

# BEST REFERENCE BOOKS 1970-1980

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Titles of Lasting Value Selected from  
American Reference Books Annual

Edited by  
Susan Holte  
and  
Bohdan S. Wynar

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**Libraries Unlimited, Inc.  
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# INTRODUCTION

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*Best Reference Books 1970-1980* provides a selection of 920 reference titles determined by the editors to be of lasting value to libraries of all types. Works appearing in this selection include those of a specialized nature, which will be of particular value to larger libraries, as well as those of wider appeal, which will be useful to smaller as well as large and medium-sized libraries. This volume was designed to be used as a selection tool for existing libraries looking for gaps in their collections and for new libraries just beginning to build a reference collection.

These titles were selected from 12 volumes of *American Reference Books Annual*, the comprehensive annual reviewing service for reference books published in the United States. The 12 volumes of ARBA published since 1970 have provided reviews of a total of 20,553 titles. Reference books reviewed in ARBA include dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories, bibliographies, guides, concordances, atlases, and other types of "ready reference" tools, as well as foreign reference titles that have an exclusive distributor in the United States. Government documents and reprints are reviewed in ARBA on a highly selective basis. As a matter of editorial policy, the following categories of reference books are not reviewed in ARBA: reference titles of less than 48 pages; books published by vanity presses; those produced by the author as publisher; and certain types of reference materials published by library staffs for internal use. With a few exceptions, serial publications have been excluded from *Best Reference Books*, as well as travel guides, and, in the area of literature, reference titles that deal with individual authors. These editorial decisions were made in order to keep this volume to a manageable size and thus make it more useful to smaller libraries.

The first edition of *Best Reference Books*, published in 1976, presented a selection of 818 reference titles covering the years 1970 to 1976. All titles included in the first edition have been reevaluated, and, if necessary, revised for this new edition; a total of 471 titles from the first edition have been retained and 449 new titles were added. A small number of titles published in 1969 which in our judgment represent substantial contributions to the literature have been included in this edition.

Reviews for the titles included in this volume were prepared by 290 subject specialists throughout the United States and Canada who review for ARBA. Editorial notes have been added to many of these reviews to indicate new editions, added volumes, other changes since the original review was published, as well as additional titles that may prove useful. Many reviews have been re-edited or completely rewritten to bring the information up to date and to reflect a title's value in view of more recent publications in that subject area. Reviews signed by two contributors are in most cases composite reviews, which were prepared from two reviews pertaining to two different editions or two separate volumes of a particular work. Unsigned reviews were written by the editors. Complete bibliographic and ordering information is provided for each title. Prices for all titles have been updated to December 1980, and those citations lacking price information are presumed to be out of print. References to reviews published in periodicals (e.g., *Library Journal*, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, etc.) are appended to the reviews.

Although this is a selection of "best reference books," critical comments provided in the original ARBA reviews have been retained. Thus, this volume follows the same policy as ARBA, providing critical appraisals of the titles, since even superior works may be deficient in one respect or another. In many cases, the reviews evaluate and compare a work in relation to other titles of a similar nature.

We wish to express our gratitude to the many ARBA contributors whose reviews appear in *Best Reference Books*. The contributors and their affiliations are listed on the pages following this introduction. We would also like to thank the following members of the Libraries Unlimited staff for contributing their talents to this volume: Judy Caraghar, Mary Alice Deveny, Beverley Hanson, Janet Littlefield, Robynn Moon, Melissa Mullins, Louise Stwalley, and Stephanie Van Bogart.

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# JOURNALS CITED

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## FORM OF CITATION

BL  
Choice  
C&RL  
JAL  
LJ  
RQ  
SLJ  
WLB

## JOURNAL TITLE

Booklist  
Choice  
College & Research Libraries  
Journal of Academic Librarianship  
Library Journal  
RQ  
School Library Journal  
Wilson Library Bulletin

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

INTRODUCTION .....	xv
CONTRIBUTORS .....	xvii
JOURNALS CITED .....	xxiv

## 1—GENERAL REFERENCE WORKS

Bibliography .....	1
Bibliographic guides, 1; National and trade bibliographies: United States, 4; Great Britain, 7; other countries, 8	
Periodicals and Serials .....	11
Publishing and Bookselling .....	15
Dictionaries, 15; Directories, 15; Price guides, 17; Copyright, 18	
Encyclopedias .....	19
Directories .....	21
Handbooks .....	24
Abbreviations .....	28
Alternative Information Sources .....	29
Government Publications .....	29
Style Manuals .....	34
Biography .....	35
Bibliographies, 35; Indexes, 35; International, 39; United States, 41; Foreign countries, 42	

## 2—LIBRARY SCIENCE

General Works .....	48
Bibliographies .....	48
Dictionaries and Encyclopedias .....	49
Directories .....	51
Handbooks .....	54
Periodicals .....	58
Selection Aids .....	59
General, 59; College libraries, 61; School libraries, 62	
Biography .....	65

## 3—SOCIAL SCIENCES AND AREA STUDIES

Social Sciences .....	66
Bibliographies, 66; Encyclopedias, 67	
Area Studies .....	67
Comprehensive works, 67; Africa, 68; Asia: comprehensive works, 70; China, 70; India, 71; Australasia, 72; Canada, 73; Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, 73; Great Britain, 75; Latin America, 76; Middle East and North Africa, 77; United States, 79	

**4—HISTORY**

<b>Archaeology</b> .....	81
<b>World History</b> .....	83
General works, 83; Atlases, 84; Bibliographies, 86; Chronologies, 86; Encyclopedias, 87	
<b>United States</b> .....	90
General works, 90; Atlases, 90; Bibliographies, 92; Dictionaries and encyclopedias, 95; Directories, 96; Indexes, 98; Biography, 99	
<b>Africa</b> .....	99
<b>Asia</b> .....	100
<b>Canada</b> .....	102
<b>Germany</b> .....	102
<b>Great Britain</b> .....	103
<b>Italy</b> .....	105
<b>Latin America</b> .....	106
<b>Russia</b> .....	106

**5—ETHNIC STUDIES**

<b>Comprehensive Works</b> .....	108
<b>Individual Groups</b> .....	110
Blacks, 110; Jews, 113; Native Americans, 115; Puerto Ricans, 115; Slavic Americans, 116	

**6—GENEALOGY AND HERALDRY**

<b>Comprehensive Works</b> .....	117
<b>Genealogy</b> .....	117
General works, 117; United States, 118; Great Britain, 118	
<b>Heraldry</b> .....	119
<b>Names</b> .....	121

**7—POLITICAL SCIENCE**

<b>General Works</b> .....	123
<b>Dictionaries</b> .....	123
<b>Handbooks</b> .....	124
<b>U.S. Government</b> .....	126
Dictionaries and encyclopedias, 126; Federal government, 127; State government, 129; Local government, 130; Biography, 131	
<b>Communism</b> .....	131
<b>Fascism</b> .....	133
<b>International Relations</b> .....	133



**8—LAW**

<b>General Works</b> .....	135
<b>Bibliographies</b> .....	135
<b>Dictionaries</b> .....	136
<b>Sources and Documents</b> .....	137
<b>Biography</b> .....	138

**9—GEOGRAPHY**

<b>Atlases</b> .....	140
World, 140; United States, 143; Africa, 144; Canada, 145; Central America, 145; China, 145	
<b>Bibliographies</b> .....	146
<b>Dictionaries</b> .....	149
<b>Directories</b> .....	150
<b>Place Names</b> .....	150

**10—EDUCATION**

<b>Bibliographies</b> .....	152
<b>Dictionaries and Encyclopedias</b> .....	156
<b>Directories</b> .....	160
<b>Indexes</b> .....	161
<b>Biography</b> .....	162
<b>Instructional Materials</b> .....	163

**11—RECREATION AND SPORTS**

<b>Bibliographies</b> .....	166
<b>Dictionaries and Encyclopedias</b> .....	166
<b>Baseball</b> .....	167
<b>Basketball</b> .....	168
<b>Football and Soccer</b> .....	168
<b>Games</b> .....	169
<b>Golf</b> .....	171
<b>Hockey</b> .....	171
<b>Hunting and Fishing</b> .....	172
<b>Motor Sports</b> .....	172
<b>Sailing</b> .....	173
<b>Skiing</b> .....	173
<b>Swimming</b> .....	174
<b>Tennis</b> .....	174

## 12 — SOCIOLOGY

Bibliographies .....	175
Directories .....	175
Encyclopedias .....	176
Aging .....	176
Marriage and the Family .....	177
Prisons .....	178

## 13 — WOMEN'S STUDIES

General Works .....	180
Bibliographies .....	182
Biography .....	183

## 14 — ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

Atlases .....	184
Bibliographies .....	184
Encyclopedias .....	185
Handbooks .....	187

## 15 — STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHY

General Works .....	190
Dictionaries and Encyclopedias .....	190

## 16 — ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Atlases .....	192
Bibliographies .....	192
Dictionaries and Encyclopedias .....	194
Directories .....	195
Accounting .....	198
Advertising .....	199
Finance and Banking .....	199
Insurance .....	200
Labor .....	200
Management .....	201
Real Estate .....	201

## 17 — FINE ARTS

Bibliographies .....	203
Dictionaries .....	204
Encyclopedias .....	205