

Tips for American Biography Research

Step #1: Check out specialty encyclopedias and the available databases (see suggestions below) to read general information and summaries on your historic figure using his/her last name.

Step #2: Find in-depth information from books and materials owned by the library.

Use the Online Catalog to search for materials and use the ones suggested below. <http://lhwildcats.org/library>

Browsing the Shelves	Call Number
Native Americans	970
General American History	973
Colonial America	973.2
Revolutionary America	973.3
Early American Democracy	973.4
Civil War	973.6 to 973.8
Late 1900s	973.82
Title of Reference Books	Call Number
<i>Great Lives 17th Century</i>	Ref 909.6 Great
<i>Great Lives 18th Century</i>	Ref 909.7 Great
<i>Great Lives 19th Century</i>	Ref 909.81 Great
<i>American National Biography (24 vol. set)</i>	Ref 920.073 AME
<i>Facts about Presidents</i>	Ref 973 Kane
<i>American Presidents (6 separate series)</i>	Ref 973.09
<i>American Eras</i>	Ref 973.2 American
<i>Notable American Women</i>	Ref 973.92 NOT

Title of Primary Source Materials	Call Number
<i>American Primer</i>	Ref 973 American
<i>American Reader</i>	Ref 973 American
<i>American Spirit</i>	Ref 973 Bailey
<i>Eye Witness to America</i>	Ref 973 Eye
<i>American History Told by Contemporaries</i>	Ref 973 Hart
<i>Annals of American (22 vol. set)</i>	Ref 973.08 Annals

Understanding Citation and Primary Sources:

- ❖ Works Cited is an alphabetical list of works you quoted from, or works you referenced in the paper. Works Cited uses MLA (Modern Language Association) style.

Works Cited and Bibliography are not the same. In Works Cited you only list items you have actually cited. For this project you will not be using a Bibliography, which is a list all of the material you have consulted in preparing your essay whether or not you have actually cited the work.

*Citation information can be found via the On-Line Catalog. Add the book title to “add to this list”, then click “in this list” (right-hand side); finally, click “Go” at the bottom of the page next to the Bibliography tab.

Two Print Sources = **includes e-books besides print sources**

Two Electronic Sources = **both as databases or a database and one internet site source**

One Primary Source = **item directly from the past**

- ❖ Primary Sources are created by people who actually saw or participated in an event and recorded that event or their reactions to it immediately after.
In history, primary sources are usually letters, records or other written documents created during the period that is being studied. These documents would be as far ranging as diaries, legal notices newspaper articles or personal accounts. Primary sources can include photographs, jewelry, furniture, and all sorts of items crafted from the time period.

Step #3: Use journal articles and materials from these suggested databases. Electronic Databases sponsored by LHS Library are found on the library webpage. <http://lhwildcats.org/library>

ABC-CLIO:

Username:
libertyville

Password:
wildcats

Areas to Use: Click on the “American Government” and “American History” for a general site search.

Citation: Citation is at the end of the article in MLA format.

Facts on File:

Username:
libertyville

Password:
wildcats

Areas to Use: Click on the “American History Online” then the Biographies or simply do a basic search. Be sure to use tabs for biographies and **primary sources** and **timelines**.

Citation: Information is at the bottom of the article but it is in Chicago Style. Click on the “How to Site” and then create your citation using the example of MLA.

Gale Resource Center:

Login ID:
wildcats

Areas to Use: Select the “History Resource Center-US”. Click on the “person search” or simply do a basic search—this will also show a **primary sources** tab.

Citation: Citation is at the end of the article in MLA format.

Annals of America:

Login ID:
cats

Password:
library

Areas to Use: On the Home Page just make a general search or search by your person’s name. Resist using only the ‘author’ search since your person may not have written anything.

Citation: Information is at the bottom of the article and must be placed in MLA format.

Proquest History Center:

Login ID:
libertyville

Password:
wildcats

Areas to Use: Select "Historical Newspaper" for a basic search. Be cautious. Double check dates so you can be sure if it is a **primary source** not an article about your person written at a later time period.

Citation: Information is at the top of the article and must be placed in MLA format.

Step #4: Gale Virtual Reference Library = e-books found in **Gale Resource Center**

Login ID: wildcats

Areas to Use: Simply conduct a "basic search" or use "advanced search" if you want to restrict your search.

Citation: Citation is at the end of the article in MLA format.

Step #5: Find information on the Internet.

Use the Internet wisely. Set up a good internet search when you use Google. Websites ending in .edu, .gov, .org or .net are usually trustworthy—no Wikipedia and no .com and only one internet source. Remember to use the “+” and “-“ symbols to narrow down the search.

For example: Benjamin Franklin
“Benjamin Franklin” +”printing press” -com +edu

General Biography Websites

Internet Public Library Biographies Links
<http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/ref15.00.00/>

Colonial Williamsburg <http://www.history.org/research/> Excellent site for biographies of Colonial America.

Personnel in Naval History <http://www.history.navy.mil/index.html>

Archiving Early America - The Lives of Famous Early Americans
<http://www.earlyamerica.com/lives/> Do not cite since it is a .com address but do use it to gather information to confirm with other sources.

From Revolution to Reconstruction and What Happened Afterwards
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/B/index.htm> Excellent source.

Who Served at Historic Valley Forge
<http://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/served/index.html> Excellent coverage of Revolutionary War figures.

National Archives and Records Administration - The Founding Fathers
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
<http://www.archives.gov/search/index.html>

NARA Women's History

<http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/women.html>

US History: <http://www.ushistory.org/index.html>

Smithsonian Education Spotlight Biography - Founding Fathers

<http://smithsonianeducation.org/spotlight/july4.html> Also has other links to Founding Fathers.

Smithsonian Institute Presidents

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/presidency/home.html>

Spy Letters of the American Revolution - People of the Revolution

<http://www.si.umich.edu/spies/index-people.html>

The White House - First Ladies' Gallery - Excellent resource

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/>

The White House - Presidents of the United States - Excellent

resource. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/index.html>