

SOURCES

political topics. Since there are roughly the same number of articles on political, social, and geographical issues, another fitting subtitle word would be “Geography.”

The nationalities represented in the biographical articles are wide-ranging and more balanced than the themes mentioned in the subtitle. Despite the slightly larger number of biographical articles on Israelis than Palestinians, a neutral tone pervades the text. This neutrality is especially evident in the entry on “Terrorism,” which discusses both Israeli and Palestinian terrorist groups.

The vast array of subjects covered in this encyclopedia is certainly a strength worth noting, along with the helpful charts and detailed maps. As well as supplementing the articles, the charts provide useful background information; for example, “Massacres in the Middle East,” “Decolonization of the Middle East and North Africa,” and “Selected Political Parties of Israel.” Maps serve a similar purpose, and those found within the text offer currency and detail that are lacking in the maps found at the beginning of each volume.

Despite its strengths, there are some areas for improvement. For example, including the detailed chronology in each volume rather than just in volume four would have improved the encyclopedia’s usefulness, especially because some entries, such as “Abu Sharah, Naif,” expect pre-existing knowledge. Another weakness involves irrelevant background information related to American politicians.

In conclusion, the strengths of *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History* far outweigh its weaknesses; it truly is one of a kind. It would be a welcome addition to any undergraduate collection. —Elizabeth A. Young, *Research and Information Literacy Librarian, Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland*

Encyclopedia of the Jazz Age: From the End of World War I to the Great Crash. Ed. by James Ciment. Armonk, New York: Sharpe Reference, 2008. 2 vols. alkaline \$199 (ISBN 978-0-7656-8078-5).

This encyclopedia chronicles one of the most colorful and influential periods of twentieth-century American history, encompassing an era that saw a significant rise in prosperity, women’s suffrage, organized crime, recreational activities, arts and cultural movements, and many other important aspects of society. The work presents a near comprehensive view of the Jazz Age, covering the major themes, movements, personalities, and events. This period has been well covered in the monographic scholarly literature; however, few reference books delve into the same level of detail as this encyclopedia. Excellent exceptions are volumes 2 (1910–19) and 3 (1920–29) of the *American Decades* (Gale, 1995) series. While non-encyclopedic, they rival this work in coverage and treatment of the subject.

The roughly six-hundred-page work contains several sections. There are five easy-to-read introductory essays that provide context and background on topics such as politics, economics, culture, and foreign affairs. There are more than

three hundred alphabetically arranged encyclopedia entries with interesting yet sporadic illustrations. As with the essays, the entries are well written and researched. The editor has made a laudable decision to include topics that have been historically ignored, including coverage of various ethnicities and women. However, there are a few glaring omissions. For example, horse racing is completely ignored as a topic despite its popularity at the time, and Man o’ War, arguably the finest thoroughbred to ever race, is not mentioned. The “Cultural Landmarks” section presents more than one hundred important items from art, literature, and the performing arts of the era.

Helpful features of the work include the “Topic Finder,” which breaks the entries into broad categories. As well, the cumulative index provides easy access to subtopics and personalities that do not have their own entries. The editor has also compiled an extensive bibliography. Although the work provides several access points for researching topics, one missing element is a chronology. Even though a very short period of time is covered, chronologies can often orient unfamiliar readers and provide a clearer context to events and how they may interrelate.

This reference title would be useful for all levels of undergraduate and graduate academic libraries as well as larger public libraries, but could be passed up if the library owns the *American Decades* books.—Brent D. Singleton, *Reference Librarian, California State University, San Bernardino*

Foyle’s Philavery: A Treasury of Unusual Words. Ed. by Christopher Foyle. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 233p. \$15.95 (ISBN 978-0-550-10329-1).

There are dozens of lightweight, recreational dictionaries of unusual or enjoyable words. The reader may choose among dictionaries that are practical, elevating, entertaining, historical, etymological, whimsical, and humorous. Variations on this theme include dictionaries of exotic words derived from personal names, animals, nautical terms, or the writings of William F. Buckley Jr. *Foyle’s Philavery* occupies a place on the spectrum between diversion and self-improvement next to the dictionaries written purely for the enjoyment of word lovers such as *Gallimaufry: A Hodgepodge of our Vanishing Vocabulary* by Michael Quinion (Oxford Univ. Pr., 2006), *The Word Lover’s Dictionary: Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words* by Josefa Heifetz (Citadel, 2000), *The Disheveled Dictionary: A Curious Caper through Our Sumptuous Lexicon* by Karen Elizabeth Gordon (Houghton Mifflin, 1997), and *The Grand Panjandrum and 2,699 Other Rare, Useful, and Delightful Words and Expressions* by J.N. Hook (Collier Bks, 1991). At the opposite end of this spectrum are dictionaries such as *100 Words To Make You Sound Smart*, by the editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries (Houghton Mifflin, 2006) and *The Words You Should Know: 1200 Essential Words Every Educated Person Should Be Able to Use and Define* by David Olsen (Adams Media, 1991).

Christopher Foyle is chairman of the family business that runs the famous Foyle’s bookshop in London. The term

Philavery is an invention that he defines as “an idiosyncratic collection of uncommon and pleasing words” (iii–v). The *Philavery* is very much Mr. Foyle’s dictionary. It grew out of a list of unfamiliar words or usages Foyle encountered in his own reading, supplemented by “new gems—pleasing, interesting, and unusual words, both ancient and modern which attracted my attention in some way and demanded to be remembered” (iii). Happily, Foyle has a broad range of reading interests and catholic tastes when it comes to words he finds pleasing. The dictionary holds approximately 1,170 words with a good variety of etymological origins. He includes words that are common but pleasing (“blurt”), nonsensical (“friscajoly”), archaic (“leman”), scientific (“dasyphyullous”), poetical (“synecdoche”), religious (“Muggletonian”), rhetorical (“paradiastole”), philosophical (“ontology”), and a little naughty (“priapic”). Foyle’s Englishness comes through in definitions of Americanisms and even more in his occasional notes, which include anecdotes about the author’s home in a converted abbey (see “decollate”) and the seventeenth-century thatched stone cottage he used to own in Wiltshire (see “rhabdomancy”). English spellings occur in only a few of the definitions and should not be distracting to American readers. The English tone of Foyle’s commentary is well matched by the book’s attractive design, with its William Morris end papers and cover decorations, its gold lettered spine bound in red cloth, and its sewn-in ribbon to mark the reader’s place.

The definitions seem well researched. Scanning the familiar words I discovered only a few odd definitions and only one that I would judge a mistake; the description of a “monstrance” as “a large open or transparent cup” is at odds with all the other dictionaries I consulted. Comparing a random sampling of forty-five obscure words to the *Oxford English Dictionary* showed that Foyle’s definitions are in good accord with this authority. The most common discrepancy is when Foyle emphasizes or restricts himself to a sense the *OED* lists as a secondary meaning. Only one of the sample words could not be found in the *OED*: “haptodysphoria,” a medical term that Foyle defines as “an unpleasant sensation felt by some people in response to certain tactile sensations.” It is clear that Foyle has consulted a variety of sources and authorities and he has produced a highly enjoyable dictionary. The only substantive criticism of the *Philavery* is that Foyle has chosen to include pronunciations and derivations only where he feels they are necessary or interesting. Similar dictionaries include these for all terms, allowing the reader to determine when they are necessary or interesting. *Foyle’s Philavery* is suitable for school, public, and academic libraries.—Alistair Morrison, *Product Manager, Lexis-Nexis, MLS candidate, University of Maryland*

The Gale Encyclopedia of Diets: A Guide to Health and Nutrition. Ed. by Jacqueline Longe. New York: Gale, 2008. 2 vols. \$415 (ISBN 978-1-4144-2991-5).

Coronary heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity continue to increase in many Western countries; and, in the United States, coronary heart disease is the leading cause

of death for both sexes. Many medical experts attribute the rise in these diseases to a sedentary lifestyle and the modern Western diet that is based on unhealthy fats, processed foods, and an over-reliance on fast food.

At the same time, Western societies are youth-obsessed, and slenderness and physical fitness are usually associated with youth and beauty. Dieting, good nutrition, and the maintenance of health preoccupy the citizens of Western countries. Consumers are constantly bombarded by advertisements for diets and nutritional products that claim to offer immediate results. These consumers may find it challenging to locate accurate and truthful information about these items. In fact, these individuals’ main sources of information may be marketers and media messages.

This well-designed and comprehensive reference, which contains 275 signed articles, provides objective information in contrast to biased sources. All articles furnish good overviews, and they are good places to start research because they provide sections for definitions, descriptions, resources, and key terms. Cross-referencing includes capitalizing in the text of all topics that are main entries. The work also contains approximately two hundred color illustrations.

The resource provides information for basically three types of topics: special and popular diets, nutrition basics, and health. It will assist individuals to better understand relationships between nutrition and medical conditions. For example, the articles for specific diets, especially controversial diets, discuss precautions, risks, and questions to ask physicians. The articles focusing on nutrition basics have sections for precautions, interactions, aftercare, complications, and parental concerns; and the health articles discuss nutrition, dietetic concerns, and prevention.

Weight loss programs endorsed by celebrities such as Dr. Phil, Richard Simmons, and Suzanne Somers are covered, as well as popular plans like Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers. There is even an entry for the Subway diet, the diet associated with Jared Fogle, a loyal customer of the Subway fast-food chain. Many other entries focus on the foods and eating patterns of specific groups, such as adolescents, African-Americans, Central Americans and Mexicans, and men.

Jacqueline Longe, the editor, has edited similar encyclopedias for Thomson Gale, such as *Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine* (2006), *Gale Encyclopedia of Cancer* (2005), and *Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine* (2004). Although there is some overlap in topic coverage between works, the articles in this newest encyclopedia have been totally updated and are often written by new authors. Besides being an excellent resource to answer personal questions, this set will be useful for exploring a variety of research topics. Therefore, this resource is being recommended for all public and academic consumer health collections.—Caroline Geck, *School Library Media Specialist, Newark Public Schools, New Jersey*

Handbook to Life in the Medieval World. By Madeleine P. Cosman and Linda G. Jones. Facts On File Library of World History. New