A BRIEF LIST OF USEFUL REFERENCE BOOKS

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I. Desk Reference Books

A. General
   1. A good dictionary (Webster’s Collegiate and the American Heritage are obvious choices).
   2. The Oxford English Dictionary (provides meanings of words as they have evolved, with examples of uses).
   3. Roget’s International Thesaurus
   4. Spelling Dictionary (in addition to SpellCheck!)

B. Literary
   1. Bible, King James Version with Concordance (essential for looking up religious references; the concordance tells you where any single word appears).
   2. Mythology by Edith Hamilton or The Greek Myths by Robert Graves (What was the sin of Sisyphus? How did Midas get his ears? Who was Philomel? Etc.)
   3. A Handbook to Literature by C. Hugh Holman, et.al.
   4. The Oxford Companion to American Literature by James Hart (a handy guide for biographical and historical information. Includes brief discussion of many important works. But contains some bad information, such as the entry on “jazz.”
   5. The New Columbia Encyclopedia by William H. Harris, Judy S. Levy (Like the Oxford Companion to English Literature, only better; ask your parents for this one-volume treasure trove for Christmas).

II. Style Manuals

A. Rules for Scholarly Writing
   1. MLA Handbook
   2. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations by Kate Turabian

B. Principles of Composition
   1. The Elements of Style by W. Strunk and E. B. White
   2. The Random House Handbook, Frederick Crews
III. Literary Histories

A. *The Literary History of the United States* by Spiller, Johnson, et al (3 volumes)
C. *The Oxford History of English Literature* (14 volumes)
D. *A History of the English Language* by Albert C. Baugh
E. *The American Language* by H. L. Menken

IV. Bibliographical Studies

A. Books to Own
   1. *A Guide to English Literature* by F. W. Bateson
   2. *A Bibliographical Guide to Studies in the Literature of the USA* by Clarence H. Gohdes
B. Useful Library Sources
   1. *The Humanities Index*
   2. *The MLA Bibliography*
   3. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*
   4. *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*
   5. *Literary History of United States* by Spiller, Johnson (Bibliography in 3rd volume)