**Common Questions about the Research Paper**

I don’t know how to start!

--You need to start by thinking about HOW your question could be answered

--If you don’t know, you need to learn some basic knowledge about your topic…try a general knowledge site like WORLDBOOK

My question is difficult to answer

--Ask yourself these questions: is it specific enough? Maybe you aren’t finding sources because your topic is too broad. Are you ANSWERING A QUESTION?? Some students get stuck in their research because they end up DESCRIBING an event, and not proving a point

--TALK TO ME, I can help you ☺

I’ve started researching, but I don’t know how to find specific facts…

--In databases, search for the SUBTOPICS of your paper. For example, if I was writing a paper about the effects of the New Deal, I would need to narrow my search to organizations like the CCC or the WPA to get more specific facts

--Decide what kind of research you need to have…what will support your argument? Is it dates and events? Statistics? Opinion columns from the time period?

I don’t know what kinds of facts to find and write down

--Remember, you are attempting to answer your research question through your paper. You are PROVING A POINT and persuading your audience. Find facts that will convince someone to believe your thesis.

--If this is still a struggle for you, we need to talk one-on-one

JSTOR is awful and confusing

--Confusing, yes. But there is a way to make it more helpful. There is a way to narrow your search in JSTOR , which I will show you how to do.

--You can also use other databases: EBSCOHOT, Google Scholar

I can’t find any primary documents

--Good news: I am reducing the requirement to JUST ONE PRIMARY SOURCE (much rejoicing ☺)

--Again, narrowing your focus to the subtopics of your paper will help immensely. You need to figure out what specific parts of your paper need evidence and facts, which may mean that the primary documents come a bit later down the road…

--The National History Day website has some great resources for primary documents:

<http://www.nhd.org/USHistoryPrimarySources.htm>

--Look at the Library of Congress for a wonderful database of primary source material

--Check out old copies of the New York Times…articles about your topic FROM THE TIME PERIOD count as primary documents!

*A few last thoughts…*

--YOU NEED TO DO A LOT OF RESEARCH OUTSIDE OF CLASS AND ASK FOR HELP

--DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO DO YOUR NOTECARDS OR YOUR PAPER!

