

E 43-3112

[Internet Resource]

The Free dictionaryURL: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

[Visited Nov'05] This reference Web site, developed by Farlex Inc., went live in 2003. It contains English language (including idioms), medical, legal, financial, and computer dictionaries, plus a thesaurus, acronyms dictionary, and encyclopedias. The licensed sources are a combination of the standard and the new—*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (4th ed., CH, Feb'01, 38-3049), *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (6th ed., CH, Jan'01, 38-2464), and *Wikipedia* <<http://www.wikipedia.org>>. Farlex's business development office has been busy licensing content, adding eight new sources so far this year. The home page is inviting, especially for trivia enthusiasts. Columns, which are updated daily, include This Day in History (e.g., Taipei 101 becomes the world's tallest building); Today's Birthday (e.g., Arthur Miller's); Article of the Day (e.g., Giverny); and Quotation of the Day (e.g., from Willa Cather). The search function is simple, but well designed for searching online lexicons. A single box with a drop-down menu allows users to choose "starts with," "ends with," or "mentions." A search will return a definition, if available, provide links to articles that mention the entry, and also browse the site's indexes—revealing other possibly helpful entries. As with Google, the advertisements generated by the search are separated from the content and are not too annoying. Farlex is also developing a companion site, *The Free Library* <<http://thefreelibrary.com>>, a literary reference collection. **Summing Up:** Recommended. All levels.—*S. M. Metcalf, New Mexico State University*

E 43-3113

[Internet Resource]

The Index of articles on Jewish studiesURL: <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/rambi/>

[Visited Nov'05] *The Index of Articles on Jewish Studies* (RAMBI) is a freely available Web-based bibliography of scholarly material. It selectively indexes thousands of journal articles, articles in collections, and chapters in books from primary and secondary sources in Hebrew, Yiddish, and European languages, offering worldwide coverage of Jewish studies and the land of Israel. This ambitious bibliographic project began in 1966 and became electronically accessible on the Internet in 2001, following a large retrospective conversion project. The database has been compiled from the holdings of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. The interface is easy to navigate and well designed, offering a choice of English or Hebrew searches (only the English search feature is reviewed here). RAMBI presents both browse and search functions; options include basic and advanced searching, and keyword or field-specific searching. Full bibliographic citations, source identification, and detailed subject descriptors are provided. In comparison with *Index to Jewish Periodicals* <<http://www.jewishperiodicals.com>> and the *ATLA Religion Database* (CH, Jan'06, 43-2538), RAMBI covers a more extensive, international range of sources with a greater level of subject analysis, though more selectively; thus, it may be considered a complement to those databases. With its scholarly emphasis and international coverage, RAMBI is an outstanding resource. Its main drawback is a lack of abstracts; otherwise, it is a very welcome (and freely available!) addition to the scholarly roster. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Upper-level undergraduates and above.—*L. E. Jorbin, Cleveland State University*

43-3114

GV862

2005-1718 CIP

Light, Jonathan Fraser. **The cultural encyclopedia of baseball**. 2nd ed. McFarland, 2005. 1,105p index afp ISBN 0786420871, \$75.00

This single volume offers an enormous amount of detail about the national pastime. It profiles every Hall of Fame player, as well as every National and American League club (and predecessors). As one may imagine, statistics play a large role in this resource, which includes facts and figures on just about every conceivable event in the game. Cultural references to baseball are noted throughout in numerous quotations. Some of the more fascinating sections include "Nicknames," "Presidents," and "Salaries." Other entries that make for offbeat perusal include "Freak Accidents," "Sex," and "Injuries and Illnesses." Coverage extends through the end of the 2004 postseason. A significant section on movies discusses milestone motion pictures involving the sport. As much as statistics, anecdotes are generously included through-

out this volume. A good, lengthy essay covers the history and origins of the game. Awards, such as the "Silver Slugger," "Gold Glove," and "Most Valuable Player," have major essays. This resource is primarily targeted toward the baseball enthusiast, but will serve as a valuable reference work and complement to other standard baseball works. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Academic and public libraries; all levels.—*L. Kong, California State University, San Bernardino*

43-3115

PE1591

MARC

Meltzer, Peter E. **The thinker's thesaurus: sophisticated alternatives to common words**. Marion Street, 2005. 461p ISBN 0972993789, \$29.95; ISBN 0972993797 pbk, \$16.95

Meltzer, a Philadelphia attorney, created this unusual thesaurus based on his lifelong interest in lexicology. He reports having consulted over 500 dictionaries, wordbooks, periodicals, newspapers, and Internet sources, and in his introductory articles compares his thesaurus with other works. His thesaurus, he believes, will solve two major problems present in traditional thesauri such as *Roget's International*: 1) they rarely offer interesting choices, and 2) most of them are organized by base words listing alternatives in the same grammatical category, a practice that tends to restrict users to one-word synonyms while occasionally ignoring nuances. Meltzer discusses similar titles (e.g., *Weird and Wonderful Words*, ed. by Erin McKean, 2002) that offer unusual words but are problematic because they favor archaic, rare, obsolete, or obscure words. His purpose is to provide synonyms (and current examples of their use) for "legitimate" words not generally included in thesauri, or words for situations where an ordinary thesaurus would lead readers astray. "Clarifier" entries provide more exact definitions and nuances in words. Because this work is not as comprehensive as a traditional thesaurus, readers should not view it as a replacement, but rather as a supplement. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Word lovers, scholars, and literati; upper-level undergraduates and above.—*S. A. Ariew, University of South Florida*

E 43-3116

[Internet Resource]

OAIsterURL: <http://oaiester.umdl.umich.edu/o/oaiester/>

[Visited Nov'05] Although research libraries are creating and hosting a growing body of digital material, in many cases only a few people outside the institutions are aware of these resources. But discovery is facilitated when digital collections meet certain standards, such as the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH). Digital library creators whose data is OAI-compliant want their content to be included in data harvesters like *OAIster*, which allows users to search across hundreds of digital collections in a uniform and systematic way. Among the over 500 collections exposed to the *OAIster* data harvester are the Library of Congress's *American Memory* (CH, Sup'97, 34Sup-134), the *California Digital Library* <<http://www.californiadigitalibrary.org>>, and *PubMed Central* <<http://www.pubmedcentral.com>>.

Users may search *OAIster* by general keyword or specific fields (e.g., author, title). Results can also be limited by format: text, image, audio, or video. Search results include a sidebar that displays the number of hits from each institution and identifies digital collections with strengths in a particular area. Items range from Web sites targeting elementary students to scholarly monographs. Search terms are highlighted, which helps in the interpretation of results when a large number of fields are displayed. There is only one display format, and results are listed ten at a time—which can be cumbersome when scanning large result sets. In contrast to most Web searching, this system treats any terms entered in sequence as a phrase search. The absence of a controlled vocabulary means that searchers should consider variations and/or synonyms. Although *OAIster* brings together very rich and authoritative collections under one roof, the search interface could be improved and modified to display both brief and full results. However for students or scholars in search of digital materials, particularly images, audio, and video, *OAIster* is a much better resource than standard Web search engines. **Summing Up:** Recommended. All levels.—*A. R. Hutchinson, Smithsonian Institution Libraries*