Finding Reliable Images for Annotations

This is an open resource, so try to find media and images for your annotations that are accessible online, legal to use, and outside of your university's paywall. You might look at library exhibits or museums. This will help ensure that your images haven't been edited, are authoritative, and fully citable (creator, context, date, medium, and so on). For more information on visual literacy, see the ACRL standards.

You also want to be sure that your images are appropriate for your annotation or the text in question

Characteristics of appropriate images:

1. **Time of creation.** Is the painting or engraving (for instance) actually from the same time period? If you're considering a material object—for instance, a snuffbox—that has been photographed for an online museum catalog, is the object itself from the same time period? If you're reading an American text from the 18th century, make sure the image is also relevant to the 18th century.
2. **Cultural, social, or national context:** If you're reading a text by Charles Dickens, you would not want to use a Russian painting or a photograph of a Chinese shoe—that is, unless those contexts are relevant in the text.
3. **Credibility.** Where did you find the image? Is the source a *good* source? Is the image likely to have been edited (a portion cropped out, or the colors filtered, the aspect ratio altered, for instance)? Is the image of a high quality—not pixelated, for instance?
4. **Citeable.** This is a part of credibility—what information does the source provide about the origins of the image? Could you cite it?
5. **Legality.** Can you legally use the image? Look for copyright information on the source. Under what conditions can you legally use the image? If you're unsure, you should contact the source and ask for permission, or find another source. Most images from libraries and museums will be free to use for educational purposes, or they may have a "Creative Commons" or "Public Domain" license. Simply citing an image is not enough for legal reproduction of the image in *Literature in Context,* because someone has to have made that image—taken a photograph of a painting, for instance—and that image is usually *theirs* to do with as they will. a

Test yourself!

1. This is a less authoritative image. Why?
   https://basementgalaxy.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/band0115.jpg
2. These are more authoritative images. Why?
   - https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdc.00013715105/?sp=113
   - https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw05761/Mary-Shelley
3. Under most circumstances, Wikimedia Commons is often a good source of reliable images. But look at this one. Is it appropriate? Why or why not? Consider all the issues noted in the Characteristics section, 1-5.
   https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dore-I_had_done_a_hellish_thing.jpg
4. This is an authoritative image, but it is not usable. Why?
   https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll17/id/425