

HOW TO FIND INFORMATION IN BOOKS

When doing research, students and teachers automatically think on-line as technology gives faster and more hits on a subject. However, most Librarians will advise or point out that it is often quicker, more appropriate, and reliable to use a book. This is where the librarian's important and vital role in providing appropriate resources and advice helps as the students' conduit to these skills and every time they ask the librarian something these vital skills are reinforced. However, information skills whether used for researching online or paper based such as books, journals etc. are skills that are so important to learn because these skills will carry you as a student and person through University and beyond and make your marks better and your life easier.

Deciding which books to take out of the Learning Resources Centre and use in your study can be a difficult task. This guide will help you to develop the necessary skills to make good decisions. It is also designed to introduce you to the Reference Books that are held in the Quick Reference section of the LRC.

Using the contents page and index to help you decide whether or not a book is relevant will help you to develop another important skill – the skill of *Skimming*. Skimming is a type of reading in which you will look at key areas within a book to make a quick decision about how useful it is going to be in your study. Use subheadings in the text, figures, charts and diagrams when you are skimming a book.

You will find the quick reference section in the ICT room in the LRC. The reference books in this section are sources of information such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases and directories that provide basic facts on a subject. The reference books covered in this guide are dictionaries, encyclopaedias and directories.

Helpful Hints

- *Spending time selecting books in the LRC will save time later*
- *Experiment with the Quick reference books to see how much information really is available to you. You will increase your subject knowledge and impress your friends in the process!*
- *Be careful not to confuse 'Reference Books' with 'for Reference only books'. Reference books are a particular brand or type of book whereas the reference books in the main LRC book stock are simply books that are not available to borrow.*

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10 MAIN STEPS TO RESEARCH AND INFORMATION FINDING SKILLS

1. Choose a subject or topic you want to find out about.
2. If the subject is too big e.g. mammals, select a topic from this subject to concentrate on e.g. sea mammals.
3. Make a list of key information you want to write about e.g. a list of all the sea mammals, size, food they eat etc.
4. Decide on how you want to present your work e.g. written with pictures or drawings, chapters, index etc.
5. Select your sources of information e.g. books, CD-ROMS, the Internet etc.
6. Spend some time looking at all your selected sources and SKIM, SCAN looking out for KEY WORDS and/or PHRASES.
7. Make clear notes. DO NOT COPY.
8. Write up your final work.
9. Make a list of all the sources you have used. This is called referencing or a bibliography. By referencing you prove to your tutor how hard you have worked to find your information.
10. Present your work attractively e.g. in a file or a plastic pocket.

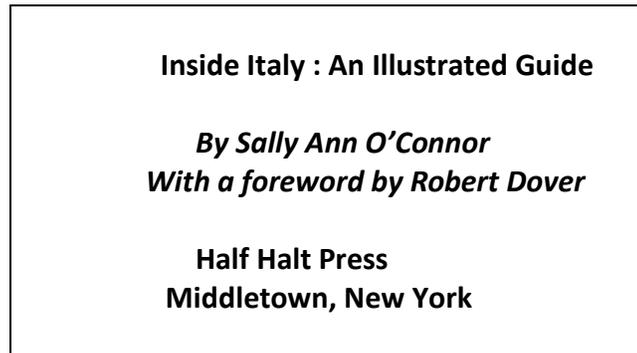
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THE TITLE PAGE.

The title page of a book gives an idea of what the book might be about. The title page of a book provides the following information, which would help you in selection and decision-making.

- Full title of the book.
- Name of author's, editor's etc.
- Who published the book?

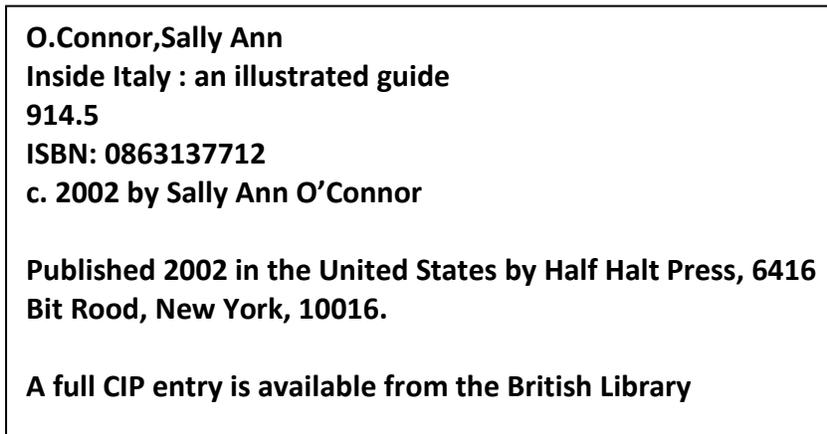
EXAMPLE



On the back of the title page more information about the book can be found. Some of the information provided is

- Date when the book was published – this tells you if the book is old or new
- Where the book was printed and by who
- If it is a reprinted edition, if so how many times it has been reprinted
- If it has been revised which means the book has been updated or improved – this is sometimes shown by the word '2nd edition 1989' or '5th ed. repr.1997'.
- A copyright date, which is important for copying or photocopying, purposes.

EXAMPLE



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CONTENTS PAGE

The Contents page of a book appears at or near the beginning of a book. It is a summary of the subject matter of the book. It is a list of chapters, sections, and parts with the relevant page numbers listed next to it. By looking through the list of contents you can quickly work out what the book is likely to be about i.e. its subject matter.

EXAMPLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 5

INTRODUCTION 6

Chapter 1

WHAT DOES ITALY LOOK LIKE? 7

Chapter 2

TOWNS AND CITIES 8

Chapter 3

FOODS OF ITALY 29

Chapter 4

FAMILY LIFE 36

Chapter 5

THE ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS 38

Chapter 6

THE ITALIAN MOUNTAINS 40

INDEX 52

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THE INDEX.

The index like the content page is also a list, arranged in an alphabetical order. There are 3 main types of indexes

SUBJECT - deals with the subject-matter of a book.

AUTHOR – lists the authors or other writers in the book.

CATEGORY – lists topic by group of similar subjects.

EXAMPLE of a subject index.

INDEX

Alps of Italy	19-25	Colosseums	51
Bologna	12,17,26	Dolomites [Northwestern Italy]	21-23, 40-45
Pasta	30-32	<i>see also under Italian food</i>	
Italian food	29-35		
Lasagne	29		
Pasta	30-32		
Pizzas	32-33		
Macaroni	34		
Minestrone soup	35		
Spaghetti	34		

EXAMPLE of an author or other writers index

Fairclough, James	19-25
Kinsey, Edward	12,17,26
Watson, Emma	29-35

EXAMPLE of categories index

Cities	12,17,26,51
Italian food	29-35
Mountains	19-25

The numbers next to a subject refers to pages in the book where you can find information on that subject. Sometimes there may two or several pages dealing with a subject. Sometimes you will be given 'see' and 'see also' references to alert you to other information on a subject, which may be of use to you. The index although at the back of the book is more useful. By looking up the pages referred to in the index you can see quickly if the information is what you need without reading the whole book first.

