

1. I like Lawrence Block. What other authors might I like?

I'm not familiar with Lawrence Block, but that doesn't really matter, because we have some great Advisory tools! Starting with *NoveList* I looked up the Author's name and learn that the author is "a highly-acclaimed and extremely versatile Mystery author of several best-selling series," I note that they are contemporary (a new book released in 2019 even!), and has written novels and short stories. I would also start with asking the patron what they like about Lawrence Block's books... I can see that LB only has male protagonists, and I wouldn't want to get too social activist on the patron by only recommending books with female protagonists if that's a specific feature that the reader is drawn to.

NoveList describes some of the points that our textbook referenced for identification—quick paced, gritty and comedic style, intricate plot, strong sense of location, cozy yet thrilling. To the right side of the interface *NoveList* offers 9 "Read Alikes," with brief descriptions of why the recommended author reads like the selected author, wow. Now that I know a little more about the author and their style, AND have asked the patron for specific qualities that they like I can either identify a few authors from this list that my library might have in circulation (or we can borrow from another library), or depending on how independent the patron is it might be best to print the list off and let them browse a few of the authors on their own.

Immediately I am drawn to Peter Temple and Stuart Kaminsky's description, for including both humor and darkness. Jack Higgins and Tim Weaver seem like great recommendations as well. Don Winslow and Steve Olfelder seem a little "toxic masculinity" or violent, and I might want to find a round-about way of figuring out if these books are actually advisable to this particular reader first. If the patron isn't in a "boy's only reading club" I would be happy to recommend Evelyn Smith as well.

Cited:

NoveList, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/novelist/detail?vid=2&sid=da11b61e-264f-4f0c-b986-f6ede50d9950%40sessionmgr4006&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92ZWxpc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#UI=1000414&d b=noh> (Accessed October 15, 2019)

2. I need a review of *The Lightning Thief* by Riordan.

Using *LibraryThing*, I quickly learn that *The Lightning Thief* is a book by Rick Riordan and is part of a 4 book series called Percy Jackson and the Olympians. Using the UI-UC database for Book Reviews, I navigate to *Gale Literature: Book Review Index*. As I enter the terms in the Search Box I realize that there are different variations of the work. Now I need to know more about what the patron needs. Do they need a book review or a review of the film, or the graphic novel? Is the reader a child or adult?

Our course text referred to *Publisher's Weekly* as a popular publisher of book reviews, so if the patron was looking for general information, I would recommend this review from July 18, 2005. *Booklist* was another coursebook favorite, and there's an article from September 15, 2005 to recommend. If the reader is a child, I would be more drawn to the *Creative Kids* review. If the patron wants more academic reviews, or is a school librarian for example, I would recommend the two reviews written for that specific audience.

Gale is an authoritative resource that we have talked about in class and in the context of our coursebook, and I have had positive experiences with the databases so far.

Cited:

LibraryThing, <https://www.librarything.com/work/173670>

“The Lightning Thief (Book),” *Gale Literature: Book Review Index*, https://go-gale-com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/ps/paginate.do?tabID=T002&searchResultsType=SingleTab&topicId=&searchId=R5&searchType=BasicSearchForm¤tPosition=1&userGroupName=uiuc_uc&inPS=true&prodId=BRIP&audit=y (Accessed October 15, 2019)

3. A patron asks for a 'good book.' List at least 5 clarifying questions you could ask to help you discover what type of book the patron might like.

Our coursebook has great advice for this question, regarding explanations of appeal. I would start by asking the patron to tell me about the last book that they enjoyed reading, if they have a hard time thinking of a *book*, I would ask about a film or audiobook instead. From their responses I would try to hone down on particular features that define elements of appeal to the reader that would help me identify a style, genre, setting, character, or mood that relates to what the reader is interested in. My five-ish questions might go something like this:

Are you searching for yourself or a friend; Is this for a special project or pleasure?

Can you tell me about the last book that you enjoyed reading? Do you remember what it was? What did you like about it, any specific parts?

Are you looking for something similar or are you interested in trying something new?

What sorts of characters appeal to you? Are you more interested in strong psychological elements or plot-driven narratives? Are you more interested in comedy or irony?

Are there any particular concerns or needs that you have? Do you have any concerns regarding length or violence limitations or age-appropriateness or language preferences?

4. I am interested in stories set during World War II. Can you help me find some good stories, both fiction and non-fiction, set during the war?

I tried to explore the other databases that we went over in class and in the coursebook, but ended up going back to my new friend *NoveList* for this question as well, because the Search Box at the top has a super accessible Keyword search that prompts “Describe a book. Ex. Japan 1930 women” which just begs to be used for this question. After doing some Reader’s Advisory interviewing (such as in Q3 above) to determine what sort of books appeal to the patron, I would know better what to recommend—*NoveList* retrieves 6,591 hits for this search.

The first book is forthcoming historical fiction: *Survival Tails: World War II* by Katrina Charman, about zoo animals in London that must survive an artillery attack. What, it’s for an adult reading level? How about Leonard Pitts’s *The Last Thing You Surrender: a novel of World War II*, which follows three young man, two black and one white, from the U.S. South whose lives are brought together by the war. Oh, it should be based in Hungary and written in the 20th c, not recently? How about Thomas Keneally’s *Shindler’s List*, it was written in 1982 and is about Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who saves the Jewish workers in his Polish factory from the concentration camps. Oh, you want something a little

shorter? How about Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*, about a young Polish boy trying to find shelter during WWII.

I might also ask the reader if they are interested in film adaptations of books, because I noticed that the award-winning book *The Painted Bird* by Jerzy Kosinski has been adapted to film by Václav Marhoul and is showing at the end of October at The Chicago International Film Festival. (I love tying in recommendations to current local events, because Get Your Books and Go Out and Talk About Them!)

For nonfiction *NoveList* didn't work so well. While responding to an earlier question I noticed that the UI-UC database *Book Review Digest Retrospective* stopped at 1982, which would make it great for this patron's 20th c appeal. A search for "world war II"+Poland retrieves reviews of 11 nonfiction books including Columbia University Press's *Poland in the twentieth century* and Tadeusz Swietochowski's *On the border of war and peace: Polish intelligence and diplomacy in 1937-1939 and the origins of the ultra Secret*. It seems a little more difficult to do Reader's Advisory on nonfiction books using these tools and the methods recommended in the coursebook. The UI-UC LibGuide recommends that "If you are looking for a review of a scholarly monograph in your field, it may be best to search in a subject specific database." The LibGuides History lead me to an extraordinary resource of "Digitized Polish Historic Newspapers and Serials" but does not seem so forthcoming with Nonfiction Reader's Advisory browsing tools. I think an old fashion catalog search by subject heading would work best for this type of research need,

Cited:

NoveList,

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/novelist/search/novbasic?vid=0&sid=3a6b2105-1917-45e0-959d-25970323876c%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>

The Chicago International Film Festival, <https://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/festival/> (Accessed October 15, 2019)

Book Review Digest Retrospective: 1903-1982,

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/ehost/resultsadvanced?vid=11&sid=1d099ee7-11cf-4fbc-b724-9d04adf8dde6%40sessionmgr4008&bquery=%22world+war+II%22%2bpoland&bdata=JmRiPWJyciZ0eXBIPTEmc2VhcmNoTW9kZT1TdGFuZGFyZA%3d%3d>

"Digitized Polish Historic Newspapers and Serials," *Illinois Library*,
<http://guides.library.illinois.edu/digitizedpolish>

***Favorite Resource:** Although I love reading print editions of book reviews in newspapers and magazines (almost for their own literary quality), I don't particularly enjoy reading such reviews online. But I do love the extraordinary relationships that online resources offer, that print editions do not. *NoveList* is an exceptional resource that I hadn't encountered before. After learning of this database in class I lost a few hours throughout the week looking for new authors and books, and looking up books to recommend to friends, and giggling at the ways that books and authors are broken down so analytically. I'm not sure if I actually believe in reader's advisory on this level (it's a little like reading tea leaves... "So! you like psychologically complex novels set in foreign countries that are written in a stream-of-consciousness style and may include romantic scenes between translators?!") but it is fascinating to explore, and has led me to a wealth of authors that I want to try. The Read-alikes recommendations that actually compare particular features to the selected author or book are an excellent feature.