

2 Investigate previous research and subject matter literature.

- A. Read and understand what has already been written on your subject.
- B. Create a bibliography or an annotated bibliography.

1 Define the topic or questions being researched.

Defining the scope of your research is key to a successful outcome. Define the who, what, where, when, why and how questions to avoid scope creep to the extent possible.

3 Research primary sources available.

A. Contact area archives, museums and historical societies, government records, and other primary source repositories. Be thorough in your investigation of pertinent primary sources. Do not limit your search to one community or county. B. Augment the project's bibliography or annotated bibliography.

4 Evaluate what you have learned.

Assess what you have learned by thinking about the topic in the context of its time period, geographic location, social, and political environment.

6 Refine or augment the research questions.

Once satisfied that you know what the questions are, return to #2 and #3.

5 Evaluate your research questions.

Are they still the most compelling questions, or has your research led to different questions?

7 Write a fully cited paper.

Once you have answered the most compelling questions related to your research topic, write a fully cited paper answering those questions.

8 Determine the best way to communicate your research.

Possible formats include a paper, journal article, book, video, website, presentation, museum exhibit and catalog, piece of music, or poem.

Careful citation in any format is important. Consider how to share both research results and bibliographic materials.

BEST PRACTICES for

Local History Projects

NOTES & IDEAS

