



50+

TOP ONLINE RESEARCH

resources for

historical fiction writers



THE HISTORY QUILL
HISTORICAL FICTION SPECIALISTS

50+
TOP
ONLINE
RESEARCH
RESOURCES FOR
HISTORICAL FICTION
WRITERS

Archives

[Library of Congress Digital Collections](#)

Houses a vast collection of historical material.

[The British Library](#)

Another vast collection of historical material, some of which is available online.

[British Library Sounds](#)

Worthy of a separate mention, the British Library has made 50,000 historical sound recordings available online.

[National Archives Catalogue \(US\)](#)

The US National Archives host an extensive collection of online material.

[National Archives Catalogue \(UK\)](#)

View the UK National Archives' collection of online material.

[Internet Archive](#)

They have thousands of public domain books, including loads of interesting historical memoirs.

[Wikisource](#)

A vast archive of digitised public domain texts.

[Google Books](#)

Useful for accessing previews and snippets of books.

[Project Gutenberg](#)

A great source for public domain books.

[Archives Hub](#)

A central archive hub for over 330 institutions across the United Kingdom.

[Chronicling America](#)

The Library of Congress's dedicated newspaper archive.

[The British Newspaper Archive](#)

An archive of British newspapers dating from the 1700s. You have to pay to get full access, though.

[Victorian Voices](#)

A topical collection of periodical articles from the Victorian era.

[Presidential Recordings Programme](#)

The University of Virginia's Miller Center hosts original telephone audio recordings made by US presidents from Roosevelt to Nixon.



50+
TOP
ONLINE
RESEARCH
RESOURCES FOR
HISTORICAL FICTION
WRITERS

Archives (continued)

[FreeREG](#)

A searchable database of information drawn from historical parish registers (baptisms, marriages, burials) in the United Kingdom.

[The V&A](#)

Search the V&A's online collection related to art and design.

[Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts](#)

A catalogue of medieval manuscripts that you can view online.

Journals

[JSTOR](#)

An online collection of academic journal articles.

[CAIRN International Edition](#)

A translated collection of CAIRN's francophone academic library.

Family/biography

[Geneanet](#)

Search for biographical information and family trees.

Language

[Online Etymology Dictionary](#)

Use this tool to discover word origins (often including date of first recorded use).

[Google Ngram Viewer](#)

See when certain words first appeared in books.

[Idiomation](#)

Discover the origins of common idioms.

[Google Translate](#)

Don't rely on it for precise translations, but it's ideal if you need to work out the gist of a document in a different language.

[Merriam Webster](#)

An excellent online dictionary.

[Thesaurus](#)

For when you just can't think of that word!



50+
TOP
ONLINE
RESEARCH
RESOURCES FOR
HISTORICAL FICTION
WRITERS

Practical matters

[The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World](#)

It doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but this model allows you to estimate historical journey times across the Roman Empire.

[The National Archives' currency converter](#)

Calculate the purchasing power of currency in Britain all the way back to 1270.

[Crow's Eye Productions](#)

A YouTube channel dedicated to historical clothing.

[Letterlocking](#)

A website dedicated to the historical practice of letterlocking.

Crime and punishment

[The Proceedings of the Old Bailey](#)

Records of court cases at the Old Bailey dating back to 1674.

[Historical Crime Data](#)

The UK's official crime data from 1898.

Weaponry and war

[Schola Gladiatoria](#)

Fantastic YouTube channel focusing on historical weaponry and combat.

[Knyght Errant](#)

Another fantastic YouTube channel dedicated to medieval weaponry, armour, and culture.

[Napoleonistyka](#)

An impressive collection of resources related to the Napoleonic Wars, including information on battles, tactics, weapons, uniforms, and maps.

Blogs, magazines, and specialist websites

[Jane Austen's World](#)

Loaded with interesting detail on life in Regency England.

[History Today](#)

Blog and magazine covering a range of historical topics.

[English Historical Fiction Authors](#)

A goldmine of information on English history.

[Victorian Web](#)

Contains a wealth of information on society, literature, technology, and other areas relating to Victorian Britain.



50+
TOP
ONLINE
RESEARCH
RESOURCES FOR
HISTORICAL FICTION
WRITERS

Blogs, magazines, and specialist websites (continued)

[A Woodsrunner's Diary](#)

Learn all about living, trekking, and survival in the 18th century.

[History Extra](#)

The BBC's history magazine.

[Discovering Ancient Egypt](#)

Hieroglyphs, pyramids, mummies. What's not to like?

[Medievalists.net](#)

A well-presented blog focused on the medieval era.

[The Labyrinth](#)

A directory of resources dedicated to the medieval era.

Images

[Pinterest](#)

A massive search engine for images. Look for historical clothing, paintings, tools, and much more.

[Flickr](#)

Best known as a way to find stock photos, but Flickr also has a decent collection of historical illustrations.

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Explore the Met's historical art collection online.

Geography

[Google Maps](#)

An invaluable tool for measuring distances and even (using Google Street View) viewing physical environments. Remember things change over time, though!

[Old Maps Online](#)

A useful search engine for historical maps.

General and miscellaneous

[Wikipedia](#)

No such list would be complete without Wikipedia! It's a great reference tool, though it should be a starting point rather than the end point in your research.

[Modern History](#)

A YouTube channel dedicated to exploring the reality of the past, including food, weapons, and armour.

