

U.S. History Research Guide

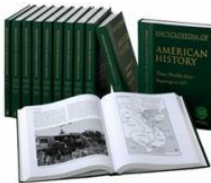
[Find Books](#) [Find Articles](#) [Suggested Websites](#) [Research Process Guide](#)

I. Find Books

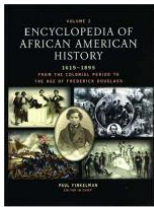
A) Reference Materials: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.

Reference materials offer background information and broad overviews of subjects. This information is often helpful in narrowing your topic and in selecting a specific area to explore further. Reference materials such as almanacs and yearbooks also provide quick access to statistical data.

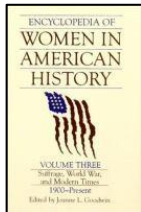
1) Suggested Titles:



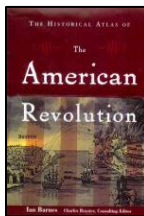
[Encyclopedia of American History](#). New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2003. (REF E174 .E453 2003) Ten-volume set that traces the history of America from the 15th century to the present.



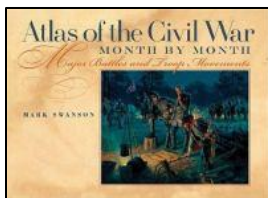
[Encyclopedia of African American History 1619-1895](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. (VER REF E185 .E545 2006). Three-volume set that includes alphabetically arranged entries on important events and individuals that shaped African American history.



[Encyclopedia of Women in American History](#). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2002. (VER REF HQ1410 .E53 2002) Examines the unique influence and contributions of women in every era of American history, from the colonial period to the present. Covers not only the issues that have had an impact on women, but also traces the influence of women's achievements on society as a whole.



[Historical Atlas of the American Revolution](#). New York: Routledge, 2000. (E208 .B36 2000) Details the entire history of the struggle for independence, from Colonial governments and North American extensions of European wars to the early days of the American Republic.



[Atlas of the Civil War](#). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004. (E470 .S94 2004) The first Civil War atlas to depict multiple aspects of the war's action, month by month, from April 1861 through May 1865.



[History in Dispute](#). New York: St. James Press, 2000. (VER REF D20 .H543 2000) This series includes critical interpretations of major historical events in the U.S. and worldwide.

B) [Library Catalog](#): Print and E-book Collections

The online catalog offers convenient access to titles housed at all VC library locations. At the catalog screen, select "Search the Catalog" to locate titles or subjects that match your terms such as "American Revolution."

E-books:

After entering your search terms such as Civil War, use the filters in the left menu bar to limit your results to those books available online.

E-books can be checked out and downloaded to a PC, iPad, or other device. See the **Accessing E-books** section in the [Library Tips](#) document.

C) [Browse the Collection](#)

Physically browse the U.S. History titles shelved by call number in the following Library of Congress Classification ranges:

E 11-143: America

E 660-738: Late Nineteenth Century

E 151-887: United States

E 740-837: Twentieth Century

E 300-453: Revolution to Civil War

F 1-975: U.S. Local History

II. Find Articles

A) Article Databases

1. [Academic Search Complete](#): This database includes more than 5,300 full-text periodicals covering many areas of academic study including history. Coverage includes the following journals:

- *American History*
- *American Indian Quarterly*
- *American Heritage*
- *Hispanic American Historical Review*
- *Journal of African American History*
- *Journal of the Early Republic*
- *American Historical Review*
- *Reviews in American History*

and over one hundred others. Select from a number of different limiters to customize your search, including cover stories, publication dates, page numbers, etc.

Enter your keyword(s) to search all journals simultaneously for articles addressing your topic. For example, if looking for information on how **Ronald Reagan** influenced the outcome of the **Cold War**, enter both terms connected with the Boolean operator "and".

Citing the articles: The database offers formatting rules with examples for citing the articles selected. For assistance in citing the articles, select the "Help" link in the upper right corner of the screen, scroll to view "Citation Styles" in the left menu bar, and then choose the documentation style of your choice.

III. Suggested Websites

[American Memory Project, Library of Congress](#): Provides free and open access through the Internet to written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music that document the American experience. It is a digital record of American history and creativity.

[Internet Modern History Sourcebook](#): The Internet Modern History Sourcebook is one of a series of history primary sourcebooks. It is intended to serve the needs of teachers and students in college survey courses in modern European history and American history, as well as in modern Western Civilization and World Cultures.

[Library of Southern Literature](#): Includes a wide range of literary works of the American South published before 1924. This collection begins with some of the earliest texts about America written by British discoverers that set the foundation for American letters and traces the development of southern literature through to the beginning of the twentieth century.

[Eyewitness to World War II](#): A collection of webpage articles regarding World War II events and information, including pictures and some links to audio files.

[History Matters](#): Designed for high school and college teachers and students of U.S. history survey courses, this site serves as a gateway to web resources and offers unique teaching materials, first-person primary documents, and guides to analyzing historical evidence.

[Best of History Web Sites](#): An award-winning portal that contains annotated links to over 1200 history web sites as well as links to hundreds of quality K-12 history lesson plans, history teacher guides, history activities, history games, history quizzes, and more.

[Vietnam Project and Archive](#): The Vietnam Archive has collected millions of pages of material and tens of thousands of photographs, slides, maps, periodicals, audio, moving images, and books related to the Vietnam War, Indochina, and the impact of the war on the United States and Southeast Asia.

The Research Process

- 1) Select a topic that you find interesting and appropriate for the assignment.
- 2) Review reference sources such as subject encyclopedias for background information to help focus or narrow the search.

For example, students interested in the **Civil Rights Movement** may consult the *Encyclopedia of American History* for ideas in narrowing the focus to a particular area of interest such as the **strategy of nonviolence for producing change**.

- 3) Restate the topic as a question. Inquiry is at the heart of the research process, a quest to locate information which answers questions and leads researchers to a greater understanding of the topic.

Restating the topic as a question will help in:

- Locating information that is useful and relevant to the primary focus or thesis of your research.
- Identifying the keywords or phrases to use in the search statement.

Example: How successful was **nonviolence** as a strategy during the **Civil Rights Movement**?

- 4) Develop a search statement by combining keywords or concepts from the research question. For example, "**nonviolence**" and "**Civil Rights Movement**" were identified as keywords in the question above. By connecting both terms with the Boolean operator "**and**", the researcher will retrieve only those articles that discuss *both* concepts, thus improving the relevancy of the search.

Enter in search field: **nonviolence and Civil Rights Movement**

- 5) Develop alternate search statements to improve the search results. Authors may use various terms to describe the same concept.

For example, **nonviolence** is often used in the same context as **civil disobedience**.

By identifying and connecting alternate terms, researchers may expand the search results. As indicated below, consider brainstorming and listing synonyms or word variations to identify alternate keywords.

Concept 1		Concept 2
nonviolence	AND	Civil Rights Movement
civil disobedience	AND	human rights
passive resistance	AND	civil justice

- 6) Evaluate information for objectivity and reliability.
- 7) Cite the information borrowed from other authors or informational sources. Careful documentation will ensure that credit is given with no intention to plagiarize or claim ownership of information belonging to other researchers. For explanations and examples, visit the [Duke University Library's Citation page](#).

Questions?

Email: librarian@vernoncollege.edu

Chat: Select the chat icon on the homepage.

Phone: 940-552-6291 ext: 2222