BACKGROUND SOURCES: FINDING INFORMATION IN ENCYCLOPEDIAS, HANDBOOKS, ETC.

Literature Resource Center (published by Gale Cengage Learning)

Literary Reference Center Plus (published by EBSCO)

These two databases provide biographical, bibliographical, and critical content on literary figures and their works from all time periods and genres. Information comes from reference works, books, and literary journals. Included are biographies, plot summaries, journal articles, reviews, and more.

OBIS is the Oberlin College Library’s online catalog; it lists most library materials. Online borrowing is available through the OhioLINK Library Catalog, which combines the holdings of 120 libraries at Ohio colleges and universities, and through SearchOhio, which does the same for 28 Ohio public library systems. All three catalogs are searchable by Author or Title for a specific author or work, or by Subject Heading or Keyword for works about a topic, person, place, etc.

Search for the names of specific authors and for topics as a subject and browse entries, e.g.,

Walker, Margaret, 1915-1998
Wright, Richard, 1908-1960
African diaspora in literature
Blacks in the performing arts / African Americans in the performing arts / African American theater
Place (Philosophy) in literature
Young adult literature / Young adult fiction

ARGUMENT SOURCES: FINDING BOOKS AND OTHER LIBRARY MATERIALS

OBIS is useful for argument sources, too! Try KEYWORD and ADVANCED searches to find writings on more specific topics by searching book titles, tables of contents, words in the subject headings, summaries, etc.

jane austen and (humor or humour or wit or witty or comed* or comic* or parod* or satir* or … etc.)

ARGUMENT SOURCES: FINDING ARTICLES IN SCHOLARLY JOURNALS AND OTHER SOURCES THROUGH DATABASES

Connect from Databases tab in the Library home page search box, or use the “Quick Links” drop-down menu.

★ MLA International Bibliography

Indexes books and articles from 4,400+ journals in world literature, modern languages, and folklore

Humanities International Complete

Indexes books and journal articles in all humanities disciplines, with particular focus on literary, scholarly and creative thought

JSTOR

Digital library of 2,000+ academic journals (400+ in language and literature), dating back to the first volume published, along with thousands of monographs and other materials, largely in social sciences and humanities disciplines; few recent issues are available (most titles have a 3-5 year “moving wall”); every word of every article is searchable, which gives it a certain edge over MLA International Bibliography

To determine if the library has a particular journal, Use “360 Link to Full Text” or “Find It!” where available in research databases, or search Journal Finder from Library home page or the Quick Links pull-down menu
Other Recommended Research Databases
Depending on your topic, the databases listed below may also prove useful. If you need assistance finding and using these or other library resources, ask for help at the Research Desk.

- Academic Search Complete (multidisciplinary)
- America: History & Life (U.S. history & culture)
- Art Full Text
- Arts & Humanities Database
- Black Studies Center
- Communication and Mass Media Complete
- Film & Television Literature Index
- Gender Studies Database
- Historical Abstracts (world history & culture)
- International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance
- MasterFile Complete (popular/non-scholarly)
- Performing Arts Periodicals Database
- PsycINFO (psychology)
- SocINDEX (sociology)

CASTING A BROAD NET WITH SUMMON — choose Summon tab on library home page search box

- searches across the spectrum of library content: books, scholarly articles, newspapers, data, audio, video, images, government documents, and more; searches many, but not all, library resources
- draws from OBIS, OhioLINK, many full text and article indexing databases, and digital repositories from colleges, universities, research centers, and other open-access archives
- comprehensive or complex searches should be done in subject specific databases
- OBIS and OhioLINK are generally better for finding books
- if links don’t lead to full text, be persistent or ask for help; we probably do have access

THEORY SOURCES


METHOD SOURCES, RESOURCES ON WRITING AND RESEARCH


   Main Reference PE1431 .G73 2014

   Main Reference PR56 .B34 2006

DOCUMENTING YOUR SOURCES

   Main Reference LB2369 .G53 2016

Purdue Online Writing Lab (aka the OWL). Maintained by Perdue University.
   https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
   See the Research and Citation section for examples of how to cite resources using APA, MLA, and Chicago citation styles.

Consider using a citation management tool such as RefWorks to help you:
- track sources consulted
- organize citations, notes, and documents
- automatically format bibliographies and lists of works cited in just about any style you can think of
- for info, choose “For Students” (under “Services” on library home page), then “Citation Help”

HOW TO GET MATERIALS NOT AVAILABLE AT OBERLIN

OhioLINK/SearchOhio
- how it works: more than 300 Ohio libraries lend materials (primarily books) to each other
  ✔ does not include delivery of journal articles – see section below on ILL
- to request: do-it-yourself searching and online requesting (barcode is the number on back of OCID)

Interlibrary Loan (ILL or ILLiad)
- use for: articles in journals not available at Oberlin, books not available from OhioLINK
- how it works: libraries lend materials to each other; for journal articles they usually send pdf scans
- to request: select “ILLiad/Interlibrary Loan” from the Quick Links menu on the Library’s home page; set up an account; enter and track ILL requests online

HOW TO GET RESEARCH HELP AT THE LIBRARY

Drop-in help at the Research Desk. Just stop by and tell us what you need
   Monday–Thursday: 10am–noon, 1–5pm, & 7pm–midnight
   Friday: 10am–noon & 1–5pm
   Weekend: Sat.: 2–4 pm, Sunday: 1–5pm & 7 pm–midnight

Research appointment. Sign up online from the library home page

See Research Help on the library’s home page for other ways to get help
## BEAM/BEAT Framework for Thinking About Sources

### Example from Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Source</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **B** Background sources | • Present shared information and established facts  
• Provide context or background  
• Intended to be informative  
• Information is uncontested  
• Examples: encyclopedias, handbooks, companions, readers, biographies, etc. | • Encyclopedia article on evangelism  
• Biography of the Brontës  
• Books or articles on the history/culture of a literary period  
[Note: If you are analyzing bias or controversy in these sources, they become “exhibit” sources rather than “background”] |
| **E** Exhibit sources (particulars from exhibits become evidence) | • Documents, data, visual images, field observations, lab findings, statistical arrays, natural phenomena, or other artifacts/objects that you analyze, interpret, or explicate  
• Sources on which you have exercised your own critical thinking to make an argument | • The text of Jane Eyre (exhibit)  
• Contemporary cultural documents and reviews (exhibit)  
• Quotations, paraphrases, or other textual citations from Jane Eyre or contemporary materials (evidence) |
| **A** Argument sources (typically peer-reviewed books and articles by other scholars) | • The conversation of critical views and relevant scholarship that you are joining  
• Affirm, refute, critique, refine, extend | • Views of other scholars who have written about Jane’s marriage to Rochester.  
• Argument sources create the critical conversation that the writer is joining.  
• Typically, you identify a view that you are “pushing against” in some way  
• Your goal is to add something new or challenging to the conversation |
| **M / T** Method / Theory sources | • References to the theoretical or methodological lens being used  
• These authors have usually not addressed your specific research question | • References to theorists—Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Judith Butler, etc.  
• Specific references to theory or method—feminism, performance theory, new historicism, reader-response theory, deconstruction, etc. |