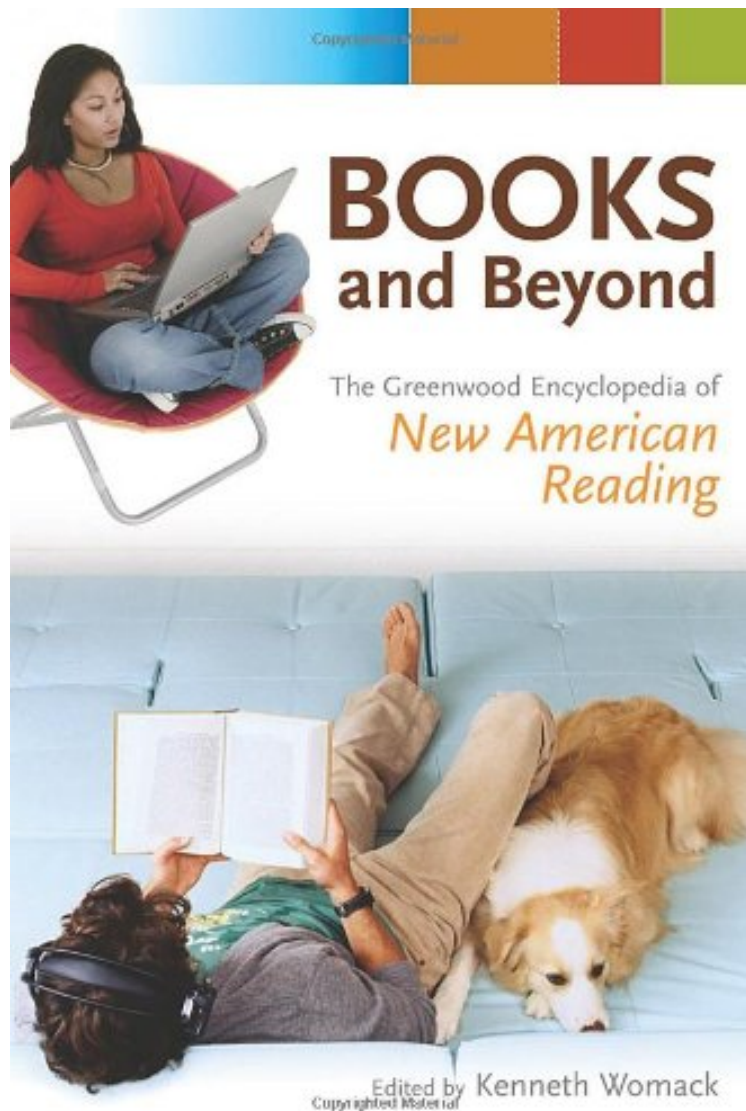


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There's a strong interest in reading for pleasure or self-improvement in America, as shown by the popularity of Harry Potter, and book clubs, including Oprah Winfrey's. Although recent government reports show a decline in recreational reading, the same reports show a strong correlation between interest in reading and academic achievement. This set provides a snapshot of the current state of popular American literature, including various types and genres. The volume presents alphabetically arranged entries on more than 70 diverse literary categories, such as cyberpunk, fantasy literature, flash fiction, GLBTQ literature, graphic novels, manga and anime, and zines. Each entry is written by an expert contributor and provides a definition of the genre, an overview of its history, a look at trends and themes, a discussion of how the literary form engages contemporary issues, a review of the genre's reception, a discussion of authors and works, and suggestions for further reading. Sidebars provide fascinating details, and the set closes with a selected, general bibliography. Reading in America for pleasure and knowledge continues to be popular, even while other media compete for attention. While students continue to read many of the standard classics, new genres have emerged. These have captured the attention of general readers and are also playing a critical role in the language arts classroom. This book maps the state of popular literature and reading in America today, including the growth of new genres, such as cyberpunk, zines, flash fiction, GLBTQ literature, and other topics. Each entry is written by an expert contributor and provides a definition of the genre, an overview of its history, a look at trends and themes, a discussion of how the literary form engages contemporary issues, a review of the genre's critical reception, a discussion of authors and works, and suggestions for further reading. Sidebars provide fascinating details, and the set closes with a selected, general bibliography. Students will find this book a valuable guide to what they're reading today and will appreciate its illumination of popular culture and contemporary social issues.

From Booklist Greenwood has published an encyclopedia that is designed to help librarians, general readers, and students understand contemporary American literature. Its 75 entries give a broad overview of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, and comics since 1980. Each entry includes a definition of the genre, history, recent trends and prevailing themes, context and related issues, critical and popular reception, selected authors, a bibliography, and suggestions for further reading. The set also includes lists of contemporary authors by genre and a comprehensive index. Besides analyzing the standard fiction genres, the encyclopedia covers the growth of such genres as Cyberpunk, Graphic novels, Flash fiction, and Transrealist fiction. For nonfiction, there are essays on Historical Writing and True Crime Literature, among others. There are also entries for poetry genres such as Eco-poetry and other topics, such as Film adaptations of books. Within each essay, the contributors connect their topics to movies, radio, the Internet, and American popular culture. Numerous sidebars give interesting lists, trivia, and quotations to engage the readers' interest. The essays range in quality from outstanding to just fair. Those on newer genres such as Chick lit and Zines are complete and quite informative. Entries on Arab American literature and Beat poetry also give an outstanding overview. Autobiography and memoir, on the other hand, has a very short overview of the genres' history and sums up the trends in the area in just a few sentences. There is a great deal of duplication among the entries. For example, Suspense fiction covers legal thrillers in great detail, yet there is a separate essay on Legal thrillers. Adventure fiction spends most of its time discussing nonfiction travel literature, while there is another entry for Travel literature. Adventure fiction explains the elements of the genre very well but does not discuss the important authors. Books and Beyond does an outstanding job of explaining the new fiction genres, nonfiction, and poetry. Although anyone seeking to understand the traditional fiction genres would get more information from Genreflecting (6th ed., 2005) or any of the Libraries Unlimited Genreflecting Advisory Series titles, it could be useful for librarians, as well as for students, because of the variety of literatures it covers. Recommended for public and academic libraries. Also available as an e-book. --Merle Jacob "Written for high school, college, and university students, these four-volume set addresses the shape and nature of contemporary American literature focusing on 1980 to the present - in all of its print and post print formats. Womack (English, Penn State, Altoona), who has published widely on 20th-century literary and popular culture, brings together the writings of 64 international scholars on over 70 literary genres." - Library Journal "This four-volume encyclopedia includes over 70 types of genre literature, from the well established, e.g., historical fiction, to the more recent and emerging genres, e.g., chick lit, zines, and graphic novels. While the focus is on popular American literature, contributors discuss writers from other countries when they are significant in a particular genre Recommended. Lower-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers; general readers." - Choice "Greenwood has published an encyclopedia that is designed to help librarians, general readers, and students understand contemporary American literature. Its 75 entries give a broad overview of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, and comics since 1980. Each entry includes a definition of the genre, history, recent trends and prevailing themes, context and related issues, critical and popular reception, selected authors, a bibliography, and suggestions for further reading. The set also includes lists of contemporary authors by genre and a comprehensive index. Books and Beyond does an outstanding job of explaining the new fiction genres, nonfiction, and poetry. Although anyone seeking to understand the traditional fiction genres would get more information from Genreflecting (6th ed., 2005) or any of the Libraries Unlimited Genreflecting Advisory Series titles, it could be useful for librarians, as well as for students, because of the variety of literatures it covers. Recommended for public and academic libraries." - Booklist "Recommended for the very large

high school library and above, where scholarly critical information is needed." - Teacher Librarian
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About the Author
Kenneth Womack is Professor of English and Head of the Division of Arts and Humanities at Penn State Altoona.