

# SELECTION POLICY and PUBLICATION HISTORY

## SELECTION POLICY

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Resources for College Libraries and Resources for College Libraries: Career Resources are highly selective core bibliographies, together covering approximately 90,000 titles in over 115 subjects across the community and liberal arts college curriculum.

Resources in RCL and RCL Career Resources aim to be:

- relevant to the broad undergraduate curriculum;
- required or recommended for coursework;
- useful for undergraduate research;
- reflective of current scholarship in an area;
- classic or historically significant to a subject;
- if advanced, critical for faculty preparing new curricula or senior undergraduates doing thesis work.

Simply put, RCL titles are those considered to be essential for all academic libraries. Resources are carefully considered by subject specialists, who are almost exclusively academic librarians and faculty members. The collection includes both books (including reference works and select textbooks) and electronic resources (subscription databases, web sites, data sets, and other digital content). Select journals or visual media may be included in individual subjects, but are not comprehensively covered by RCL.

RCL selections primarily support the teaching curriculum at undergraduate institutions and thus are materials targeted at an undergraduate audience. Research materials primarily for graduate students and faculty may be present in the collection, though they are not the standard. In most fields, RCL selects works in the English language only. Though the majority of selected monograph works are in-print, there are instances in which it is appropriate for an out-of-print work to remain in RCL, particularly those works considered to be classic or foundational, which should not be removed from a library's collection. For electronic resources, subject editors use similar standards they would apply to monographic works, but additionally judge an electronic resource's reliability, stability, and longevity.

Though individual criteria for selection will vary from one discipline to another, just as it often varies amongst selectors and institutions, users can trust that RCL editors have applied rigorous and high standards to the resources selected for this core bibliography. To that end, each subject area undergoes comprehensive peer review to ensure that selections remain relevant, credible, and current for the undergraduate collection. Reviewers evaluate all aspects of the digital product: a scope note that describes the work and methodology; the taxonomy for logical order and relevance to the discipline; and all titles selected as essential for research and study. Following peer review, the subject editor is responsible for incorporating reviewers' recommendations into future iterations of the bibliography and taxonomy.

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

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### 1967

The first edition of *Books for College Libraries* (BCL) was published. BCL grew out of the collection development initiative for the University of California's New Campuses Program, aimed to create three identical library collections for the new Irvine, Santa Cruz, and San Diego campuses. Drawing upon published library catalogs from Harvard University and the University of Michigan, editors Melvin Voight and Joseph Treyez set out to build a collection of 50,000 core titles. The result became *Books for College Libraries*, a single-volume resource offering 53,410 hand-selected titles with publication dates prior to 1964.

### 1975

The second edition of *Books for College Libraries* was funded by the Council of Library Resources, and for the first time editorial development was led by Choice magazine. 38,651 titles published before early 1973 were included in the six volumes. Seven main subject classifications were covered: Humanities, Language & Literature, History, Social Sciences, Psychology, Science, and Technology.

### 1988

Thirteen years later, *Books for College Libraries* (3rd edition) debuted. While still managed by Choice, BCL3 was published without the aid of outside funding. An all-volunteer staff of subject specialists compiled 49,662 titles in the same seven main subject areas. Adopted by academic libraries large and small, BCL3 redefined the ideal core collection of monographs for supporting undergraduate study.

### 2006

Nearly forty years after the original *Books for College Libraries* was published, Resources for College Libraries was released in both a print and online version, as well as for use with the Bowker Book Analysis System. The collaboration between ACRL's Choice, Bowker, and more than 300 editors and subject specialists resulted in an academic core list 65,000 titles strong with expanded coverage for interdisciplinary fields and online resources.

### 2009

Resources for College Libraries: Career Resources was released as an online supplement to RCL content. The successor to *Vocational and Technical Resources for Community College Libraries* (ed. Mary Ann Laun, 1995), RCL Career Resources updated the core content for vocational, technical, and career college libraries in ten major subject disciplines. The resource featured 56 career-oriented subject areas, recommending monograph titles, as well as essential electronic resources.

**[For more information, visit the RCL homepage](#)**