

LS 507: Information Resources and Services

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Question Set 1: Bibliographic Sources, Catalogs, Indexes, Abstracts, and Databases

What I'm looking for:

As your instructor, I am more concerned about the process by which you approach a reference question than by your mastery of specific sources. For each question, I would like you to narrate your process. This should include:

- The information you identified from the question
- The information needed to answer the question
- The type of reference source you believed likely to provide the answer (and why)
- ALL the sources consulted in looking for the answer (including unsuccessfully, this is the "process" I'm talking about). A short citation is appropriate for these "misses" (e.g., Ulrich's, Balay, *Magazines in Libraries*)
- The final answer, and where it was located (with proper citation)
- Any thoughts on the process. Did the ease of finding the information surprise you? The difficulty? The location of the answer?

Other specific instructions:

- DO NOT START WITH GOOGLE or another web search. Part of the process is using the materials we're currently studying. This may seem artificial, and in fact, is, but this is reference education and not real-life reference work.
- Use sources listed in our textbooks (Katz, ch. 3-6; Cassell & Hiremath, chs. 4 and 8) or those discussed in class as a point of departure.
- Bear in mind that the final answer may be located in an item we haven't yet, or won't study. Sources and skills covered in this assignment pertain to bibliographies, catalogs, indexes, etc. In other words, reference sources that lead to something.
- Although your final submission will be the result of collaborative effort, your first pass at this assignment should be on your own.
 - If you identify a potential source of an answer for one of the questions but you do not have access to that source, it's all right to wait until getting back together with your group to see if one of the other members can check that source.
- It is perfectly acceptable for you to ask library staff for assistance with the "mechanics" of the library: searching their catalog, item location, etc., but you should not seek their assistance with the content of the collection. For example, asking "what's the best way to search your catalog for biographies?" is acceptable; asking "where can I find information about RQ?" is not.
- If library staff ask for clarification on this, feel free to share these instructions and/or my contact information with them.
- Treat the reference staff and the collection of the library you use with respect. You may want to ask the staff if they'd prefer for you to re-shelve materials or leave them on tables. You'd be surprised how many library staff members have strong opinions about this!

Question Set 1

1. My collection development teacher keeps talking about the journal "RQ", but the library doesn't have a current subscription. Where can I find it?
2. My nephew's third grade class did a unit on stamps last year, and now he's hooked. I'd like to get him a subscription to a stamp-collecting magazine for his birthday. Any suggestions?
3. My husband's employer is moving him to the Research Triangle. I work in newspaper advertising and would like to send résumés to some major papers in the area. Where should I start?*
4. I was visiting my mother-in-law in North Alabama last weekend. We were sitting outside and she told me that she had been seeing more snake doctors than usual this spring. Even though I'm from up north I can usually figure out what she's talking about, but I'm at a loss for this one. Can you recommend a source for me to look in?*
5. My brother is opening a nursery and I told him I'd find a good, recent book with information specifically about trees, preferably with illustrations.
6. Can you suggest a couple of places for me to look for women's civil war-era correspondence and personal writing?
7. Find a current bibliography of the author Toni Morrison's books (hint: she published more than one book in 2008).
8. Find the title of a SLIS faculty member's dissertation.
9. My eighth-grader needs to find an article about the Supreme Court's involvement in the outcome of the 2000 presidential election.
10. I'd like to read some articles about bookmobiles from the 1930's. Please find me some citations.
11. I need an obituary for Frederick Douglass.
12. I'd like to find primary source material about life in the U.S. Colonies. Please name 3 possible sources.
13. What was the theme and month of 1996's All-India Library Conference?
14. I need an article that appeared in *Southern Exposure* sometime in the 1980's. Where should I look?
15. Where can I find an overview of the Information Retrieval industry? What's its SIC Code? Does it have a NAICS code?
16. I have to read a poem at my Great-Step-Uncle's Brother's funeral and I have no idea where to look. How can I identify a poem that would be, you know, "appropriate for the occasion"?
17. Nicholson Baker writes a lot about libraries and the move away from traditional sources and services. I'd like to read an essay by him on the topic. Has he published anything on the topic in library-related journals?
18. In Chicago, the toniest African-American neighborhood of the late 19th and early 20th century was called Bronzeville. The area fell on hard times in the latter half of the 20th century but is experiencing a renaissance of late. Can you find me a local (to Chicago) article about Bronzeville's comeback?
19. Find a citation for a review of the book *Notorious in the Neighborhood*. How many libraries within 20 miles of your home own this book?
20. Find an article that cites a member of the University of Alabama SLIS faculty.

*You may not have access to a reference work that includes the answer to this question; identifying likely sources is adequate.