Commonly Used Library Terms

- **Abstract**: a brief summary of a book or periodical articles. Abstracts of articles are found in our online periodical or newspaper databases.

- **Annotations**: short comments about books or articles either summarizing the subject of the material or evaluating the content of the material or both. Frequently, bibliographies contain annotations.

- **Anthology**: a collection of literary pieces by one or more authors. Frequently, a collection of short stories or poems are published in an anthology.

- **Autobiography**: a history or summary of a person’s life written by that individual, or the story on the author’s own life.

- **Bibliography**: a list of books, articles or other resources on a particular subject or by a particular author. Bibliographies are found in books, at the end of journal articles or entries in reference books, or at the end of a research paper. A bibliography that contains abstracts or annotations is referred to as an annotated bibliography.

- **Biography**: the history or account of someone’s life written by another person.

- **Boolean operators**: words used in searching electronic databases or online catalogs to expand or limit the results of a search. Examples of Boolean operators are AND, OR and NOT.

- **Call numbers**: materials in the library’s online catalog are given a call number which is printed on a label and placed on the material. Use the call number as an address to locate the material on the library shelves. Hartnell College uses the Library of Congress Classification System to label materials.

- **Catalog**: a file of records arranged systematically, listing all books, periodical titles, and other print or non-print materials owned by a library. Hartnell Library uses an online catalog searchable by authors, titles, subject headings or keywords. It is located on the library’s website.

- **Circulation desk**: the desk located near the entrance of the library where books and other materials are checked out to students.

- **Citation**: information that identifies a publication, book, or article. Style manuals or writing guides provide information on the manuals’ approved format.

- **Course Reserve materials**: materials from the collection or from an instructor which have been temporarily placed on reserve for the use of a class. Course Reserve materials must be used in the library and are kept at the Circulation desk. They can be searched for in the online catalog.

- **Database**: an organized collection of records, stored in computer, that have a standardized format and content. (Academic Search Complete is an example of a full text article database.)

- **Fiction**: writing or literature created from the imagination; an invented story which may or may not be based on a true story or situation.

- **Full text article database**: electronic or computerized database files which include complete text or scanned images that are an exact duplicate of the original source.

- **Holdings**: books, journals and other materials owned by a library.
- **Index**- an alphabetical list of subjects at the end of a book which are included in the book.

- **Interlibrary Loan (ILL)**- a service provided by libraries to borrow books or articles from other libraries.

- **Journal**- a *magazine* which is scholarly in nature with articles written by scholars or individuals with special knowledge of the subject field. Journals are also called *periodicals* since they are published on a regular or periodical basis.

- **Keyword**- a word or words in the record of an entry in the library's *online catalog* or *full text databases*.

- **Library of Congress Classification System**- a classification system with call numbers from A to Z often used in academic libraries to arrange materials in the collection.

- **Magazine**- less scholarly than a *journal* with articles of a more general interest frequently written by individuals who may not have a special knowledge of the topic. *Magazines* are also called *periodicals* since they are published on a regular or periodical basis.

- **Nonfiction**- writing that chronicles facts about real people or events.

- **OPAC**- an acronym for *online public access catalog*. It is another phrase for the library's catalog.

- **Periodical**- see *Journal* and *Magazine*.

- **Reference materials**- materials designed to be consulted for specific facts rather than to be read from beginning to end (such as encyclopedias and dictionaries). These items cannot be checked out of the library. The Reference Collection is located on the 2nd floor behind the Reference desk.

- **Special Collections**- a collection of materials shelved separately from the general collection due to its rarity, age, value, or research interest. The Hartnell Library's Silliman Collection is an example.

- **Stacks or Book Stacks**- an area of the library where circulating books (books that can be checked out) are located. The Hartnell Library's *books stacks* are located on the second floor.

- **Style Manual**- a book on how to research, record, document, and format reports, theses and journal articles. Used by students, scholars, professional writers, editors, and printers. MLA and APA are examples of frequently used style manuals.

- **Subject Headings**- headings which describe the contents of books or other materials in the collection. The *subject headings* can be found in the record or description of the item in the online *catalog*. The headings used are created by the Library of Congress. They can be used to search for items in the online *catalog*.