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**Best Reference 2012**

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/brian-coutts/25/
Best Reference of 2012 (Including Best Free Reference)

By Brian E. Coutts and Cheryl LaGuardia

Last year brought a big change to the reference world: Encyclopaedia Britannica announced its exit from the print business, 244 years after its famous, eponymous work was first published. The year also saw the term F-bomb, which first surfaced 20 years ago, appearing in Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary along with sexting, flexitarian, and life coach. An article in The Guardian alleged that a former editor of the Oxford English Dictionary deleted thousands of words because of their foreign origins; Oxford University Press responded that the deletions were for space and cost considerations.

The year also saw observation of the centennial anniversary of the sinking of Titanic, a disaster that is covered comprehensively in one of our recommended websites, and the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, every aspect of which is described in ABC-CLIO’s The Encyclopedia of the War of 1812. As civil war raged in Syria and new conflict broke out in Mali, The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought shed some light on the background to these conflicts as it tracked differing positions Islam has taken during its political expansion over the past 14 centuries.

The most pivotal event in modern Irish history occurred when more than a million people perished of hunger between 1845 and 1852, a story that is brilliantly told in New York University Press’s lavishly illustrated and thoroughly documented Atlas of the Great Irish Famine. On a much narrower theme, the Atlas of Yellowstone combines 500 maps, photos, charts, and the latest satellite imagery to create a visually stunning reference work on our first national park.

The first edition of the Oxford Latin Dictionary begun in 1933 took almost 50 years to reach print in 1982. Fortunately, this second edition has taken only 20 years. With 40,000 entries, 100,000 translations, and more than five million word of text, it’s the largest and most up-to-date Latin-English dictionary available.

SAGE has several entries on our list, such as its Encyclopedia of Consumption and Waste, the first encyclopedia to focus on what we throw away. A generation of readers of graphic novels get a well-deserved reference source covering “Heroes and Superheroes,” “Independents and Underground Classics,” and “Manga” in Salem Press’s Critical Survey of Graphic Novels.
Arts

Classical Music in Video. Alexander Street Press

A streaming video collection designed to support the study of classical music, CMIV includes music appreciation, history, performance, and analysis and theory. It covers music from medieval times to the 21st century, with historical recordings from the 1950s to the present. It’s an outstanding addition to ASP’s other video databases in the arts, and an excellent selection for libraries supporting serious students and researchers in the discipline. (LJ 10/1/12, CL)


Opera lovers will rejoice with this revised edition by a noted musicologist that updates many of the original 3,500 entries while adding coverage of 900 more works, most focusing on the past decade. There is an introductory brief history of opera in English arranged by country. The core text arranges operas alphabetically by title and provides information on authors, first and notable performances, principals and conductor, setting, bibliography, and discography. Volume 2 lists composers, librettists, and authors and offers a chronology. There’s even an index of characters with vocal ranges listed.


These 2,030 entries span from the western shores of Ireland in the sixth century to the eastern fringes of Europe in the 16th. While drawing from the earlier Dictionary of Art, entries are updated to reflect 15 years of new research, and 270 new pieces enhance coverage of gender, pilgrimage, and Jewish medieval art as well as add biographies of deceased medievalists. Comprehensive coverage of all major works, sites and monuments, and figures and media are enhanced by 637 illustrations including 72 pages in full color. Access is assured by an exhaustive, 226-page index. Written by leading scholars and edited by a team headed by Hourihane at Princeton, this work greatly elevates knowledge of the period.


Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden have been the source of some of the world’s greatest films, directors, actors, and actresses. Including works like Ingmar Bergman's haunting The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Scandinavian cinema dates back to 1897. Five film studies professors have here combined their talents to produce 400 cross-referenced entries covering the industry’s people, films, themes, and studios. These are preceded by detailed cinematic histories of each country and a list of acronyms and followed by a detailed bibliography arranged by country and then by topic.

Business & Economics


This welcome second edition of a work first published in 1998 will help readers to make sense of terms such as assisted living, exurbia, and tax increment financing. New articles describe the foreclosure crisis that began in 2007 and attempts that were made to deal with it on a federal level. There’s a detailed explanation of the subprime mortgage crisis and the new Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design standards for green building. Available in print and online, this is a timely resource.

With interest surging in high schools and colleges about new-venture management (entrepreneurship), this work by a business professor with contributions from 128 international writers should be in hot demand. From accounting, adaptation, and advertising to venture valuation and work-life balance, the 193 entries discuss entrepreneurial characteristics and skills from creativity to obstacle identification and examine case studies by product type. Even universities are involved with their business incubators.

Food


The first edition of this book with its 770 entries from 200 authors drew widespread acclaim in 2004. This new release with its 1,300 entries from 350 authors adds another volume and updates and revises earlier entries. There’s more emphasis on the food of ethnic and immigrant groups, new biographies, histories of iconic products, and culinary profiles of 30 cities like New Orleans with its mufalettas and Café du Monde. Controversies surrounding “foie gras” are discussed as are recent developments in obesity. Finally, there is extended coverage of organic and locally grown foods.

General Reference

Academic World Book; World Book

This reference and research all-in-one site includes an encyclopedia, primary-source reproductions (several hundred thousand letters, books, speeches, articles, records, interviews, and images), biographies, a citation builder, an atlas (and interactive maps), a dictionary, time lines, fiction and nonfiction ebooks, tutorials and exercises about college-level research skills, a writing center, links to global newspapers, and multimedia (animations, maps, pictures, sounds, tables, and videos). The amount and quality of the material here, and its organization and presentation, are first-rate. This reasonably priced, go-to source will prove invaluable to many students. (LJ 9/15/12, CL)


More than 50 years ago Leeper, who died earlier this year, began a column called “Louisiana Places: Those Strange Sounding Names” for the Baton Rouge Sunday Advocate. The 893 entries here are drawn from some of those columns and based on written records, legend, oral history, tradition, and folklore. Many of the places listed were
named for prominent families, such as Kentwood in Tangipahoa Parish, which was called after Amos Kent, who speculated in land along the Illinois Central. Others are named for saints like St. Martinville, or after a fourth-century French bishop, St. Martin of Tours. Still others, such as Cloud Crossing, evoke weather. All states should have such a fascinating collection of terms devoted to them.


Librarians everywhere rejoiced when ProQuest announced its decision to take over publication of a classic source published since 1878, most recently by the Census Bureau. The 2013 print edition adds new tables on “Same Sex Households” (there were 646,464 in 2010), “Obese Children” (18%), “Youth with a Major Depressive Disorder” (8% in 2010), and “Mean Student Loan Debt” ($26,682). A new table, “Leisure Time Use” shows that most people watch too much TV (53% of their free time) as opposed to participating in sports/recreation (7%) or reading (4%). With enhanced indexing, the print edition is easy to navigate and a pleasure to use. ProQuest’s subscription database version includes monthly updates and enhanced searching capabilities.

State Stats; CQ Press

This sleek, dynamic statistics database covers a wide range of topics, seeking to be users’ first stop for statistics about the United States. Data come from the past ten to 15 years, with a few pieces from the early 1990s. They are pulled from a series of CQ Press print works published between 1995 and 2011, including State Rankings, Health Care State Rankings, Crime State Rankings, and Education State Rankings. Much of the information available in here comes from publicly available sources, but those sources are seldom as simple to use, and few governmental statistics repositories have the functionality to compare data this easily. (LJ 6/15/12, BS)

Statista; Statista

This database aggregates statistics and data sets from an impressive variety of fields and groups them into 20 main categories covering topics such as advertising, telecommunications, chemicals, energy, education, consumer goods, e-commerce, banking, health care, retail, demographics, sports, transportation, and tourism. The interface is elegant and incredibly user-friendly, especially in comparison to some sources of free statistics. Institutions that purchase this product will quickly find it becoming the number one source for reference questions beginning, "I need statistics on...." (LJ 1/12, BS)

Humanities


By the mid-1830s, one-third of the Irish population depended on the potato for 90 percent of its food. Failures of the potato crops beginning in 1845 and the onset of blight in 1846 contributed to more than a million people perishing of hunger in Ireland between 1845 and 1852. It was the greatest social disaster to occur in one country in the 19th century. Perhaps a million and a half emigrated overseas, primarily to the United States, Canada, and Australia, and still others moved to British slums. This work offers accounts found in written and oral sources, and poetry, art, and photography, all enhanced by 200 new digitized maps to create a picture of this pivotal event.


In 1871, a U.S. Geological Survey team including artist Thomas Moran and photographer William Jackson explored the sources of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. The appearance of their works in "The Wonders of the West" for
Scribner’s Monthly in February 1872 prompted Congress and President Grant to create the first national park in the United States in this unique area of 2.2 million acres. A class project in advanced cartography at the University of Oregon grew exponentially to include a veritable army of cartographers who have created these 500 maps and accompanying text that explain the geographic setting, human and physical geography, and even the wildlife of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park.


Leading scholars trace here the development of religious traditions in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean, including those transplanted from other parts of the world as well as domestic religious movements. Volume 1 covers pre-Columbian times to 1790 in 39 essays on topics from French Catholicism in New France to Congregationalism in New England. The 39 articles in Volume 2 (1790–1945) describe the dramatic expansion of religious diversity with its attendant conflicts. A final volume (1945–present) in 37 essays explores conflicts over race, gender, sex, and civil rights. A rich collection.


The war between 1846 and 1848 cost $100 million and 13,000 lives. Mexico lost half of its national territory while the United States completed its westward expansion to the Pacific. Some 800 alphabetically arranged entries, 25 tables, 31 maps, and 146 primary documents from 167 contributors enhance our knowledge of this prelude to sectional crisis here and civil war in Mexico. Even General Santa Anna gets his due.


The United States declared war against Britain on June 18, 1812, primarily for maritime reasons but also with hopes of expanding into Native-held regions of the Old Northwest. The war was a defining moment for the provinces that would later confederate into the Dominion of Canada, and it enhanced American nationalism especially after Andrew Jackson’s stirring defense of New Orleans. Here 166 cross-border contributors help make sense of it all in 867 entries that are accompanied by maps, a chronology, and 113 primary documents.

Nineteenth Century Collections Online (NCCO); Gale Digital Collections

NCCO, a multiyear digitization and publishing project, will culminate in an enormous gathering of primary-source materials from 1789 to 1914 (with some content stretching beyond that period) arranged in cross-searchable online collections by topics or themes. Material comes from libraries, archives, special collections, and repositories worldwide and includes books and monographs, broadsides, diaries, financial accounts, hand-written sheet music, manuscripts, maps, newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, letters, photographs, poetry, statistics, and more and is in Western and non-Western languages. The rare material, the powerful yet uncomplicated search mechanism, and the added-value subject indexing stand out here. (LJ 6/1/12, CL)

The Oxford Classical Dictionary.

Since the first edition in 1949, the OCD has acquired legendary status among classical scholars as a place of first reference. The third edition, published in 1996 and revised in 2002 with 6,250 entries from 364 international scholars, was almost entirely rewritten. This fourth edition, while adding only 90 new and replacement entries, revises and updates many others. New coverage ranges from pieces on Jewish art to circumcision, masculinity, opera, and the Sabbath. A six-page replacement entry on Homer by Suzanne Saïd is particularly noteworthy. This remains an indispensable source.
A collection of authoritative Oxford (OUP) editions of major works in the humanities, OSEO is designed to serve research in the fields of English literature, history, philosophy, and religion, with launch content including the complete text of more than 170 scholarly editions of material written between 1485 and 1660. There are approximately 12,000 works—equal to 82,000 print pages—now in the collection, including all of Shakespeare’s plays and the poetry of John Donne. The full text of each work is included, along with the editor’s record of variations in the text and explanatory notes. Many works include historical context and information on editorial principles. This game-changing online file surpasses the equivalent print editions and is recommended for serious scholarship in the humanities everywhere. (LJ 11/15/12, CL)

Popular Culture in Britain and America, 1950–1975: Rock and Roll, Counterculture, Peace and Protest; Adam Matthew

This resource collects international archival materials, including original manuscripts and typescripts, photos, letters, pamphlets, advertisements, clippings, censorship documentation, leaflets, government files, video clips from ITN Source and Huntley Film Archives, images of posters, pins, and other memorabilia, and a chronology from 1950 to 1975 containing embedded articles and images. The content is outstanding; overall discoverability and accessibility are good. Recommended enthusiastically to public, academic, and special libraries serving serious American and British cultural and historical researchers. (LJ 4/1/12, CL)

Romanticism Redefined (RR)
Alexander Street Press

Focusing on the period between 1800 and 1830, RR collects 123,481 pages of text from 3,323 publications of London-based publishers Pickering & Chatto (P&C) and the complete run of The Wordsworth Circle (updated as new issues become available). P&C material includes, for example, diaries, letters, literary criticism, historical writings, speeches, lectures, travel and exploration literature, political and sociological works, and critical essays commissioned by P&C and written by leading scholars of the period. The content is superb, with linked contextual notes in the texts, and the interconnections among the authors and their works become evident after only a few searches. A slice of heaven for serious, scholarly researchers of the Romantic period. (LJ 1/12, CL)

Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC); Beacham Group

TRAC combines original analytical articles, copies of related news stories from a wide variety of sources, and links to connected resources and tools to create a compelling collection. Profiles of terrorist groups make up the largest section of the database, with hundreds of entities listed (including some that are no longer active, such as the African National Congress). Group profiles may include brief summaries of origins and links to TRAC articles about their ideology, tactics, and targets. An attractive, high-quality, and comprehensive treatment of terrorism-related information. (LJ 5/1/12, BS)

Women and Social Movements, International (WASMI), 1840-Present
Alexander Street Press

WASMI is a collection of primary-source materials from more than 300 repositories around the world. Documents here are mainly in copyright and previously unpublished and include letters, diaries, manuscripts, conference proceedings (a major portion of the file), journal articles, memoirs, photographs, ephemera, and national committee reports. These are licensed from women’s organizations, archives, and publishers and accompanied by scholarly essays for historical context. The file also provides links to 20,000 pages of online primary-source material. Approximately seven percent of the content is in Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, or Spanish, and well over half of the published material is from outside the United
States. This scholar’s dream will be equally accessible to high school students and post-docs alike. It is recommended to libraries worldwide serving historical, cultural, and political researchers. (LJ 5/15/12, CL)

Language & Linguistics


Many readers have difficulty understanding and enjoying Shakespeare’s work. The primary objective of this wonderfully organized and accessible new resource is to counter those difficulties. Active Shakespearean scholars and teachers provide extensive coverage of every play, 76 sonnets, and all of his longer poems, beginning with “Venus and Adonis.” Part 1 places the Bard’s life in context through the latest research. Part 2 covers his poems and Part 3 his plays. Discussions of modern criticism and the plays today will interest students.


Graphic novels, with their unique combination of visual images and text with an emphasis on art over description, have flourished in recent decades. This project is designed to provide insights into and analysis of the most influential and widely read such novels. Heroes and Superheroes covers 130 works whose titles such as Batman: Dark Victory and Wonder Woman: Love and Murder will be immediately recognizable. Independents & Underground Classics discusses 215 works that were either self-published or produced by independent houses since the 1960s. Finally, Manga examines a Japanese literary form introduced to the this country in translation, covering 65 meta series and stand-alone books including Naoko Takeuchi’s wildly popular Sailor Moon, which ran as a television series from 1995 to 2000. For each title there is a plot summary, a list of characters, and discussion of themes and impact. Beaty (Univ. of Calgary) and Weiner (director, Maynard PL) are leading experts in the genre. Access to the online database version is free with print purchase.


With its focus on proverbs that originated since 1900, this rich collection of 1,400 sayings drawn from newspapers, songs, and films is the first to use recently digitized sources to provide more accurate attributions. Alphabetized by keyword with information about each proverb’s earliest datable appearance, origin, history, and meaning, the work is endlessly entertaining.
Law & Politics


The outline for this work emerged from meetings with leading scholars in London, Tokyo, and California. With a stated purpose of providing a seminal resource for the emerging field of global studies, some 600 alphabetically arranged entries describe civil society, communication, conflict, culture, demographics, economic issues, environmental issues, governance and world order, health and nutrition, and justice and legal issues. While most entries are topical (“Biohazards”), others describe ideas such as capitalism or even events such as 9/11. In print and online.


Some 800 alphabetically arranged entries by Latin American specialists describe the ebb and flow of U.S.-Latin American relations since 1800. An excellent introduction provides the parameters that are explored in abundant detail in entries on the history of U.S. relations with individual counties. Biographies describe major Latin American leaders and key U.S. statesmen as well as the Latin American policies of U.S. Presidents. Major initiatives such as Kennedy’s “Alliance for Progress” are analyzed, as are U.S. occupations such as that of the Dominican Republic in 1965 and commodities including bananas, coffee, copper, and oil.


This resource has had a tortuous history. The idea for such a dictionary was first discussed in 1875 but abandoned in favor of an American competitor. Work on the first edition began in 1933 but was not completed until 1982, as it was slowed by wars, editors, and a desire to assemble it from a fresh reading of Latin texts. For the second edition, the newly digitized text now boasts 40,000 headwords and 100,000 senses enriched by 400,000 citations from 700 classical resources. As before, it covers the language of Rome from its earliest days to 200 CE.


In this timely volume, 15 major entries examine key topics such as Muhammad, jihad, gender, fundamentalism, and pluralism. The remaining nearly 400 entries focus on the origin and evolution of Islamic political terms, concepts, personalities, movements, places, and schools of thought. The article on sharia (sacred law of Islam) is one of the longest. There are detailed entries on Shiism and Sunnism, to which the majority of contemporary Muslims adhere. The editor is professor of Islamic Studies at Yale.


This is the richest collection of African American electoral data ever compiled. It aims to capture the dynamism of the African American electorate starting with the free men and women of color in Colonial America and continuing through electoral disenfranchisement to the historic election of Barack Obama in 2008. The compilers use descriptive and visual statistics, and their addition of newly found data makes this particularly valuable. From table 9.5, which shows “Free African American Male Voting in Presidential Elections, 1789 to 1868,” to Diagram 23.1, which visually depicts the dismantling of the Democratic Party’s White Primary, the work portrays a remarkable journey.


Covering more than 4,000 of the most commonly grown garden plants in Europe and North America, botanist Coombes tells us where plants come from, who discovered them, and how they got their names. He explains for example that *Zinnia* ("zin-ee-uh") L (Asteraceae) is named for 18th-century German botanist Johann Zinn, and its 17 species of annuals and perennials range from the United States to South America.


A vast array of topics are discussed here, from acute sleep deprivation to disturbed sleep and PTSD, the impact of media on nightmares, sleep and shift work, sleep apnea, and even yawns. The book also describes studies showing that, for example, sleep duration in children and adolescents has declined by one hour over the past ten years, and documenting a relationship between daytime tiredness and mobile phone use. This fascinating work from cutting-edge researchers has the most attractive cover of the year.


Director of horticulture for all of the Royal Horticultural Gardens in the UK, Gardiner says he became hooked on flowering shrubs as a student and has been taking slides of ones that make rewarding garden plants for more than 40 years. These plants have been collected worldwide as well as introduced by hybridizers and nurseries. The 1,700 illustrated here are arranged alphabetically by genus name with notes on size, need for sun/shade, flowering period, and hardiness. A “Table of Selected Shrubs” lists key design and cultural characteristics. One of the most beautiful books of the year.


University of Guelph entomologist Marshall has been an insect enthusiast since he was five. He notes that diptera (flies) have been around for more than 300 million years and that they have an enormous impact on the planet, killing millions of people by transmitting disease but also pollinating plants and disposing of dung and carrion that would quickly otherwise overwhelm us. Part 1 of the book describes the life of the creatures, Part 2 examines their diversity, and Part 3 gives advice on how to study, collect, and identify flies. With 2,200 stunning color photos, this book offers a whole new perspective on a world of more than 160,000 species.


A native of Finland, the author is the world’s best-known owl expert, having visited the birds in 128 countries over the past 40 years. Here he describes all of the world’s 249 species of owls in copious detail with tips on identification, habitat, calls, and status and distribution. The text is enhanced by 750 color photographs from leading wildlife photographers. A spectacular book.

**Naughton, Donna.** *The Natural History of Canadian Mammals.* Univ. of Toronto. 784p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781442644830. $69.95.

Naughton, a biologist, spent 11 years studying and drawing mammals for this project. It profiles all 215 known...
species of mammals in Canada from the family Aplodontiidae (mountain beaver) whose single living species is considered the most primitive living rodent, to the prolific family Sciuridae (squirrels and marmots), those large-eyed mammals with bushy tales, and killer whales, the largest of the dolphin family. Each is described in abundant detail with graphics of skulls, illustrations of tracks, full-color drawings, and photographs. An ebook version is due out soon, with a French translation to follow.

Social Sciences


This may be the first encyclopedia to focus exclusively on what society throws away, as what’s old hat to archaeologists has only recently drawn the attention of other social scientists. Covering everything from global municipal waste management systems to the residual impact of consumer products, these articles will both inform and, in some cases, alarm. Every U.S. state’s waste management program is discussed as are those of many of the world’s major cities. In print and online.

Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education.

This landmark study serves both as a history of where we’ve been and a road map to where we need to be. The 700 entries describe alternative education modes, curriculum issues, exceptionality, gender and sexual orientation, global dimensions (by region), immigration, language, racial and ethnic diversity, and testing and assessment. A series of special essays, “Perspectives in Education,” from eminent scholars provides additional insights. In print and online.


Drawing on the talents of 150 scholars, Danver has selected 400 native groups from six regions of the world to profile and organized them by region. The first volume describes groups ranging from the Han, who represent 90% of China’s population to the Kuna, who live along the Caribbean coast of Panama, and from the Sami, who live within the Arctic Circle in Finland, Norway, and Sweden to the San of Namibia and Botswana. Part 2 examines the treatment of these peoples in some 80 countries. A final section describes 50 issues that affect these groups worldwide from land and water rights to social discrimination.


Traditional social science methods have been combined here with “bottom up history” with its focus on criminals and their interaction with the criminal justice system to create an immense if uneven literature on crime, policing, the courts and law, imprisonment, and philosophical issues from the Colonial period to the present. The coverage by state is a useful feature. A series of extended essays by period complemented by primary documents make this an excellent classroom resource. In print and online.
Sports


Recent sports headlines touted that this year’s Super Bowl teams would be coached for the first time by two brothers, Jim and John Harbaugh of the 49ers and the Ravens, respectively. The writers could have verified that in this engagingly written new biographical dictionary by Rutgers reference librarian (and LJ reviewer) Maxymuk. In it he describes all 466 men who have served as head coaches in the NFL since 1920. For each he discusses their approach, style, and relative success. He’s even created an algorithm to rank coaches by their results (Paul Brown tops the list).


Defining sport as a rulebound physical activity that is played at informal and formal levels by various age groups, the editors have selected 850 entries written by 250 experts in various sports and events and arranged them regionally. For each there is an opening essay on sports history and culture in the region followed by detailed entries on particular sports, athletes, competitions, and venues. General essays explore topics from disabled athletes to sexuality and sports psychology. Of particular interest is coverage of lesser-known activities from capoeira in Brazil to camel racing in the Middle East.

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