

BLIS semester II
(paper – 5)
Reference Sources & Services
Topic – **THE REFERENCE COLLECTION**
e-content

MADHU
Guest Faculty,
Dept. of library & Information Science
Patna University.
Email Id – madhu.gfatm@gmail.com

THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

The reference collection is a group of non-circulating, highly used materials such as dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias, bibliographies and bibliographical guides, directories, almanacs, etc. These sources often represent the most current information the library owns in a bound format. The campus library's general reference collection, located on the main floor, houses reference books on many different subjects.

For the most part, reference materials provide background information. These sources answer who, what, where, when and why questions and are more useful for purposes of identification than for in-depth research. The reference section is an excellent "first place to look" when conducting research.

Like the regular collection of circulating material, the Shorter College Library's reference collections are arranged by subject using the Dewey Decimal system, so works on a particular subject would begin with the same call number in reference as they would in the regular collection.

Many different types of reference materials exist.

DICTIONARIES, THESAURI, AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Dictionaries and thesauri can help you understand terms related to your subject. There are both general dictionaries, such as the Oxford English Dictionary [the username and password for the use of this resource off-campus can be found in the Library tab of Scholar], and specialized dictionaries that define such things as acronyms or phrases from literature and mythology.

General encyclopedias, such as Encyclopedia Britannica*, contain a broad overview of many topics. Encyclopedias also help to identify terms, and encyclopedia articles generally end with a short bibliography of other sources for you to locate. General encyclopedias are located in call number R 031 of the Rome campus library's reference collection. (An "R" preceding a call number denotes a reference work.)

In addition to general encyclopedias, which cover all fields of knowledge, the reference collection contains subject-specific encyclopedias and dictionaries, such as encyclopedias of

religion and medical dictionaries. These sources are found within their subject areas, usually close to the beginning of the call numbers (numbers assigned by subject which are used to order books on the shelf) for that subject area; for instance, an art encyclopedia would be found

along with other art resources in the 700s section of the reference collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDES

Bibliographies list books that have something in common with each other. For example, a subject bibliography might list the best books about a particular topic, such as American History. A critical bibliography might list all the criticism written about a single author or group of authors. Bibliographies are helpful to researchers because they gather together, in one place, materials on a single topic. This saves them from having to track the materials down themselves.

Bibliographic guides to broad subject fields are intended to acquaint the novice researcher with the protocols of research in a particular discipline. They list and describe important reference books, journals, and other research tools, and provide an overview of research procedures in the discipline.

OTHER TYPES OF REFERENCE SOURCES

Directories function somewhat like phone books. They provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, and URLs for companies or organizations. Some also list personnel, financial or other information. A list of directories will be available soon.

Statistical sources provide quantitative data about every imaginable subject. They can be very useful in substantiating claims you make in your papers. Good sources of statistical information will be available soon.

Almanacs and fact books provide miscellaneous facts and figures, both for the present and the past. Almanacs and fact books are listed on the News & Facts page.