

How Do I Choose My Category?

Do you have special interests or talents that lend themselves to a specific category? How can your material best be expressed? Answering the following questions may help you decide.

Historical Paper

1. Do I enjoy writing?
2. Am I more comfortable expressing myself on paper rather than in front of an audience?
3. Am I trying to convey a complex idea that requires a lot of explanation?

Performance

1. Do I enjoy being in front of an audience?
2. Do I like to act?
3. Can I sing or play a musical instrument? (Musical talent is not necessary, but many students incorporate music into their performances.)
4. Can my topic be expressed dramatically?

Exhibit

1. Do I enjoy creating things with my hands?
2. Do I have room to keep an exhibit once I create it?
3. Do I have a way to transport my project to a contest?
4. Can I tell my story primarily through pictures and artifacts instead of words?

Documentary

1. Do I have access to and enjoy working with media equipment?
2. Do I have access to editing equipment that I can operate?
3. Do I have a VCR, television, slide projector, tape recorder, computer, etc. that I can take to a contest?
4. Will my research be most clearly presented as a documentary?

Websites

1. Do I enjoy working with computers?
2. Do I have access to a laptop computer to present my entry at the contest?
3. Do I have a basic knowledge about developing websites?
4. Can I effectively present my topic in a website?



NHD: Choosing a Topic

A. Topic Selection

1. Historical sub-fields - History is a huge and broad umbrella that includes lots of sub-branches of history. Look at the list below and choose five to cross out (that you have NO interest in) and five to circle (that you have a high interest in).

political history	social history	military history	economic history
religious history	cultural history	diplomatic history	environmental history
women's history	public history	history of government	demographic history
rural history	family history	ethnic history	labor history
urban history	history of education	history of the common man	intellectual history

2. Time Periods / Geographic Regions - the second thing that you have to do is to narrow down some geographic locations. Based on that, choose one or two that you'd like to pursue.

North America	Central America	Caribbean	South America
Pre-Columbian	Pre-Columbian	Pre-Columbian	Pre-Columbian
Exploration and Settlement	Exploration and Settlement	Exploration and Settlement	Exploration and Settlement
Founding / pre-civil war	Independence movements	Independence movements	Independence movements
Post-Civil War	Twentieth century	Twentieth century	Twentieth century
Europe	Africa	Asia	Pacific Rim
Romans, Dark/Middle Ages	Pre-imperialism	Pre-imperialism	Pre-imperialism
Early Modern	Imperialism	Imperialism	Imperialism
Imperialism	Post-imperialism	Post-imperialism	Post-imperialism
Twentieth century	Modern Africa	Modern Asia	Modern Oceania

3. Are you thinking of working in a group? Glance at the paper of the members of your group - do you agree more than you disagree?

B. Web Searching – Choose three of the links below to explore.

Our Documents - <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/index.php?flash=true&>

Look at the 100 most important documents in US history.

Choose three that you think are interesting and note WHY you are interested in these documents

Document....	This is interesting because....

Library of Congress - <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/>

→ Click on the link above and choose two set of primary sources

Primary Source Set....	This caught my attention...

National Historic Landmarks - <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/>

→ Sometimes a place can inspire an idea....the National Parks Service protects historic places across the United States

Ideas.....

PBS History - <http://www.pbs.org/topics/history/>

On the menu bar across the top, choose the “topics” and choose some categories that interest you. Note your pathways and ideas in the boxes below.

Ideas.....

Library of Congress Timeline –

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/index.html>

→ If you like to look at history chronologically.....try this

Ideas....

C. If you have extra time, consider some of these....

<i>If you're interested in....</i>	<i>Try....</i>
Exploration in North and South America....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.americanjourneys.org/
Colonial History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.history.org/history/teaching/index.cfm • http://www.dohistory.org/home.html
Social History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ashp.cuny.edu/
Politics and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/
Women's History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/thematic-units.html
A general overview of US History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://historymatters.gmu.edu/ • http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/ • http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/index.cfm • https://www.gilderlehrman.org/ • http://nhd.org/USHistoryPrimarySources.htm
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.bne.es/es/Colecciones/ • http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page • http://nhd.org/WorldHistoryPrimarySources.htm
Puerto Rican/Latino History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/ • http://www.preb.com/geneal2/adasi.htm • http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/

NHD Helpful Web Resources:

→ NHD Website: Find student project examples from past years, the annual theme sheet, tips for creating different types of entries, the contest rule book and more!

<http://www.nhd.org>

→ Need research tips from a master NHD teacher?

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/usfIFqsHoVk>

→ Need help writing a thesis statement from a master NHD teacher?

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/5728zt9ZYnQ>

Research Checklist

Have you....

- Searched the local library catalog for books
 - Searched under your subject's name(s)
 - Searched the name of key associates of that person or people associated with the event
 - Searched the name of key events with which your person was associated
- In the classroom
 - Searched the classroom library
- On the Internet:
 - Search the course website for research resources in your time period.
 - Google key words (you never know what you might find)
 - Google key words (using site:edu)
 - Google for primary sources ("Eleanor Roosevelt primary source")
 - Repeat process using other key words
 - Searched the *OAH Magazine of History* site
<http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/>
 - Search the *American Heritage* website
<http://www.americanheritage.com/>
 - Search the *History Net* website
<http://www.historynet.com/>

Reminder about Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources

Primary Source-The most common definition of a primary source is that which is written or produced in the time period. Primary sources are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles from the time, oral history interviews, documents, photographs, artifacts, or anything else that provides first-hand accounts about a person or event. This definition also applies to primary sources found on the internet.


Secondary Source- Secondary sources are usually published books or articles by authors who were not eyewitnesses or participants in the historical event or period and who base their interpretation on primary sources, research, and study. These sources provide context for a historical event. For example, high school history textbooks, biographies, retrospective newspapers and other history books about a particular topic are secondary sources. This definition also applies to secondary sources found on the internet.

Tertiary Source-Tertiary sources are summaries and collections of primary and secondary sources. These sources provide ideas for topics and further investigation. Some examples are almanacs, encyclopedias, dictionaries, guidebooks, manuals, etc.

TOPIC	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY
Civil War	Photograph by Mathew Brady	Article on battle strategies of the Civil War by James McPherson	Civil War database
Westward Movement	Diary of Sarah Jane Osborne	Monograph on the life of Sarah Jane Osborne	Dictionary on wagons of 19 th century America
Industrial Revolution	Patent for the sewing machine	Book describing the social changes due to the sewing machine	Manual on the uses of sewing machines
World War I	Enlistment Posters for World War I	Web site on World War I	Encyclopedia of World War I
World War II	War movie filmed in 1943	Magazine article about World War II	Dictionary on World War II
Civil Rights	Recording of a speech by Martin Luther King Jr.	Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.	Guide to the 1992 movie about MLK

Keepers of the Past: Finding the Information You Need

In the search for history and those little “nuggets” of information that provide historians with insight into the past, there are times when a lot of time and patience are needed to uncover (or discover!) just the right source. Listed below are “repositories”, or places where you might find many of the resources you need for your project! However, do not limit yourself to just this list! See if you can discover and record other repositories and sources of your own!

	<p>STATE RECORDS: Historic Registers Photographs Census Records Geological Survey Maps Military Records Fire Records Railroad Records</p>	<p>HISTORICAL & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: Special Collections Artifacts Archaeological Site Maps Letters Government Records Newspapers Exhibits Historical Archives</p>	<p>HOME: Albums Diaries Journals Letters Private Collections Genealogy Quilts Oral Histories Medical Records Military Records Photographs</p>
<p>COURTHOUSE: Deeds Wills Ledgers Estate Settlements Marriage Records City Directories Tax Records Genealogy Records</p>	<p>LIBRARY: Census Records Business Ledgers Histories Reference Works Special Collections Primary Sources Magazines Books Photographs</p>	<p>SCHOOLS: Yearbooks Attendance Records School Board Minutes</p>	
<p>ONLINE: Primary Sources Secondary Sources Photographs Letters Census Records Genealogy Records Newspapers</p>	<p>BUSINESSES: Employer Newsletters Correspondence Annual Reports Photographs Historical Records</p>		<p>PLACES OF WORSHIP: Memberships Names and Dates Cemetery Records Burial Practices Inscriptions</p>