Overview

Library of Congress Online Resources for Educators


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"The Library's mission is to make its resources available and useful to the Congress and the American people and to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations.

The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. It is also the largest library in the world, with nearly 130 million items on approximately 530 miles of bookshelves. The collections include: books and other printed materials, sound and motion picture recordings, photographs, maps, and manuscripts."


As large and diverse as the Library's collections are, it does not have every book ever published. While virtually all subject areas are represented in the collections, the Library does not attempt to collect comprehensively in the areas of clinical medicine and technical agriculture, which are covered by the National Library of Medicine and the National Agricultural Library, respectively.

Researchers should also note that the Library of Congress is distinct from the National Archives, which is the major repository for the official records of the United States government.


Things to Remember When Using the Library of Congress Website

- The Library of Congress' Collections are not encyclopedic.
- The Library of Congress is the world's largest library. The primary function is to serve Congress and the American people.
- There are many different places on the Library of Congress website to locate primary source items and information.

Different Library of Congress search boxes will locate different types of resources.
Why do people go to the library?

- Find a book
- Tax forms
- Story time or reading
- Research
- Community meeting
- Look at an exhibit
- Get assistance
- More?

Compare the reasons for going to the library with the links on the home page at LOC.gov to decide "Where would you click to go to the things normally found at a library?" and "What on this home page is not normally found at the library?"

“The Library's Web site is a treasure house of free educational materials for all ages. For kids, there is America's Story from America's Library. Teachers will find lessons and more on The Learning Page. Researchers will use our online catalog and reading room sites. And, for life-long learners, there are fascinating sites such as the Wise Guide, a monthly online magazine featuring the many compelling, educational and useful resources available on the Library's Web site; our online Exhibitions site; THOMAS, for current legislative information from the U.S. Congress; the vast collections of U.S. history in American Memory; and world treasures in Global Gateway.

Since its beginning in 1994, the Library of Congress National Digital Library (NDL) Program has been the nation's premier resource for noncommercial, high-quality intellectual content on the Internet. More than 8.5 million items (as of October 2003) from the Library's collections are available to users anywhere anytime. The site, one of the federal government's most popular, handles more than two billion transactions per year.

Library of Congress Online Resources for Educators

Library of Congress Divisions


http://www.loc.gov/about Welcome * History, Mission, and Priorities * Speeches, Statements and Biography

http://memory.loc.gov Collection Finder & Search Pages * Today in History * Featured Collection * FAQ

http://memory.loc.gov/learn Orientation & Search Tips * Student Activities * Lesson Plans * Educators’ Programs * Community Center

http://loc.gov/rr/askalib Online Reference Service * Query Library Reading Rooms * Links to Library Programs and Services * Chat Service

http://www.americaslibrary.gov Meet Amazing Americans * Jump Back in Time * See, Hear, and Sing * Explore the States

http://thomas.loc.gov Legislation Text & Status * Congressional Record * Committee Information * Congress & Legislative Agencies

http://international.loc.gov/intldl Special International Guides * Meeting of Frontiers Russia/USA * Portals to the World

http://www.loc.gov/exhibits Featured Exhibits * More Exhibitions Online * Treasure Talks

http://www.loc.gov/wiseguide Online Magazine * Timely Web Features * Archives

http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook Affiliates and Partners * Themes and Partners * Publications * Literary Events

http://catalog.loc.gov General & special catalogs * Search by subject, name, title, call #, keyword; set limits * Capture & email catalog record

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html 250,000+ records * Keyword searches * Number searches * Subject browser lists

http://www.loc.gov/rr/research-centers.html Research Centers * Poetry and Literature Center * Kluge Center for Scholars

http://locweb2.loc.gov/scbt Bibliographic guide for science topics * Search by title, keyword, or number * Science Fair projects

http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets About the Project * Participate in the Project * See & Hear Veterans Stories * News & Events

http://www.loc.gov/rr/program Journeys and Crossings * Telling America’s Stories * Luminary Lectures * Bibliographies and Guides

http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/virtualref.html Selected Web Resources * Other Reference Sites * Selected Subject Feature

http://www.loc.gov/loc/visit About the Visitor’s Center * Events at the Library of Congress * Special Online Tour * Guided Tours
If you are unable to visit the Library of Congress, with the **Online Exhibitions** you can access information about and select items from current exhibits and past exhibitions. Learn about the history of the exhibit and access primary sources included in a digital format.

“Acting under the directive of the leadership of the 104th Congress to make Federal legislative information freely available to the internet public, a Library of Congress team brought the **THOMAS** World Wide Web system online in January 1995, at the inception of the 104th Congress. Searching capabilities in THOMAS were built on an information retrieval system, developed by the Center for Intelligent Information Retrieval based at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

**Thomas Databases**
- House Floor This Week --- House Floor Now --- Quick Search Of Text Of Bills

**Legislation**
- Bill Summary & Status --- Bill Text --- Public Laws By Law Number --- Votes --- House Roll Call Votes --- Senate Roll Call Votes

**Congressional Record**
- Most Recent Issue --- Congressional Record Text --- Congressional Record Index --- Days-In-Session Calendars

**Committee Information**
- Committee Reports --- Committee Home

**Pages** --- House Committees --- Senate Committees --- House and Senate Directories

**Research Guides and Databases**

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The **Global Gateway** offers access to Collaborative and Individual Digital Collections. The Library of Congress collects materials from all over the globe. It's collections of foreign-language materials are stunning in their scope and quality. For many areas of the world, such as China, Russia, and Latin America these collections are the finest and most comprehensive research collections outside the country of origin. For several regions in the world, where preserving materials takes a back seat to more immediate human needs, the collections are superior to what is available locally.


More on **American Memory** on page 62.

The **Prints & Photographs Online Catalog (PPOC)** is unique in scope and richness; the Prints and Photographs Collections number more than 13.7 million images. These include photographs, fine and popular prints and drawings, posters, and architectural and engineering drawings. While international in scope, the collections are particularly rich in materials produced in, or documenting the history of, the United States and the lives, interests and achievements of the American people. These resources are of particular interest to educators for illustrating ideas and expanding subject knowledge as well as helping students to develop visual literacy skills.

The search box on the Prints and Photographs Online Catalog is like a viewfinder. PPOC contains visual images in collections including art, photographs, cartoons, posters, ads, graphic art, and much more. Some items from PPOC are in American Memory but not all. So, you may want to search both PPOC and American Memory.

**Getting to the Catalog and Lists of Images on Popular Topics**

2. From Researchers, click Prints & Photographs Reading Room.
3. From Prints and Photographs Reading Room choose the Online Catalog to search for items or View Lists of Images on Popular Topics.

The Library of Congress is the world’s largest library, with millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts in its collections. MyLOC.gov presents items in online exhibitions that tell the story of world culture, knowledge and creativity through primary sources.

- **Plan your visit.** Use this site to get familiar with the Library. Plan a visit to the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. If you’ve already been here, you can revisit exhibits and build your personal collection of Library objects.

- **Touch history.** MyLOC.gov is also an online museum with exhibitions and interactive features that bring rare historical books and objects to life. See the edits on the Declaration of Independence. Read the hieroglyphics on a Mayan vase. Turn the pages of The Builder’s Dictionary, once owned by Thomas Jefferson.

- **Get lesson plans.** MyLOC.gov has dozens of lesson plans, all created and organized around the books and items on display that will help teachers use primary sources to bring history to life.

- **Plus, there are cool activities for students.** Zoom into maps. Do a word search related to the founding documents of the United States. Try your hand at re-writing the Declaration of Independence.

**Why Sign Up?**
You don’t have to sign up to enjoy myLOC.gov. But if you do you can:
- send a personalized postcard to a friend,
- collect your favorite exhibit items
- Play Knowledge Quest, the Library of Congress’ interactive activity, online
Here’s how to get the most out of myLOC.gov:

**Step 1.**
Sign up! **Note:** The Library reserves the right to notify a parent or teacher of a minor’s attempt to create an account. The parent/teacher will be notified by e-mail and will be able to cancel the account from that e-mail. **Don’t worry — your privacy is important to us.** We won’t know your real name unless you provide it to us, and we won’t spam your e-mail. See our privacy policy.

**Step 2.**
Sign in on any page once you have registered. You’ll get immediate access to your personalized collection.

**Step 3.**
Start collecting. Add your favorite items and interactive features to your collection by clicking the "Add to My Collection" button below each item.

All of your items will be in available in your personalized collection.

**Step 4.**
Tell a friend. Once you have registered, you can send postcards featuring your favorite items.
Information about professional development opportunities at the Library and online.

Learn about Teaching with Primary Sources Programs from across the United States.

This area will feature information about new initiatives at the Library and events that may be of interest to educators.

Jump start your classroom use of primary sources with this guide.

Resources with easy access for students and teachers – great “jumping off” points!
Library of Congress Online Resources for Educators

Primary Source Sets

Don’t miss the presentations and interactive features!

Themed Resources

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Themed Resources
American Memory provides free and open access through the Internet to written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music that document the experience. It is a digital record of American history and creativity. These materials, from the collections of the Library of Congress and other institutions, chronicle historical events, people, places, and ideas that continue to shape America, serving the public as a resource for education and lifelong learning.


American Memory primary sources may contain material not suitable for students. This chapter identifies primary sources as the type of material available through American Memory. Explorations in this chapter help to develop an understanding of how American Memory is organized. Research patrons with an understanding the concept of a "collection of collections" will save time through more productive searching.

Research patrons with an understanding of the concept of a "collection of collections" will have strategies for beginning research and will save time through more productive searching.

American Memory is a collection of collections for primary sources.

Think about how you organize at home or school. For example:

- alphabetical
- size
- categories
- season / holiday
- theme / event
- place
- date
- miscellaneous

1. Consider these questions: “If American Memory is like this picture of trunks, then what do you know about American Memory?” “What do you know about the organization within each trunk based on the list of how you organize your things?”

2. Think about search strategies by pretending you are standing before these trunks in the picture. Make a list of ways strategies that you could use to find out what's inside.

3. Mark a check next to strategies that would be effective for finding a picture of your great-grandparents wedding. Draw a star next to strategies that you might use for browsing.

4. Look for the strategies from your list on the Browse page for American Memory.
Collection home pages are useful to expand and find other items relative to a certain topic or to begin a search with a broad focus that you will narrow as needed.

1. To begin a search, click on a collection subject that interests you from the list all collections link.

   Locate the links to:
   - the home page at loc.gov.
   - visit the Reading Room, Division of the Library or external site of a partnership organization with the Library responsible for this collection.

2. Compare a few collections, notice how each collection is organized differently resulting in unique ways to browse the collection.

3. Reflect on how collection home pages help Library patrons.

**Collection Home Page (Original Format)**
The letters in the image correspond to the letters in the above list.

**Collection Home Page (New Format)**
The letters in the below image correspond to the letters in the above list.

Searching with different key words in multiple places is essential.

1. Search in American Memory to find primary source items with bibliographic records, Collection homepages with copyright and other information and special presentations or special features for more information on a topic.

   Experiment with three search strategies:
   a. Across all collections.
   b. Limit the collections through the Browse page.
   c. Search within a collection.

2. Reflect after American Memory search practice and answer these questions:
   a. Which of the three searches offers a full text search in some collections?
   b. Which search helps to identify collections of interest? Why?
   c. Which search strategy was most effective for the topic researched?

“Canadian scenes. Stacks of boxes and trunks” Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Trunks piled up in Grand Central Station, New York Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

1 Search across All Collections

The Search all collections box is like using a microscope to look through a huge group of trunks that contain collections created by many different people over hundreds of years. “Search all collections” focuses details from bibliographic information in all of the American Memory Collections. A microscope is focused on a small part (the key words you typed); there may be many other items of interest to you that were cataloged with different key words.

The “Search all collections” box is very useful to:

- Find collections that contain items related to a topic. Then search within those collections.
- Get a sense of what is available.
- Search with keywords or names to locate specific items and collections of interest.
- Click on Gallery View on the search results page to see thumbnail pictures of the items.
- Think of synonyms related to the key words already used.

2 Browse to Limit Collections

“Canadian scenes. Stacks of boxes and trunks”
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

The Browse page organizes the trunks into groups. Grouping trunks limits the number of collections by the content or media type they contain.

- Topic
- Time Period
- Place
- Collections containing: maps, manuscripts, motion pictures, sheet music, photos, prints, sound recordings, books & other printed text

3 Search Individual Collections


Open one trunk and look for items inside.

- All collections in American Memory can be listed alphabetically by subject or by collection title.
- Search bibliographic records of items with keywords. In some collections search the full text of items.
- Select a relevant collection and search using key words and synonyms.
- Search individual collections by authors, subjects, or titles.
- Examine special presentations and features within collections.
- Use search options (All words, Exact phrase, result limits, etc.).
- Explore Indexes and Browse Lists linked from the home page.

Other tips for learning about the American memory Collections:

Pathfinders search by event, people, place, time & topic
http://memory.loc.gov/learn/start/gs_src_path.html

Help Button at the top of American Memory
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/help/index.html

Ask a Librarian http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-memory.html

Locating the Exact Title of an Item

1. Click on the bibliographic information for the item from American Memory.

2. Look below the image of the item for the title, which may be displayed in a variety of ways:

- The word Item Title appears in bold letters
- The word Title appears in bold letters
- A phrase appears in bold letters

3. Copy the text exactly as it appears below the thumbnail image and if applicable, between the square brackets.

4. Paste the exact title where needed.

Saving a Permanent URL for the Bibliographic Information

Many items in American Memory are located with a temporary URL. When this is the case you will see the word temp in the URL. To find the permanent URL to create a bookmark or copy for reference take the following steps:

1. From the page, right click and select View Source.

2. Notepad will open. This text will contain the HTML code that makes up the Web page being viewed.

3. Towards the bottom of the window you can locate the permanent URL. Highlight and copy the permanent URL. Be sure to begin with the "http" and end with the "http".

4. Close the Notepad window.

5. Paste permanent URL where needed.
Locating the URL of a Digitized Primary Source

1. Right-click on the digitized primary source and select Properties from the menu.
2. Look for the Address (URL) line when the Properties Dialog Box appears.
3. Highlight the Address (URL) line.

Citing Sources
It is very important for us to model proper citation behaviors with students at all ages.

1. Locate the item you would like to save from American Memory.
2. Locate the credit line which reads "Rights and Reproductions"
3. Click on "Rights and Reproductions"
4. Scroll down and there will be information on rights and reproduction as well as a credit line

Other Resources
Citing Sources: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/start/cite/index.html
Copy Right: http://memory.loc.gov/learn/start/cpyrt/index.html
The Library of Congress Web site has many different areas such as American Memory, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, Exhibitions, America's Library, Global Gateways, Research Centers, and many other areas. To return to an item, it is helpful to remember where the item is located. There are a few strategies to recognize the area of the Library of Congress:

**Locating the Library of Congress Area**

Use the breadcrumb trail of links at the top of the screen to locate the section of the Library of Congress Web site where the item you searched for is located. The area is the link just before the link to the Library of Congress on the breadcrumb trail.

or

Look for a graphic icon at the top of the screen to locate the area of the Library of Congress Web site.

**Locating the Library of Congress Collection for an Item**

Within each of the different areas of the Library of Congress Web site there are groupings of items referred to as collections. The collection is listed on the screen in different places in each area. The most common and difficult areas are shown below.

**American Memory** collections are shown under the American Memory banner.

**Exhibitions** items will have the words "exhibitions" on the screen and/or have the word "exhibits" in the URL. There will be a "Home" button that will take you to the home screen of the exhibition where the title is usually very clear.

**Prints & Photographs** Online Catalog will have the words "ABOUT COLLECTION" if the item is in a collection. Click on the words "ABOUT COLLECTION" a screen like this one will appear.
SEARCH TOOL

To get started, visit these resources and note information relative to your topic:

- **Browse by a Topic**: Arts & Culture; American History; News, Government, Science, Technology & Business; Journalism and Advertising; Law & Politics; Sports, Recreation & Leisure; Religion and Philosophy; Maps & Geography and World History & Cultures or sub-topics.
  - http://www.loc.gov/topics

- **Is there an Exhibit on the topic?**
  - http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/

- **Look for Lesson Plans or Features and Activities** for your topic on the Learning Page.
  - http://memory.loc.gov/learn/

- **Search in the archives of Today in History.**
  - http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/archive.html

- **Is there a Collection Guide or Bibliography** on your topic?
  - http://www.loc.gov/n/program/bib

- **Search the topic in the Community Center.**
  - http://lcweb2.loc.gov/learn/community

- **Browse Pathfinders** for events, people, places, time and topics.
  - http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/start/gs_src_path.html

My Topic:

**Possible Keywords**

The homepage Search Box will recommend resources found within: **Library of Congress Web Pages** (news, events, exhibitions, webcasts), **U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections** (manuscripts, maps, photographs, films, audio, sheet music), **Library of Congress Online Catalog** (descriptions of books, journals, manuscripts, maps, music, computer files, audio, visual materials), **Prints & Photographs Online Catalog** (photographs, prints, drawings, posters, architectural documentation) and **Legislation, Congressional Activity** (House and Senate Bills 1989-).