

A Short Guide to Research

Geneva Libraries

The most important resources for your research in English studies are the libraries in Geneva. The English Library at the Bâtiment des Philosophes holds over 25,000 volumes, including important reference works such as the *Reference Guide to English Literature*, *A Reference Guide for English Studies*, or *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. There are many works of criticism and scholarship available on the library shelves for each of the major authors. Moreover, the Bibliothèque de Genève (which used to be called 'Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire', short 'BPU') holds thousands of additional volumes dealing with English studies. While many books at the Bibliothèque de Genève need to be ordered (see below), others can be freely accessed at the Salle Saussure (enter via the ground floor) or at the Salle de lecture, where a number of English reference works are available on the 'galerie'.

Online Catalogues and Card Catalogues

The most convenient way of finding the books and articles you are looking for is the online library catalogue:

<http://opac.ge.ch/gateway>

This catalogue gives you access to most books in Geneva. If a book you're looking for is at the Bibliothèque de Genève, you can order it online by means of your library card number and password. This saves you having to fill in a slip and having to wait for half an hour or so until the book arrives.

Note, however, that records for many books published prior to 1983 which are in the English Library are not accessible online. For these books, there is a card catalogue in the English Library. Likewise, the online catalogue does not provide records for most books in the Bibliothèque de Genève which were published before 1960. For these books too, there is a card catalogue, this one at the Bibliothèque de Genève.

Interlibrary Loan

Many books and articles which are not available in Geneva (nor online, see below) can be obtained through interlibrary loan. The online catalogue of RERO, the Library Network of Western Switzerland, gives you access to the holdings of the university libraries in Fribourg, Lausanne, and Neuchâtel as well as a number of other libraries:

<http://opac.rero.ch/gateway>

Once you have your library card and a password, you can place orders online. Books which you order online, to be picked up in the English Library, can be borrowed for free. Make sure you order them via the English Library though and not via the Bibliothèque de Genève – if you do the latter, they cost CHF 3 to 8 per volume!

Articles can also be ordered by means of the online interlibrary loan service, but, contrary to books, these orders are processed by the Bibliothèque de Genève and are not for free. The current rate is CHF 8 for the first 20 pages, plus a small amount for every additional page.

You can try to locate books and articles which are not available in Western Switzerland via the following online catalogue which gathers records of books in libraries throughout Switzerland:

<http://www.informationsverbund.ch/>

For articles in periodicals which you can't get hold of in Western Switzerland, use the Portail suisse des périodiques:

http://ead.nb.admin.ch/web/swiss-serials/psp_fr.html

Articles Available Online

Before you order an article through interlibrary loan, make sure it isn't available online for free! The University of Geneva subscribes to an increasing number of periodicals which can be conveniently accessed from any computer that is connected to the University's network. Jstor and Project Muse are presently the most important electronic journal archives to which the University subscribes, but there are a number of others too, and more may follow. To find out whether a journal is available online, you should check via the University's online 'Répertoire des périodiques électroniques':

<http://resolver.rero.ch/unige/az>

Internet Research Skills

While we encourage students to make intelligent use of electronic resources, you also need to be aware of the dangers and pitfalls awaiting you in cyberspace. To develop your internet research skills, we recommend:

Internet Detective: Wise Up to the Web, <http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective/> (a web-based tutorial teaching Internet research skills)

Other Online Resources

Other important resources for English studies are increasingly available online, either by subscription or for free. Here are some of these resources:

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED): <http://dictionary.oed.com/>, the most authoritative dictionary of the English language, with plenty of information not only about the meaning of words, but also about their pronunciation, spellings, etymology, and past and present usage. You are encouraged to use this resource throughout your studies! The dictionary is also available in book form at the English Library.

Modern Language Association International Bibliography (MLAIB): http://www-md6.csa.com/ids70/advanced_search.php?SID=1144fb921ad0e65db651bd4946e485ce,

provides a classified listing and subject index for books and articles published on modern languages, literatures, folklore, and linguistics.

Many databases can be accessed via the University's online repertory of electronic resources: <http://www.unige.ch/biblio/chercher/bddic.html>.

These include:

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB):

http://www.oxforddnb.com/subscribed/?_fromAuth=1 (the ODNB is also available in book form at the salle de lecture of the Bibliothèque de Genève)

AustLit: the Resource for Australian Literature, <http://www.austlit.edu.au/>

Oxford Reference Online: The Concise Companion to English Literature:

http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t54

Oxford Reference Online: The Concise Oxford Companion to American Literature:

http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t53

Oxford Reference Online: The Concise Oxford Companion to Literary Terms:

http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t56

All the following resources can be accessed freely from any computer with an internet connection:

Middle English Dictionary: <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/med/> ('a comprehensive analysis of lexicon and usage for the period 1100-1500, based on the analysis of a collection of over three million citation slips, the largest collection of this kind available'; fully searchable; the dictionary is also available in book form at the English Library)

LOOK INSIDE!: The 'LOOK INSIDE!' function of amazon.com (www.amazon.com) allows you to access important parts of many recently published scholarly books. If you are unsure whether a book contains material of interest of you, it is often convenient to check first with this function rather than to order the book from a library: the 'table of contents' and the 'index' give you a good idea of what the book does and does not deal with, and the search function allows you to access several pages of text before and after the keyword you are looking for.

Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.com/> (allows you to search and access parts of scholarly books)

Google Book Search: <http://books.google.com/> (allows you to search an increasing number of books, many of which can be accessed in their entirety)

Web Gallery of Art: <http://www.wga.hu/index.html> ('a virtual museum and searchable database of European painting and sculpture of the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods (1100-1850), currently containing over 17.300 reproductions', with commentaries on pictures and biographies of artists)

The British Library Online Catalogue, <http://www.bl.uk/> (bibliographical information about 13 million books and 920,000 journal and newspaper titles; many articles can be ordered or downloaded directly, though the service is so expensive that it can hardly be recommended)

The Library of Congress Online Catalogue, <http://catalog.loc.gov/> (contains approximately 14 million records representing books, serials, manuscripts, and so on)

The English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), <http://estc.bl.uk/> (provides bibliographical information for over 460,000 items published between 1473 and 1800, mainly in Britain and North America, but not exclusively, in English from the collections of the British Library and over 2,000 other libraries)

Finally, a note about *Wikipedia* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>), the free online encyclopedia which anyone can edit: students need to be aware of the limitations of this resource. Note, in particular, *Wikipedia's* own disclaimer about its validity (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:10_things_you_did_not_know_about_Wikipedia):

We do not expect you to trust us. It is in the nature of an ever-changing work like Wikipedia that, while some articles are of the highest quality of scholarship, others are admittedly complete rubbish. We are fully aware of this. We work hard to keep the ratio of the greatest to the worst as high as possible, of course, and to find helpful ways to tell you in what state an article currently is. Even at its best, Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, with all the limitations that entails. It is not a primary source. We ask you not to criticize Wikipedia indiscriminately for its content model but to use it with an informed understanding of what it is and what it isn't. Also, as some articles may contain errors, please do not use Wikipedia to make critical decisions.

What this means for students is that while Wikipedia can occasionally be a starting point for research, it must never be an end-point: it is okay to use Wikipedia when thinking through ideas or writing (when turning to other sources might be time-consuming and break the rhythm of thought), but any information found must be corroborated by another, authoritative, source, and the citation in the final paper must be of the authoritative source.

Bibliographies for English Studies

Apart from the online *Modern Language Association International Bibliography (MLAIB)*, which is mentioned above, there are several other important bibliographies in English studies, available in book form:

Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (ABELL), available from the Bibliothèque de Genève (BGE Salle de lecture, galerie, 820.16, BPU AA 3117) (one of the most important bibliographical sources for English studies, which aims to list annually all scholarly articles, books and reviews concerning English language and literature and related topics published anywhere in the world, and in any language)

The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, 5 vols., ed. F. W. Bateson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1941-57), at the English Library

The Bibliography of American Literature, 9 vols., ed. Jacob Blanck (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955-91), at the English Library

The Year's Work in English Studies, available from the Bibliothèque de Genève (BGE Salle de lecture, galerie, 820.16, BPU HGC 1439)

The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory, available from the Bibliothèque de Genève (BGE Magasin 3, BPU HGC 1439 A)

Annotated Bibliography for English Studies (ABES), currently not available in Geneva