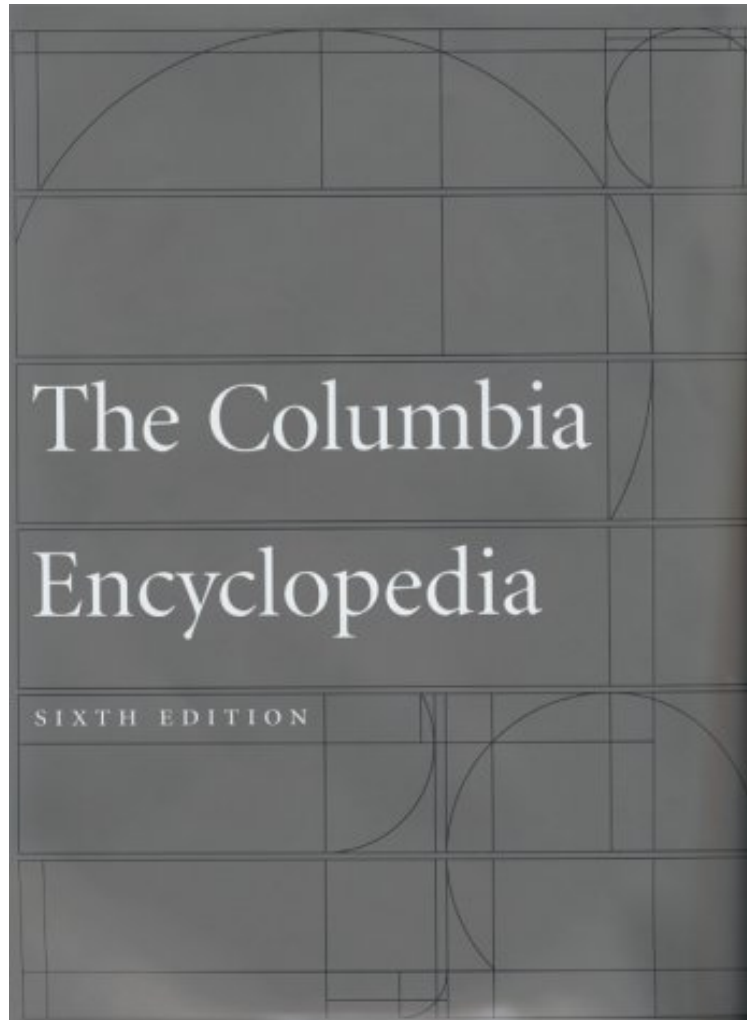


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From Booklist The single-volume Columbia Encyclopedia was first published in 1935 as a "suitable companion to a good dictionary and atlas" for the general reader, and it still fits that description more than 75 years later. There are nearly 51,000 entries in this new edition, with 1,300 new entries and revisions made to 40 percent of the remainder. The preface states that efforts have been made to expand computer, medical, and science coverage, and this appears to be the case. Editor Lagasse credits an able editorial board and contributors, as well as the dozens of consultants and academic advisors responsible for the content and accuracy of the fifth edition, on which this work is based. Since the last edition was published, in 1993, the Web has exploded into daily culture. This is reflected throughout the book, in articles as diverse as Book publishing, Broker, Newspaper, Postal service, Speculation, Store, and Telecommuting. (Indeed, the full text of the new Columbia Encyclopedia is available free on the Internet [<http://www.bartleby.com/65/>].) Global warming and Artificial intelligence have been expanded. Mine has been updated with statistics, recent treaties, and mine-removal operations; and Lyme disease mentions the human vaccine approved in 1999. Other new entries: Antidepressant; Blair, Tony; Dietary mineral; Dove, Rita; DVD; Echinacea; Reconnaissance satellite; and Triathlon. Political events from 1999 have been added to many articles: Australian Aborigines reflects the government apology for mistreatment, Chechnya discusses the establishment of Islamic law, and polls showing declining support for secession are noted in Quebec. The table for Nobel Prize winners is current through 1999. Any major encyclopedia will always have a few errors, and this one is no exception. The 1997 change in family classification for skunks to Mephitidae is not mentioned (they're still described as part of the Mustelid, or weasel, family). The Longfellow Mountains shown marching across the Maine state map are a subrange of the Appalachian Mountains; the name is of historical interest, but it's not part of the common knowledge of hikers and residents, nor is it used on current maps from most standard publishers. Entries range in length from a sentence or two to several pages, which means a great number of words given the extremely small font size utilized. Two welcome improvements have been made to the layout of longer articles: division into indented paragraphs for the first time, and more subsection headings. Cross-references (80,000 of them) are found throughout the text of articles (e.g., to Drug resistance from Antibiotic), and see references (e.g., I-Ching SEE Book of Changes) are adequate. In the Web edition, these are hypertext links, which is very convenient. Many articles include a short bibliography of books, often listed only by author and year in the interest of saving space. Another note on the font: the editors have switched from a sans-serif to a more readable serif font for the article text. There is no handy thumb index in the new edition. Maps are included for countries and U.S. states and vary widely in the amount of detail provided. For example, some countries, such as Italy, get a full-page map with major cities and geographic features identified, while others, such as Botswana, are represented by a tiny darkened area on a small map of the continent, on which the capital city is not even indicated. Get out that world atlas! Tables and charts (e.g., for elementary particles, U.S. presidents, United Nations members, the periodic table, the manual alphabet, constellations) are used where appropriate. Line drawings aid understanding of articles such as Cone, Gear, Jet propulsion, Kepler's second law, Methionine, Orders of architecture, and Panpipes. Some choices seem odd: why illustrate Mint but not Potato? The Internet edition includes tables but not the maps and drawings found in the print volume. Even though the Internet version has the dual advantages of keyword searching and font enlargement, most libraries will still want to have the latest Columbia Encyclopedia in the reference or reading room. Put it on a well-placed, sturdy stand, and it's likely to get more action than the Web site will ever attract.

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