

Introduction to Literary Research: Online Resources

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Subject Librarians for English

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Library Catalog

Use VIRGO (<http://virgo.lib.virginia.edu>) to:

- Find library-owned materials, including books, manuscripts, CDs and DVDs
- Renew materials, place a recall, request a purchase or an interlibrary loan

Sample searches:

joyce james [author]
'poetic designs' [title]
lyric poetry [subject]

Truncation: **poet\$** for poetry, poetic, poetics, etc.
Booleans: **black or 'african american'**
shakespeare and ado and criticism

Indexes of Scholarly Journal Articles

[MLA International Bibliography \[MLAIB\]](#): The standard resource for finding scholarly journal articles about languages and literature. Due to the recent addition of retrospective content, its coverage now goes back to 1926.

[Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature \[ABELL\]](#): A good supplement to the MLAIB, featuring more international content, more monograph citations and book reviews, and coverage back to 1920.

All-Purpose Databases

[Literature Resource Center](#) is a great place to begin research on a particular author. This database includes full-text articles from the Dictionary of Literary Biography and other biographical and critical compilations about authors, along with citations from MLAIB (see description below) and some full-text articles (see also the [Literature Online \[LION\]](#) database, which has similar content).

Sample search: In Literature Resource Center, search for **Zadie Smith**. Click on the tabs near the top of the screen to view results in different categories – in this case, 2 biographical essays, over 50 reference articles, 15 citations from MLAIB, etc.

Historical Newspapers and Journals

[ProQuest Historical Newspapers](#): Use this database to find newspaper articles more than 20 years old. It contains full text of four major US newspapers (NY Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune) from their initial dates of publication (as early as 1851).

Sample search: Type **hemingway** in the first search box and **the sun also rises** in the second search box. Use the pulldown menu to sort results by oldest (historical) first. Returns early ads for the novel and reviews in the New York Times and Chicago Tribune

[The Times Digital Archive](#): Provides searchable full text content of the London Times from 1785-1985, including advertisements.

[Periodicals Index Online](#): Indexes the contents of thousands of scholarly and popular journals in the humanities and social sciences, in 40 languages. Mostly 19th and 20th coverage, although a few titles go back earlier. Some full-text articles are available via links to JSTOR or to a companion database, [Periodicals Archive Online](#).

[American Periodicals Series](#): Full text of 1000+ journals published in the U.S. from 1740-1900.

Contemporary Newspapers (Reviews of Books, Movies, and Plays)

For criticism of contemporary literature, drama and film, newspapers are sometimes a better resource than scholarly journals. [LexisNexis](#) has an advanced search for finding reviews.

Sample search: From the main page, click on the **Guided News Search** tab. Select **Arts & Sports News** from the 1st pulldown menu, and **Book, movie music & play reviews** from the second. Type "**hedwig and the angry inch**" in the 1st search field. Select **All available dates** as the date range. Returns 25 reviews of the play and film.

Searchable Databases of Literary Works

[Early English Books Online \[EEBO\]](#) contains bibliographic records, page images, and (in some cases) transcriptions of virtually every work printed in the UK from 1473-1700, literary or otherwise.

[Eighteenth Century Collections Online \[ECCO\]](#) picks up where EEBO leaves off, containing "every significant English-language and foreign-language title printed in Great Britain" during the 18th century.

[Early American Imprints](#) is the American equivalent of EEBO and ECCO, containing complete bibliographical citations and page images of American imprints from 1639-1800.

[Literature Online \[LION\]](#) has a surprisingly complete collection of full-text poetry, prose, and drama, and contains a limited number of 20th century works as well. You can limit your searches to literary works only, and limit by date, gender, ethnicity, or literary movement.

Helpful URLs

Ask a Librarian (phone, email, IM): <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/questions.html>

English Subject Guide: <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/English>

Accessing Databases from Off Grounds: <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/indexes/authent.html>