

Contemporary Issues: Researching the Pros & Cons

Reference:

ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES

General Encyclopedias provide an overview or broad outline of a wide range of subjects. *Subject Encyclopedias* and *Dictionaries* are specialized sources for background information and vocabulary in a particular area of interest. Examples are:

General Encyclopedias:

Encyclopedia Americana	[REF] AE 5 .E334
Encyclopaedia Britannica [now online!]	[REF] AE 5 .E333
World Book Encyclopedia [now online!]	[REF] AE 5 .W35

Subject Encyclopedias:

- [Gale Virtual Reference Library](#) [online -- collection of subject encyclopedias & other resources]
- [Oxford Reference Online](#) [online -- dictionaries, encyclopedias, & more]
- [Sage eReference](#) [online collection of specialized encyclopedias]

Look for these other kinds of sources that cover your subject area:

- **Almanacs**
- **Handbooks or Guides**
- **Statistical Sources** (general call number = HA)
- **Quotation Books** (general call number = PN 6000's)
- **New! *iPOLL*** = online source for United States public opinion data covering 1935 – present.

Circulating Materials:

Search the [online library catalog](#) for books related to your topic. You may search by author, title, subject or keyword. Try a *keyword* search to locate *series* such as [Oposing Viewpoints](#) [now online!], *Contemporary Issues*, or *Taking Sides*.

Periodicals:

The term PERIODICAL includes magazines (intended for a wide variety of readers rather than specialists in a particular field), journals (intended for academic or professional readers) and newspapers. The following periodicals are excellent resources for examining current issues:

- [CQ Researcher](#) (full text online as one of the JCCC databases; available on & off campus.)
- [Congressional Digest - A Pro & Con Monthly](#) (current issue on display - JK1 .C65; ask for older issues at the Periodicals Desk.)

INDEXES are tools which help you find periodical material about your subject or by a particular author.

Use **general** indexes that offer coverage of a wide range of subjects such as:

- [Academic OneFile](#) (one of the JCCC databases available on & off campus)
NOTE: Use the **keyword** capability to link your topic with 'editorial' to find opinionated material.
- [LexisNexis Academic](#) (available on & off campus)
Excellent general news, business, & legal topics.
- [Research Library](#) (database offering full text coverage as well as indexing--available on & off campus)
- [Oposing Viewpoints Resource Center](#) (online database including many periodical articles and lots of other material including statistical material, reference resources, and polarized essays; available on & off campus with JCCC ID)

Use subject indexes such as:

- [Health Reference Center Academic](#) (one of the online database for use on and off campus)
- [PsyncARTICLES](#) (full text psychology articles available on and off campus)
- [Criminal Justice Periodicals](#) (full text of 50 journals plus indexing/abstracting of 100 other journals in the field. Available on and off campus)

Web Sites:

Here are a few useful web sites:

- [ProCon.org](#)
Pros & cons of controversial issues.
- [W3 Virtual Library](#)
Coverage of innumerable subject areas.
- [Internet Public Library](#)

Quality information sources; hosted by U. of Michigan

- [Librarians' Index to the Internet](#)Reviewed, cataloged www sites

Carol Campbell, June 2009

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