

Conducting Historical/Geographical Research

1. Begin with an idea and look for some general sources. Encyclopedias or web sites may be a good place to look for the basics, but move from them quickly. You should know a little bit about your subject and then move on to more serious sources.
2. See what's available at hand by looking in the on-line (formerly known as card) catalog. Most of this material will be in book form or journals.
3. Look at a few of these books to see what's of use.
4. Next, use a search engine, such as Ebsco Host (the librarians know lots of them) to find peer-reviewed and other articles.
5. If your topic is very geographical, it helps to look at a map while you're reading and thinking about it.
6. If your topic is deeply historical, it helps to prepare a timeline while you're cogitating.
7. Make an outline and start to fill it in.
8. It helps to be organized in some manner--a notebook works for me, others like file folders.
9. **BE SURE TO SITE YOUR SOURCES ON ALL THE MATERIALS THAT YOU COLLECT.**
10. When you begin to write, site your sources as you use them, so you won't have to hunt for them later.
11. Write.
12. Think.
13. Rewrite.