

Dictionaries, Glossaries, Encyclopedias, Atlases, Etc. - Selected Websites

This guide provides selected web resources for Dictionaries, etc. See also Sawyer Library's [Database by Subject: E-Books](#) for additional resources, e.g., Gale Virtual Reference Library, Sage eReference, Credo Reference, Access Science, and the Oxford English Dictionary.

[Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary and Thesaurus](#)

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Look up words or phrases for definitions and word alternatives. The unabridged dictionary is a fee-based subscriber-only feature, but a general collegiate dictionary and thesaurus are both free. Site includes word games and a "Word of the Day" feature.

[Chambers Reference Online](#)

<http://www.chambersharrap.co.uk/chambers/features/chref/chref.py/main>

Like Merriam-Webster, Chambers is a major publisher of dictionaries and other reference sources. At this website you can do a quick look-up in the *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*, the *Chambers Thesaurus* or the amended edition of the 1997 *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*. A good, basic ready-reference source.

[YourDictionary.com](#)

<http://www.yourdictionary.com/>

Need to look up words in languages other than standard English? Try this site that provides links to dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries, "specialized dictionaries," and other word tools in over 300 languages. Find everything from Abenaki to Zulu.

[Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

<http://www.britannica.com>

Although Suffolk faculty and students on-campus (or off-campus through the proxy) are better off with the library's full-function [Encyclopedia Britannica Online, Academic Edition](#), this free version of the encyclopedia can also be useful, especially for quick look-ups.

[Best Free Reference Web Sites](#)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaourassoc/rusasections/mars/mars.cfm>

This annual list (1999+) from the Machine-Assisted Reference Section (MARS) of the American Library Association's Reference and User Services Association contains (mostly) free ready reference sites that have been reviewed and selected by librarians.

[Infoplease](#)

<http://www.infoplease.com/>

"Information Please" originally began as a radio quiz show in 1938, added an annual almanac in 1947, and has been on the Internet since 1998. This version includes an on-line Dictionary, Encyclopedia, Atlas, and Almanacs. The Almanacs, as well as "Features" and "Quizzes," are grouped into categories such as: History & Government, Biography, Business, Society & Culture, Health & Science, Weather & Climate. Other tab headings include: Timelines, Disasters, and Countries.

[Measure 4 Measure](#)

<http://www.wolinskyweb.net/measure.htm>

Self-described as "A collection of interactive sites on the Web that estimate, calculate, evaluate, translate, etc. In other words, they do the work for you." A very handy annotated set of links and one of MARS' "best free Reference Web sites."

[nationalatlas.gov](#)

<http://www.nationalatlas.gov/>

Work on a new version of the National Atlas of the United States began in 1997. This website presents available materials from that ongoing project, designed to deliver "easy to use, map-like views of America's natural and sociocultural landscapes."

[U.S. Geological Survey Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#)

<http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/index.html>

Want to look up geographic names or features in U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) maps? This handy search engine, developed for the U.S. Board on Geographic Names by the USGS, "contains information about almost 2 million physical and cultural geographic features in the United States. The Federally recognized name of each feature described in the data base is identified, and references are made to a feature's location by State, county, and geographic coordinates." The record results page also provides links to a TopoZone.com basic display, a Digital Raster Graphic digitized version of the USGS topographic map, and a USGS Digital Orthographic Quadrangle (aerial photo map).

[National Geographic: Maps and Geography](#)

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps/>

From the organization known for its maps and geographic pictorial spreads comes this nice website. Although designed to sell you National Geographic products, there are many "printer-friendly" and other maps available for free here. Try the "MapMachine Online Atlas" search engine or look for special featured maps which often reflect current world events.

[HRW World Atlas](#)

http://go.hrw.com/atlas/norm_htm/world.htm

The well-known textbook publisher, Holt, Rinehart and Winston (in conjunction with [MapQuest.com](#)), provides this useful online world atlas. Click on a continent and then a country and get a basic map and facts.

[AF Acronym Finder](#)

<http://www.acronymfinder.com>

This website provides over 270,000 definitions of acronyms, abbreviations, and initialisms. Useful, if you can ignore or suppress the annoying pop-up ads.

[Bartleby.com: "Great Books Online"](#)

<http://www.bartleby.com/>

"Unlimited access to books and information on the web, free of charge," e.g., the full-text of such reference titles as Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, Simpson's Contemporary Quotations, King James Bible, Oxford Shakespeare, Gray's Anatomy, Strunk's Elements of Style, a Columbia Encyclopedia, Roget's Thesauri, American Heritage Dictionary. Also includes grammar books and the full-text of major works in verse, fiction, and nonfiction.

[Everybody's Legal Dictionary](#)

<http://www.nolo.com/dictionary/wordindex.cfm>

This is a well-reviewed legal dictionary by NOLO, the publisher of "plain-English legal products," that is less technical than other legal dictionaries. Browse by topic or look up a definition of a word.

[Refdesk.com](#)

<http://www.refdesk.com/>

This free "fact checker for the Internet," created by Bob Drudge, provides an extensive collection of ready reference links that act like books in a library. Look for "Desktop Resources" for basic tools like zip code look-ups and a Farmer's Almanac or click on the link near the top of the opening page for "Fast Facts." The "Facts Encyclopedia" area links to a variety of pages that are broken down by subject. Another one of MARS' "best sites."

[LibrarySpot.com](http://www.LibrarySpot.com)

[http://www.LibrarySpot.com/](http://www.LibrarySpot.com)

A "free virtual library resource center" that includes in its Main Pages: Libraries, Reading Room, Reference Desk, Must-See Sites, and links to other Spot.com sites.

[Symbols.com](http://www.symbols.com)

[http://www.symbols.com/](http://www.symbols.com)

This website claims to be the "world's largest online encyclopedia of graphic symbols." But besides the symbols themselves, which include about 2500 Western signs in 54 groups, entries also contain a good bit of background text. You can search by text (via Google), random sign, or use the unusual "graphic index" to do a search by the four "graphic characteristics:" symmetry, open or closed, shape, or crossing lines.

[Webopedia: Online Computer Dictionary for Internet Terms and Technical Support](http://webopedia.internet.com)

[http://webopedia.internet.com/](http://webopedia.internet.com)

"The only online dictionary and search engine you need for computer and internet technology." Entries include links to definitions of related terms.

[Weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

[http://www.weather.com/](http://www.weather.com)

The Weather Channel sponsors this website which tells you about temperature, precipitation, etc., for any city in the country and includes maps and videos. Enter a zip code or city name in the "local forecast" box. A ten-day forecast is also available.

[Old Farmer's Almanac](http://www.almanac.com)

[http://www.almanac.com/](http://www.almanac.com)

The familiar yellow-faced *Old Farmer's Almanac* gives astronomical facts and weather predictions originally meant to help farmers with their planting schedule. The website provides weather details by locale back to 1973, happenings on this day in history, and "red letter days" for the current month. Gardening tips, cooking advice, and recipes are also posted here.