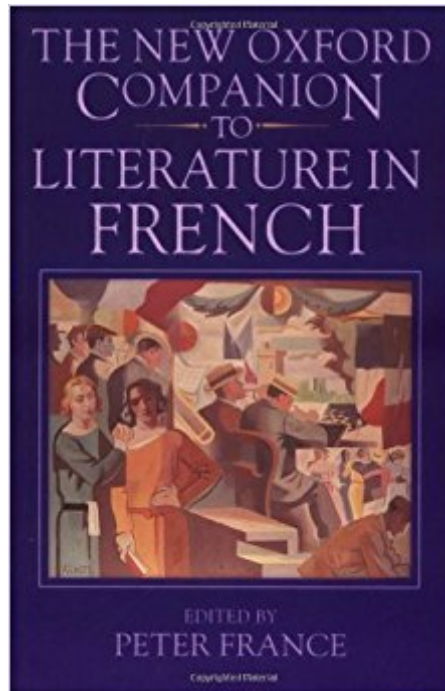




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# The New Oxford Companion To Literature In French



## Synopsis

Rabelais and Montaigne, Moliere and Racine, Stendhal and Proust--the literature of France boasts a long and glorious tradition. In *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*, readers will have at their fingertips a trusted guide to this rich literary heritage. Written by an international team of experts, the Companion's 3,000 entries capture ten centuries of work produced in France and, more recently, in other French-speaking countries around the world. The coverage they provide is superb. The volume highlights not only poets, novelists, and dramatists, but also historians, scientists, statesmen, and philosophers--providing a sweeping tour of French culture. Here readers will find lengthy articles on the giants of French letters, from Voltaire, Flaubert, and Balzac, to Valery, Cocteau, and Sartre. Among the new features of the Companion are substantial essays that reflect the latest scholarship on topics such as literary movements and genres; historical subjects such as chivalry or Occupation and Resistance in wartime France; intellectual movements from Scholasticism to Feminism; linguistic topics; coverage of the sciences; and the arts and media, including opera, cinema, and journalism. There is generous coverage of painters such as Degas and Delacroix, and composers such as Meyerbeer and Debussy. Scientists and philosophers also appear in these pages (ranging from Poincare and Cuvier to Descartes, Pascal, and Rousseau). There is even an entertaining entry that cites 100 well-known quotations from French literature. Finally, the contributors have approached the literature of France in the widest terms possible, challenging the traditional canon as they examine everything from strip cartoons and pamphlets. Adventurous and wide ranging, the New Companion is more than a simple revision of the original work. Whether you are interested in Condillac or Condorcet, Lamartine or Lamarck, Madame de Stael or Madame Deficit (Marie-Antoinette), *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French* provides informed and engaging coverage of the vast literary tradition of France.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 926 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1st edition (May 4, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0198661258

ISBN-13: 978-0198661252

Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 2.4 x 6.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #818,295 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #136 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Bibliographies & Indexes > Literature](#) #375 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > French](#) #529 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Reference](#)

## Customer Reviews

Nearly four decades have elapsed since the publication of *The Oxford Companion to French Literature* (OCFL) in 1959, and almost 20 years since the abridged and revised version, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of French Literature* (1976). However, as the editor, a professor emeritus at the University of Edinburgh, notes in his introduction, *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French* (NOCLF) is not simply an updated edition of these earlier works, but a completely new compilation. The changed title reflects the most significant difference: coverage now extends beyond literature produced in France to encompass francophone writing from throughout the world. The NOCLF not only treats individual writers from many countries, but also provides broad survey articles on the literature of each area, for example, Africa (South of the Sahara), Belgian Literature in French, Haiti, Quebec. In addition, this new companion reflects the shifting perceptions of the literary canon by embracing more women writers and popular literature, and it gives greater emphasis to literature produced in the last half of this century. It also recognizes the increased influence of popular culture by including such entries as Chevalier, Maurice; Detective Fiction; and Tintin. The approximately 3,000 alphabetically arranged entries were written by France or a member of an international team of 130 scholars. The majority are limited to a single paragraph, but major authors, such as Marguerite Duras, Victor Hugo, and Voltaire, receive more extensive treatment, as do topics of a more general nature, for instance, Feminism and Versification. The longer articles are generally accompanied by one or two bibliographic references. The generous provision of see references greatly facilitates use, and a list near the front of the volume groups selected entries into broad topical categories such as Intellectual and Cultural Movements and Literary and Theatrical Genres. Other helpful features include a chronological chart linking specific authors with events in France and other French-speaking countries and a section of maps of France, its colonies, and Paris. No other English-language compilation offers the breadth of coverage of the NOCLF. However, Anthony Levi's two-volume *Guide to French Literature* (St. James, 1992<sup>+</sup>-94) provides more in-depth treatment of 326 major French writers and literary movements, and Sandra W. Dolbow's *Dictionary of Modern French Literature: From the Age of Reason through Realism* (Greenwood, 1986) covers the period 1715<sup>+</sup>-1880 in greater detail. This new Oxford companion is

an important acquisition for public and academic libraries. However, even with its expanded scope, it has only half the number of entries of the OCFL. Because hundreds of minor authors, historical figures, geographic entities, titles, characters, and literary allusions have either been dropped or incorporated into more general articles, librarians may want to consider retaining one or both of this work's predecessors. ((Reviewed Sept. 1, 1995)

"No other English-language compilation offers the breadth of coverage of the New Oxford Companion to Literature in French."--Booklist  
"Never ponderous, the entries are incisive. The authors are not afraid to come out with judgements. It will be much admired."--Professor Victor Brombert, Princeton University  
"One of the best Oxford companions.... This is just the book for the prospective major in French or comp lit--or for anyone who enjoys reading the only literature in the world to rival that of England and America."--The Washington Post Book World  
"Encompasses the world's rich and multifaceted Francophone heritage, with its cultural, historical, and linguistic variations.... Essential as a research tool for both teaching and study, it also contains a wealth of information for the general reader."--Library Journal

The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French is well written, clear, concise. It takes you 30 seconds to 5 minutes to read any subject and yet get a pretty good idea about it. I am at the Graduate Level of French Studies and I have found every entry that I have searched for: from critics' profiles to genre definitions, it has all the major authors and their writings, as well as explanations about historical and political issues relevant to French Literature. It is a strictly informative text; by this I mean that it does not intend to express any particular point of view. Finally, the editing and printing make it very easy to use and read.

This is an extraordinarily detailed desktop reference (perhaps the most detailed I have ever seen). It is essential for those conducting French literature research.

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