



# REFERENCE BASICS

Alex Brower, Information Services Director



# WHAT IS REFERENCE?

# What is Reference?

Finding  
answers and  
information

The *right*  
stuff

In-person  
and Remote

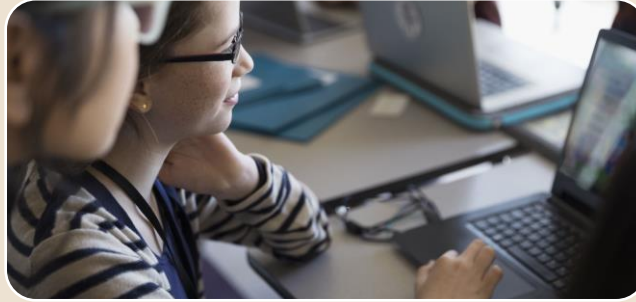
# Privacy

- ALA: "In a library (physical or virtual), the right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others."
- Libraries are there to facilitate, NOT MONITOR, access to information.

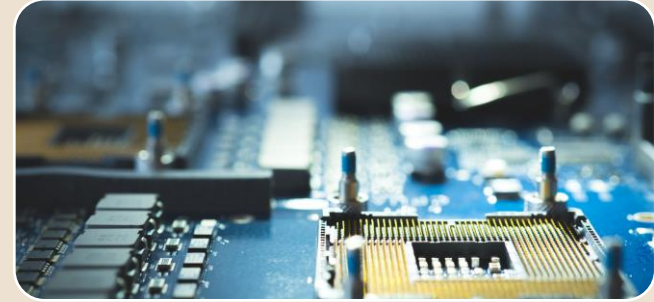
# Types of Sources



Books/Print Sources:  
Best for deeper or  
historical  
information



Databases:  
Best for scholarly  
articles and  
specialized  
information  
(e.g.: MAGNOLIA)

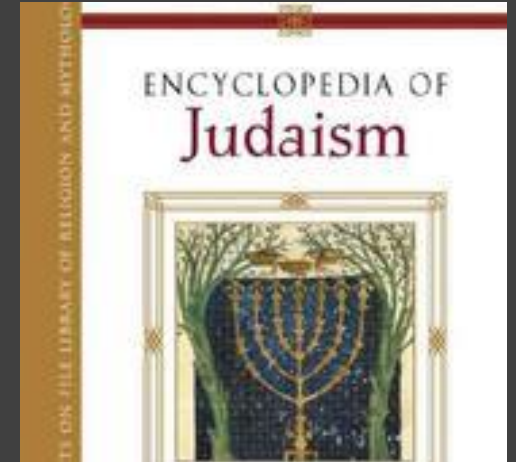
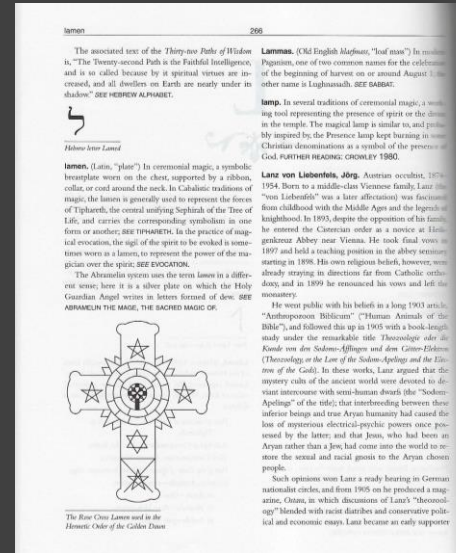
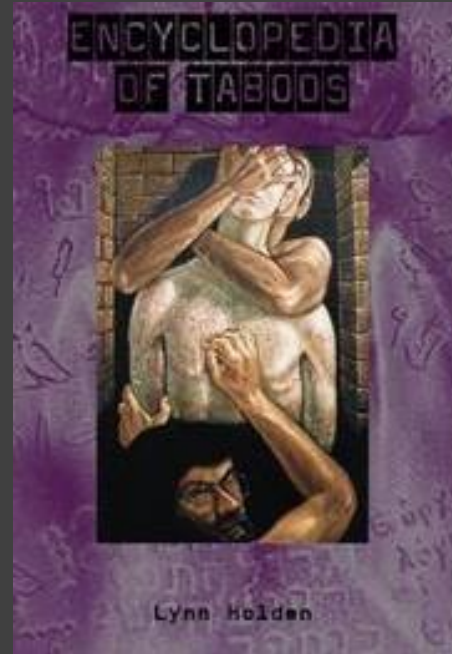
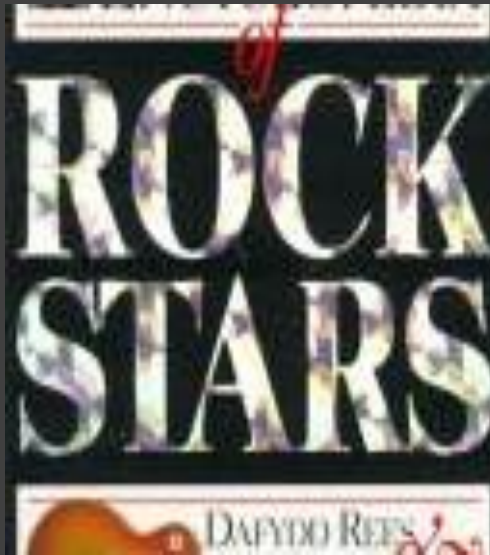


Internet Sources:  
Best for quick facts,  
news, pop culture,  
and government  
publications



# TYPES OF PRINT SOURCES





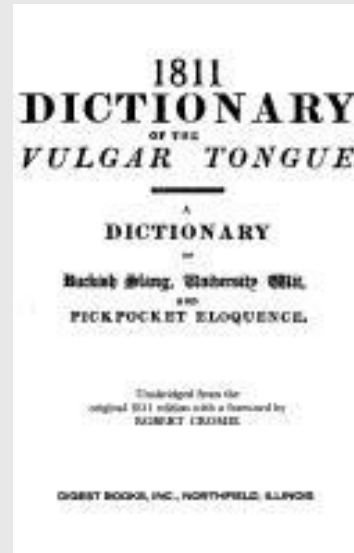
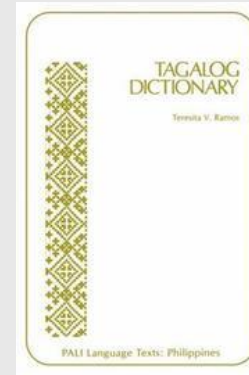
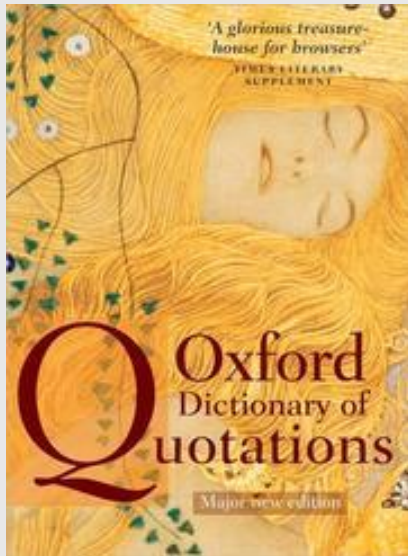
The New  
Encyclopedia of  
the Occult

# ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Brief, factual information about a variety of topics. Often includes pictures

# Dictionaries

- List terms in alphabetical order and give each word's meaning
- Language dictionaries
- OED has etymology as well as definition



## C A T

**CAT'S FOOT.** To live under the cat's foot; to be under the dominion of a wife hen-pecked. To live like dog and cat; spoken of married persons who live unhappily together. As many lives as a cat; cats, according to vulgar naturalists, have nine lives, that is one less than a woman. No more chance than a cat in hell without claws; said of one who enters into a dispute or quarrel with one greatly above his match.

**CAT LAP.** Tea, called also scandal broth. See SCANDAL BROTH.

**CAT MATCH.** When a rook or cully is engaged amongst bad bowlers.

**CAT OF NINE TAILS.** A scourge composed of nine strings of whip-cord, each string having nine knots.

**CAT'S PAW.** To be made a cat's paw of; to be made a tool or instrument to accomplish the purpose of another: an allusion to the story of a monkey, who made use of a cat's paw to scratch a roasted chesnut out of the fire.

**CAT'S SLEEP.** Counterfeit sleep: cats often counterfeiting sleep, to decoy their prey near them, and then suddenly spring on them.

**CAT STICKS.** Thin legs, compared to sticks with which boys play at cat. See TRAPSTICKS.

**CAT WHIPPING, OR WHIPPING THE CAT.** A trick often practised on ignorant country fellows, vain of their strength, by laying a wager with them that they may be pulled through a pond by a cat. The bet being made, a rope is fixed round the waist of the party to be catted, and the end thrown across the pond, to which the cat is also fastened by a packthread, and three or four sturdy fellows are appointed to lead and whip the cat; these on a signal given, seize the end of the cord, and pretending to whip the cat, haul the astonished booby through the water. ---To whip the cat, is also a term among tailors for working jobs at private houses, as practised in the country.

**CATAMARAN.** An old scraggy woman; from a kind of float made of spars and yards lashed together, for saving shipwrecked persons.

**CATCH CLUB.** A member of the catch club; a bum bailiff.

**CATCH FART.** A footboy; so called from such servants commonly following close behind their master or mistress.

**CATCH PENNY.** Any temporary contrivance to raise a contribution on the public.

**CATCH POLE.** A bum bailiff, or sheriff's officer.

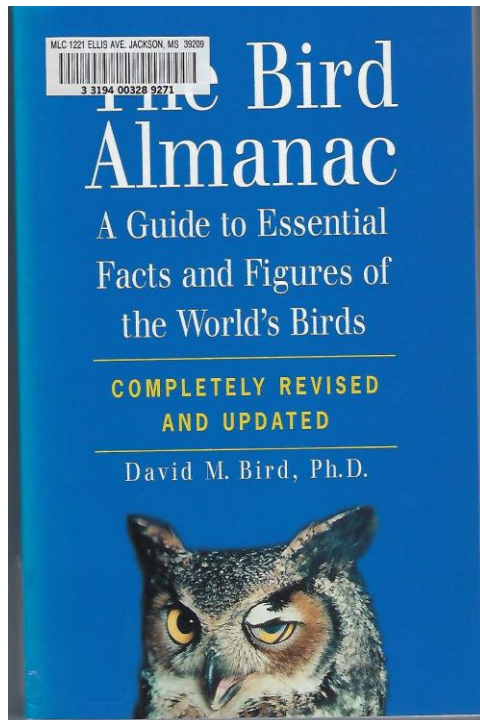
**CATCHING HARVEST.** A dangerous time for a robbery, when many persons are on the road, on account of a horse-race, fair, or some other public meeting.

**CATER COUSINS.** Good friends. He and I are not cater cousins,

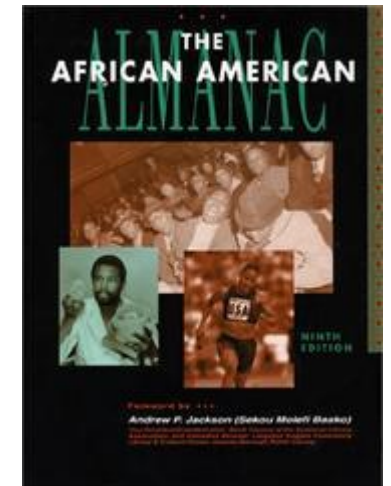
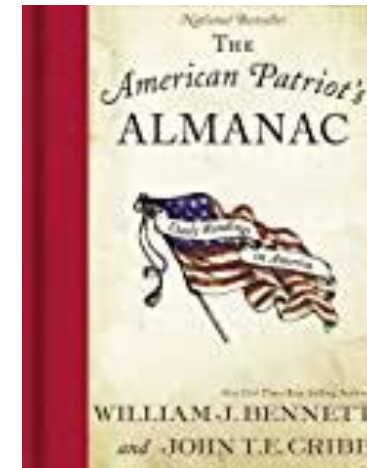


# Almanacs

- Include calendars, basic facts, and statistical information about people, places, and events
- Contain specific, detailed information

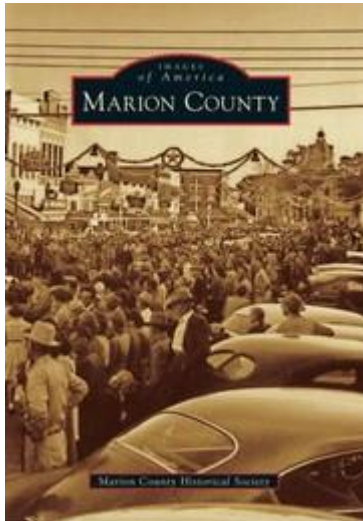


Contents	
Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xvii
■ Fossil History of Birds	1
■ Anatomy	3
Terms for Anatomical Characteristics of Birds	3
Bill	3
Tail	3
Wing	4
Legs and Feet	4
General Anatomical References	5
Skeleton (FIGURE)	7
Topography (FIGURE)	8
Measurements (FIGURE)	9
■ Physiology	10
Circulatory System	10
Heart (FIGURE)	10
Heart Weight of Selected Birds Relative to Body Weight	10
Approximate Heartbeat Rates of Selected Adult Birds at Rest	11
Approximate Blood Volumes of Selected Birds	11
Approximate Erythrocyte (Red Corpuscle) Numbers in Selected Birds (Millions per cubic millimeter)	12
Approximate Number of Leukocytes and Thrombocytes in Bird Blood	12
Approximate Total Plasma (or Serum) Proteins, "Albumins," "Globulins," and "A/G" Ratio in Selected Birds	13
Digestive System (FIGURE)	14
Composition of Avian Esophageal Fluids	15
Respiratory System	15
Approximate Breathing Rates of Resting Birds Relative to Body Weight	15
Relative Respiratory Volumes in the Chicken	15
Major Air Sacs (FIGURE)	16
Approximate Diving Depths of Selected Diving Birds	17
Diving Durations for Selected Underwater Birds	17
Urogenital System	18
Male and female (2 FIGURES)	18



# Genealogy Sources

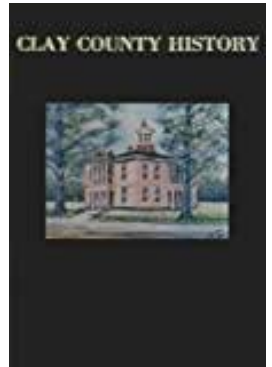
- Mortality Schedules
- Family Histories
- Family Maps
- Yearbooks
- Town Histories
- County Historical Records



OCCUPATION LIST OF CODES	
00 Nothing listed or no occupation	35 Machinist
01 Farmer	36 Baker
02 Blacksmith	37 Overseer
03 Teacher	38 Planter
04 Wheelwright	39 Innkeeper
05 Bricklayer	40 Ditcher
06 Physician	41 Wagoner
07 Carpenter-Joiner	42 Miller
08 Shoemaker-cordwainer	43 Stock Keeper
09 Laborer	44 Painter
10 Student	45 Grocer
11 Cabinet worker	46 School keeper
12 Saddler	47 Post Master
13 Tailor	48 Stonemason
14 Merchant	49 Boatman-Pilot on river
15 Gunsmith	50 Mason
16 Milkman	51 Trader
17 Lawyer	52 Silversmith
18 Printer	53 Tanner
19 Sailor-Navy personel	54 Housekeeper
20 Landlady-landlord	55 Surveyer
21 Cooper	56 Paper maker
22 Clerk-bank clerk	57 Carriage maker
23 Soldier-Army personel	58 Tobacconist
24 Engineer	59 Pauper
25 Plasterer	60 Hatter
26 Herdsman	61 Woolcomber
27 Stage driver	62 Ship carpenter
28 Millwright	63 Justice of the Peace-Judge
29 Mechanic	64 Constable
30 Clergyman-Minister BC, Priest, Preacher	65 Brush maker
MECN	66 Distiller
31 Potter	67 Teamster
32 Butcher	68 Bridge maker
33 Gardner	69 Chain maker
34 Gambler	70 Varnisher

MORTALITY SCHEDULE-MISSISSIPPI 1850		PAGE	6
CAGE, CATHERINE	WILKINSON CO.	MS	6M F NG MS FLUX
CALCOTE, NAPOLEON	ATTALA CO.	MS	9M M SEP MS UNKNOW
CALDWELL, ELIZABETH C.	POINTOTOC CO.	MS	1 F OCT MS CHOLERA
CALLOWAY, JOSHUA	CLAIBORNE CO.	MS	13 M JUL MS CHOLERA
CAMPBELL, CANOLINE	CHOCTAW CO.	MS	23 F SEP TN CHOLERA
CAMPBELL, ALLEN	PERRY CO.	MS	55 M SEP NC FEVER
CAMPBELL, ELIJAH	COAHOMA CO.	MS	6 M SEP VA BOWELS
CAMPBELL, LOWAX	HARRISON CO.	MS	6 M SEP LA LINGERING
CAMP, EDMONIA	TIPPACH CO.	MS	7 F NOV MS PNEUMONIA
CAMPBELL, ALLEN E.	HARRISON CO.	MS	55 M FEB SL SMALLPOX
CAMPBELL, AGUELLA	COPIAH CO.	MS	5 F NOV MS PNEUMONIA
CAMPBELL, HUGH	HINDS CO.	MS	66 M MAY SC HEMORRHA
CAMPBELL, M.C.	FRANKLIN CO.	MS	2 F MAR MS LIVER
CAMPBELL, MOSES M.	COPIAH CO.	MS	2 M SEP MS CROUP
CAMPBELL, PENELUPE	MARSHALL CO.	MS	94 F APR NC OLD AGE
CAMPBELL, SARAH	TIPPACH CO.	MS	1 F OCT MS FEVER
CAMPBELL, THOMAS R.	ATTALA CO.	MS	25 M MAR NG PNEUMONIA
CANNON, ANGELINE J.	DE SOTO CO.	MS	7 F AUG MS CHOLERA
CANNON, REBECCA	YAZOO CO.	MS	18 F APR MS PNEUMONIA
CAPERTON, JOSEPH	MUNROE CO.	MS	38 M OCT MS CROUP
CAPERTON, JOHN J.	WINSTON CO.	MS	4 M SEP TN WORMS
CARP, MRS.	ADAMS CO.	MS	28 F MAR NG CONVULSIONS
CARKS, JAMES	HINDS CO.	MS	21 M JUL MS FEVER
CARKS, JOHN B.	JACKSON CO.	MS	55 M AUG MS DYSENTERY
CARLISLE, MARY T.	MUNROE CO.	MS	34 F MAR KY ERTYPELAS
CARNES, FRANCIS U.	MADISON CO.	MS	28 M OCT IR SUICIDE
CARNES, SALINA	ATTALA CO.	MS	63 F DEC GA FEVER
CARNES, SARAH	ATTALA CO.	MS	10 F AUG GA FEVER
CARNEY, JOHN PLEASANT	ISSAQUENA CO.	MS	1 M APR LA CHOLERA
CARR, T.J.	MARION CO.	MS	3 M MAR MS CONGESTION
CARR, THOMAS	TIPPACH CO.	MS	30 M DEC NC KILL BY TREE
CARR, WILLIAM	TIPPACH CO.	MS	67 J UL D AC CONSUMPTION
CARR, WILLIAM	TIPPACH CO.	MS	67 M JUL PA CONSUMPTION
CARR, WILLIAM	TIPPACH CO.	MS	68 M JUL NC DYSPEPSIA
CARR, WILLIAM	RANKIN CO.	MS	22 M APR NC ACCIDENT
CARRAWAY, WILEY S.	HANCOCK CO.	MS	91 M JUN NG FLUX
CARRBELL, CHARLES	MARSHALL CO.	MS	2 M JUL MS DIARRHEA
CARRINGTON, JAMES A.	MADISON CO.	MS	21 M MAR MS PNEUMONIA
CARSON, JOHN	JASPER CO.	MS	42 F FEB VA CONSUMPTION
CARSON, LOUISA W.	MADISON CO.	MS	75 F DEC SC ACCIDENT
CARSON, MARGARET	CHOCTAW CO.	MS	54 F FEB GA PALSY
CARSON, ROSANAH	POINTOTOC CO.	MS	5 M AUG MS FEVER
CARTER, ALFRED C.	HINDS CO.	MS	64 M NOV MS FEVER
CARTER, ASBERRY	NOXUBEE CO.	MS	1 M SEP MS BRAIN
CARTER, CLARA	CHOCTAW CO.	MS	2 F JAN MS CROUP
CARTER, E.O.M.	JEFFERSON CO.	MS	23 M SEP MS TYPHOID
CARTER, ELIZABETH	KEMPER CO.	MS	23 M MAR NC CONSUMPTION
CARTER, H.B.	TIPPACH CO.	MS	38 M MAY NC UNKNOW
CARTER, HENRY D.	TIPPACH CO.	MS	11 M JAN MS DRUPSY
CARTER, JAMES	CLARK CO.	MS	92 F APR NC OLD AGE
CARTER, JOHN W.	JACKSON CO.	MS	92 F DEC MS FEVER
CARTER, MATHIE	TUNICA CO.	MS	5 F JAN MS SCARLETINA
CARTER, SARAH	HOLMES CO.	MS	8 M SEP MS UNKNOW
CARTWRIGHT, MILTON	TUNICA CO.	MS	8 M SEP GA BRAIN
CARTWRIGHT, RENE D.	MUNROE CO.	MS	9 M MAR NG CONGESTION
CARTWRIGHT, ROBERT M.	DE SOTO CO.	MS	20 M SEP NC TYPHOID
CASPER, NATHANIEL M.	DE SOTO CO.	MS	62 M FEB NC WORMS
CASPER, MARGARET M.	ATTALA CO.	MS	21 F FEB TN TYPHOID
CASEY, AMEROSE	TIPPACH CO.	MS	34 M APR MS WORMS
CASEY, EMILY	ATTALA CO.	MS	3 F OCT CROUP
CASEY, JAMES N.	ADAMS CO.	MS	2 M MAR MS WORMS
CASHEN, GEORGE	PIKE CO.	MS	1 M JAN MS HEMIA
CATCHING, BENJAMIN L.	KEMPER CO.	MS	3 M MAY MS BOWELS
CATES, THOMAS	ITABAMBA CO.	MS	40 M DEC GA MURDERED
CATHALA, WILLIS	WARREN CO.	MS	14 M JAN MS CROUP
CATHELL, MARY A.	JACKSON CO.	MS	1 M JUL MS CHOLERA
CATTS, WILLIAM	CLARKE CO.	MS	7 F SEP MS FEVER
CAVIE, PERRY	CLARKE CO.	MS	82 M AUG SC JAWWED
CANTHEN, THOMAS B.	CLARKE CO.	MS	3 M AUG MS UNKNOW
CANTIN, JOSEPH	YAZOO CO.	MS	59 M SEP VA DRUPSY
CHAFFIN, THOMAS	WINSTON CO.	MS	2 M SEP MS SCARLETINA
CHAMBERS, BENJAMIN	SCOTT CO.	MS	24 M JUN TN VIOLENCE
CHAMBERS, JAMES R.	KEMPER CO.	MS	28 M NOV AL TIVES
CHAMBERS, JOHN	LEAKE CO.	MS	10 M JUN MS DRUPSY
CHAMBERS, JOHN	LEAKE CO.	MS	7 M MAY MS DRUPSY
CHAMBERS, JOHN	LEAKE CO.	MS	30 M SEP AL FEVER

Mortality Schedule Mississippi 1850





# DATABASES

# Databases



Helpful for current topics that may not be in books yet

Example: New medical treatments



Digitized reference materials



Broad or narrow focus



Online and Subscription Databases



# Database Searching

Full-Text

Date Range

Scholarly Source?

Boolean Operators

# Boolean Operators

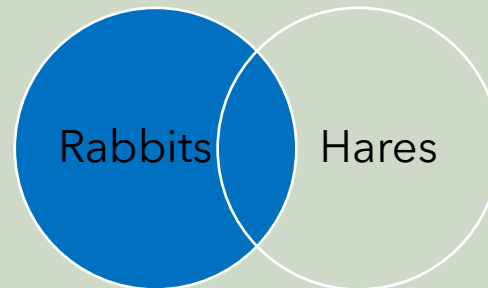
AND: All the given terms must be found, narrows a search.

- Witches AND Wizards



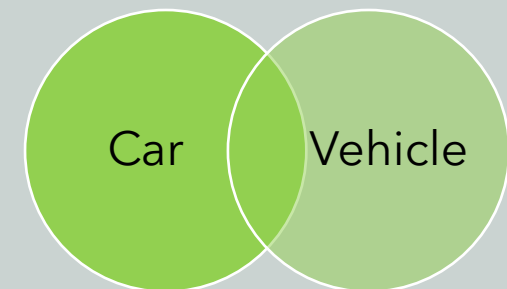
NOT: Eliminate all terms that follow it, narrows a search. Useful when you need a specific aspect of a topic.

- Rabbits NOT Hares



OR: Searches any of the terms connected to it, broadens a search. Helpful when searching for synonyms.

- Car OR Vehicle





# DATABASE BREAK



**Demographics Now:**

Business database that contains detailed demographic estimates, consumer expenditure, and retail sales information customizable by state, county, city, zip. Can be used to gather information for business or grant-seeking purposes.

**Heritage Quest:**

Genealogical database (similar to Ancestry) containing not only census information, but articles from historical journals and information from the Freedman's Bank

**Novelist Plus:**

The complete readers' advisory solution, empowers librarians, engages readers and connects communities. This database is a readers' advisory tool for both fiction and nonfiction titles.

**Sanborn Maps:** Digital versions of historical fire insurance maps.

# MLC's Subscription Databases





# INTERNET SOURCES



# Types of Internet Sources

- Government Information
- Ready Reference
- Genealogical Sites
- Online Databases

Comprehensive list of online sources from ALA:  
<http://www.ala.org/rusa/awards/etsbestindex> (may have to check that they still work)

# Searching the Internet

- Which search engine?
  - General search engine: Google, Yahoo
  - Academic search engine: Google Scholar
- Start with blanket terms and then narrow down
- Think about alternate spellings
- Give context (ex: when looking for information on Prince, search for "Prince" and "artist" or "artist formerly known as prince")
- Can use Boolean operators, like searching a database

# Evaluating Internet Sources

Untrustworthy until  
proven authoritative

Is the author known  
in their field?

Was the website  
linked from a trusted  
source?

Does a known  
organization sponsor  
or run the site?

Are their sources  
cited?

Typos?

Currency of the  
website/copyright  
date?

If it looks sketchy, it's  
probably sketchy.  
Trust your instincts!



# Google Tips

Use quotes when searching for something specific or a whole phrase.

"Honda civic reviews"

Plug in math questions for quick answers

Use a hyphen to exclude words from your search  
Pelicans -basketball

Use a colon to search specific sites for information

Heart disease site:heart.org

Use an asterisk wildcard  
Librar\* (will bring up libraries, library, librarian, etc)

Search for a specific year or range of numbers  
Opera 1930...1945

Find a specific file or file type  
Reference Skills filetype:ppt

Use Asterisk Placeholders  
"Ask not what \* \* can do for you"

Use as a converter  
3 gallons to oz

# Types of Reference Questions

- Library Specific
  - When is storytime?
  - How do I get a library card?
- Ready Reference
  - What is the phone number for the American Printing House for the Blind?
  - Who is my Congressperson?
- Research Questions
  - Could you help me find out who my great grandparents were? My grandmother's name was Pantaloons Magee and she lived in Possumneck.
  - I'm writing a paper for my English class. Can I get some articles on tragic romance in literature, and some biographies for British authors?



# TIDBITS AND GEMS?



Do patrons always ask the actual question they want the answer to?



Does the patron always know what they're talking about?



Does the patron always tell you the information you need to answer their question?



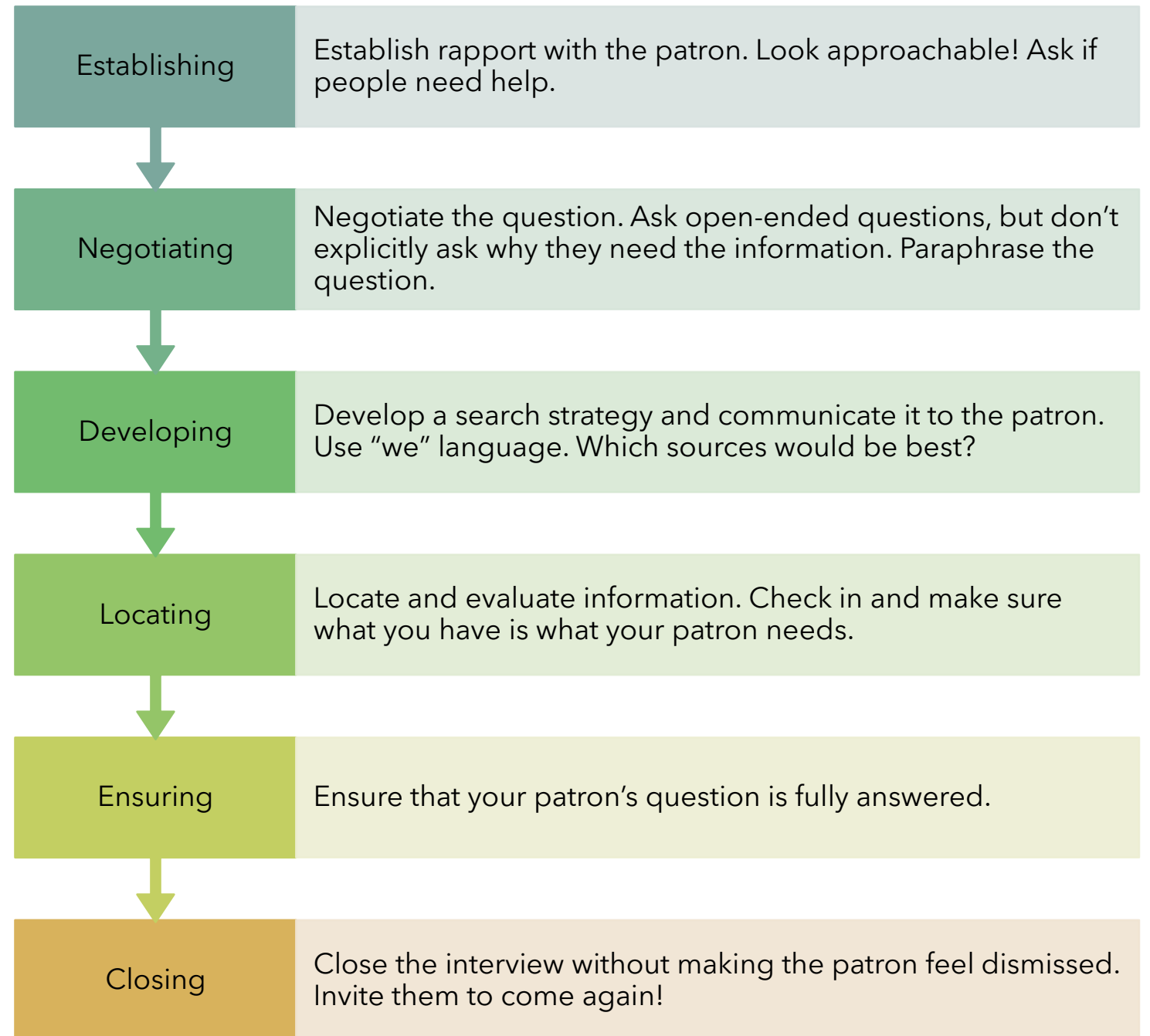
NO! People are weirdos. They hide stuff or don't remember details. They are bad at communicating.



Thus, reference interview.



# Reference Interview Steps



# Medical and Legal Questions

- Don't interpret any information. You are not a doctor or a lawyer.
- Do you have a library policy for these questions?
- MLC's legal statement:  
Please note that I am not a lawyer and all information I have enclosed is simply for your informational use. I cannot give legal advice; I can only provide information from sources available to me through the state government and the Mississippi Library Commission. Please let me know if you have further questions. Thank you for using the Mississippi Library Commission as a source of information.

# Medical Sources

- Websites:
  - Government Sites (ex: National Cancer Institute, National Library of Medicine)
  - Health Organization Sites (ex: American Heart Association, World Health Organization)
- MAGNOLIA:
  - Health Source: Nursing & Academic Edition: Full text, abstracts and indexing for nearly 2000 medical journals, especially in the fields of nursing and allied health.
  - Natural & Alternative Treatments: Current information on complementary and alternative medicine and natural health, including medical conditions, alternative therapies, drug interactions, and homeopathy.
  - Consumer Health Complete: Full text content covering all areas of health and wellness from mainstream medicine to the many perspectives of complementary, holistic and integrated medicine. Topics include aging, cancer, diabetes, drugs and alcohol, fitness, and more.
- Print Sources (check dates!):
  - Medical Dictionaries
  - Medical Encyclopedias

# Legal Sources

- Contact MLC staff and we will help you!
- MLC Databases (staff only)
  - Lexis Advance
  - Gale LegalForms
- Legal Sites:
  - Justia: <https://www.justia.com/>
  - FindLaw: <https://www.findlaw.com/>, has *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law*
- MS Bar Pro Bono Resources: <https://www.msbar.org/for-the-public/pro-bono-resources.aspx>

# Government Forms

- Handle in a manner similar to medical and legal forms (no advice)
- Tax forms/unemployment, etc.
- Help patrons locate a specific form they need (IRS website, etc).
- Point them in the direction of a list of forms on a specific topic
- IRS Website: <https://www.irs.gov/forms-instructions>

# Secrets to Ref-cellence



- Practice!
- Get out there!
- Look up weird stuff you're interested in.
- Stick to a template for remote requests (chat, text, email, etc).
- Create finding aids or lists of resources for common questions.
- Talk to your coworkers when finding an answer.
- Practice more!



Still can't find  
an answer?



MLC Reference Desk



601-432-4492



601-208-0868 (text)



[mlceref@mlc.lib.ms.us](mailto:mlceref@mlc.lib.ms.us)

# Activity:

In your breakout rooms, develop a plan for how you would answer one of the following questions:

- I need some articles for a project I'm doing on child development. I don't care about babies, just older kids. I can only use stuff newer than 2005.
- I need information about birds. I'd like to know how their insides work. And maybe some pictures of them flying.
- I need all the music Arcade Fire has put out. I also need some of their tour dates, and maybe some Arcade Fire tattoo pictures.

What sources would you use? Print? Digital?

What keywords would you use to search?

Using MLC's catalog (<https://mlco.agverso.com/home?cid=mlco&lid=mlco>), databases, or websites, have one person try and find the answer using the sources you suggested.

If not, what other steps did you take to find the answer or information?

Thank you!

My Contact Information:

Alex Brower, Information  
Services Director

601-432-4117

[abrower@mlc.lib.ms.us](mailto:abrower@mlc.lib.ms.us)

MLC Reference Desk:

601-432-4492

601-208-0868 (text number)

[mlcref@mlc.lib.ms.us](mailto:mlcref@mlc.lib.ms.us)

# Sources

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<http://www.ala.org/rusa/guidelines/definitionsreference>.
- <https://cloud.lib.wfu.edu/blog/research-like-a-librarian/reference-resources/>
- <https://apus.libanswers.com/faq/2310>
- <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/20-tips-use-google-search-efficiently.html>