A Bare Bones Reference List for Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries in Maine 2008

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For Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries in Maine

Southern Maine Library District
Portland, Maine. 2nd ed, 2008
Introduction

The first edition of "A Bare Bones Reference Collection" was compiled in 1988 to offer Maine librarians who serve communities with the resources of small or medium-sized libraries a starting point to assess their reference collections for breadth and depth. We are defining a small Maine library as one in a town under 7,500 population. The 1988 document was based on a list distributed by the Vermont Department of Libraries in 1987; material was evaluated according to its timeliness, effectiveness in responding to frequently asked questions, and reasonable cost.

The 2008 edition contains a considerable amount of new material. A major change is the addition of freely available websites. Another change is the addition of children’s reference materials. This document is divided into four sections: Basic Tools; Additional Sources; Focus on Maine; and Webliography.

In any public library, large or small, a reference collection helps answer ready reference questions, and is the basis for further research. Designating an item "reference" usually means that it does not circulate. Thus, the reference collection should be relatively small, especially in a small library. Before designating a book "reference," consider how important it is that the book be there when needed. If another reference source is just as effective and efficient for answering questions, perhaps the book in question should circulate.

Reference books should be chosen using the same standards as other nonfiction: accuracy, authoritativeness, appropriateness to the collection and its users, format, lack of bias, point of view, and most of all, currency. In addition, reference books should be easy to use. Thorough indexing and cross-referencing help patrons find information readily.

Several of the materials on this list are available in various editions. Although you may prefer a hardcover edition, paperbacks are often appropriate in the reference collection.

Before selecting the books from this list, we recommend analyzing your own community's needs first. The size of your community and your library's resources will help determine how comprehensive your purchase plan should be. Use information from past reference questions. In addition, try to anticipate future needs.

Current and potential use of your collection should guide your purchases. Keep track of what questions people ask. Is what you have sufficient or do they need more depth? Can you answer them all? To assist in answering questions from school-aged patrons, ask teachers and school librarians about new curriculum topics as well as topics that are covered every year.

Your library may use the information in the Bare Bones list as an aid in your fundraising efforts by documenting useful material that your library should have. Remember that your library is not limited to these materials. Contact neighboring libraries as well as your Area Reference and Resource Center for additional information resources.

This document was prepared by the Southern Maine Library District Reference Study Committee in cooperation with the Maine State Library and the Bangor Public Library. Special thanks are due to typist Elaine Bissonnette.

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Suggestions and comments are welcomed. Please send to SMLD@portland.lib.me.us or mail to Southern Maine Library District, 5 Monument Square, Portland, Maine 04101.
A BARE BONES REFERENCE LIST
REFERENCE SOURCES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARIES IN MAINE
2008

Basic Tools

The majority of small public library reference questions can be answered with these tools:

1. **MARVEL/ statewide databases** [http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases/](http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases/) and a color printer for staff use. Thousands of magazines, newspapers, and reference books available anywhere in the State of Maine through the online resources of MARVEL! Maine’s Virtual Library, a service of Maine InfoNet. MasterFILE Premier has magazine content similar to Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature. These sources are excellent for selection, readers’ advisory, and weeding.


4. **CONSUMER REPORTS ANNUAL BUYING GUIDE**, published annually in December, serves as an annual compilation of test reports, and is one of the most widely requested public library materials. One guide does not usually update another, so keep the last four years of Buying Guides (2008, $10.00)

5. **DICTIONARIES:** An all-purpose dictionary, updated every five years. *WEBSTER’S 11TH NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY* (Merriam, 2003, $17.95), is a good all-purpose dictionary for students and general readers, or *THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006, $48.00), up-to-date with good coverage of modern words and interpretations. In addition, a good unabridged dictionary is essential such as *RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER’S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY* (2nd ed. 2006, $99.95). *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL WEBSTER’S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE* (2006, $79.95). Foreign language dictionaries, particularly French here in Maine, will provide solid back-up. *WEBSTER’S FRENCH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY* (Federal Street Press, 2004, $3.99)

6. **THE MAINE ATLAS AND GAZETEER** (DeLorme Publishing Company, 2007, $19.95). An excellent collection of maps covering the entire state of Maine in 70 detailed sections. Included are street maps for selected cities within the state. The gazeteer section has information about airports, campgrounds, museums, beaches, etc.

7. **MAINE REGISTER, STATE YEARBOOK AND LEGISLATIVE MANUAL** (Tower Publishing, annual, 2008, $95.00). Includes information on Maine: Congressional delegation, courts, foreign consulates, federal agencies, state government, clubs, associations, societies, organizations, media, schools (elementary through college), zip codes, geographical directory and a classified business directory.


Additional Sources

Several other materials will expand on the information found in the above tools. Select additional titles as your financial situation and community needs dictate. The following are not listed in order of importance:


2. **ATLASES: ATLAS OF THE WORLD** (Oxford, 14th ed. 2007, $80.00) or **TIMES COMPREHENSIVE ATLAS OF THE WORLD** (11th ed. 2005, $250.00)

3. **BARTLETT’S FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS: A COLLECTION OF PASSAGES, PHRASES, AND PROVERBS TRACED TO THEIR SOURCES IN ANCIENT AND MODERN LITERATURE** (17th ed. 2002, $31.50). If you have an earlier edition, keep it as well since later editions do not include everything from previous editions.


5. **BLACK’S LAW DICTIONARY** (8th ed. 2004, $67.00).

6. **CHASE’S ANNUAL EVENTS** (2008 with CD, $64.95) Founded in 1957, this annual compilation contains more than 12,000 special events, holidays, historic anniversaries, etc.


8. **COMPLETE SPEAKER’S AND TOASTMASTER’S LIBRARY** Jacob M. Braude and Glen Van Ekeren (Prentice Hall, 2nd ed. 1992, $69.95)


10. **ENCYCLOPEDIAS**: A multi-volume encyclopedia, no older than five years.
    If your library can only afford one set, a popular writing style and intermediate reading level such as **WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA** (2007, $999.00) will be best. If you can afford more than one, stagger replacements and plan to own at least one geared to children and another for adults. (Children: **COMPTON’S**; Adult: **BRITANNICA**). Don’t try to save money by substituting with a one volume encyclopedia - too little information.

11. **FOUNDATION GRANTS TO INDIVIDUALS** Phyllis Edelson, ed. (New York: Foundation Center, 2007, $65.00)

12. **GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS** (Bantam, 2008, $19.95, paper). This gives superlatives for fun and quick reference. Older editions will circulate, especially to kids. [www.guinnessworldrecords.com/default.aspx](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/default.aspx)

13. **HOYLE’S RULES OF GAMES** (3rd revised, Signet, 2001, $7.99)

14. **INTERNET YELLOW PAGES** Mikal E. Belicove and Joe Kraynak (Que, 2007, $19.95)
15. KOVELS' ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES PRICE LIST (Crown, 2008, $27.95 paper)

16. LEGAL GUIDE FOR STARTING AND RUNNING A SMALL BUSINESS Fred S. Steingold (Nolo, 10th ed. 2008, $34.99)

17. MERRIAM-WEBSTER GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY (3rd ed. 2007, $34.95)


20. PETERSON'S FOUR YEAR COLLEGES (2008, $32.00). Peterson's regional college guides are nearly all available in paperback in a price range of $5.00-$30.00. www.petersons.com


22. SHAKING THE FAMILY TREE: A BASIC GUIDE TO TRACING YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY Ralph J. Crandall (2nd ed. NEHGS, 2001). Out of print but Amazon offers copies for $3.00 and up.

23. UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MANUAL (Office of the Federal Register, Superintendent of Documents, National Archive and Records Administration, $20.00/year, 2007/2008, $27.00) www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html

24. WORLD POETRY: AN ANTHOLOGY OF VERSE FROM ANTIQUITY TO OUR TIME by Washburn (W.W.Norton, 1998, $45.00)

25. WRITERS TOOLS: A writer's manual such as A MANUAL FOR WRITERS OF TERM PAPERS, THESSES, AND DISSERTATIONS Kate L. Turabian (5th ed. Univ. of Chicago Press, $20.00, $7.95 paper). A guide to suitable style in the presentation of formal papers, term papers, reports, articles, etc. WRITER'S REFERENCE Diana Hacker (2008, $58.95) or D. Hacker's POCKET STYLE MANUAL (2008, $32.50). In addition, PREPARING THE RESEARCH PAPER L.F. Dangle & A.M. Haussman (Prentice Hall, $1.00) a small pamphlet listing necessary information for footnotes, bibliographies, and brief information on writing a term paper. WRITER'S MARKET 2008 (F&W Publishers, 2007, $29.95)

If circulating copies are always on loan, consider keeping additional copies for reference:

- Peterson Field Guides (for example: A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA Roger Tory Peterson and Virginia Marie Peterson (Houghton Mifflin, 2002, $30.00)
- READER'S DIGEST COMPLETE DO-IT-YOURSELF MANUAL (Revised, 2005, $35.00)
Focus On Maine

In addition to the Maine sources in "Basic Tools," these Maine and local resources include both types of material as well as specific titles that are basic sources for the reference collection.

1. **COMMUNITY CHECKLIST** Your library should include the following: local histories; local newspapers; annual town reports; directory of town/regional officials and services; Chamber of Commerce publications; local government and community publications, studies and reports; local business annual reports; local maps and local telephone books.


3. **DIRECTORY OF MAINE GRANTMAKERS** (Maine Philanthropy Center, 2007, $60.00). Profiles of more than 400 grantmakers, Maine corporate foundations, corporate giving programs, and grantmakers located outside Maine with granting history in Maine.


5. **MAINE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S CONSUMER LAW GUIDE, 3rd ed.** Assistant Attorney General James A. McKenna and the Consumer Protection Division (State of Maine, Office of the Attorney General, 2004, $19.95)


7. **MAINE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY** (Tower Publishing, annual, 2008, $125.00). Over 40,000 companies listed.

8. **MAINE FAMILY LAW PAMPHLET: As Amended Through the 123rd Legislature, 2007 First Regular Session** (Thomson West, $69.00)


10. **MAINE SENATE AND HOUSE REGISTER** (Maine House and Senate, current year, free from your legislator). State Constitution, rules, directory, and memoranda.

    http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/legislature.html

11. **STATE MAPS** are available from the Maine Office of Tourism. See also the state website www.maine.gov, a valuable tool for planning trips, events and attractions, state government facts, etc.
Webliography

The following free web resources include citations from “Best Free Reference Websites,” RUSA Quarterly. Every effort has been made to confirm accuracy at time of publication. See also Maine’s Virtual Library MARVEL! http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases/ -- databases that are free for Maine citizens. MARVEL! databases are funded with legislative appropriations as well as funds from the Maine State Library, University of Maine - Fogler Library, the Public Utilities Commission, and MTEAF (Maine Telecommunications Educational Access Fund - commonly know as state Erate).

Business, Finance & Employment

Directory of companies, industries, and executives www.hoovers.com/free/
Federal forms including small business forms http://www.forms.gov/bgfPortal/citizen.portal
Help wanted for Southern Maine www.southernmainehelpwanted.com
Job database plus searching tips www.monster.com
Job listings and employers for Maine www.jobsinmaine.com
Maine Small Business Development Center www.mainesbdc.org/
Small business help www.score.org
Small businesses starts, financing, and expanding www.sba.gov
Stock quotes (current and historical) and public companies trading on stock exchanges www.bigcharts.marketwatch.com/

Consumer Information

800 tel. numbers for live business and service customer service reps www.gethuman.com
Consumer guides and protections http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Consumer_Safety.shtml
Consumer law center (national) http://www.consumerlaw.org/
Consumer Price Index http://www.bls.gov/cpi/home.htm
Consumer top-rated products in 13 categories www.consumersearch.com
Do not call registry (national) https://www.donotcall.gov/
How products are made www.madehow.com
How to do just about anything www.ehow.com
Kelley Blue Book (Vehicle pricing/appraisal) http://www.kbb.com/
Product recalls www.recalls.gov
Reviews of hotels, resorts, vacations and related http://www.tripadvisor.com/
Education
65,000 plants and animals of the US and Canada www.natureserve.org
College information (also links to book sales) www.petersons.com
Country information: Background Notes (U.S. State Dept. information about countries)
  http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/. CIA World Fact Book
Dictionary of units of measurement and conversions http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units/
Graphing calculator http://www.coolmath.com/graphit/index.html
Guide to grammar and writing http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
Help citing research in several styles http://citationmachine.net
History Channel http://history.com
Math help and tutorials http://www.sosmath.com/
Mathematic calculations http://www.martindalecenter.com/Calculators2.html
National digital newspapers project http://www.loc.gov/ndnp/
Newspapers by state and country http://www.ipl.org/div/news/
Presidents of the US www.ipl.org/div/potus
Smithsonian Institution www.si.edu
Strunk & White’s Elements of Style http://www.bartleby.com/141/

Entertainment
Celebrities (living & deceased) from all fields www.wa-wd.com
Great books online http://www.bartleby.com/
Movie Database www.imdb.com
Musical styles from popular to obscure with reviews, out of print, etc. www.allmusic.com
Readers’ advisory and library catalog http://www.librarything.com/

Genealogy
See the following three sites for comprehensive genealogy research:
  • http://www.familysearch.org (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
  • http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/
  • http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/index.html
Adoption information for genealogists http://adoptionregistry.com
Genealogy sites on the internet http://www.cyndislist.com/
Port of New York Passenger records search http://www.ellisisland.org/
General Reference
600,000+ images from the New York Public Library http://digitalgallery.nypl.org
American art plus pricing & artists from around the world http://www.askart.com
Art online http://www.artcyclopedia.com/
Books & other materials from OCLC member libraries http://www.worldcat.org/
Collection development and ILL www.amazon.com, www.worldcat.org and
www.barnesandnoble.com
Currency converter http://www.xe.com/ucc/
International news from the BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk
Librarians' Internet Index http://www.lii.org
Library of Congress www.loc.gov
Library of Congress American Memory Project - virtual library & museum
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html
Maine Memory Network - virtual library & museum http://www.mainememory.net/
MapQuest http://www.mapquest.com/
Maps -- political, physical, weather, natural resources www.nationalatlas.gov
Merriam-Webster Dictionary online www.m-w.com
National Weather Service www.nws.noaa.gov
(reverse look-up)
Translates words, phrases, paragraphs from Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Korean, and
European languages (not always perfectly) http://babelfish.altavista.com
Travel information -- U.S. and international www.tripadvisor.com
Yellow Pages, White Pages, maps and directions http://www.anywho.com/

Health & Nutrition
Diet, weight loss, physical fitness www.smallstep.gov
Drug information from MedlinePlus (Includes generic and brand name information for drugs,
supplements and herbal remedies)
Evaluating health information on the Internet
Food diary, calorie counter, health and fitness forums http://www.thedailyplate.com/
Internet Public Library's health sciences collection
http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/hea00.00.00/
Health & Nutrition (continued)
Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine (Includes Docfinder, a Maine directory of physicians and physician assistants) http://www.docboard.org/me/me_home.htm
Maine Health Science Libraries and Information Consortium http://library.umassmed.edu/h slic/
Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com
Medical Library Association health resources http://www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html
Merck Home Edition (interactive edition of consumer medical textbook)
   http://www.merck.com/mmhe/index.html
National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov
Nutrition information www.nutrition.gov
Patient resources and physician locator http://www.mainemed.com/patients/index.php
Recipes http://allrecipes.com or www.epicurious.com

Law & Government
Government documents page at the Portland Public Library (Links to the city of Portland, the state of Maine, and federal government information)
   http://www.portlandlibrary.com/research/govinfo.htm
Internet Legal Research Group (legal forms, research, lawyers, etc.) http://www.ilrg.com
Kid's portal to the US Government http://www.kids.gov/
Legal help http://www.ptla.org/ptlasite/cliented/cliented.htm
Maine Law and Legal resources list http://www.mainegov.portal/government/law.html
Maine Statutes http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes
US Government's official web portal http://www.usa.gov/

Search Engines
In addition to Google and Yahoo, consider www.about.com, www.altavista.com,
To compare Search Engines:
   http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/SearchEngines.html