

# **Mrs. Kragen's History Day Rules and Guidelines for Sources and Notes**

**In the end, I expect each person to have at least 15 sources, roughly half of them being primary and the rest being secondary sources.**

**National winners may have 100 or more sources!**

**You need to take notes on your sources. You may use 3x5 cards. Or you may use a variety of on-line tools.**

**You will finish all your required research before Winter Break. You may continue to do research, to take notes, and to add to your bibliography, but you will no longer be required to turn that work in to me.**

## **National History Day Rules and Guidelines for Sources**

We can't tell you a specific number of sources, as that will vary by the topic and by the resources to which you have reasonable access. For some topics, such as the Civil War or many 20th-century US topics, there are many sources available. For other topics, such as those in ancient history or non-US history, there likely are far fewer sources available.

The more good sources you have, the better, but don't pad your bibliography. Only list items which you actually use; if you looked at a source but it didn't help you at all, don't list it in your bibliography.

As much as possible, your research should be balanced, considering the viewpoints of all relevant groups. That means:

- ✓ losers as well as winners
- ✓ males and females
- ✓ different nations
- ✓ different socioeconomic/ethnic/religious groups
- ✓ AND SO ON!

What "balanced" means will vary depending on your topic.

## **You do need to find both *primary* and *secondary* sources.**

Secondary sources help you to put your topic in context, that is, to see how your topic relates to the big picture and to understand its long-term causes and consequences. Primary sources help you develop your own interpretation and make your project lively and personal.

Primary sources are directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include:

- ✓ letters
- ✓ speeches
- ✓ diaries
- ✓ newspaper articles *from the time*
- ✓ oral history interviews
- ✓ documents
- ✓ photographs
- ✓ artifacts
- ✓ anything else that provides first-hand accounts about a person or event

**CHECK OUT THE  
[RESEARCH ROADMAP](#)  
FOR MORE HELP.**

**(I'M SERIOUS—  
IT'S GREAT STUFF!)**

### **Some materials might be considered primary sources for one topic but not for another.**

For example, a newspaper article about D-Day (which was June 6, 1944) written in June 1944 was likely written by a participant or eyewitness and would be a primary source; an article about D-Day written in June 2001 probably was not written by an eyewitness or participant and would not be a primary source. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered soon after the 1863 battle, is a primary source for the Civil War, but a speech given on the 100th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg in 1963 is not a primary source for the Civil War. If, however, the topic was how Americans commemorate the Civil War, then the 100th anniversary speech would be a primary source for that topic. If there's any doubt about whether you should list a source as primary or secondary, you should explain in the annotation why you chose to categorize it as you did.

### **Here are some common questions about primary sources:**

- ✓ **Are interviews with experts primary sources?** No, an interview with an expert (a professor of Civil War history, for example) is not a primary source, UNLESS that expert actually lived through and has first-hand knowledge of the events being described.
- ✓ **If I find a quote from a historical figure in my textbook or another secondary source and I use the quote in my project, should I list it as a primary source?** No, quotes from historical figures which are found in secondary sources are not considered primary sources. The author of the book has processed the quotation, selecting it from the original source. Without seeing the original source for yourself, you don't know if the quotation is taken out of context, what else was in the source, what the context was, etc.
- ✓ **Should I list each photograph or document individually?** You should handle this differently in notes than in the bibliography. When you are citing sources for specific pieces of information or interpretations, such as in footnotes or endnotes, you should cite the individual document or photograph. In the bibliography, however, you would cite only the collection as a whole, not all the individual items. You should include the full title of the collection (i.e., Digges-Sewall Papers or the Hutzler Collection), the institution and city or city/state where the collection is located (i.e., Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore). You can use the annotation to explain that this collection provided 7 photographs which you used in your exhibit or that collection provided 14 letters which were important in helping you trace what happened. The same treatment applies to newspaper articles. In the footnotes or endnotes, you should cite the individual articles and issues of a newspaper. In the bibliography, you would list only the newspaper itself, not the individual issues or articles; you can use the annotation to explain that you used X number of days of the newspaper for your research.