

# Finding and Selecting Resources

## Book Reviews

Book reviews are essays that summarize the contents of a book and evaluate its merits. Reviews usually appear in periodicals soon after a book is published.

### General vs. Scholarly Book Reviews

Some reviews are written for the general public or librarians. They are usually short, designed to help readers determine if a book would be worthwhile to read or order for their library. They are in publications like *The New York Times Book Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, *Library Journal*, or popular magazines.

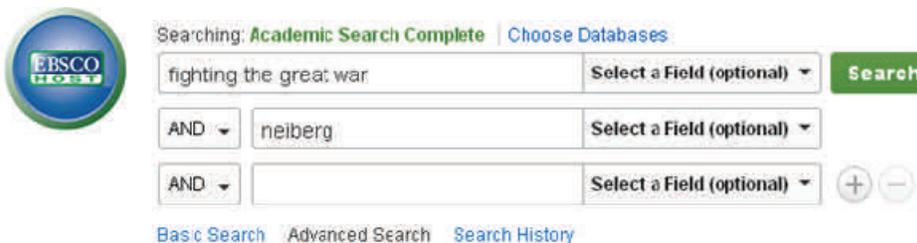
Other book reviews are written by specialists for other specialists or students in a particular academic discipline. They are longer, and critique the author's content, scholarship, and methodology. They are in academic journals, with titles that reflect their specific discipline, like *Journal of Sociology* or *Political Science Quarterly*. Scholarly journals are usually produced by an academic organization or university, and are "peer-reviewed" – articles are checked for accuracy by other experts in the field.

Your professor may want you to use more scholarly reviews. If you are searching the online databases, you can click on the "Scholarly Journals" limiter under "Source Types" (see below).

### Online Sources

You can find references and even the full text of book reviews from many journals and magazines via Richland's online databases. To use this resource:

- Go to the library homepage: <http://jics.richland.edu/ICS/Library>. (If working off-campus, be sure you are logged in with your Richland NetID.)
- Under *Article Databases*, click on *Academic Search Complete*. Click on the Full Text Journals link.
- Select the following general databases on the next page: *Academic Search Complete*, *MAS Ultra*, *MasterFile Premier*, and *Military & Government Collection*. Click the *Continue* button.
- In the search box, enter the title of the book you want reviews of and the author's last name. For example, if you want reviews of *Fighting the Great War: A Global History*, by Michael S. Neiberg, enter:



Searching: **Academic Search Complete** [Choose Databases](#)

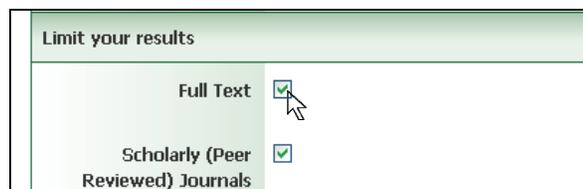
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[Basic Search](#) [Advanced Search](#) [Search History](#)

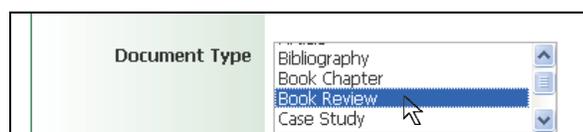
- If you only want results with the full article text available, or from scholarly journals, scroll down and click the appropriate boxes.
- Finally, scroll down to **Document Type** and select **Book Review**. Now you can scroll up and click the green **Search** button.



Limit your results

Full Text

Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals



Document Type

Bibliography

Book Chapter

**Book Review**

Case Study

This search results in two full-text scholarly reviews of the book. The first is from the journal *Historian*, the Summer 2007 issue, and is two pages long. Hold the cursor over the magnify icon,  and you'll see a summary of the article.

You can click on **PDF Full Text** or **HTML Full Text** to see the full text of an article, and then print, email, or save it. Additionally, if you click on  **Add to folder** you can bookmark any number of articles into a folder for later review. If you've created an EBSCOhost account (free), then sign-in, and your folder items will be available any time you login to EBSCOhost in the future.



If you unclick the **Scholarly Journals** limiter, you'll get additional full-text reviews from other publications.

If you unclick the **Full Text** limiter, you'll get references to additional reviews, but without the article text available online. If you want the text of one of these reviews, click on the article title, print the detail page, and bring it to one of the librarians to order a copy for you via Interlibrary Loan or fill out the Article Request form on myRichland to order a copy for you via Interlibrary Loan. Please allow 2 to 14 days to receive materials ordered via Interlibrary Loan.

### Print Sources

The online databases generally cover journal issues dating back to the 1990s at the earliest (depending on the specific journal). If you are looking for reviews of a book published prior to then, you will need to use a print index. It is always a good idea to check both the databases and print indexes to do a thorough search.

The **Book Review Index** is an annual directory of reviews of books and periodicals, indexing reviews from publications from the previous calendar year. The LRC owns all volumes from 1965 to the present. The call number is **REF Z 1035 .A1 B6**. (The most recent volume is shelved with the reference books; previous years are shelved on the south side of the library, near the magazines.)

To search for reviews of a particular book, you need its: 1) title, 2) author/editor, and 3) year of publication. If it has been reprinted, you will need the year it was first published, unless you're looking for a review of a particular newer edition or reprint.

For example, suppose you are looking for reviews of *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*, by Barbara W. Tuchman, first published in 1978.

- Get the 1978 volume of *Book Review Index*, as well as 1979 (reviews may not appear in print until a year or two after the book is published).
- Look alphabetically under the author's last name. In the 1978 volume, you'll find 22 reviews listed, starting with:

<p><b>TUCHMAN, Barbara W</b> - A Distant Mirror Am - v139 - N 11 '78 - p334 Atl - v242 - O '78 - p116 BL - v75 - S 1 '78 - p23 BS - v38 - N '78 - p252 BW - O 8 '78 - pE 1 ...</p>
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Look inside the front cover for the alphabetical "Publications Indexed" list.

You'll find that "Am" stands for *America*. The book was reviewed in volume 139 of November 11, 1978, on page 334. (Later volumes of *Book Review Index* also include an indication of the length of the review, which is important if you're looking for more detailed reviews.)

To get a copy of this review, make a photocopy of the necessary details (title & author, periodical, volume, date and pages), and fill out an Interlibrary Loan Request slip at front desk. Please allow 2 to 14 days to receive materials. When requesting reviews, think about the type of review needed for your assignment. Popular magazines (*Newsweek*, *Time*) and library journals (*Kirkus*, *Publishers Weekly*) will usually have shorter reviews; more detailed articles will be found in academic journals.

### Author Information

In addition to reviews of the book, you may also need biographical information about its author.

For authors in print up to 2004, the *Contemporary Authors (CA)* and *Contemporary Authors New Revision (CANR)* series is the most comprehensive reference work in our library. To use it:

- First look up the author in *Contemporary Authors Cumulative Index* in the reference section (call number: **REF Z 1224 .C6**). Looking up Barbara W. Tuchman, you'll find an entry starting with:

<p>Tuchman, Barbara W(ertheim) 1912 –1989..... CANR-24 Obituary ..... 127 Earlier sketches in CA 1-4R, CANR-3 See also BEST 89:1</p>
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- You will find the most recent biographical sketch in volume 24 of CANR, and a briefer obituary in volume 127 of CA. Looking in the front of the index for the table of abbreviations, you see that biographies can also be found in *Best-sellers*, issue 1 of 1989, among other sources.

The library additionally has other volumes of author biographical sketches (all in reference), including:

Encyclopedia of World Writers (3 vols)	PN 451 .E55 2005
Encyclopedia of British Writers (2 vols)	PR 451 .E55
Notable American Novelists (3 vols)	PS 371 .N68 2008
Notable Latino Writers (3 vols)	PS 153 .H56 N68 2006
American Ethnic Writers (3 vols)	PS 153 .M56 A414 2009