

How to...

FIND BOOK REVIEWS

1. **WHAT IS A BOOK REVIEW?**

A book review is an article that describes and evaluates a book after its publication. Popular books may be published and reviewed simultaneously. More scholarly reviews may appear months or years later. This guide provides a list of sources that provide citations to book reviews. It is helpful to have the complete title, author, and date of publication when searching for reviews.

Book reviews appear in many places. Scholarly journals, newspapers, magazines and professional journals all publish book reviews. Depending on where they appear, reviews can be written by academics, journalists, writers, librarians or practitioners in a field.

2. **HOW DO I FIND A REVIEW?**

A book is usually reviewed in the year it is published, or the next year. In order to locate reviews, you must know the following pieces of information about your book:

1. author
2. title
3. original publication date

CAUTION: one book can have several "publication" dates -- e.g. new editions etc.

When using a **print index**, look up the author of the book, then for the book title. Entries for the individual book reviews are listed below the book publication info. Each entry will give the title of the journal in which the book review appears, the volume and issue of the journal, the page numbers, then the date.

Although the indexes all vary slightly in format, each will provide you with a complete citation (name of the journal, volume number, date and page) for locating the review. Here is a sample citation from Book Review Index. It lists three reviews of Margaret Atwood's novel *Life Before Man*.

e.g. Atwood, Margaret
Life Before Man
Bks in Can. 8:10-11 O' 79
Maclean's 93:66, 68 O' 15 '79
Q & Q 45 no 12:31 '79

When searching an **electronic database**, search using the title and/or author of the book. Set the 'Document Type' or 'Article Type' to **Book Review**. The database will display each book review as a separate listing. Note the reviewer, journal title, volume number, issue number, page number(s), and date. If the journal is part Calvary Baptist Theological Library's holdings, this will be indicated by a green text label. (If a 'Remote Text' link appears on the record, you can view and print a copy of the review online.)

Once you have located the review, search the online catalog for the journal in which the review appears. Search by the title of the journal. Click on the title link on your results page to see the full record and details holdings held at the library. If you must have this journal and the library does not have it its holdings in print, microfilm or online, please fill out an online ILL request.

⇒ **BOOK REVIEW INDEXES AND PERIODICALS**

This is not a comprehensive list but only a sampling of sources available at Nichols Library.

The Booklist. Current issue on browsing shelf; current year in bindery prep; past issues in bound serials; library has 1955 – present.

Book Review Digest

Located in Nichols Reference. Call Number: **Z1219 .C95**. Covers 1905 – present; Search by author name.

Book Review Index

Located in Nichols Reference. Call Number: **Z1035.A1 B6**. Covers 1965 – present; Search by author name.

Choice. Current issue on browsing shelf; current year in bindery prep; past issues in bound serials; library has 1985– present.

Kirkus Reviews. Located in bound serials—library has 1973-1986.

New York Review of Books. Located in serials office—microfiche; library has 1964-1975

New York Times Book Review Index

Located in the Nichols Serials Office--microfiche, Call number Z1007.N48. Library has 1986 – present; Search by title or author name. A searchable online index is also available for the years 1981-present, at <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/review/index.html>.

Publishers Weekly. Current issue on browsing shelf; current year in bindery prep; past issues in bound serials; Library has 1998 - present.

⇒ **PERIODICAL INDEXES AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AS SOURCES OF BOOK REVIEWS**

Academic Search Premier: Most useful for books published after 1990. Search for the title of the book, and under Refine Search, choose Document Type "Book Review".

ATLA Religion Database (1949 -): Contains more than 446,000 book review citations.

Book Review Digest Plus: Brings together book reviews from all the Wilson databases with coverage back to 1983.

Expanded Academic Index ASAP from Infotrac/Gale: Covers 1980-present. Contains citations and some full-text reviews from popularly and scholarly journals. Search for the book title or author name, along with the keyword "review".

Humanities Fulltext: Provides book reviews from journals indexed back to 1984.

Humanities Index: Located in Nichols Reference, library has 1974-2006; Call Number: **AI3 .H85**

JSTOR: For books published from the 1800's through the early 2000's; Search for the title of the book, and narrow your search to article Type "Review"

LexisNexis Academic Universe: Most useful for books published after 1990, this is an index to hundreds of newspapers and trade and professional journals. To find book reviews follow the following steps:

Within LexisNexis select "Guided News Search"

- In the first pull down menu select "Arts & Sports News"

- In the second pull down menu select "Book, movie, music and play reviews."
- Adjust the time frame to cover the publication date of the book.
- Type in the author's name and a few words from the title.

Literary Reference Center: Contains approximately 500,000 book reviews.

Literature Resource Center: Books from all time periods; Search by Title. Once in your search results, choose the "Literary Criticism, Articles, & Work Overviews" tab. Select the "Article" sub-section, under the main tabs. Scan article descriptions for those listed as "Book Review".

MasterFILE Premier: Contains nearly 5,000 Magill's Book Reviews

Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature: Book reviews are listed separately at the back of each index; located in Nichols Reference. Call Number: **AI3 .R48**

⇒ **SPECIAL BOOK REVIEW SOURCES**

Choice reviews in women's studies, 1990-96. Nichols Reference; Call Number: **HQ1180 .C56 1997**

Christianity in modern theology. Kearley Special Collection; Call Number: **BT1110 .V3 1955**

The Civil War bookshelf : 50 must-read books about the War Between the States. Nichols Circulating; Call Number: **Z1242 .W66 2001**

Critical review of books in religion. Nichols Circulating; Call Number: **BL1 .C75 1988**

Index to critical film reviews in British and American film periodicals : together with: Index to critical reviews of books about film. Nichols Reference; Call Number: **Z5784.M9 B64**

Modern Romance literatures. Nichols Reference; Call Number: **PN813 .C8**

Putting up with the Russians : commentary and criticism, 1947-84. Nichols Circulating; Call Number: **DK274 .C697 1984**

Required reading [computer file]: sociology's most influential books. Netlibrary

⇒ **FINDING BOOK REVIEWS ON THE WEB**

Book reviews on the Web are good examples of the pluses and minuses of Web content. You may find a terrific review written by a knowledgeable reviewer or you may find a review by a nut, and sometimes it is hard to tell because there are few if any clues to help you decide. To test the accuracy of a review on the Web you will want to find published reviews that can be compared with the insights of the Web review.

There are two basic approaches to finding a review on the Web—(1) Use Google and enter the author's name and the title of the book; (2) Use Amazon.com. Also try ACQWEB'S Directory of Book Reviews on the Web: <http://www.acqweb.org/bookrev.html>.

Here are some specific sites for book reviews:

Booklist—also has an online site: http://www.booklistonline.com/?gclid=CKPzxOKh6IwCFRkVgQodz0_7yg

NPR—provides book reviews: <http://www.npr.org/templates/topics/topic.php?topicId=1032>

Yahoo! Directory—contains book reviews: <http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Literature/Reviews/>

Library Journal.com—also provides book reviews: <http://www.libraryjournal.com/community/Book+Reviews/47112.html>