

# Bibliotips

Contemporary Authors  
Contemporary Literary Criticism  
Dictionary of Literary Biography

**Alfred R. Neumann Library, University of Houston Clear Lake**

**Contemporary Authors, Contemporary Literary Criticism, and Dictionary of Literary Biography** are databases that make available much, but not all, of the material from multi-volume sets of the same titles published by Gale Research. The paper editions (available at Neumann Library in editions through 2003), containing biographical and critical material about authors and their works, are available in the Reference Area of the library:

Ref Z 1224 .C6  
Ref PN 771 .C59  
Ref PS 21 .D52

**Contemporary Authors**  
**Contemporary Literary Criticism**  
**Dictionary of Literary Biography**

In addition to some text that is omitted from the online versions, the paper copies have photographs and facsimiles. The online versions are updated frequently (in some cases, daily) and are searchable by words, phrases or subjects.

## STARTING THE GALE LITERARY DATABASES

From the library's World Wide Web homepage (<http://www.uhcl.edu/library>), click on **Research a Topic**, then **Databases A-Z**. Select the tab **Databases by Name**, click on **C**, and then click on the **Contemporary Authors** hyperlink.

## HOW TO SEARCH

Search all three of these databases simultaneously, or select only one or two:

The screenshot shows the Gale Literary Databases search page. On the left, there are three callout boxes:
 

- Top: "Click on tab to select one database with its specialized search modes." with an arrow pointing to the "Contemporary Authors" tab.
- Middle: "or"
- Bottom: "Check boxes to search one or several databases with this screen." with an arrow pointing to the checkboxes at the bottom of the page.

 On the right, there are two callout boxes:
 

- Top: "Searching terms in both *author* and *title* fields will narrow your results. One field alone will broaden results in that one." with an arrow pointing to the "Author Name" and "Title of Work" input fields.
- Bottom: "or"
- Bottom: "If desired, enter a year to find biographical entries about authors who were born (or died) in that year." with an arrow pointing to the "Birth Year" input field.

 The search interface includes:
 

- Navigation tabs: "Search All Literature Databases", "Contemporary Authors", "Contemporary Literary Criticism", "Dictionary of Literary Biography".
- Search criteria fields: "Author Name" (filled with "lessing, doris"), "Title of Work" (filled with "golden notebook"), "Birth Year" (filled with "1919"), "Death Year", "Nationality" (filled with "None"), "Subject/Genre" (filled with "None"), "Full Text".
- Buttons: "Search", "Clear Form", "Return results" (dropdown set to "10"), "Include index entries" (checkbox).
- Database selection: "Select the database(s) you wish to search:" with checkboxes for "Contemporary Authors", "Contemporary Literary Criticism", and "Dictionary of Literary Biography" (all checked).

- **Author Name**

Type the name in order or inverted, a surname or a pseudonym:

William Faulkner  
Faulkner, William

Goethe  
Vargus Llosa

Mark Twain  
Clemens

- **Title of Work**

Enter the complete title or combination of title words:

A Rose for Emily	Barren Ground	Vein of Iron
Death Takes a Holiday	death and holiday	gone and wind

- **Nationality**

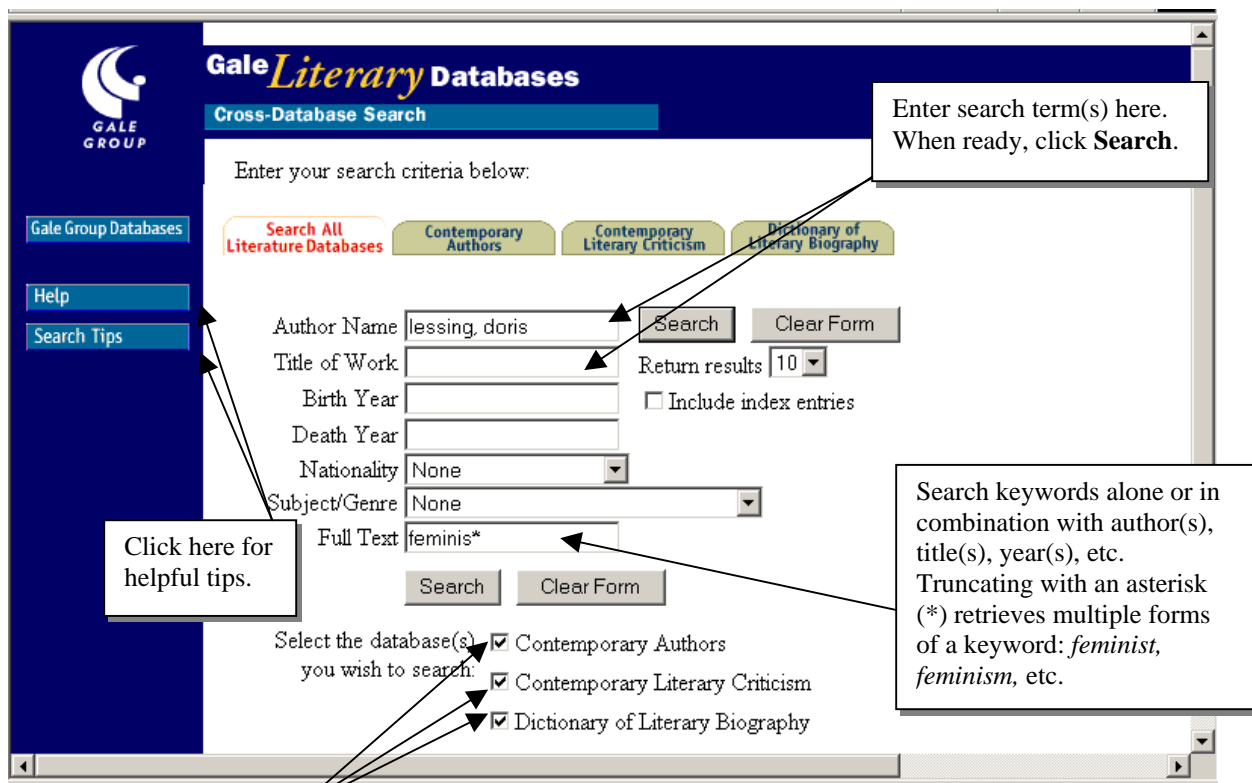
Select from the provided pull-down list. (British, Italian, Nigerian, etc.)

- **Subject/Genre**

Select from a pull-down list: Autobiography/Memoir; Nonfiction; Plays; etc. Note: This type of search will be more effective in the *Contemporary Authors* database than in the other two Gale Literature databases.

- **FullText**

Try a full text search if your search by author and/or title has not found any relevant records. Search in the “Full Text” space for word(s) and phrases in the main text of each article as well as for all forms of the author's name. This type of search will be more flexible than the “Subject” search menu.



Other specialized types of searches are possible within the three various databases: *Honors and awards* (in **Contemporary Authors**), *Essay topics* (in **Dictionary of Literary Biography**), *Critic name* (in **Contemporary Literary Criticism**), etc.

## RESULTS LIST

After clicking the **SEARCH** button, the list of documents that correspond to your query will appear.

**Gale Literary Databases**  
Cross-Database Search

Your search: (author lessing, doris) AND (uz CA or CLC or DLB) AND (DT Criticism or Biography or Topic)  
Found **34** Documents  
Document(s) 1-10 of 34  
Tip: To reorder these documents, click on the appropriate heading below.

Page#: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Click the highlighted entry to see the full text of the document.

Score	Document Title	Source	Type
	Lessing, Doris (May) <a href="#">"Doris (May) Lessing," in Contemporary Authors. (A profile of the author's life and works)</a>	Contemporary Authors	
	Lessing, Doris <a href="#">"Doris Lessing," in Contemporary Literary Criticism-Select. (A brief review of the author's life, works, and</a>	Contemporary Literary Criticism	

Results are sorted by **relevance** "score". To sorting order, click Document Title, Source [name of database] or Type.

Many documents have internal *Table of Contents* links, so that you can jump directly to the information you seek.

**Table of Contents:**

- [Biographical and Critical Essay](#)
- [The Grass Is Singing](#)
- [Martha Quest](#)
- [A Proper Marriage](#)
- [A Ripple from the Storm](#)
- [Landlocked](#)
- [The Four-Gated City](#)
- [Retreat to Innocence](#)
- [The Golden Notebook](#)
- ["The Small Personal Voice"](#)
- [Briefs for a Decent into Hell](#)

## NAVIGATING DOCUMENT

Your search terms will appear in **bold** in each instance throughout each retrieved article.

Additional buttons are available at the bottom of the complete text to enable you to move around. They are: *First Document*, *Previous Document*, *Next Document*, and *Last Document*.

It will often be possible to link from the text of one document to other related documents on the topic at hand. In particular, biographical essays found in Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism* have such a feature. Labeled: "Jump to Critical Essay(s) about the Author's Works", it includes links to related essays in the database. There are also links to "Recent Updates".

**Doris (May) Lessing**  
1919-  
Nationality: English

Recent Update

Look for hyperlinked "Recent Updates" in biographical essays to find new publication information.

Entry Updated : 01/29/2004

Considered among the most significant writers of the post-World War II generation, Lessing has explored many of the most important ideas, themes, and social issues of the twentieth century in her prolific body of work. Her oeuvre displays a broad spectrum of interests and concerns, ranging from racism, communism, and **feminism** to psychology and mysticism. Lessing began her career in the 1950s, writing fiction in the realist mode that focused on the theme of racial injustice. As her writing developed, Lessing began focusing on strong-willed, independent heroines who suffer emotional crises in male-dominated societies, anticipating many of the major **feminist** concerns of the

Search terms appear in **bold** in the body of each article

## ADDITIONAL SEARCH TIPS

- Be specific and not too broad. "Roman" may turn up literary characters with that given name, not necessarily the literature of classical Italy.
- Phrases of two or more words are searched in the database just as typed in the search line. For example, the phrase, "time travel" (the quotation marks are **not** necessary) will retrieve results that relate to that exact phrase. The retrieved results will not include separate instances of the words "time" and "travel". Single search terms can be combined with phrases with the word "and" to yield more precise results; "ancient Rome and Caesar" is an example of such a search.
- Use synonyms for terms: e.g., *bildungsroman* or *coming of age* to pull all possible citations together.
- The database is not case sensitive; lower case letters, capitals or a mixture can be used.
- *Truncation or "Wildcards"*: There are two truncation (wildcard) operators - The Asterisk (\*) is used at the end of words employing the same root: *poet\** can be used for *poet*, *poetry*, *poetic*, or *poetics*, etc.; it can also be used to replace any number of characters within a word. The Question mark (?) is used when only one letter needs to be substituted *wom?n* retrieves both *women* and *woman*; *love?* retrieves *lover*, *loves* or *loved*, but not *lovely*

## PRINTING/DOWNLOADING

To print or save a document, use the toolbar on your computer's browser window. To print, click the **Print** icon on the browser toolbar to print any currently displayed record. To download results to a floppy disc, CD, or other, click on **File** from the browser toolbar, then click **Save as**. Select the appropriate drive for your disc and label the document with a file name.

## CITING SOURCES

Citations to electronic library database sources will usually be slightly different than to print sources. Refer to appropriate citation guides, e.g. *The MLA Handbook* (UHCL/Circulation Reserve: LB2369 .G53 2003) for information about citing articles—signed or unsigned—from databases such as these full text sources from Gale.

For more information, refer to onscreen help, or consult a reference librarian.