

Professor Jacobs
21H.206
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The One Best Source

Now that the tough work of figuring out your topic is behind you, the fun part of going through the primary sources begins. When you approach your sources, keep in mind the questions you are interested in answering. Be flexible enough to allow the sources to guide you in the right direction, but be firm enough so that you don't start reading newspapers and magazines cover to cover. When you look through your sources, take notes as you go. I find that index cards are convenient-- you can put the date and cite at the top and then write down the pithy quotes that you may want to use. In the end, you'll have more than you can use, but that's okay.

For the "one best source" assignment, pick one or maybe a couple of representative or interesting documents. Explain what it is, where it comes from, and how it fits into your project. Make a copy of an ad, a portion of a congressional hearing, etc. Keep your explanations short. Make sure to explain the connections between this source and your thesis.

Try to get as much research done in the next two weeks as is possible. That means at least several hours (i.e.: double-digits) of research per week. Then it will be time to start writing. If you are having difficulties dealing with your sources, just let me know.