

What was written before 1800?!

Using Welch Library Resources for the ENG2111 Masterpieces of World Literature I Research Paper

The ENG2111 research paper is a foundational paper for Welch College students. Through it, you will learn how to craft a well-researched and well-cited paper, a skill necessary for a successful college career. However, this paper may seem overwhelming, especially if you are more familiar with notable works of literature produced after 1800. Never fear, though! Welch Library has several resources that can help you both choose a topic and find good sources that you will use to support your thesis. We want to help you produce an excellent paper.

In-House Resources

1. Classic and Medieval Literature Criticism

Call Number: 809.01 C614 v.1-20

Poupard, Dennis and Jelena O. Krstovic, eds. *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism: Excerpts from the Criticism of the Works of World Authors from Classical Antiquity through the Fourteenth Century, from the First Appraisals to Current Evaluations*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company, 1988.

You'll find these large brown books downstairs in the stacks. This twenty-volume collection of critical essays on notable works from the earliest literary eras will provide you with important insights into the particular work you have chosen for your research paper. There are several indexes included in the back of Volume 20 that will help you find materials; these indexes cover several other Gale criticism collections so if these particular volumes do not include your work, you may find something in another collection. There are three indexes: author of the work (organized alphabetically by last names), title of the work (organized alphabetically), and literary critic (organized alphabetically by last names).

2. Literature Lover's Companion

Call Number: R 803 L776

Editors of Prentice Hall Press, *Literature Lover's Companion*. Paramus, NJ: Prentice Hall Press, 2001.

Though the entries in this single volume are short, this resource is nonetheless helpful. Each entry includes a brief biographical paragraph about a work's author, but perhaps the most useful feature of each entry is a list of each author's works organized by their years of publication. Use this list to either help you choose a work for your paper or to confirm that the work you have already chosen was indeed written in the assigned time period. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author last name for easy location.

3. The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature

Call Number: R 810.3 E56p Vols. 1-4

Parini, Jay, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

This reference source contains entries on prominent American authors. The first volume features an excellent timeline that highlights literary works and historical events from significant years in United States history, allowing you to more easily pinpoint an American work that was written before 1800.

This encyclopedia also features lengthy entries about certain authors as well as entries about particular periods of American literature (such as “Colonial Writing in America”). The alphabetically arranged table of contents of the entire series at the beginning of volume one allows you to easily locate the author or broad topic you seek. The essays themselves feature general information about the author or topic they address, a list of all works written either by the author or during a particular time, and a list for further reading that can lead you to additional sources for your paper.

4. Scribner’s American Authors and British Authors

Call Numbers: R 928.1 A512w, R 928.2 B862b

Unger, Leonard, ed. *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1974.

Scott-Kilvert, Ian, ed. *British Writers*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1979.

These series feature lengthy and insightful essays about particular authors and their works. Each essay offers information about the authors’ lives, and, perhaps more importantly, a discussion of the author’s works and frequent themes. Thus, these books can be useful tools for developing a solid thesis for your research paper and can also, to a certain extent, function as sources to support your thesis. The bibliography at the end of each entry will lead you to other research sources for your paper. To find your author, consult the index, arranged by authors’ last names, in the final volumes of the original and supplement series. Alternately, you can scan the spines of each volume to see which authors are included therein.

5. Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome

Call Number: R 880.09 A541 Vols. 1-2

Luce, T. James. *Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1982.

Though this collection is similar to the other Scribner’s Authors series, it is particularly valuable because it focuses on a literary era that is featured prominently in EN 2111. This resource features entries on familiar authors such as Homer and Sophocles and on other major and minor ancient writers. Like the American and British Authors series, this series is indexed in the final volume; features essays on the author’s lives, works, and themes; and includes helpful bibliographies.

6. Literature and Its Times

Call Number: R 809.93358 L776 Vol. 1

Moss, Joyce and George Wilson. *Literature and Its Times: Profiles of 300 Notable Literary Works and the Historical Events That Influenced Them*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1997.

The first volume of this series highlights literature from Ancient Times to the American and French Revolutions (Prehistory-1790s). The timeline of notable literary works from the era in the front of the book is especially helpful if you are having trouble choosing a research topic. The essays in volume one, arranged alphabetically by title, highlight each work's historical context and discuss literary aspects of the work, such as themes and symbols. A "further reading" list features more research resources.

7. World Literature and Its Times

Call Number: R 808 W927 Vols. 1-8

Moss, Joyce and Lorraine Valestuk (first three vols.), eds. *World Literature and Its Times*. Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 1999.

Though this series is similar to *Literature and Its Times*, it covers a much broader literary range. Most volumes in the series feature entries on works that were written within the paper's required time frame. These volumes are dedicated to literature from several cultures: Africa, Latin America, Britain and Ireland, Spain and Portugal, the Middle East, and Italy. Volume Eight is dedicated to classical literature from all around the world and is especially suited to EN2111. Like *Literature and Its Times*, each volume contains a helpful timeline of notable historical events and works of literature from the era. Furthermore, each entry is a signed article that could potentially function as a source itself. An index in the back of each volume allows for more focused searching as well. Contents are arranged alphabetically by title, but an alternate table of contents allows you to browse each volume by alphabetically arranged author names.

8. Magill's Critical Surveys: Drama, Long Fiction, Poetry, and Short Fiction

Call Numbers: R 822.00903 C934 Vols. 1-7, R 823 C934 Vols. 1-8, R 811 C934 Vols. 1-8, R 809.3103 C934 Vols. 1-7

Magill, Frank N., ed. *Critical Survey of Drama*. Revised Edition. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1994.

Magill, Frank N., ed. *Critical Survey of Long Fiction*. Revised Edition. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1991.

Magill, Frank N., ed. *Critical Survey of Poetry*. Revised Edition. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1992.

Magill, Frank N., ed. *Critical Survey of Short Fiction*. Revised Edition. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1993.

These multi-volume sets consist of essays about authors, poets, or playwrights in literary history arranged alphabetically by authors' last names. The entries in all four series contain the following information: birth and death dates, principal works in the genre, works in other literary

forms, achievements, biographical data, analyses of works and themes, and a bibliography for further reading and research. Thus, these short essays are a great place for you to start with your research and may help you choose a topic more easily.

9. The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare

Call Number: R 822.33 O98

Dobson, Michael and Stanley Wells, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Shakespeare's plays are major works from this particular period of literary history. Though this book is very much like an encyclopedia, with several short entries about specific Shakespearian terms and people associated with Shakespeare, it also features lengthy entries about the plays themselves. These essays include a brief synopsis of the play and information about its original text; Shakespeare's sources; its artistic features; its critical, stage, and film histories; and major editions of the play that would certainly provide helpful insights for your research paper. Its alphabetically arranged entries make this work very user-friendly.

10. Shakespeare for Students

Call Number: 822.33 S527s Vol. 1-3

Scott, Mark W., ed. *Shakespeare for Students: Book I*. Detroit MI: Gale Research Inc., 1992.

Dominic, Catherine C., ed. *Shakespeare for Students: Book II*. Detroit MI: Gale Research Inc., 1997.

Darrow, Kathy D. and Ira Mark Milne, eds. *Shakespeare for Students: Book III*. Detroit MI: Gale Research Inc., 2000.

This reference work is another excellent resource for you if you have chosen to write about a Shakespeare. The contents page of each volume lists the plays covered and topics addressed. There is also a helpful "How to Get the Most out of This Resource" entry and a chronology of Shakespeare's life and writings at the beginning of each volume.

The entries themselves are full of useful information. Major characters, plot, and themes are introduced at the beginning of the entry, but a much more in-depth treatment of these elements follows the introduction. These essays could serve both as a tool to help you determine your thesis and as a source for your paper. There is also an annotated bibliography of sources for further study at the end of each essay.

11. Ben's Index

Located in the small card catalog across from the second floor copier

Several years ago, a library employee named Ben initiated a project to index the articles in our back issues of *PMLA*, the *Publication of the Modern Language Association*. This journal features peer-reviewed articles about great works of literature, a required source for your paper.

Each card features either an author (listed by last name then first name) or the title of a work. Beneath that is the month and year of the issue in which the article on the topic appears, followed by a page number. Unfortunately, there is no other information on the cards so you will

have to examine the journals themselves, located in the Archives room. However, this extra perusal may help you find a better angle for your thesis.

Online Resources

All of our online resources may be reached from the library's webpage, welchlibrary.wordpress.com; just click on the link in the right-hand column. All databases may be accessed on any computer connected to the campus network, and all databases except JSTOR may be accessed on an off-campus computer with the usernames and passwords provided in your Library Handbook. Please see a librarian if you need another copy.

12. ATLA

If you have chosen to examine a passage of Scripture from a more literary angle for your paper, or if you wish to explore any other religious writing or author, ATLA is certain to have peer-reviewed articles that you can use as sources. This EBSCO database has excellent search tools that will help you locate your topic fairly easily. For example, if you search for a specific passage of Scripture, you will likely receive several full-text articles about the passage. If you find an article that you would like to use that is not available in full-text form, a librarian will be happy to see if she can locate it elsewhere.

13. Gale Literary Sources

This database, a fairly new resource to our library available through the Tennessee Electronic Library, is perfectly suited to this paper. One of the database's most useful tools is the topic finder. Just type the name of the author or the title of your chosen work into the search bar to view a wheel that maps common topics and themes related to the work. Clicking on each of these topics will retrieve several sources for your perusal. You may also use the "term frequency" tool to see how often articles about your topic have been published. An interactive chart allows you to click on the graph to view articles about your topic according to the years in which they were written.

Alternately, you may run a general search for the work on which you are writing. Doing so will yield results that include literary criticism, biographies, topic and literary work overviews, and primary sources. There are also several limiters on the result page that you can use to refine your results.

14. Twayne's Authors Online

Twayne's Authors Series is part of the Gale Virtual Reference Library available through the Tennessee Electronic Library. It is comprised of critical works on notable authors available in digital form. You can search for an author, and, once you have chosen the appropriate title from the results, you can use the clickable chapter headings from the table of contents to access the particular section of the work you need to browse for your research. There is also an index with hyperlinked page numbers for easy browsing that you can use if you are looking for a certain term.

15. JSTOR

JSTOR is a popular online database that features several full-text articles and books. While the college's subscription level to JSTOR features resources that are more historical in nature, you can usually find something related to literature from an older publication. Use the simple or advanced search features to locate articles on your topic. You can also browse a list of publications available through JSTOR to see if we have full-text access to a particular resource. Again, if you are interested in an article that we do not have in full-text form, please ask a librarian if she can find it elsewhere.

Remember

These resources are great places for you to begin researching your paper topic. Keep in mind, though, that you will most certainly need more focused works that are found in our circulating collection. Never hesitate to consult the library's best resources, the librarians, for help. We are happy to help you track down resources and refine your thesis so that you create an excellent paper.