

How To Find A Book Review

A book review describes and critiques a book's content and usually appears shortly after the book is published. These reviews can be found in various periodicals such as magazines, newspapers, and scholarly journals. A book review can be a valuable item for providing a brief description of a work and can also give insight into a how well a particular work was received near the time of publication.

In order to find a book review, you will need to know:

- **Title and/or author of a book**
- **Year of Publication**

Two ways to find this information:

- By looking on the title page of the book itself
- By looking the book up in Minerva, U of L's catalog available on the Libraries' website (library.louisville.edu).

Remember that if you have any questions you can always consult the Reference Desk on the first floor of Ekstrom or by calling them at 852-6747.

Once you have the above information, there are two sources you can use for finding a review:

- **Book review indexes in print form**
- **Online databases available on U of L's website**

Using Book Review Indexes In Print Form

Book review indexes are "indexes"; that is, they index reviews and thus, contain citations that will tell you in what periodical the review appears. Note, book review indexes DO NOT CONTAIN the reviews themselves. To find the actual review you will need to consult the periodical listed in the citation. Below are four book review indexes in print you can consult. All of these are on Table 14 in the Reference Department on the first floor of Ekstrom.

Book Review Digest (1906-Current Issues) Z 1219. C692

Contains excerpts of many of the reviews as well as summaries of the content of the reviewed work. Arranged by author. Title index included.

Book Review Index (1965-Current Issues) Z 1035. A1 B6

Indexes reviews from over 500 English language periodicals. Arranged by author. Title index included.

Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Humanities Journals (1802-1974) Z 1035. A1 C642 1982

Indexes reviews concerning all of the various humanities subjects

Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Scholarly Journals (1886-1974) Z1035.A1 C64

Indexes reviews appearing only in scholarly journals

- After choosing an index, find the volume or issue that matches the time/year of publication for your book. Keep in mind that after a book is published, a year or more may elapse before a review appears; thus, a book published in 1999 may be found in the 2000 or 2001 volume.
- Citations in the review indexes are arranged alphabetically by the book author's last name. There may also be a title index in the back of each volume. A typical citation may look like this:

**Sontag, Susan In America
For Aff-v79-p159[51-500]**

- Sontag is the author of the book, In America, which is being reviewed.
- The abbreviation "For Aff" stands for the journal, Foreign Affairs, in which the review appears.
- This review is on page 159 of volume 79 (v79) and the numbers in brackets represent the estimated length of the review, 51-500 words.

Note, each book review index may abbreviate journals differently and it's important to consult the abbreviations list in the front of the volume/issue.

Finding Reviews In The Online Databases

You can also find reviews in many of the databases available through the library's website. Below is a short list of some of the databases that index reviews:

- Ebsco Academic: General topics database indexing magazine and journal articles (some full-text). Coverage: 1984-Present (full-text 1990 to present); updated daily
- ProQuest Direct: General topics database indexing newspaper, magazine, and journal articles (some full-text). Coverage: 1971-Present (selective); updated daily
- Periodicals Contents Index: Database indexing older issues of periodicals in the humanities and social sciences back to 1770 (concentration on periodicals published in 20th century. Coverage: 1770-1991; additions made semi-annually
- JSTOR: General topics, full-text database indexing journal articles. Coverage varies for each journal. No current (last several years) articles appear in JSTOR.

Using Ebsco Academic

This is a general subject database that indexes reviews (some full-text) appearing in magazine and journal articles and covers the dates 1984-Present (full-text 1990-Present). To find indexed reviews in Ebsco from U of L's homepage you will need to:

- Click **Article Databases A-Z**, Click on "E", and then choose **Ebsco Academic**
- Click **Advanced Search** tab.
- In the search box enter the title or author of the book
- In the **Document Type** box, click on the down arrow, select **Book Review**, and then perform your search

Keep in mind when searching for reviews using the databases, not every return will be full-text. If the full-text for a result is not offered, you will have to note the journal or magazine in which the review appears, go back to Minerva and perform a "Journal Title" search to see if U of L subscribes to the periodical and has the corresponding volume/issue needed.