IB Orientation 2017, Yonkers Riverfront Public Library

1. Reference materials
2. Reference sources
3. Sample searches

Types of reference materials.

What is a reference book? You can use reference books to find basic facts and general overviews of topics. They are usually located in the Reference Department of the library and can’t be checked out.

Why use reference books? To get a better sense of the topic area before beginning research; to check quick facts, such as names, dates, and locations. All print materials are not online, and unlike the Internet, books don’t suffer technical difficulties!

What is a primary source? Primary records are those generated by a particular event, by those who participated in it, or by those who directly witnessed the event. Primary sources might be interviews or typewritten accounts from witnesses, newspaper articles describing the event, or other recorded accounts.

Print references. Most materials can be found in the Reference area on the third floor of the Yonkers Riverfront Library (call numbers and URLs are in brackets).

Dictionaries. Brief definitions of words and concepts, either general or within the context of a subject area; arranged alphabetically.

- Dictionary of Afro-American slavery (at the Will Library)
- Historical dictionary of the old South [975.03 R]
- Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary [423 M 2003]

Encyclopedias. Brief discussions of specific topics; generally more detailed than dictionaries. Arranged alphabetically, often with bibliographies at the end of each entry (leading to additional articles/sources).

- Abolition and anti-slavery: historical encyclopedia of the American mosaic [326.8 A]
- African American history [305.896 A]
- Encyclopedia Americana; Encyclopedia.com (online resources available with library card through the Yonkers Public Library)
- Encyclopedia Britannica (at the Will Library)
- Encyclopedia of African American history [305.896 E]
- Encyclopedia of American History, vols. 1-6 [973.03 E 2010]
- Encyclopedia of antislavery and abolition [326.8 E]
- Encyclopedia of slave resistance and rebellion [306.36 E]
- Encyclopedia of the great black migration [307.2 E]
- Enslaved women in America [306.362 E]
- Latin America, history and culture: an encyclopedia for students [980 L]
- MacMillan encyclopedia of world slavery [306.36 M]
- Slavery in the United States: a social, political, and historical encyclopedia [306.36 S 2007]
- World of a slave: encyclopedia of the material life of slaves in the United States [306.36 W 2011]

Atlases. Collections of maps that organize all kinds of information (not just directions) geographically; organized by the principle of the atlas: geographically, chronologically, alphabetically.
- African American atlas: black history and culture—an illustrated reference [305.896 A (11 98)]
- Atlas of African American history [305.896 C 2007]
- Atlas of American history [911.73 N]
- Atlas of Slavery [306.36 W]
- Atlas of the transatlantic slave trade [306 E]
- Chronology of world slavery [306.36 R]
- Rand-McNally Road Atlas [912.7 R 2016]

Directories. Organized lists of people, businesses, organizations or associations, including addresses, telephone numbers, and other contact information. Arranged alphabetically, geographically, or by subject.
- Europa world year book [REF 909.82 E 2014] (shelved at reference desk)
- Yellow Pages, White Pages

Almanacs. Often published annually, almanacs contain calendars, facts, statistics, and other miscellaneous information; organized by subject, usually with an extensive index.
- African-American almanac [305.896 R 12 97]
- African American almanac [305.896 B]
- Historical statistics of black America [305.896 H]
- Statistical record of black America [305.896 S]
- World Almanac and Book of Facts [317 W]
**Biographical resources.** Written accounts of people’s lives, often collected by subject area; usually arranged alphabetically by last name.

- *African American national biography* [920 A]
- *African American lives* [920 A]
- *African biographical dictionary* [920 B]
- *Dictionary of American biography* [920 D]

**Handbooks.** Concise guides to specific topics; arranged variously, usually with extensive indexes.

- *Brazil: a country study* [981 B 1997 (10 98)]
- *From slavery to freedom: a history of African Americans* [306.36 F 2000]
- *Guide to New York City landmarks* [917.471 G]
- *Historical guide to world slavery* [306.36 H]
- *The Black New Yorkers: the Schomburg illustrated chronology* [305.896 D]
- *MLA handbook for writers of research papers* [808.02 M 2009]
- *Slavery in the United States* [306.36 S 2007]
- *Cotton and race in the making of America: the human costs of economic power* [306.362 D]

**Indexes.** Guides to periodical literature like magazines and newspapers; published periodically and arranged alphabetically by subject.

- *New York Times Index* [070 N, also online through YPL]
- *Ulrich’s periodicals directory* [011.34 U 2015]

**Primary source collections.** Subject-based collections of primary source materials on a specific topic; often arranged chronologically or by subject or author. Some collections will contain primary and secondary source material.

- *100 milestone documents.* [http://www.ourdocuments.gov/]
- *Annals of America* [973 A]
- *Black abolitionist papers* [973.09 B]
- *Black women in American history* [305.348 B]
- *First-person narratives of the American South.* Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/]

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1 The *Our Documents* initiative is a cooperative effort among National History Day, The National Archives and Records Administration, and USA Freedom Corps.
• *Making of America.* Collection of approximately 1,600 full-text books and 50,000 journal articles from the antebellum period through Reconstruction. [http://moa.umdl.umich.edu/index.html](http://moa.umdl.umich.edu/index.html)

• *National Museum of African American History and Culture.* More than 37,000 objects relating to African American history can be found through this digital collection. [https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection](https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection)

• *North American slave narratives.* Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/](http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/)

• *Public papers of the President of the United States* [973.916 U (9 95)]

• *Remembering slavery: African Americans talk about their personal experiences of slavery and emancipation* [306.36 R]

• *Slavery in America: from colonial times to the Civil War* [326.09 S (11 00)]

• *Slavery in the courtroom: an annotated bibliography of American cases* [342.087 F (9 94)]

• *Transatlantic slave trade database.* Information^2^ on almost 36,000 slaving voyages that forcibly embarked over 10 million Africans for transport to the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. [http://www.slavevoyages.org/](http://www.slavevoyages.org/)

• *Valley of the shadow: living the Civil War in Pennsylvania and Virginia.* Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia Library project that interweaves the histories of two communities on either side of the Mason-Dixon line during the era of the American Civil War, incorporating a narrative and electronic archive of sources. [http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/](http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/)

**Google Books.** Search on Google Books or on Google.com, and when a book with content that contains a match for your search terms is found, Google Books will provide a link to the results (sometimes full-text).

Google Books contains vast amounts of primary and secondary source materials and is particularly useful in searching for print materials that are out of copyright (printed before 1922).

Each book includes an 'About this book' page with basic bibliographic data like title, author, publication date, length and subject. For some books you may also see additional information like *key terms and phrases, references to the book from scholarly publications or other books, chapter titles and a list of related books.* For every book, you'll see links directing you to bookstores where you can buy the book and libraries where you can borrow it.

^2^ Database sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Emory and Harvard Universities; University of Hull (UK); Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Brazil); Victoria University, Wellington (New Zealand).
**Viewing materials.** If the book is out of copyright, or the publisher has given permission, you'll be able to see a preview of the book, and in some cases the entire text. If it's in the public domain, you can download a PDF copy.

- **Limited Preview.** If the publisher or author has given permission, you can see a limited number of pages from the book as a preview.
- **Snippet View.** Like a card catalog, the snippet view shows information about the book plus a few snippets – a few sentences to display your search term in context.
- **No preview.** Google also displays search results for books that have not been digitized. As these books have not been scanned, their text is not searchable and only information such as the title, author, publisher, number of pages, ISBN, subject and copyright information, and in some cases, a table of contents and book summary is available.

**Some helpful URLs:**

- **IB Library guide, Sarah Lawrence College:** [http://sarahlawrence.libguides.com/IB](http://sarahlawrence.libguides.com/IB)
- **Research databases, New York Public Library:** [https://www.nypl.org/research](https://www.nypl.org/research)
- **Research databases, Yonkers Public Library:** [http://www.ypl.org/research/](http://www.ypl.org/research/)
- **Academic Onefile, click on Magazines. To access Chronicling America, click on History.**
- **WorldCat.** [http://www.worldcat.org/](http://www.worldcat.org/) **Online union catalog that searches many libraries at once for an item, and locates it in a library nearby, useful for finding materials to request via interlibrary loan. (Note: not all library materials are listed in WorldCat, and not all libraries allow items to be checked out.)**

**Reference Sources.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For information about…</th>
<th>Choose…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Dictionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General information, overview of topic</td>
<td>Encyclopedias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names, addresses of people, organizations, institutions, companies</td>
<td>Directories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profiles of people</td>
<td>Biographical dictionaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Places, maps</td>
<td>Atlases or gazetteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facts, statistics</td>
<td>Almanacs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formulas, tables, how-to instructions</td>
<td>Handbooks and manuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>A person’s work</td>
<td>Reviews, criticisms</td>
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<td>Dates, outlines, historical timelines</td>
<td>Historical tables, chronologies, historical yearbooks</td>
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<td>Periodical articles</td>
<td>Indexes or abstracts</td>
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<td>Books and other sources</td>
<td>Bibliographies, guides to literature</td>
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Sample searches. These are general topics and far too vague for a historical investigation/research paper. Here’s how to narrow that topic down.

Finding a research topic related to Harriet Tubman.

2. Then review some entries in encyclopedias, such as the Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion, or Abolition and Anti-Slavery: a historical encyclopedia of the American mosaic. Take notes on the bibliographies in the entries; these articles might be useful to explore as you narrow your topic.
3. Take a look at other resources, such as From slavery to freedom, Atlas of Slavery and the African American atlas: black history and culture—an illustrated reference to see what else you can find.
4. From there, you can use the themes you find in these materials to find out information that leads you to determine a topic to investigate. What made Harriet Tubman decide to risk her life to help others make their way to freedom? What did her contemporaries in the abolitionist movement think of her mission? What might be the women’s history viewpoint on this topic?
5. You might do some searching in biographies of Tubman, in primary source materials such as Black Abolitionist Papers, Black Women in American History and the like to find information and other ideas for your paper.

Finding a research topic relating to slavery in Brazil.

1. Start by looking at an encyclopedia that contains information about Brazil, perhaps Latin America, history and culture: an encyclopedia for students for general information on Brazil and to find out more about slavery in that country.
2. Review some other resources, such as Atlas of Slavery and the Atlas of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade for additional information.
3. Then turn to a handbook: Brazil: a country study, or A historical guide to world slavery to get ideas on narrowing your topic. Perhaps you want to consider economic factors that encouraged the rise of slavery in Brazil in the nineteenth century. These resources each have bibliographies that provide additional sources for you to check. For example, the MacMillan encyclopedia entry on plantations in Brazil offers several articles on plantations and slavery in its bibliography.
4. From here, you can research the economic history of Brazil and narrow down your topic. Some resources that could be helpful are The Financial Crisis of Abolition or The Brazilian Empire: myths and histories.