

# FINDING AND EVALUATING SOURCES

Sources that historians and social scientists use come in a variety of forms: print sources (ie: books, journals, magazines, newspapers), internet sources (ie: www sites, reference subscription databases), films, audio, interviews, and artifacts. Great papers use a variety of resources.

Sources can be either primary or secondary. **Primary sources** include items such as artifacts, official documents, letters, diaries, and memoirs; they are eyewitness accounts of an event or a period of history. **Secondary sources** are accounts written after the events by people who played no part in them. Usually, a historian's account is a secondary source, as in your text book.

Choosing appropriate and reputable sources can be a difficult task. Selecting appropriate resources is essential in creating a sophisticated research paper. Many sources may appear to have valuable and accurate information, but too often students are impressed by interesting titles or fancy book covers. Students also enjoy the ease of internet browsing without fully realizing that many of these works are not done by professionals in the field and may contain inaccurate or incomplete information.

## Book Sources

Book sources are often rich in content, reliable, and relatively easy to find. A quick and easy method to locate books is to figure out where in the library the books on your topic are located. Then, review the books in that section by examining the table of contents, introductions, topic headings, bibliographies, and indexes as guides to determine their usefulness. One way to determine the accuracy and reliability of a source is to review the section on the author's background. If the source was written by a professor at a major university, there is a better chance that the information contained in that book is reliable and well researched. You may also want to check the publication date. If it is more than twenty years old, the work can still be valuable. But you may also want to find a recent work which incorporates new scholarship.

History is based on facts, but interpretation and bias still exist. Don't expect to find harmony among sources. Authors often disagree in their opinions. Consequently, guard against bias and outdated scholarship by gathering numerous sources. If you are unsure whether the book you have found would be a good source to use, consult a librarian or a teacher.

## A Sample Book Search

The actual search for books on your topic could take the following steps. If you were searching for books on the Holocaust, your first move would be to find out some background information. You may look up Holocaust in an encyclopedia or other informational source such as a textbook and discover that this event occurred during the 1930s and 1940s in Nazi Germany and increased in intensity during World War II. Such background information is useful in establishing key word searches for the online the card catalog called "Destiny Card Catalog" on the computer network's Novell launcher and accessible from home using the "Library Resources" tab on LFHS website).

Next, try a variety of keywords that can lead you to information on your topic. Obviously, your first keyword would be “Holocaust.” Enter this search term and you will discover that nearly all related books have a similar call number of 940.43 (Dewey Decimal number of the binding on the book) and are located together on the library shelves. Then, type in “World War II” because you know that the Holocaust occurred during this event. The call numbers for this section, group around the 840s. Finally, type in “Nazi” or “Nazism” and discover that most of these books have a call number in the 750s.

At this point, go to these three sections of the library (940.43, 840s, and 750s) and scan the books in these areas using the above criteria (ie: table of contents, index, author’s background). You will discover many professional sources on your topic in a short amount of time. To take full advantage of this method, use the bibliographies in these books to find more quality sources. If you can’t locate these titles in the LFHS library consider a public library, a college library, or purchasing through Amazon.com. Remember to ask the librarians for help. They are great resources!

## **Encyclopedias: General vs. Specialized**

Although general encyclopedias can be useful for background information, they do not contain the depth necessary for sophisticated research and shouldn’t be used as cited sources in your paper. Conversely, specialized encyclopedias, such as the *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, *Women in World History*, the *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, and *The African American Encyclopedia* are great sources of detailed, in-depth information. These sources are narrower in focus and have rich detail that can be cited in the bibliography. Peruse the Reference section of the library for specialized encyclopedias and the Galenet Virtual Reference Library database for their vast collection of specialized reference books.

## **Internet Sources**

Internet sources are usually students’ first choice when asked to complete a research project. By simply sitting at a computer, students can access large quantities of information on their topic. However, some of the information on the general world wide web is not reliable or accurate. Many websites are not secure and anybody can create a site that looks official. Without close examination, you may mistake some inaccurate internet information as fact.

### **General World Wide Web:**

1. General www websites are useful but should be connected to a university, major news source, government agency, cultural institution, or library. Website addresses ending in *org*, *edu*, or *gov* tend to be more reliable sources of information.
2. Internet articles should be authored. Exceptions do occur, but be skeptical of any source without an author. See instructor if you have any doubts.

### **Reference Subscription Databases:**

The following sites require a paid subscription for access. LFHS has allocated significant dollars annually to make these databases available for your uses. You may access these databases using

the “Library” tab off the LFHS homepage. **User names and passwords can be found at the library circulation desk or on Edline:**

### **ABC-CLIO**

*(Available Databases: American History, World Modern History, World Ancient History, American Government, US at War, Issues, & History Reference Online)*

With over 15,000 primary and secondary sources in each database, this collection is extremely helpful for evaluating historical evidence, interpreting current events, and making comparative analysis.

### **Country Reports**

Entirely web-based, CountryReports offers more than 26,000 pages of content covering a wide-range of topics. You can find statistical data, cultural, geographical, and historical information and much more! There is also a great gallery of images from every country in the world!

### **CQ Researcher**

This is a great database for those who are seeking original, comprehensive reporting and analysis on issues shaping our world. Each 12,000-word report is a unique work, investigated and written by a seasoned journalist. The library also holds a hard copy of all current reports.

### **EBSCO Host**

*(Available Databases: MAS Ultra, Health Source, Newspaper Source, Professional Development Collection, ERIC, TOPICSearch & Student Research Center)*

A collection of databases featuring magazines, newspapers, health, bios, images, etc.

### **Facts On File**

*(Available Databases: Literary Reference Online, American History, American Women’s History, African American History, American Indian History, Modern World History, Ancient & Medieval History)*

A collection of databases that provides an in-depth focus on a wide variety of historical events and literary pieces. Includes biographies, events & topics, primary sources, timelines, and an image gallery. You may search a specific database or use the federated search tool to search collection of databases.

### **Galenet Student Resources**

*(Available Databases: Student Resource Center, Opposing Viewpoints, Biography Resource Center, Gale Virtual Reference Library)*

A database containing primary documents, biographies, topical essays, background information, critical analyses, full-text coverage of magazines/newspapers, and images.

### **JSTOR**

A database that includes archives of over one thousand leading academic journals across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, as well as select monographs and other materials valuable for academic work. The entire collection is full-text searchable, offers search term highlighting, includes high-quality images, and is interlinked by millions of citations and references.

### **Latino American Experience**

A full-text database focusing on the history and culture of Latinos living in the United States. Its content spans from the pre-Columbian Indigenous civilizations of the Americas, through the Spanish and Mexican settlement of much of what is now the United States, to the triumphs and challenges facing present-day U.S. Latinos. Contains reference articles, images, primary sources, biographies, and timelines.

### **Newsbank**

(Available Databases: *Access World News & Historical Newspapers*)

*Access World News*: These databases provide the electronic editions of local, regional, and national newspapers, as well as full-text content of key international sources.

*Historical Newspapers*: an amazing collection of American historical newspaper articles from 1690 to 2000. The articles cover topics pertaining to the government, politics, social issues, culture, discoveries, inventions, and more from hundreds of primary sources!

### **Novelist**

(Available Databases: *Novelist, Novelist K-8, Novelist K-8 Plus & Novelist Plus*)

Search for your next great read with this online database that contains over 251,000 fiction and nonfiction titles. It includes specialized content such as read-alikes for popular authors, book discussion guides, award lists, full-text searchable reviews, series information, book jacket cover images, genre studies, and much more!

### **Pop Culture Universe**

A digital library of information on American and world popular culture, past and present. A great resource for decade studies. Contains reference articles, biographies, and images.

### **ProQuest**

(Available Databases: *eLibrary & eScience*)

Includes newspapers, magazines, book excerpts, maps, pictures, audio/video, and TV/radio transcripts.

### **Rosen Teen Health and Wellness**

Developed for teens, this database provides students with comprehensive academic support and self-help tools on topics including disease, drugs, alcohol, nutrition, fitness, mental health, diversity, family life, and much more.

### **S.I.R.S. (Social Issues Resource Series)**

(Available Databases: *SIRS Researcher, SIRS Government, SIRS Renaissance*)

This comprehensive search portal provides information on: current topics and trends throughout the world, resources by and about the government, and current perspectives on the arts and humanities.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A bibliography (sometimes called a “Works Cited” page when only sources that are actively cited in the paper are listed) is a formal list that accredits the people who authored or produced the research used in your paper. Sometimes a teacher may ask you to create an *annotated bibliography*. This is a bibliography that adds a description after each source that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. The annotation also explains to the reader how each particular source was useful in supporting your thesis.

Good annotations include a concise summary of the central theme and scope of the book or article and at least one or more of the following: (1) an evaluation of the author, (2) a discussion of the intended audience, (3) a defense of the reliability of the source, and/or (4) a specific

explanation of how the source helped you supports your research topic. Generally, annotations are in formal narrative form much like the text of your paper.

Consider the following examples of sources with well written annotations:

London, Herber. "Five Myths of the Television Age." *Television Quarterly* 10.4 (Spring 1992): 81-89. *ProQuest eLibrary*. Web. 15 November 2009. <<http://elearning.bigchalk.com>>.

Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University and author of several books and articles, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. In the article, the author provides many examples, such as the assassination of John F. Kennedy, to prove his points. London uses logical arguments to support his ideas which are his personal opinion and he doesn't refer to any previous works on the topic. London's style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader, but is mainly geared towards high school students.

"Who Won?" *New York Times* 29 July 1978: Sec. A, 24. Print.

This article outlines the Supreme Court decision and questions what the impact of the case will be on future affirmative action programs. It demonstrates division in the court this controversial subject and includes quotations from the majority of dissenting opinions.

## **Bibliographic Formatting**

The bibliography/works cited page is often the first place teachers and professors look when beginning to assess a paper. If the bibliography/works cited page has unreliable sources, weak scholarship or messy formatting, it leaves a distinctly negative impression on the reader. Remember an argument is only as good as its support. Presenting those sources must be taken seriously. When finalizing your bibliography/works cited page be sure to: use proper punctuation, indent appropriately (for all entries if longer than a single line), italicize all book titles, put article titles in quotation marks, capitalize where necessary, and be consistent in style.

Your collection of sources must also be alphabetized with author's last name first without any numbering. Refer to the MLA 7 (Modern Language Association) most recent templates for other questions. You may also choose to use the following online bibliographic construction sites if you prefer: Citation Machine, Knight Cite, or Easy Bib.

## Bibliography Form Guide for Online Sources

### New Changes to the MLA style that will go into effect immediately!!!

**No More Underlining! Underlining is no more.** MLA now recommends italicizing titles of independently published works (books, periodicals, films, etc).

**Volume and Issue Number are required.** For every journal entry, both volume and issue numbers are required, regardless of pagination.

**Publication Medium.** Every entry receives a medium of publication marker. Most entries will be listed as Print or Web, but other possibilities include Performance, DVD, or TV. Most of these markers will appear at the end of entries; however, markers for Web sources are followed by the date of access.

**New Abbreviations.** Many web source entries now require a publisher name, a date of publication, and/or page numbers. When no publisher name appears on the website, write N.p. for no publisher given. When sites omit a date of publication, write n.d. for no date. For online journals that appear only online (no print version) or on databases that do not provide page numbers, write n. pag. for no pages.

General paper formatting (margins, headings, etc.) and in-text citations will remain the same, but all Works Cited style entries will be different from the 6th edition guidelines.

### General Bibliography Format Instructions

1. Arrange citation entries ALPHABETICALLY by the first word in the citation ignoring "The," "A," "An" or "The."
2. The first line of each citation starts at the LEFT margin; the second and any succeeding lines are indented FIVE spaces.
3. Put those periods in the right spots!
4. Put all article titles in quotation marks
5. Italicize all source titles
6. DO NOT number your sources.

### Databases (Specialized Subscription Sites)

Last, First Name of Author. "Title of Article." *Name of Journal/Reference Book* Volume #.Issue #  
(Day Month Year of Publication) : page #s. *Database Name*. Medium of Publication. Day Month  
Year of your visit. <URL>.

#### Examples:

Signed Article:

Wilkins, Johanna M. "The Myths of the Only Child." *Psychology Update* 23.1 (12 December 1999) :  
16-20. *ProQuest E Learning*. Web. 30 April 2009. <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

Unsigned Article:

"George Washington." *Discovering Biography* 13.4 (Dec. 2000) : 1-3. *Galenet Student Resource Center*.  
Web. 20 February 2009. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

#### Remember

*If there are no pages, use: n. pag.*  
*If there is no publication date, use: n.d.*  
*If there is no publisher, use: N.p.*

## WWW Sites (World Wide Web) Examples

\*\*If you are citing a source that you have located on the World Wide Web that is not a Lake Forest High School Library Reference Subscription Database Source, use the following format.

Last, First Name of Author. "Full Title of Work in Quotation Marks." *Name of the Web Site*. Publisher of the Website, Day Month Year of Publication. Medium of Publication. Day Month Year of your visit. <URL>.

### Examples:

Signed Entry:

Everly, Robert. "Baltimore Riot of 1861." *CivilWarHome.com*. Shotgun's Home of the American Civil War, 5 January 2005. Web. 2 March 2009. <<http://www.civilwar.com>>.

Unsigned Entry:

"Gaea." *Greek Mythology.com*. Greek Mythology, 2008. Web. 20 February 2009. <<http://www.mythology.com>>.

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## Online Journal/Magazine Articles

Author (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Article." *Name of Journal/Magazine Volume # .Issue #* (Day Month Year of Publication): Page #s. Name of Website. Publisher of Website, Day Month Year of Electronic Publishing. Medium of Publication. Day Month Year of your visit. <URL>.

### Examples:

Signed Article:

Hamilton, Dane. "What Happened in 1912?" *American History* 10.11 (13 August 2001): 67-72. *American History Online*. PBS, 2008. Web. 20 February 2009. <<http://www.pbs.org>>.

Unsigned Article:

"Violence in the Iraq War." *History in the Making* 2.8 (Spring 2009): 2-4. *History.com*. Historians Unite, 2007. Web. 20 November 2009. <<http://www.minnstartribune.com>>.

## Online Newspapers

Author (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Article." *Name of Magazine/Newspaper*. Publisher, Day Month Year of Publication. Medium of Publication. Day Month Year of your visit. <URL>.

### Examples:

Signed Article:

Hamilton, Dane. "Nanotechnology Finding Backers on Wall Street." *Chicago Tribune.com*. Chicago Tribune, 18 February 2002. Web. 20 February 2009. <<http://www.chicagotribune.com>>.

Unsigned Article:

"Cracking Down on Alcohol Abuse." *Minneapolis Star Tribune.com*. Minneapolis Star, 30 November 2001. Web. 20 February 2009. <<http://www.minnstartribune.com>>.

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**Image (including paintings, sculptures, and/or photographs found online)**

Last, First Name of Artist. *Name of Image*. Day Month Year of Publication. *Name of the Website*.  
Medium of Publication. Day Month Year of your visit. <URL>.

**Examples:**

Signed Article:

Mili, Gjon. *Bronze Statue*. 1973. *Time.com*. Web. 13 April 2009. <<http://www.time.com>>.

Unsigned Article:

*Embrace*. 1850. *AllPosters.com*. Web. 13 April 2009. <<http://www.allposters.com>>.

**IF USING ANY OTHER TYPES OF SOURCES,  
COME SEE MRS. LITTEL OR MRS. GRIGG IN THE LIBRARY!  
YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT THE LIBRARY CITATION GUIDES AND  
RESEARCH RESOURCES AT:**

[http://www.lfhs.org/academics/library/citation\\_guides.html](http://www.lfhs.org/academics/library/citation_guides.html)

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4. Put all article titles in quotation marks
5. Italicize all source titles
6. DO NOT number your sources.

## Book Citations

Author (Last Name, First Name). *Title of Book*. Publication site: Publisher, Date of Publication. Medium of Publication.

### Examples:

One Author:

Adamson, Charles. *The Great Masters at Work*. New York: Dutton Publishers, 1993. Print.

Two Authors:

Billings, William and Daniel J. Cooper. *America and Its Investors*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Silver Press, 2002. Print.

## Specialized Reference Books

(Multiple volume works that are NOT general encyclopedias like *World Book Encyclopedia* or *Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

Author (Last Name, First Name). "Article Title." *Name of Reference Book*. Volume Number. Place of Publication: Publisher, date of publication. Page #s. Medium of Publication.

### Examples:

Signed Article:

Duffy, Alice. "People of Newfoundland." *Peoples of the Earth*. Vol. 5. Danbury, CT: Grolier, 1992. 25-33. 20 vols. Print.

Unsigned Article:

"Egyptians." *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Man*. Vol. 5. London: Marshall Cavendish Limited, 1978. 555-560. 20 vols. Print.

## Magazine Articles

Author (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine* Day Month Year of Publication: Page #s. Medium of Publication.

### Examples:

Signed Article:

Fredericks, John. "The Realist in American Literature." *American Literature Magazine* 25 October 2000: 32-41. Print.

Unsigned Article:

"Hair Styles." *Glamour* June, 2001: 25-28. Print

## Newspaper Articles

Author (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Article." *Title of Newspaper* Day Month Year of Publication: Section/Page #s. Medium of Publication.

### Examples:

Signed Article:

Kennedy, Benjamin. "Chicago Cubs Win World Series!" *Chicago Tribune* 15 October 2002: B5. Print.

Unsigned Article:

"Legislator Calls Back His Grant." *New York Times* 2 February 1997: C4. Print.

## Work in Anthology (poem, essay, short story, play, speech, etc.)

Author (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Work." *Title of Anthology*. Ed. Editor's Name(s). Publishing City: Publisher, Publication Date. Page #s. Medium of Publication.

### Example:

Lincoln, Jennifer. "The Afternoon Tea." *American Short Story Collection*. Ed. Ben Raforth. Chicago: Ballinger Press Publishing Company, 2001. 32-45. Print.

## Other Types of Sources

### Personal Interview

Interviewee (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Interview." Medium of Interview. Day Month Year of Interview.

### Example:

Frederick, Mark. "Questions about the Iraq War." Telephone interview. 10 Feb. 2009.

### Interview found on the Web

Interviewee (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Interview." Interviewer. Name of Website. Publisher of Website, Day Month Year of Publication. Medium of Publication. Day Month Year of Access. <URL>.

### Example:

Bush, George. "Diane Sawyer discusses the war with President George Bush." Interview by Diane Sawyer. *World News and Report*. ABC, 5 Apr. 2008. Web. 12 Feb. 2010. <<http://www.abc.com>>.

### Lecture/Speech (seen in person)

Lecturer (Last Name, First Name). "Title of Lecture." Event Title. Location, City. Day Month Year of Lecture. Medium of Presentation.

### Example:

Wilson, Fred. "Was the war successful?" 2009 Demonstration. Waldorf Hotel, Rock Island. 5 Aug. 2005. Lecture.

## Movie

"Title of Movie" Director. Main Performers. Studio Company, Publication Year. Medium of Publication.

### Example:

"*Schindler's List*" Dir. Steven Spielberg. Perf. Liam Neeson and Ben Kingsley. Universal Pictures, 1993. DVD.

**IF USING ANY OTHER TYPES OF SOURCES,  
COME SEE MRS. LITTEL OR MRS. GRIGG IN THE LIBRARY!  
YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT THE LIBRARY CITATION GUIDES AND  
RESEARCH RESOURCES AT:**

[http://www.lfhs.org/academics/library/citation\\_guides.html](http://www.lfhs.org/academics/library/citation_guides.html)

Consider the following example of a Bibliography/Works Cited page using proper format without annotations:

Akinjide, Richard, Ed. *Africa and the Development of International Law*. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1988. Print.

Cervenka, Zdenek. *The Organization of African Unity and Its Charter*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968. Print.

Dowell, William. "Rwanda: Who Should Pay for the Crimes?" *Time Magazine* 3.3( 17 July 2000): 18-21. *Facts on File*. Web. 3 December 2007 <<http://www.fofweb.com>>.

Esedebe, P. Olisanwuche. *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and the Movement, 1176-1991*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1994. Print.

"Facing Up to Uganda." *The New York Times* 9 Dec. 1977, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., sec 4:1-6. *Proquest*. Web. 30 November 2007 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

Gibbs, Nancy. "The Killing Fields of Rwanda." *Encyclopedia of Africa*. Vol. 8. Danbury, CT: Grolier, 1998. 34-45. 15 vols. Print.

*Organization of African Unity: Making Human Rights a Reality for Africans*. New York: Amnesty International Publications, 1998. Print.