

Heart of Texas Regional History Fair

Organizational Outline for Research and Writing

This outline summarizes research resources and provides a step-by-step guide to assembling the information you gather by research into a finished project. The outline is particularly aimed at writing a historical paper, but the general procedure—researching, organizing information, formulating a thesis, analyzing and interpreting, drawing conclusions—is the same for all good history fair projects.

Step 1: Review the sources available for research. Let each source lead to the next. Check the bibliographies of each book and journal article you read to see what sources the author used, and ask each person you consult if he/she knows of someone else who might be helpful. Some of the local resources available are:

- A. Public and School Libraries
 - 1. books
 - 2. articles
 - 3. newspapers and magazines
 - 4. encyclopedias
 - a. general, e.g., *Britannica*, *Collier's*
 - b. special, e.g., *The Encyclopedia of World Art*, *Encyclopedia of American History*
 - 5. biographical aids, e.g., *Who's Who in America*, *American Men and Women of Science*, *Dictionary of American Biography*
 - 6. Remember that local libraries can borrow from a network of libraries if they do not have a book you need. Ask the librarian for help.
- B. Special Libraries
 - 1. Lee Lockwood Library
 - 2. Red Men Museum and Library
 - 3. Art Center
 - 4. Waco Veteran's Administration Library
- C. College and University Libraries
 - 1. McLennan Community College
 - 2. Texas State Technical College
 - 3. Baylor University
 - a. Moody and Jones Libraries
 - b. The Texas Collection
 - c. Armstrong Browning Library,
 - d. Collections of Political Materials
- D. Special collections owned by individuals, clubs, churches, fraternal and service organizations, businesses, trade associations, etc.
 - 1. books
 - 2. manuscripts
 - 3. documents
 - 4. oral history (interviews you conduct and record or published ones)
 - 5. newspapers
 - 6. photographs
- E. museums
 - 1. Mayborn Museum (Baylor University)
 - 2. Dr Pepper Museum
 - 3. Historic Waco Foundation house museums
 - 4. Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum
 - 5. Texas Sports Hall of Fame

- 6. Texas Tennis Museum and Hall of Fame
- F. family records
- G. interviews
- H. courthouse, census, and business records
- I. personal correspondence
- J. videos (documentaries, etc.)
- K. write letters requesting specific information if source is not local

- STEP 2:** **Select a topic.** Read a general article or two about the subject. Make sure that there are enough available sources to support your research.
- STEP 3:** **Formulate a temporary thesis** to be the central and controlling idea of your paper. Prepare a list of questions to be answered in the paper.
- STEP 4:** **Prepare a preliminary outline.**
- STEP 5:** **Research the subject.** As you research, record your bibliography information on 3" x 5" cards and your notes on 4" x 6" cards, or create documents on your computer with lists or tables for your notes and bibliographic information.
- STEP 6:** **Assemble the data** by organizing your note cards in a workable order. Make sure your original thesis is supported by the facts. If not, rework your thesis to conform to the information you have gathered.
- STEP 7:** **Construct a final outline.**
- STEP 8:** **Write a rough draft** using your outline as a guide.
- STEP 9:** **Proofread, revise, and correct** the rough draft.
- STEP 10:** Give extra attention to writing a **strong introduction and conclusion.**
- STEP 11:** **Fill in footnotes** on the draft. Give full credit to sources.
- STEP 12:** **Write the final, revised draft.**
- STEP 13:** **Complete your bibliography.** Make sure that it is annotated and separated into primary and secondary sources.
- STEP 14:** **Double-check your work,** both for accuracy and appearance.