BRITISH LITERATURE RESEARCH GUIDE

Find Books  Find Articles  Suggested Websites  Citing Sources  Research Process Guide

Library Assistance

Find Books

IN THIS SECTION:
Library Catalog
Featured Titles
Reference Books
Browse the Shelves

LIBRARY CATALOG: Print and E-books
Students may search the catalog for print and e-books owned by the Vernon College Library System. Use the dropdown menus to limit your search by location and/or by author, title, or subject terms.

E-books: To search only for titles available electronically, select “Online” as the desired location. Use the dropdown menu to choose your search method (author, title, subject terms, etc.), then enter your search term (ex. Chaucer).

Helpful feature: While viewing a book, select the “Search” tab to bring up a search bar, which will allow you to locate a word or phrase within the entire contents of the e-book.

FEATURED TITLES

Short Guide to Writing about Literature
Sylvan Barnet
Century City Center PE1479.C7 B3

All Things Chaucer: An Encyclopedia of Chaucer’s World
Shannon L. Rogers
Vernon PR1903.R55 2007

Chaucer’s England: Literature in Historical Context
Barbara A. Hanawalt
Vernon PR1906.5 .C48

The Land and Literature of England
Robert M. Adams
PR83.A3 1986 Vernon

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**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.

**Shakespeare’s World and Work: An Encyclopedia for Students**
John F. Andrews
REF PR2892 .S56 2001 Vernon

**All Things Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of Shakespeare’s World**
Kirstin Olsen
REF PR2892 .O56 2002 Century City Center

**British Writers**
Ian Scott-Kilvert, General Editor
REF PR85 .B688 Vols. I-VII

**Bloomsbury Dictionary of English Literature**
E-book Available through Credo Reference Database
Entries include information on writers, individual works, literary and critical terms and movements, and historical, cultural, and social events.

**Dictionary of English Literature**
E-book Available through Credo Reference Database

**Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature**
E-book Available through Credo Reference Database
This resource offers a comprehensive account of the literary works, writers, and concepts of the Middle Ages, from 500 to 1500 CE.

**Encyclopedia of Renaissance Literature**
E-book Available through Credo Reference Database
The encyclopedia covers literary works, writers, and concepts of the Renaissance from approximately 1500 to 1660 CE. Entries examine the history and development of literature during the time period.

**The Handy Literature Answer Book**
E-book Available through Credo Reference Database
This resource looks at the themes, symbols, context, and other literary devices from many noted short stories, poems, and novels.
BROWSE THE SHELVES

Books are arranged according to the Library of Congress Classification System. This system organizes materials into 21 main classes labeled A-Z (except I, O, W, X, and Y). Materials on British literature are found under the subclass PR. Physically browse the titles on British literature shelved by call number in the following Library of Congress classification ranges.

| PR1-9680 | English literature |
| PR1-56 | Literary history and criticism |
| PR111-116 | Women authors |
| PR171-236 | Anglo-Saxon (Beginning through 1066) |
| PR251-369 | Medieval, Middle English (1066-1500) |
| PR401-488 | Modern |
| PR500-614 | Poetry |
| PR621-744 | Drama |
| PR750-890 | Prose |
| PR1098-1369 | Collections of English literature |
| PR1490-1799 | Anglo-Saxon, Old English (450-1066) |
| PR1803-2165 | Medieval, Middle English (1066-1500) |
| PR2199-3195 | The Renaissance (1500-1660) |
| PR3291-3785 | 17th and 18th Centuries, The Neoclassical (1660-1785) |
| PR3991-5990 | 19th Century |
| PR6000-6049 | 1900-1960 |
| PR6050-6076 | 1961-2000 |
| PR6100-6126 | 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 British literature.

OFF-CAMPUS ACCESS TO DATABASES:
To search databases off-campus:
- Select Access to Databases from the Library Homepage.
- Click on the Literature and Arts category.
- Select a database such as JSTOR.
- Log-in with your VC student ID number and PIN (without Chaps).

JSTOR: JSTOR offers considerable journal coverage in literature and is a good resource to consult for literary criticism.

Literary Reference Center:
The database provides access to literary criticism, work overviews, and author biographies from noted reference works and scholarly literary journals.
**Academic Search Complete**: This multidisciplinary database provides full-text access to numerous scholarly journals in literature. The database features an intuitive search interface with a number of limiters to help customize the search. Researchers can select “literary criticism” from the “Document Type” drop down menu.

**Twentieth Century English Poetry**: Twentieth-Century English Poetry contains the poetry of over 280 poets from 1900 to the present day, including W.B. Yeats, Rudyard Kipling, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, A.E. Housman, John Betjeman, and others.

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**Suggested Websites**

**English Literature Timeline**
http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/evolvingenglish/accessvers/index.html
This interactive timeline allows you to explore the evolution of English language and literature, from the 11th century to the present day. Scroll through decade-to-decade to investigate the richness of English poetry and prose as well as the many social, cultural, and political strands from which the English language has been woven.

**British Literature Survey**
http://people.umass.edu/eng2/index.html
The website provides background information for an introduction to British literature. Information includes guides to authors, genres, and particular poems.

**A Web Companion to the Norton Anthology of English Literature 8th Edition**
https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/welcome.htm
The site includes topics of discussion for each literary period.

**British History Online**
https://www.british-history.ac.uk/using-bho
British History Online is the digital library containing some of the core printed primary and secondary sources for the medieval and modern history of the British Isles. Created by the Institute of Historical Research and the History of Parliament Trust.

**Geoffrey Chaucer**
http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/
Provides a wealth of information on Chaucer’s life, The Canterbury Tales, Middle English, and various topics related to life and culture in the Middle Ages.
Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature
http://www.luminarium.org/
A comprehensive anthology and guide to English literature of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Seventeenth Century, Restoration and Eighteenth Century.

Romantic Circles
https://romantic-circles.org/
-A refereed scholarly Website devoted to the study of Romantic-period literature and culture-

Poetry Foundation
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/
The site includes an archive of poems and poet biographies from all time periods.

Discovering Literature: Romantics and Victorians
https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians
A project of the British Library, Discovering Literature explores the historical, political, and cultural contexts in which key literary works were written. Content includes high-resolution digitized images; articles written by scholars, poets, novelists and journalists; short documentary films; and teachers’ notes. Students can explore authors and their works, literary themes, and video documentaries presented by scholars and professors in British literature.

Great Writers Inspire
http://writersinspire.org/
A project of the University of Oxford, the website features a wealth of content on the writers and key literary themes from all time periods. Information includes audio and video lectures, major works by each author, essays on the authors and their works, pictures, etc. Students can also access information on the major themes in literature through academic lectures, primary texts, and contextual material.

OpenLearn
https://www.open.edu/openlearn/tags/literature
OpenLearn features free courses on various subjects. You can browse subject categories to explore topics and find reference materials.

Citation Style Guides
- OWL: Purdue Online Writing Lab
  OWL MLA Formatting and Style Guide
- Citation Resources from Tarrant County College Libraries
  MLA Citation Style Guide (Citation style guide for Works Cited page and for in-text citations)  
  Information Literacy Workbook
  --Citing Sources and avoiding plagiarism  pages 15-18
  --Database Search Techniques  pages 23-28
  --Selecting and evaluating Internet search engines and websites  pages 29-33
  --Planning, gathering, evaluating, and organizing information on a topic  pages 5-6

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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 *The Knight’s Tale* may consult the *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature* for ideas in narrowing the focus of the search to a particular area of interest such as how chivalry is represented in *The Knight’s Tale*.

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: How is **chivalry** represented in *The Knight’s Tale*?

4) Develop a search statement by combining keywords or concepts from the research question. For example, “**chivalry**” and “*The Knight’s Tale***” 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: **chivalry and The Knight’s Tale**

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

   For example, **chivalry** may be used in the same context as **knightliness**.

   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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chivalry</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Knight’s Tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knightliness</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gallantry</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobility</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Duke Theseus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Top of Research Guide*
6) Evaluate information for objectivity and reliability. See the Community College of Rhode Island’s [criteria](#) for evaluating websites.

7) Cite the information borrowed from other authors or informational sources. Careful documentation will ensure that credit is given with no intention to plagiarize or claim ownership of information belonging to other researchers. For explanations and examples, visit Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) for the [MLA](#) formatting style guide.

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**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 Orientation:** Discover library services! Find information and video tutorials on accessing articles, e-books, career resources, and library assistance. Find information on reserving group study rooms in Vernon or at Century City Center.

**Library Webinars:** View a schedule and register to participate in one of the library’s weekly webinars.

**Library Handbook**