

LIBR 289 e-Portfolio
Fall 2008

Evidence for Competency H

LIBR 210 – Reference and Information Services

Reference – Biographical, Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

Assignment

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Running Head: BIOGRAPHICAL

Reference Source Assignment III: Biographical, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias

by

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1. In what year was Jean Niesten promoted to the rank of full astronomer at the Brussels observatory?

ANSWER

In 1878.

SOURCE

Gillispie, Coulston C., & American Council of Learned Societies (Eds.). (1970). *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (Vol.10, p. 119). New York: Scribner.

PROCESS: The textbook identified this resource for this type of search. It also seemed most appropriate for looking up information on scientists. I located the resource at my local library.

2. Who said, “Rules are mostly made to be broken and are too often for the lazy to hide behind?”

ANSWER

Douglas MacArthur

SOURCE

Platt, S. (Ed.). (1992). *Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations from the Library of Congress* (p. 310). Washington: Congressional Quarterly Books.

PROCESS: First I checked the Quotations Database as identified by the textbook, which is available online. However a search for the entire phrase or any words of this phrase did not yield any results.

Then I checked the *Respectfully Quoted...* resource as identified by the textbook (and the reference librarian at my local library). The resource is available at the San Mateo library where I looked it up.

3. What do the initials GODORT stand for?

ANSWER

Government Documents Round Table.

SOURCE

GODORT. (2003). *Acronyms, Initialisms, and Abbreviations Dictionary*. (32nd Ed., p. 1876).
Detroit: Gale Research Company.

PROCESS: The textbook identified this as a useful resource. My local library has the 3 volumes which are kept up to date with periodic supplements.

4. What is the full name of the author Avi?

ANSWER

Avi Wortis

SOURCE

Avi Wortis. (2005). *Contemporary Authors Online*. Retrieved April, 15, 2005 from Biography Resource Center Web site:
<http://0-galenet.galegroup.com.mill1.sjlibrary.org/servlet/BioRC?vrsn=149&OP=contains&locID=sjpllib&srchtp=name&ca=10&c=2&AI=96707&NA=avi&ste=12&tbst=prp&tab=1&docNum=H1000108298&bConts=59>

PROCESS: First I looked it up online at Biography.com and Biographical Dictionary as these resources are identified by the textbook. The first one does not list the answer and the second one lists a one sentence answer indicating the name, profession and most notable work. However, I wanted a more in depth answer that did not leave a shade of a doubt.

Next, I located the Biography Resource Center online through the SJSU/King library. This resource is also identified in our textbook.

5. I have this television that just never works, and my friend told me that it was “bodgered.” What the heck is he talking about? What is a bodger, and what does it have to do with my TV?

ANSWER

It means it was made badly or clumsily being flawed or worthless. The word bodger is an alteration of the word botch.

SOURCES

Simpson, J., & Ayto, J. (Eds.). (1992). *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang* (p. 22).
Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc.

PROCESS: I happen to have a British coworker so I know that when used as slang, bodgered, means that something is useless. I wanted to find the same result from a reputable source.

At my local library, I looked in the unabridged Webster’s International Dictionary but the result didn’t convince me. So I asked the reference librarian for any dictionaries of colloquial terms and she identified this resource which is also in our textbook. Later on I also found out that the Oxford dictionaries can be accessed for free in the internet at www.askoxford.com.

6. Where can I find a biographical sketch of British art rocker Peter Gabriel? What was the inspiration for his song, “We Do What We’re Told?”

ANSWER

In the *Current Biography Yearbook*. The inspiration for this specific song was a series of controversial experiments on authority behavior conducted by psychologist Stanley Milgram. The study was conducted with 37 patients, hence why the song’s subtitle is “Milgram’s 37.”

SOURCE

Moritz, C. (Ed). (1990). Peter Gabriel. *Current Biography Yearbook* (1990). New York: HW Wilson.

PROCESS: First I tried the Biography Resource Center as identified by the textbook. Although it contains a very comprehensive essay and works on Peter Gabriel, there is no mention of this specific song. So while at the library I checked the above resource which is also identified by the textbook.

7. My nephew just can't get enough of movies like Underworld and Van Helsing. Now, I'm pretty sure that he's too young to have developed a thing for Kate Beckinsale, but he just loves vampire stories. I'm going to see him this summer, so can you find a book for me that will allow me to gain an encyclopedic knowledge of the undead so that I can look super-cool when I visit?

ANSWER

Couple of choices:

Melton, J.G. (1999). *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*. Detroit: Visible Ink Press.

Bunson, M. (1993). *The Vampire Encyclopedia*. New York: Crown Publishers.

SOURCE

San Jose State University. (2005). Library Catalog. Retrieved April 18, 2005, from website <http://www.smcl.org/external.html?catalog.plsinfo.org>

PROCESS: First I tried using ARBA online but it wasn't working. So I used SJSU/King's Library catalog to search for the term "vampire encyclopedia."

8. Who visits Moscow in Mikhail Bulgakov's most famous literary work?

ANSWER

The devil. His most famous work is *Master i Margarita*.

SOURCE

Rydel, C. (Ed.). (2002). Mikhail Afanas'evich Bulgakov. *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: Russian Prose Writers Between the World Wars* (Vol. 272, pp. 23-45). Retrieved April, 15, 2005, from <http://mill1.sjlibrary.org/search/XThe+Dictionary+of+Literary+Biography&searchscope=1&SORT=A/XThe+Dictionary+of+Literary+Biography&searchscope=1&SORT=A&extended=0/13%2C42%2C42%2CB/1856&FF=XThe%2BDictionary%2Bof%2BLiterary%2BBiography%26searchscope%3D1%26SORT%3DA%26extended%3D0&22%2C22%2C%2C1%2C0>

PROCESS: This resource was identified by the textbook. I accessed it online through SJSU/King's library.

9. My friend tells me that he's planning to "dead head" to Florida for Spring Break next year. What does he mean, and should I be worried?

ANSWER

It means that he is planning on traveling for free.

SOURCE

Partridge, E. (1970). *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (7th Ed., p. 210). New York: Macmillan.

PROCESS: The textbook identified several resources, all available at my local library. I checked the Dictionary of American Slang and Webster's which although did include definitions for the word, they didn't seem to explain it in the context used. Next I searched in A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English.

10. I understand that screenwriter Joss Whedon has a long family history in television. Which of his family members have been involved in the medium, and in what capacity?

ANSWER

His grandfather was a playwright who wrote for early television shows. His father was a television writer and producer.

SOURCE

Joss Whedon. (2003). *Biography Resource Center Online*. Retrieved April, 18, 2005 from Biography Resource Center Web site:
<http://0-galenet.galegroup.com.mill1.sjlibrary.org/servlet/BioRC?vrsn=149&OP=contains&locID=sjpllib&srchtp=name&ca=3&c=2&AI=1132380&NA=whedon&ste=12&tbst=prp&tab=1&n=10&docNum=K1650003345&bConts=43>

PROCESS

The textbook identified this resource easily accessed online through the SJSU/King's Library.