What is literary criticism?—Critical essays that analyze and interpret literature in all of its forms. These essays are published in scholarly literary journals and books of criticism. Many of these essays are put into online subscription databases made available for students to access at computers on campus. Students off campus have access by supplying MyLSC-O userID and password. Critical essays from the past are also available in print in reference books which, in some cases, have also been added to online databases.

Where are these databases?—Go to the library home page (library.lsco.edu) and click the Databases button. Click “Databases by Academic Subject” and click “Literature, Philosophy and Spanish Language.” The five literary criticism databases are listed below in recommended order for selecting and developing a topic and then finding critical essays to develop and support a thesis.

1. **Magill On Literature Plus**—Online versions of all Critical Survey and Masterplots reference sets plus other Salem Press literary reference publications. The Critical Survey information helps students select a short story or other work by listing and summarizing several of the author’s most well-known works. Masterplots provides critical overviews of stories, poetry and plays. Search Magill in two ways: by author’s name to find Critical Survey articles, then by title of the work to find Masterplots articles. For example: Start by searching for: **critical survey and Faulkner (author’s name)**
   Then search for: **masterplots and a rose for emily (title of work)**
   In search results select Critical Survey or Masterplots articles about the type of work you are interested in: Short story (short fiction), novels (long fiction), drama or plays, poetry, etc.

2. **Literature Resource Center (LRC)**—Online versions of literary criticism essays from reference sets from the publisher Gale: Dictionary of Literary Biography, Contemporary Authors, and Contemporary Literary Criticism plus other sources. After typing keywords in the search box, click the radio button for the type of search wanted: person, title of work, keyword or search entire text (of the article). In search results, select the tabs by type of info. The first tab for Literary Criticism and second tab for Author Bio are the most important, but browse the other tabs also.

3. **Literature Criticism Online: Short Story Criticism**—Online version of all 93+ volumes the Gale collection of short story overviews, author biography, and critical essays, also known as “the red books” in PDF format.

4. **Academic Search Complete**—An all-topic periodical database that includes many scholarly literary journals with the PDF full-text of articles. Check boxes that limit searching to only the scholarly (peer reviewed) journals and full-text. Then search again without limiting to full-text to get article citations. Many of these articles are available in print either in our library or from another library via inter-library loan. Search by author’s last name and keywords from the title of the work. For example, search for: **faulkner and rose for emily**
   Using AND between keywords forces all keywords to be present in the search results.

5. **Research Library from ProQuest**—Another all-topic periodical database, similar to the one above that includes some different journals or sometimes more coverage of the same journal. Again, check the boxes to limit to only scholarly journals and full text. Search again without the full-text limit. Use the same search strategy as for Academic Search Complete.

Each database is unique in what is the best search strategy to use, so always ask for help if you need it! Following the strategies described above should get you started.
Books in Reference Collection—Print or save information available in the databases first, where printing is free, and then check these print sources for more. Copy articles in reference books for 10¢/page at the copier by the elevator.

1. **Short Stories for Students** PN 3373 .S3844 — summarizes author bio, the story, major themes, style elements, characters and historical background. Provides lengthier summaries than *Masterplots*. Provides several critical essays. Use indexes in the last volume which lists titles of works and authors, themes and nationalities. Selected parts are online in LRC.

2. **Novels for Students** PN3385 N68, **Poetry for Students** PN1101 .P756, **Drama for Students** PN1601 .D595— Same type of information as *Short Stories for Students* but for novels, poems or plays. Selected parts of articles are online in LRC.

3. **Short Story Criticism (SSC)** PN 3373 .S387 — (the red books) Provide many critical essays. Look up by author’s last name in the last volume. [Online in *Literary Criticism Online*]

4. **Drama Criticism** PN1601 .D59 and **Poetry Criticism** PN1010 .P499 for plays or poetry.

5. **Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)** PN 771 C59 criticism of all literary types listed by author. Look in the index of the last numbered volume to see where your author is located in the following sets: CLC, TCLC, NCLC, DLB by volume number in BOLD and page numbers.

6. **Twentieth Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)** PN 771 .G27— covering authors who died between 1900-1959 up to 1999. Authors who died after 1999 are in CLC.

7. **Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism (NCLC)** PN 761 .N5 — covering authors who died between 1800-1899. Not online.

8. **Dictionary of Literary Biography (DLB)** PS129 .D5 — Lengthier author biographies and descriptions of their works. Some but not all of this information is in LRC

Books of criticism about individual authors—Subject search the library catalog with the author’s name, last name first, then add “and criticism”

For example search for:  faulkner william and criticism and click **Subject button**.

Search also in the Lamar University library using our catalog. Look for a drop-down menu at the catalog search page. Highlight “Mary and John Gray” and perform the subject search on your author. However, e-books found there may not be available to our users. Any book in the Stacks at Lamar University may be requested to come here by clicking **Place hold** on the Details screen for the book. Supply your Campus ID number (beginning with R) and birthday as MMDDYY. Items from Beaumont arrive in two or three days after 4 p.m. Ask for them at the check-out desk. **Ask for help when placing a hold, if needed.**

Still need more? Use works cited lists at the ends of articles to locate more resources. If a cited book is not found in our catalog or in Beaumont, ask for it via our interlibrary loan service.

**Print Periodicals/Microfiche: Articles from Literary Journals**—If you have a citation and want to know if we have the journal, use our online periodical list. Type journal names and see dates for available periodicals and the format, if paper, microfiche or online. Click the “Periodical List” on the library homepage, middle column, last link. Follow any links into the databases and select the year, then the volume/issue (or date), then look by either the page number or by title of the article. If an article is here in print, go to the periodicals area and look for the journal in A-Z order. Boxes are labeled by year. If it is here in microfiche, **ask for help.** If it is not available here, ask about filling out a form for our interlibrary loan service.

**Citing Sources in MLA style**—A research paper should have sources indicated in the text and a “Works Cited” list at the end of the paper. English courses require MLA citation style. At the library home page under “HELP!!!” click **Citation Styles. Print the MLA guide.** Help is available at the 2nd floor HELP DESK, or you may call us at (409) 882-3082, or e-mail your questions using our **ASK A LIBRARIAN** form under HELP!!! on the library home page.