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## **Encyclopaedia Britannica**

For virtually all its 238 years, **Britannica** has ruled the shelves as a peerless general encyclopedia. Reviewers have consistently given it high marks for most of the 12 criteria identified in Kister's Best Encyclopedias ([Oryx](#), 1994), including authority, subject coverage, approach, style, and illustrations. More problematic have been its criteria of arrangement, accuracy, objectivity, and recency. This 15th edition offers 100 new and 1000 revised articles but otherwise retains the same scope and three-part structure begun in 1974 . . . Upward of 4000 often world-renowned contributors pen more than 65,000 articles; a large editorial staff writes and updates the short-entry Micropaedia articles, compiles the two-volume A-to-Z index, and maintains the Propaedia , which acts as a classified index to the whole. Authority and breadth and depth of subject coverage remain unassailable, and the writing style and approach are consistently scholarly in the best sense of the term--clear, concise, and often elegant (most of the complex Macropaedia articles are challenging but not impassably dense for a motivated lay reader). . . . **BOTTOM LINE** The publisher estimates that between 35 and 40 percent of the encyclopedia's material is revised every two years, so libraries with ultratight budgets may need to weigh that against the high price tag. Otherwise, recommended for all libraries with adult readers.

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