of slavery with the **Christian ethic** of love and tolerance?

- 4) Develop a search statement by combining keywords or concepts from the research question. For example, "**Stowe**" and "**Christian ethic**" are identified as keywords in the question above. By connecting both terms with the Boolean operator "**and**", the researcher will retrieve only those articles that discuss *both* concepts, thus improving the relevancy of the search.

Enter in database search fields: **Stowe and Christian ethic**

- 5) Develop alternate search statements to improve the search results. Authors may use various terms to describe the same concept.

For example, **Christian ethic** may be used in the same context as **love**.

By identifying and connecting alternate terms, researchers may expand the search results. As indicated below, consider brainstorming and listing synonyms or word variations to identify alternate keywords.

Concept 1		Concept 2
Christian ethic	AND	Stowe
love	AND	Uncle Tom's Cabin
tolerance	AND	Life among the Lowly

Library Assistance

Email: librarian@vernoncollege.edu

Visit the chat room: Select "[Ask the Librarian](#)" from the library homepage.

Phone: 940-552-6291 ext: 2222 in Vernon
940-696-8752 ext: 3220 at Century City Center

[Library Webinars](#): View a schedule and register to participate in one of the library's weekly webinars.

[Library Handbook](#)