

## SOURCES

*Cultures, and Contemporary Issues* or the ABC-CLIO Ethnic Groups of the World series are recommended as starting points for ethnic studies research in high school, community college, and undergraduate libraries.—J. Christina Smith, *Anthropology/Sociology Bibliographer, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts*

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***The Oxford Companion to American Politics.*** By David Coates. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 2 vols. acid free \$295 (ISBN 978-978-0-19-976431-0).

This new reference work on American politics offers a collection of 245 essays focusing on American political institutions and “international and domestic economic, social, and cultural conditions” (xiv). Topics cover government institutional structure, concepts, ideologies, movements, and selected laws considered to be particularly important in American politics. Other essay topics cover selected groups and organizations, economic and social issues and policies, and foreign countries and their relationships with the United States. The essays, which include cross references and bibliographies, provide historical background and contemporary description and analysis. The work has a subject index and “topical outline of entries” located at the end of volume 2. Contributors are mainly American and British scholars in political science, international relations, economics, public affairs, sociology, and communications.

The 2001 edition of *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* served as a starting point for the new work and source of many essays. The editors of the new work incorporated entries that they decided could be reprinted or updated. In some cases this means that nearly the exact essay is used in the new book with little or no update to the text and its bibliography. For example the essay “Deregulation” is a reprint, except for 6 words alluding to the financial crisis of 2008, and the bibliography has three references from the 1980s and mid-1990s. This essay could have been updated with information about the deregulation of the financial industry in 1999, and the bibliography could have included more recent references. Also reprinted with little or no variation are essays for “Great Society,” “Federalism,” and “Finance, International.” Reprints may be understandable if this was a new edition of the 2001 work, but the impression is that the new work is completely new until you read the introduction and examine the text.

The wide variety of topics indicates the broad perspective taken in this work on American political discourse related to public policy and philosophy of government. Readers will find essays on issues such as liberalism, conservatism, abortion, health care, marriage and family, child care, charter schools, climate change, immigration, gun control, AIDS, and domestic violence. Also, examples of economic issues covered are topics such as minimum wage, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, business-government relations, Walmart, capitalism, and economic policy since World War II. Aside from two entries on state politics and urban sprawl,

this work does not treat state and local politics in a comprehensive way. The presidents beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt are treated in separate essays. The only other individuals with entries are Martin Luther King, Jr. and Osama Bin Laden. No women have essays, although there is one entry for first ladies.

There is no general essay focusing on US foreign policy in American politics. Essays deal with US relationships with Japan, India, Africa, Pakistan, Russia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Several countries, such as Iran, Israel, both Koreas, and China, have separate essays that focus on political developments with some mention of US relations. There is an essay that focuses generally on human rights and humanitarian concerns.

Overall this new collection serves as a guide to key issues in American politics, but the reliance on many essays and bibliographies written 12 years ago weakens the work even though the majority of the entries are more current. The criteria for selection of topics in foreign relations related to politics are unclear, and the biographical entries beyond the presidents are minimal. Recommended with reservations.—David Lincove, *Professor, History, Political Science, Public Affairs and Philosophy Librarian, Ohio State University Libraries, Columbus, Ohio*

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***A Student Guide to Health: Understanding the Facts, Trends, and Challenges.*** Ed. by Yvette Malamud Ozer. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012. 5 vols. acid free \$268 (ISBN 978-0-313-39305-1). Ebook available (978-0-313-39306-8), call for pricing.

This five-volume online encyclopedia, replicated from the print version, is accessible through ABC-CLIO's e-books interface and consists of 1. Health Basics, 2. Nutrition and Physical Fitness, 3. Sexual Health and Development, 4. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs, and 5. Mental and Emotional Health. The left-hand frame offers a hyperlinked list to each section within each volume. The centered frame, or “reading pane,” displays all text in particular sections, requiring users to scroll to see all the material.

This encyclopedia is designed to provide high school students with factual, authoritative information. Best practices are described and are supplemented by evidence-based advice from health professionals.

The reference is well researched and organized. Each chapter has a list of resources and a glossary. Many Internet resources are hyperlinked to their homepages. Glossary words in the text appear in boldface, but they are not hyperlinked to the glossary. Hyperlinked cross referencing is used sparingly in the glossary sections. The master index entries list the print volume and page numbers for each subject and are hyperlinked to bring users to that section and text page in the online version. Subjects in the text are highlighted in yellow. There are two appendixes. Appendix 1 is a mapping that ties National Health Education Standards to the encyclopedia content. Appendix 2 is a master list of resources consulted.

Unfortunately, the homepage is mainly text-based, which may put off teenagers, especially those with visual learning styles.

Navigation is relatively easy, although some students might have difficulty at first. At the top on the left side is a “Quick Search” box and a drop-down menu for searching within the title, using an author or keyword, or to search across titles. On the left side are green tabs called “About The Book” and “My Bookmarks & Notes.” The first supplies bibliographic information and the second enables students to take, organize, and access notes virtually.

Green tabs at the top are “Home,” “My Bookshelf,” “Help,” and “About.” “My Bookshelf” permits the creation of virtual libraries with quick access to ABC-CLIO references. Librarians and other education professionals should encourage students to explore the “Help” area before using this tool; so they can take advantage of its features. The “Help” area gives succinct information about reading, researching, and navigating. Other options are print, email, cite, dictionary, persistent link option, enlargement of the font sizes, and a page turner. The print and cite features permit citations to be generated in standard styles, and the cite feature permits content to be exported to the online citation organizational tools RefWorks and EasyBib.

This resource will attract many teenagers, because it presents reliable information about reproductive and sexual topics, such as HIV and AIDs, pregnancy, and relationships, about which they often want information. The encyclopedia commendably deals with subjects that other resources might omit or censor. Several contributors are clinical psychologists, who offer comprehensive coverage of issues affecting teens’ mental health, such as bullying, cyber-bullying, and social networking relationships.

The set encourages critical thinking by allowing youngsters to draw their own conclusions. For example, the section entitled “What People Are Saying Teen Opinions” offers answers incorporating multiple perspectives to controversial questions, such as “What are some of the challenges of being a teen parent and trying to finish high school?”

In addition to answering personal questions that high school students may ask, this reference is designed to support high school instruction and curricula, making it suitable for report writing. Therefore, this resource is recommended for all secondary school digital collections.—*Caroline Geck, Library Media Specialist, Newark Public Schools, Newark, New Jersey*

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***Vietnam War: The Essential Reference Guide.*** Ed. by James H. Willbanks. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 341 pages. acid free \$89 (ISBN 978-1-61069-103-1). Ebook available (978-1-61069-104-8), call for pricing.

Moments after first setting eyes on this book I began questioning how it could possibly have scaled-down the broad and very complex topic of the Vietnam War into such a tiny, single-volume “compendium” without having left substantial content behind on the cutting room floor. I was right to

question, as I soon realized that in this particular case, the “cutting room floor” is ABC-CLIO’s *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (1998, 2011), a work from which almost all of the present title’s content derives. And what I mean by “derives” is that the smattering of entries here have been extracted, repackaged, and republished verbatim. I suppose I could stop here by simply recommending that if your library already owns said “full version” of the book, you can pass-up this 2013 Essential iteration, but I won’t. For all the little siblings of the publishing world, I will give this one its due review.

The book opens with an incredibly brief (three pages, one of which contains a large map) “Overview of the Vietnam War,” followed by a series of short essays addressing the “Causes,” “Opposition,” and “Consequences” of the war. Additional essays include: “Communist Strategy,” “The Tet Offensive and the Media,” and “U.S Involvement in Indochina.” Scant as they are, these introductory pieces do at least touch on some of the context-providing topics and themes that are essential to understanding the scope and historical gravitas of the war. The following section—the alphabetized “Reference Entries” comprising the heart of the book—is much less panoramic in its treatment of the subject. A cursory perusal quickly reveals that the emphasis of this work is placed very heavily on how the actual “war” itself was played out; battles, operations, tactics, generals, politicians, policies, etc. Glaring omissions include things like: the antiwar/protest movement, the draft, casualties, public opinion, veterans and PTSD. To be fair, however, I must acknowledge that the essays up front do in fact mention each of these and other bigger picture aspects of the war—“Causes” and “Consequences” contributing the most substance in this regard. There is a short entry on “The Kent State University Shootings”, which is perhaps the closest the book comes to fleshing out the antiwar movement in more detail. The back matter includes five “Primary Source Documents” (This publisher’s “other” Vietnam War reference work also has all of these . . . plus 220 more), a “Chronology” and a decent “Bibliography,” but again, nothing new or unique here.

Admittedly, I am in no way an expert on the subject (editor, James H. Willbanks is) but as a librarian I have worked almost every semester for the past several years with a college course in which students write a research paper related to some—any— aspect of the war. Therefore, it is from this unique perspective that I am experiencing this book, and asking myself, “How useful would it be to students in this class?” My answer, as previously alluded to, would have to be: “Not very.” My library does own the abovementioned *Political, Social, and Military History* as well as *The Vietnam War Reference Library* (Gale, 2001), both as ebooks, and in contrast, this new Essential Reference Guide is a mere skeleton. Perhaps it would be an appropriate reference for high school or middle school students, but really, with at least two more comprehensive, readily available works on the same topic, why sell them short?—*Todd J. Wiebe, Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*