

century brings a fresh twist to this set. The term “author” is given a very wide definition. Novelists, essayists, poets, and dramatists are included, as well as diarists, journalists, critics, columnists, scientists, historians, sports writers, radio and television script writers and political figures. Entries for 520 individuals run 2–3 pages each and are arranged in alphabetical order. Each entry contains major works and dates of publication, an overview, and a photographic portrait. The individual’s life and career is described in the section “Works in Biographical and Historical Context.” The literary devices used by the individual and brief summaries of their major works are discussed in the “Works in Literary Context” section. The “Works in Critical Context” section summarizes critical reception, quoting reviews from major sources.

There are many features that teachers may find useful in developing curriculum. The “Literary and Historical Contemporaries” sidebar lists five or six famous figures prominent during the author’s period of writing. Often, such figures bear no relation to the author whatsoever. For instance, under the entry for Dan Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code* (Bantam, 2003), the following are listed as contemporaries: Barack Obama, Bret Easton Ellis, Courtney Love, Chris Rock, and J. K. Rowling. In general, however, this is a useful feature. Another sidebar, “Common Human Experience,” relates the author’s work to other authors whose writing follows a similar theme. Each entry is concluded with three to five discussion questions and writing activities, and a short bibliography of books and periodical articles pertaining to the author. A full list of works by the author is not included.

Each volume contains a list of contents and a chronology of major events in American history and literature from the exploration of the Northwest Passage in 1576 to the swearing in of President Barack Obama in 2009. Each volume is concluded with a glossary of literary terms used throughout the set, a detailed index, and a nationality/ethnicity index. The general index is an excellent tool for finding authors on the basis of theme, genre, or literary device, and for locating award winners.

This encyclopedia is a vibrant twenty-first-century resource that reflects the incorporation of critical thinking standards in the study of American literature. It will be very useful in support of teacher education programs and college-level literature courses for nonmajors, and as a resource for middle and high school teachers. Recommended for school libraries, large public libraries, and college libraries.—*Lisa Roberts, California State University, Sacramento*

Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature. Ed. by Anne Marie Hacht and Dwayne D. Hayes. Florence, Ky.: Gale, 2009. 4 vols. acid-free \$495 (ISBN 978-1-414-43130-7).

What might students learn from a comparison reading of R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* (1958) to Jean Cocteau’s *The Infernal Machine* (1936)? How might students interpret the novels of Austrian writer Elfried Jelinek with the screenplays of American director David Lynch? World literature resists

definition and enriches understanding of our shared human condition. This first edition is designed for students and aims to provide “a comprehensive view of how an author’s work fits within the context of the author’s life, historical events, and the literary world” (xxi). It consists of multipage bio-critical articles on more than 450 selected authors whose work represents the ancient and modern world, from influential to lesser-known writers to writers whose works have only recent been translated into English. Readers will be introduced to the eighteenth-century haiku poetess Issa, the graphic novelist Satrapi, and the newly discovered Josephina Niggli, among writers from more than fifteen developing countries.

Ordered alphabetically by author, the encyclopedia consists of separate articles that incorporate the author’s essential biography and treat key themes in their most recognized works. Front matter of importance consists of an alphabetical list of authors by volume and entry page. Back matter includes a glossary of literary terms, comprehensive index, and nationality index that allows authors to be found by their host country. Access to content across the four volumes is aided by duplication of front and back matter in each volume.

Articles are laid out in consistent fashion. A picture or photograph of the writer is always included with the biographical introduction. Information is separated by clear headings and organized as “Works in Biographical and Historical Context,” “Works in Literary Context,” “Responses to Literature,” and “Bibliography.” Information written in each section boosts a contextual reading of the author’s life and work. Also useful are synoptic phrases that lead each paragraph, making it easy for students to note important facts. In addition, standout boxes draw the eye and note selected contemporaries as well as creative works that share a major theme. These help build contextual associations. Bibliographies consist of short listings of books, periodicals, and websites. The writing is readable and uniform.

World literature was only recently introduced in literary reference publications. Foremost is the *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century* (St. James, 1999), valuable for its scholarly treatment of authors, inclusion of survey articles about national literatures, and attention to world languages. Its articles on national literature are cross referenced to languages and topical articles, pseudonyms are referenced as part of an author’s essential biography, and the titles of works appear in English next to their literal translation in the native language. The *St. James Reference Guide to World Literature* (2003) is useful in its focus on literatures of underrepresented languages and for its extensive bibliographical coverage of authors. The *Twayne Companion to Contemporary World Literature* (Gale, 2003) is heavy with authoritative scholarship. Text-dense pages and topical treatments are suited more to graduate students and faculty who can negotiate a literature’s cultural, political, and language complexities.

In sum, there is much here to encourage student appreciation of world literature. While the set deserves consideration for its coverage of many lesser-known writers, libraries must weigh in the fact that the larger portion consists

SOURCES

of authors who are widely known and anthologized, with information duplicated in print and online resources, such as Contemporary Authors and Dictionary of Literary Biography (both by Gale). This is still a good choice for libraries serving high school, community college, and undergraduate institutions.—Katharine A. Webb, *Librarian, The Ohio State University, Columbus*

Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health. Ed. by Jacqueline L. Longe. San Francisco: Gale, 2009. 5 vols. acid free \$650 (ISBN 978-414-40383-0).

This source exists to inform readers of the wide variety of topics that affect the aging body. This encyclopedia set was created with the assistance of six advisory board members from the medical community. This first edition consists of five volumes. The entries are listed in alphabetical order. There are more than six hundred entries that cover not just diseases that affect the aging body but also topics outside of medical diagnoses, such as transportation issues, housing options, maintaining mental acuity, the role of caregivers, nutrition and exercise guidelines, and different types of insurance.

This encyclopedia set covers every major body system; these entries constitute more than 50 percent of the material. The major categories included are “Disease and Conditions,” “Tests and Procedures,” “Drugs, Herbs, and Vitamins,” “Nutrition, Exercise, and Diet,” “Recovery and Rehabilitation,” “Professions,” “Devices/Tools,” and “Aging and Senior Issues.” All entries contained in this work are standardized, making finding information easy. The medical entries all include the definition of the condition, a description, a list of symptoms, treatment options, and questions to ask a doctor. The *Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health* also contains more than 370 color photographs, illustrations, and tables.

This work provides ready-reference information for many aspects of senior health. It is very easy to understand and to use. The inclusion of topics outside of medical issues makes this a well-rounded, complete resource for issues relating to the aging body as well as the aging population. This also is a great reference for those caring for members of the aging population.

In comparison to James E. Birren’s *Encyclopedia of Aging* (Elsevier, 2007), the source being reviewed does not contain as much detail. For example, the *Encyclopedia of Aging* devotes more than twelve pages to breast cancer, whereas the *Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health* has just more than six pages on that topic. Further comparison with the same topic shows that Kyriakos S. Markides’ *Encyclopedia of Health & Aging* (Sage, 2007) does not even list breast cancer as an entry but gives it a few paragraphs under the topic “Cancer, Common Types of” (89). In comprehensiveness, the *Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health* appears to fall between these two other works. The *Encyclopedia of Aging* provides more detail and is intended for use by both students and research professionals. The *Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health* was written with ready reference in mind, as entries are brief and offer

more consumer health type information.

Reference departments in public libraries, especially those with a heavily used consumer health department, would benefit from including the *Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health* as part of their collections. This work would also be of use for undergraduates in academic libraries offering majors in the social sciences as a quick reference, or as a starting point for a research paper.—Mina Chercourt, *Unit Leader, Database Maintenance, Grasselli Library and Breen Learning Center, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio*

Great Athletes. Ed. by the Editors of the Salem Press. Hackensack, N.J.: Salem, 2009. 12 vols. \$1,020 (ISBN 978-1-587-65473-2).

Salem Press has produced a noteworthy new reference work in its twelve-volume set, *Great Athletes*. Although its content, coverage, and indexing makes the set a worthwhile addition to most reference collections, it is the great lengths to which the publisher has gone to add value for purchasing libraries that make it stand out. Institutions that purchase the entire set (each volume is available for individual purchase) are given unlimited on-site and remote access to the content online. Purchasing institutions also receive a poster featuring thirty of the athletes profiled in the set. The poster not only promotes the set but points patrons to an online quiz that asks them to identify athletes by their photographs.

These value-added services make good use of mixed-media reference materials, and seem like a response by the publisher to the fact that much of this content is available on free websites. Of course, the true value in any online reference material is bringing authoritative and audience-appropriate content together. *Great Athletes* does just that. It offers entries on more than 1,400 athletes in a variety of sports. The set focuses on sports of interest in the United States. Three volumes are dedicated to Olympic sports, two volumes are dedicated to each football and baseball, another is dedicated entirely to basketball, and significant coverage is provided for golf, tennis, boxing, soccer, racing, and individual sports.

Athletes were selected on the basis of whether their achievements made them household names in North America. Each entry includes a black-and-white photograph (the online version includes color photographs in many cases) and a one-thousand-word essay on the athlete providing a brief overview of his or her early life, the road to excellence, his or her emergence as a champion, and their later life story. Additional readings are provided as well. Tables highlighting major accomplishments also are provided. For the volumes focusing on athletes in team sports, these tables include major career statistics.

The entries are straightforward, concise, and offer a good amount of information for the general reader. They serve as not only a good biographical reference for the athletes covered, but as a good place to get started for more in-depth research. Although the entries do include additional readings, they do not include references. For all the questions surrounding its authority, Wikipedia often does a better job