

# Cerritos College Library

In the Wilford Michael Library & Learning Resource Center

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## REFERENCE RESOURCES

Resources such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, handbooks, periodical indexes, and maps are used frequently for finding information. Reference resources such as these are a good starting point when you're doing research because they help you become better acquainted with your topic and provide useful background information. In the Cerritos College Library, reference books are located behind the Reference Desk in the low bookcases. Reference books do not circulate but they are listed in the online catalog and have [REFERENC] right before the call number (example: [REFERENC] LB 1047.3.W44 1990). Many reference resources are also available online via the Cerritos College databases. Examples include the ***Gale Virtual Reference Library***, ***World Book Encyclopedia Online***, ***Oxford Art Online***, and the ***Oxford English Dictionary Online***.

### Encyclopedias

Encyclopedias are used both as a single, quick reference source and as a good beginning for finding background information for a research topic. Many encyclopedias have authoritative articles, signed by the authors. Encyclopedia articles are often accompanied by illustrations, graphs, maps, and bibliographies.

When choosing an encyclopedia to use, it is important to look for an up-to-date, authoritative work which is appropriate to your subject. Most multi-volume encyclopedias have an index volume and, when available, you should use the index volume to find your subject.

### Dictionaries and Almanacs

Dictionaries are reference books that contain alphabetically arranged words with information about them. A dictionary lists and defines words in a language, informs us about their origin and special meanings, gives us the correct spelling and pronunciation and shows us how to use them with the appropriate social connotations.

Almanacs were originally written to distribute astronomical and meteorological data to farmers and sailors. Now they are annual compilations of statistics and information on a wide variety of subjects.

### Biographical Sources

By looking in the online catalog under a person's name as subject, you can find a biography on that person. If an entire book has not been written about that person, or if you need less information about that person, there are many biographical reference sources available to you.

### Literary Reference Sources

Literary biography and criticism will give biographical and critical information about authors and their works. Literary sources range from simple explanations of plots to detailed, philosophies, and profound essays on individual stories, poems, literary themes, or authors. Most readers, whether students or not, will find enjoyment and value from literary biographies, book reviews, and literary criticism.

### Librarian

An important and indispensable resource in any library is the librarian. The librarian offers students, staff, and faculty assistance in using the collection and explaining various library resources and services.