The ALA Choices

OUTSTANDING REFERENCE SOURCES: A 1988 SELECTION OF RECENT TITLES

A compilation of distinguished reference titles selected by the Reference Sources Committee of the ALA Reference and Adult Services Division

edited by Linda J. Sammataro

After a year of diligent consideration of at least 2,000 new titles, the Reference Sources Committee gathered to confer for three days at the 1988 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio. There, members chose the crème de la crème of outstanding reference sources of 1987—and some from 1986—for small and medium-sized public and academic libraries.

These 26 titles range in length from the slim 128-page Women in the World: An International Atlas (Simon & Schuster), compiled by two geographers, to Mircea Eliade’s monumental 16-volume Encyclopedia of Religion (Macmillan); in subject matter, from the concreteness of the Under Ground Atlas: A Gazetteer of the World’s Cave Regions (St. Martin’s) to the wide sociological and historical focus of the World Encyclopedia of Peace (Pergamon), whose honorary editor-in-chief is Linus Pauling. In between are dictionaries of mythological characters, historical concepts, and artificial intelligence terminology; encyclopedias of astronomy, deafness, and materials science; fascinating handbooks of North American butterflies, holidays, and facts about teaching; and fine bibliographies of modern Shakespearean criticism and popular music.

Although the smallest public libraries may decide not to purchase such large sets as the aforementioned Encyclopedia of Religion or the eight-volume Encyclopedia of Materials Science and Engineering (Van Nostrand Reinhold), this selection of titles represents the best in quality and appropriateness for the whole of our very heterogeneous audience, which includes all but large public and academic libraries.

Linda J. Sammataro is assistant professor and reference librarian at the University of Tennessee/Knoxville Main Library. She has chaired the Reference Sources Committee for a year. Sammataro authored “Marriage and Family Periodicals Index” in the Spring 1987 Serials Review.

The subject distribution of this year’s list is roughly one-third each in the areas of science and technology, social sciences, and humanities. No deliberate attempt has been made to balance subject coverage or to select a particular number of titles. The total of 26 books (versus 37 last year and 45 for 1985) is indeed small but select, with some important recent titles omitted only because they are new editions of old standards rather than original works—for example, Holman and Harmon’s A Handbook to Literature (5th ed., Macmillan), the McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology (6th ed., McGraw-Hill), and the Encyclopedia of Social Work (18th ed., National Association of Social Workers). Also, some otherwise outstanding works, such as The Oxford Companion to Gardens (Oxford), were a little too specialized to be judged indispensable.

Our criteria exclude non-English-language works, pamphlets, and new volumes of incomplete sets, as well as sources of purely local interest. We consider annuals and yearbooks, such as the Teacher’s Almanac (Facts on File), only when they first appear; and new editions of monographs only if significantly revised, such as the virtually new second unabridged edition of the Random House Dictionary of the English Language (Random House). Nonprint sources are included.

This photo by J. Duerst shows many fine streamers in the sun’s atmosphere during the total solar eclipse on Feb. 16, 1980. The bluish circle in the center is the moon. From The International Encyclopedia of Astronomy, edited by Patrick Moore, copyright © 1987 by Mitchell Beazley Publishers. Published in the U.S. by Orion Books, a division of Crown.

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sources and reference works written specifically for children are not excluded, although none of them has appeared on this list in recent years.

We try to keep this annual list as current as possible. However we believe that care in evaluation of reference works should not be sacrificed to speed, so some 1986 imprints are included this year. The title of this article has been changed to "Outstanding Reference Sources: A 1988 Selection of Recent Titles" rather than previously used wording, as in "Outstanding Reference Sources of 1987," because its scope is not strictly limited to publications of one calendar year. For example, the first English translation from the French of Grimal's Dictionary of Classical Mythology (Blackwell) was completed in 1985 and copyrighted in 1986, but was not widely reviewed in this country until 1987. We could not fail to bring such a landmark work to your attention merely because of its early publication date. On the other hand, the index volume of The Encyclopedia of Religion was not released until 1988, but since the other 15 volumes had been in print for a full year, we felt bound to include this magnificent source in our present list.

New formats

The exciting and rapidly changing area of CD-ROM and other new technologies has become highly important to reference services, but after discussing such worthy titles as Compact Disclosure (Disclosure Inc.) and Bowker's BIP Plus, the committee decided to spend this year refining its criteria for excellence in CD-ROMS and other disc products before voting any one title as an outstanding reference source. Members of the 1987-88 Reference Sources Committee were: Susan K. Cohen, Free Public Library, Berkeley Heights, N.J.; Marlene Klüh, Baltimore County Public Library, Md.; Mary J. Miller, Akron-Summit County Public Library, Akron, Ohio; Jack O’Gorman, Softech, Inc., Fairborn, Ohio; Judith B. Quinlan, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens; Nellie Ward, Maryvale High School Library, Phoenix, Ariz.; Sarah B. Watstein, Hunter College Library, New York, NY; Barbara S. Wurtzel, Springfield (Mass.) Technical Community College Library; Mary Larson, Intern, Concordia College Library, Moorhead, Minn.; and serving as chair, Linda J. Sammataro, Hodges Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

"Outstanding Reference Sources: A 1988 Selection of Recent Titles" will be displayed at the RASD booth during the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

Following the conference, interested groups may borrow this distinguished collection of exhibits at regional, state, or local meetings for the cost of transportation. For further information, contact Andrew Hansen, Executive Director, RASD, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611

Psychology, religion, and mythology


This first English translation of Grimal's authoritative 1951 biographical dictionary is both a browser's delight and a significant additional to the field of classical mythology. The dictionary is a comprehensive source dealing with every mythical creature and character, from Abas to Zeusxippe, and all the versions of the associated myths and legends. Articles are clear and readable, explain historical and literary allusions, and are attractively illustrated. English spelling of name entries is followed by the equivalent in Greek letters. Additional features include 45 pages of references keyed to individual entries, 40 genealogical tables, maps of ancient Greece and Rome, excellent cross-references, and a full index. An essential purchase for both school and public libraries.


The last legacy of our foremost historian of religion, this landmark work replaces Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (1908-26) and admirably avoids reductionism and cultural bias. Alphabetically arranged essays discuss major religious traditions, themes, practices, symbols, and concepts since the Paleolithic era, along with biographies of about a thousand deceased religious figures. There are 2,734 signed original articles by scholars from five continents, enhanced by excellent bibliographies and cross-references. An unprecedented amount of space is given over to non-Western religions, and the multidisciplinary focus makes this also an invaluable resource for students of art, history, literature, and anthropology. The last volume contains the 70,000-entry subject and name index, list of contributors, and synoptic outline of contents. An extraordinary asset for all libraries that can possibly afford it.


Whether your favorite creature of myth is a vampire, unicorn, or siren, plenty of information about it can be found in this unique resource. There are chapters on 20 different beings, divided into the four broad categories of Birds and Beasts; Human-Animal Composites; Creatures of Darkness; and Giants and Fairies. For each creature, an expert has contributed a historical survey of its forms and manifestations and the associated folklore, and a discussion of its appearances in both serious and popular literature and art—from ancient times right through rock videos such as Michael Jackson's Thriller. Each chapter has a fine selective bibliography. The volume begins with a glossary and an illustration section, and ends with a miscellaneous chapter on lesser-known creatures, a taxonomy, general bibliography, and meticulous index. For lovers of the fantastic, whether high schoolers or scholars.


Essays by Skinner on behaviorism, Laing on interpersonal relationships, and Chomsky on his theory of language are among the thousand or so entries in this fascinating tour of an immense subject. Discussion on almost any imaginable aspect of the mind can be found, from everyday events such as forgetting, sleep, or humor, to a 20-page tutorial on the nervous system, to Suffism, opium, and "Chinese Evidence on the Evolution of Language." There are 160 illustrations, loads of cross-references, and a 32-page index to subjects and to authors of cited references and indexed articles. Other works may cover the individual areas of philosophy, psychology, or physiology of the brain in more depth, but this unparalleled compilation of materials on all of these aspects of the mind should find a niche on all small to medium-sized library reference shelves.

Social sciences

The Encyclopedia of Aging, editor in chief George L. Maddox; associate editors Robert C. Atchley, et al.; managing editor
Reference sources


Over 200 leading gerontologists have contributed discussions of approximately 500 terms and concepts for the first encyclopedia devoted to all aspects of the aging process. The signed entries, ranging in length from one-half column to eight pages, provide the nonspecialist with "general background information...related to health and both physical and mental functioning." Subjects also include Social Security and Medicare, key government agencies, and foundations and organizations with an interest in aging. The many cross-references and extensive index are very helpful in locating topics, while the outstanding 128-page bibliography is one of the most comprehensive in the field found within one volume. Any library that must answer questions on aging needs this impressive source.


If Public: Law 94-142 and the field of special education are still impenetrable to you, put your anxieties aside. Clinical disorders, lives and works of leaders in the field, educational and psychological tests, court cases and laws, and key terminology are all treated in the approximately 2,000 signed articles by over 300 academics and practitioners. Students, professionals, and parents of students in special education programs will find the articles mighty informative and the cross-references, bibliographies, illustrations, and name and subject indexes useful. Although special education as a field is relatively recent, its body of knowledge is already vast. Reynolds and Mann have done an outstanding job of charting the terrain.


This chronological compendium describes Shavout, Florida Seminole Green Corn Dance, and Juneteenth among 125 or so religious and secular holidays, along with accompanying traditions, folklore, and historical background. Lively excerpts from over 400 published and unpublished sources on holiday customs, along with 50 recipes, songs (some with musical scores), poems, and legends, all contribute to the fun. There are indexes by subject, including holiday name; ethnic or geographic name; collector, informant, or translator; and song title or first line. Happy celebrating!


The current educational scene is the focus of this first edition of an annual reference source. Charts, tables, lists, and essays are organized into 11 sections such as the teacher's calendar, state rankings, teacher salaries, student performance, school districts, and higher education. Information highlighted in boxes ranges from bestselling children's books to girls in football. This useful volume is not only check-full, it is brimming over with data from original surveys, various levels of government, the NEA, and other sources, all thoroughly referenced and indexed. Clearly the almanac of choice for teachers and anyone else interested in facts related to elementary and secondary education.


"In the world of women, there are few developed nations," say the geographers who drew on a myriad of sources to produce this fascinating graphic view of the realities of women's lives throughout the world. Ten central themes including marriage, motherhood, work, resources, and authority are divided into 40 topics, most with a two-page multicolored map and two or three subtopics. The lively and imaginative graphs, charts, and maps are enhanced by succinct text, which interprets the data. A table of vital information by country;
notes on each chapter; a bibliography of sources ranging from Miss World programs to feminist newsletters; and a brief index to maps and notes follow the more visual sections. Every library needs this atlas because, indeed, "we cannot understand our world without understanding the everyday experience of women."


This badly needed encyclopedia—the first devoted to pacifism since Eusner—deals with all aspects of this large subject, from economic and legal to literary and religious. Volumes 1 and 2 are a dictionary of approximately 500 entries written by about 300 academics, including biographies, concepts, theories, terminology, organizations, strategies, and national peace movements. Bibliographies list primarily English-language sources. Volume 3 has the texts of 39 modern treaties; a chronology of peace efforts since 1815; and biographies of Nobel Peace Laureates through 1985. In addition to name and subject indexes to the entire set, volume 4 contains a list of peace journals, descriptions of peace institutions and organizations worldwide, the contributor list, and a substantial classified bibliography of about one thousand books. A vitally important work for all but the smallest libraries.

Science and technology


Hunt has written a masterful overview of the history of AI, from the 1950s to current trends, to precede his lucid definition of all important terms in this area—which includes robotics and vision systems. For example, AI itself is described as "the subfield of computer science concerned with developing intelligent computer programs ... that can solve problems, learn from experience, understand language, interpret visual scenes, and ... behave in a way that would be considered intelligent if observed in a human. . . ." In addition to the definitions, there are an impressive bibliography, acronyms and abbreviations, trademarks, and an extensive list of software companies and people to contact. For all libraries serving computer-science buffs.


Submit to the contrary, this is actually a uniquely encyclopedic work covering all 679 species of butterfly from Canada to northern Mexico, plus Bermuda and Hawaii. Part I is a substantial discussion of butterfly ecology and biology, and Part II covers the identification of eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults. Part III comprises 350 pages of species descriptions in phylogenetic sequence, complete with range maps and keyed to 64 gorgeous color plates of butterflies. The plates are arranged by appearance for ease of identification. A bibliography, hostplant catalog, glossary, and index by subject and species round out this veritable bible for Lepidoptera collections.


Since World War II, the many new materials discovered and put to work have had an impact on human capabilities as profound as that of iron in classical antiquity. The first seven volumes of this source contain some 1,600 articles by about 1,400 scientists on phenomena, properties, applications, and materials from high-tech (polymers and superconductors) to low (stone and bamboo); socioeconomic and humanistic aspects are included. Entries are effectively illustrated by photographs, graphs, and charts and have extensive bibliographies. Volume 8 contains an outline of the field, list of contributors, index to authors cited, and three-level subject index.

Engineering, chemistry, and physics students will need this title right alongside the Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology and Encyclopedia of Polymer Science and Technology.


This first-ever encyclopedia on both the condition of deafness and hearing-impaired people is invaluable for its international and historical scope, clearly written scholarly entries, and quality of bibliographies, illustrations, photographs, charts, and 25-page index. The 273 signed articles cover disparate scientific, social, and cultural topics such as acoustics, family dynamics, the lives of 70 people important to the deaf, and schools for the deaf worldwide. Cross-references abound, and longer articles (58 heavily illustrated pages for sign languages) are divided into sections and subsections. Like its sponsor Gallaudet University, the Encyclopedia "is expected to have broad importance and influence and its ultimate purpose is to enhance the quality of life of persons with hearing impairments." Sure to be a standard in its field.


A worthy descendant of the old Thorndike-Barnhart line of dictionaries, this compact but comprehensive volume was carefully crafted to support students in introductory science courses. The 16,000 up-to-date entries cover basic terms in both physical and biological sciences, excluding only medicine. Good, lucid definitions are often accompanied by discussions of relationships between words and illustrative quotations. There are clear black-and-white drawings to illustrate many concepts, etymologies for basic words, variant spellings, and tables of often-requested information such as the Richter Scale. The pronunciation key appears on every other page. This handy volume would earn its keep in any high school or public library.


The big bang, exploring space, interstellar matter, moons, pulsars, superclusters, and "a Family Called Universe" are the subjects of 15-page illustrated essays by international authorities which accompany the more than 2,500 shorter entries in this
GALLAUDET
Encyclopedia of Deaf People and Deafness
John V. Van Cleve, Editor in Chief

ISBN: 0-07-079229-1
$300

“A highly valuable reference...in increasing understanding and awareness of deaf people and their culture.”
—Garry W. Olsen
Executive Director of the National Association of the Deaf

The first compilation of its kind, this extraordinary new Encyclopedia is the only major reference work to examine all aspects of the culture and issues relating to the deaf community.

Authoritative and up-to-the-minute Sponsored by Gallaudet University, the Encyclopedia discusses the sociology, audiology, law, education, psychology, history and rehabilitation of deaf people. It draws on the knowledge and experience of over 400 distinguished experts, who have contributed authoritative material in 273 incisive, fact-filled entries.

Comprehensive and international in scope The Encyclopedia takes an international perspective on the world of deaf people, providing in-depth coverage of sign language and other methods of communication, the audiology, psychology, and sociology of hearing disorders, demographics, organizations, and more. It clearly describes the problems, conditions, and status of the members of the deaf community around the world.

Recognition for this highly acclaimed reference work—
* President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped 1987 Book Award
* AAP Honorable Mention for Most Creative and Innovative Project
* Selected as an Outstanding Reference by CHOICE, BOOKLIST, and AMERICAN LIBRARIERS

To order—or to receive more information about—the Encyclopedia call toll-free 1-800-2-MCGRAW or write to: Barbara Devaney
McGraw-Hill Book Company
11 West 19th Street
New York, NY 10011
marvelous one-volume encyclopedia. There are descriptions of the world’s major observatories and biographical articles with portraits of notable past astronomers, and photos of modern space travelers such as Valentina Tereshkova. Lavishly illustrated by over 600 photos, many in color, as well as drawings, charts, and diagrams, the book closes with the Messier catalog and lists of other clusters and nebulae, brightest stars, and variable and double stars. Sure to be heavily used in basic science and technology collections.


Patients are more involved with the medical process than ever before, and practitioners need to keep abreast of developments in areas of medicine other than their specialties. This engrossing work, more an encyclopedia than a dictionary, will serve both groups and lend a historical perspective to modern medicine.

With a dual American and British outlook, there are 150 signed, often illustrated essays, complete with bibliographies, on major topics such as addiction, medical journals, and women in medicine; 5,000 short definitions of terms; brief biographies of over a thousand notable names in the history of medicine, from Dr. Maude Abbott to Dr. Zhivago; and appendices of medical qualifications and abbreviations. Indeed a necessary companion to the standard medical dictionaries.


Need to find the largest cave chamber in France? The name and address of the national caving organization to contact in preparation for your spelunking tour of Australia? The Underground Atlas compiles this sort of information as well as a country-by-country inventory of karst regions in a readable, easily accessible manner. Waltham and Middleton, experienced cavers and leading writers on the underworld experience, have also included a short glossary, about 100 maps, and 38 photos of major caving regions and specific cave systems. A unique basic resource for any library whose patrons have either a scientific or a recreational interest in caves.


Following a 20-page introductory historical overview, O’Hearn provides alphabetically arranged sketches of 186 important Western women scientists born before 1885. Ranging from a few paragraphs to a few pages, they provide professional and family information, a discussion of the woman’s significance, and often a list of works by and about her. An appendix offers brief notes on 26 more 19th-century women in science. The bibliography is in seven sections based on type of work and historical period, and describes works referred to in all the previous sections. A tabular list by scientist’s name, which gives time period, field, and nationality, is followed by a name index to the entire volume. Any patron interested in women’s studies or the history of science should love this authoritative tool.

History and geography


Terms such as antiquarianism, metaphysics, and counterfactual analysis can confuse even the best of students. Here Ritter identifies about 100 key historical concepts, defining them concisely, discussing their origins and the evolution of their meanings, and illustrating them with quotations. An annotated list of references mentioned in the discussion and “Sources of Additional Information” (often including cross-references) round out each four-
Language, literature, and music


Guagua can mean: a) baby (in South America), b) bus (in the Caribbean), c) chili plant (in Cuba), or d) rodent (in Colombia), according to this easy-to-use, up-to-date new bilingual dictionary. Based on the American Heritage Dictionary and the popular Pequeño Larousse Ilustrado, it covers both “pan-Hispanic” and American Spanish usage and has added many technical and commercial words in place of obsolete ones. Helpful features for both languages include sections on grammar and usage, to which entries are keyed; verb tables; abbreviation and pronunciation guides; and synonyms for the translated/defined word in the language of the entry word. British variant spellings appear throughout. High quality paper, good type-face selection, and a binding that lies flat when open make this dictionary a great choice for both public library patrons and high school or college students.


From Prince to Lawrence Welk, from barbershop quartets to sacred pop, no style is neglected in this comprehensive, selectively annotated bibliography of books and articles on Anglo-American pop music published through 1984. While the major portion of the work is devoted to biographical sources and to the genres (folk, country, Cajun, black and its many subdivisions, jazz, and music of the stage and screen), coverage also extends to literary works about such music, discographies, technical aspects, and the song and record industry. The pervasive influence of English and American popular music around the world is evident from the appended list of more than 500 periodical indexes. The author-title-personal subject index facilitates access to the 5,276 individual entries. An invaluable starting point for any research on popular music.

Gathered for evaluation of the 1988 outstanding reference titles at ALA's Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio are, from left to right, Nell Ward, Committee Chair Linda Sammataro, Mary Miller, Sarah Weitstein, Marlene Kuhl, Jack O’Gorman, Mary Larson in black suit, Barbara Wurtzel, and Susan Cohen. Not pictured: Judy Quinlan. (Photo by Art Plotnik.)