

What's in a Library?

Databases/Books/Audio-visual materials

These materials are called monographs. This means that they are published once as compared to periodicals that are published at regular intervals. Books are the main part of most library collections. The two broad sections of books/audio-visual materials are:

- **Electronic resources:** There are many databases on a wide variety of topics available on the VHCC Library Webpage. These locate articles, reports, and other resources that are for the most part “hidden” from Google and other standard web search engines. One of the main reasons is that copyright protected materials cannot be legally displayed by Google without permission—and the resources found through the Library databases have been granted permission.
- **Circulating materials:** These materials may be checked out. Most can be checked out and taken home although some are restricted to library use only. These items make up the bulk of the library collection.
 - **Books:** Books in this part of the collection can be checked out by library users. Non-fiction books are factual. These include medicine, history, biographies, and science topics among others. Fictional books are made up stories. Novels, short stories, and other literature falls into this category.
 - **Video tapes, DVDs, and other audiovisual materials:**
The VHCC library has a fairly substantial collection of videos and is building a collection of DVDs. These include popular movies and well as educational materials. For students, these are limited to use in the Library or Learning Lab.
- **Non-circulating/Reference materials:** These books do not circulate. They are intended for use in the library to find specific answers, locate facts and statistics, read broad overviews of topics, find biographical information as well as reviews of literature and much more. The Internet does much of this same function today, but the much of the data found when doing a “Google” search is of unknown accuracy and is unorganized. The material found in Reference collections is researched, documented, compiled by reliable sources, and organized.
- **Microforms:** The VHCC Library has microfilm. For example, The *New York Times* is held back to 1954 on microfilm. There is a dedicated microfilm reader/printer in the library where copies can be printed for 10 cents per page.

Following are examples of Reference books/materials

- **Encyclopedias:** A work that contains information on all branches of knowledge or treats comprehensively a particular branch of knowledge usually in articles arranged alphabetically often by subject. Usually found in the Reference section
Examples include: Encyclopaedia Britannica
Note: There are also subject specialized encyclopedias that cover topics like crime and sociology. Not all of these are in the Reference section
- **Directories:** An alphabetical or classified list of people, organizations, companies or any thing else that can be listed. Usually will give contact information, such as address, telephone number, email, and web information if available.
Examples include: telephone directories, lists of members in an organization

- **Statistical resources:** Provide access to statistics on demographics, business, society and many other topics. Examples include: Statistical Abstract of the United States, Virginia Statistical Abstract
- **Factual resources:** Provide access to facts (such as the tallest mountain in the world) as well more broadly defined information, such as a list and description of states. Almanacs are a primary type. Examples include: The World Almanac
- **Atlas and maps:** * *A bound collection of maps often including illustrations, informative tables, or textual matter.* The VHCC library has atlases as well as road, topographic, and other maps. Example: National Geographic Atlas of the World
- **Dictionaries:** * A book containing words usually alphabetically arranged along with information about their forms, pronunciations, functions, etymologies, meanings, and syntactical and idiomatic uses
Note: these can be specialized by topic, discipline, or occupation
- **Biographies:** Indexes and entries about a person's life—usually famous or otherwise noteworthy individuals:
Example: Current Biography, Dictionary of American Biography, Who Was Who

Periodicals

These publications are issued on a regular basis, as compared to books which are published once. Newspapers, magazines, journals, and some serials are all categories of periodicals

- **Magazines/Journals:**
*a periodical containing miscellaneous pieces (as articles, stories, poems) often illustrated
Examples include: Time, Journal of Higher Education
- **Newspapers:**
*a paper that is printed and distributed usually daily or weekly and that contains news, articles of opinion, features, and advertising. The VHCC Library subscribes to local (i.e. Washington County News), regional (i.e. Richmond Times-Dispatch) and national (The New York Times).

Service areas in the VHCC Library

- **Circulation Desk:**
Located just to your left as you enter the library. This where you check out library materials as well as return them when the library is open. When the library is closed, you may return items by putting in the library drop box outside of the Learning Resources Center building.
 - **Reserve materials:** Books, audio-visual items, class notes, and other materials placed here for limited access. These are kept on the shelves behind the Circulation Desk. Most often, instructors will place these materials here for use by one of their classes.
 - **Interlibrary Loan:** The circulation desk is where make Interlibrary Loan requests. This is a system for obtaining books/videos/dvd's and copies of periodical articles not held by the VHCC Library or available full-text through VHCC databases.
- **Reference Desk:**
This is where you go for help with answering any questions you may have about finding information or assistance with using the library. You are encouraged to ask any questions. We are here to help you! *Definitions from: Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary