SOME BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE: AUTHORS, ILLUSTRATORS, AND CHARACTERS

I. General Biographical Sources

A. CHILDREN’S LITERATURE REVIEW: EXCERPTS FROM REVIEWS, CRITICISM, AND COMMENTARY ON BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. Gale, 1976 – present. (REF PN1009 .A1 C5139) – complete set available in full text online (see note below)

Although, as the subtitle indicates, the scope of this series is broader than just biographical information, each entry begins with biographical facts and a portrait of the author or illustrator. Since the biographical information is more extensive than that in many other sources, and given the large number of volumes in this series (183 volumes as of June 2013), this is a good place to begin a search for information about a children’s author or illustrator.

NOTE: This entire set is now available in full text online via the Literature Criticism Online database from the Lamson Library Home Page (under “Databases”). Organized mainly by author’s name. Suggest clicking on “Advanced Search” at top, typing name of author in search box (e.g. J.K. Rowling) and changing field from “Full Text” to “Named Author”. Then, under “Limit the results”, select the Children’s Literature Review series. Then, click on Search button.


Includes 1,200 biographical-critical entries and nearly 100 topical articles written by experts in the field. LIBRARY JOURNAL called this “the most comprehensive basic reference work on children’s literature currently available”. The work covers 150 years of children’s literature in many cultures.


Includes 900 biographical-critical entries on young adult authors and approximately 95 topical articles.


These beautifully-produced books are “a showcase of outstanding contemporary children’s book illustration” [from book jacket] Volume 1 presents the work of more than 80 acclaimed illustrators of children’s picture books; volume 2 includes over 50 children’s book illustrators.


Includes profiles of 251 young adult authors.


The four titles in this series (listed below) constitute what is probably the definitive historical series on illustrators of children's literature. Each includes a discussion of the development of illustration for children as well as biographies of artists and illustrators.

Includes 51 alphabetically-arranged entries about writers of multicultural fiction for young adults. Each entry consists of biographical information, an overview of the author’s major young adult works, a section on the critical reception of the author’s writings, a bibliography of works by the author, and a selected bibliography of criticism.

Interviews with 29 illustrators of children’s books. Included with each is a sampling of the illustrator’s works in print and a photograph (or self-portrait) of the illustrator.


Includes biographies of 230 authors and artists, with nearly 200 photographs of the subjects.

Created as part of a nationwide, touring exhibit beginning at the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia in June, 1996. Contains an introductory essay and four other lengthy essays on the history of American children’s book illustration. Includes over 230 illustrations, some full page. Also contains a complete 10-page “alphabet” created from a variety of classic ABC books.

This series has the author or illustrator write his or her own biographical entry (when possible). The entries usually have a picture of the subject. Over 1500 individuals are included in this series. Latest volume has cumulative index to all volumes in the series. (Note: Since the various books in this series have different editors, they are not together on the shelf. Check LOLA for specific call numbers. The first and second volumes in this series are entitled THE JUNIOR BOOK OF AUTHORS and MORE JUNIOR AUTHORS, respectively.)

Focuses on authors and themes of 20th century children’s literature, with an emphasis on the last 50 years. More than 800 alphabetically-arranged entries, most of which are biographical, including 75 autobiographical essays from authors and illustrators. Also includes more than 60 essays on various aspects of children’s literature. Has more than 175 color and black-and-white illustrations.
Includes 375 entries selected and updated from the 1995 volume (above). Alphabetically-arranged entries are of three types: biographies, overviews of history, issues, and genres; and “Voices of the Creators” -- notes about their work written by 30 of the “finest” authors and illustrators.

This series contains lengthy autobiographical essays by selected authors and illustrators of children’s books. The latest volume has a cumulative index for the set. Series is no longer published; last volume is volume 26 (1998).

This extensive series is written especially for use by children. Each entry has a picture of the subject and often illustrations from books by the author or illustrator. The author’s or illustrator’s mailing address is also usually included. It is an on-going series, with a new volume appearing approximately every year. A cumulative index is now included in every other volume.

Short biographies of over 600 contemporary authors. Earlier editions were titled TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHILDREN’S WRITERS. Each entry consists of a biography, a complete list of published works, and a signed critical essay. Includes a “Nationality Index”. Biographies of writers for young adults are included in a separate volume.

New edition of a work formerly titled TWENTIETH-CENTURY YOUNG ADULT WRITERS. Includes biographical, bibliographical, and critical information on almost 500 authors.

A bibliography of information on 185 British and American writers, including Web sites, and entries referring you to biographies and criticism.

-- “the first multi-volume set to document and interpret the books read by children in the English-speaking world”; includes 3,200 signed articles and more than 400 illustrations

II. DICTIONARY OF LITERARY BIOGRAPHY Volumes on Children’s Authors
The volumes in this series which provide information on American children’s authors are listed below in order of the time period covered. The signed critical essays on the authors included in these volumes would be the most extensive of any of the reference sources listed on this bibliography. Each entry also includes a bibliography of the author’s published works and a list of references. Note: There are also several separate volumes on British children’s writers.

(REF PS490 .A43 1983)


(REF PR990 .B747 1996)

(REF PR990 .B748 1994)

(REF PR990 .B75 1996)

(REF PR990 .B753 1996)

III. Character Biographies

Useful in finding information about fictional characters in children’s books published prior to 1975. Arranged alphabetically by the character's name and the work in which it appears, with a description of the attributes and activities of each character. Each entry also includes the author and a list of works in which the character appears.

Contains discussions of over 2,000 characters from 232 literary works by 148 authors, primarily from English-speaking nations. Includes character and title index.

The first volume of this series covers books published from 1859-1959; the second, books published 1960-1984; the third, books published 1985-1989; the fourth, books published 1990-1994; the fifth, books published 1995-1999. The brief entries in these volumes are arranged in a dictionary format, listing in one alphabet subjects, authors, illustrators, titles, and names of characters. There is a detailed index in each volume.

(REF PN1009 .A1 J66 1997)  
Critical introductions to more than 1700 characters from 230 works of fiction. The selected titles come from both the 19th and 20th centuries. The entries are arranged alphabetically by the author’s name, and each entry includes a plot synopsis, an analysis of the characters, and a list of works for further reading. There is a Character and Title Index.

Compiled by Gary McCool, revised June 18, 2013