Chapter 1: Getting Started

1. explore your interests

2. move from a historical interest to a research interest

3. use print resources to begin a project
   a. encyclopedias, dictionaries, textbooks
   
   b. *American Historical Association’s Guide to Historical Literature* edited by Mary Beth Norton & Pamela Gerardi

4. talk to a librarian

5. use electronic resources
   a. your library’s resources
   b. other online resources: Project Muse, JSTOR, EBSCO, ProQuest, FirstSearch
   c. may need to use hard copies of resources, and interlibrary loans

6. be skeptical about on-line resources

7. approach your topic from a particular angle
   a. combine with personal interests & previous information read on the subject
   b. continually sift through resources until you have a narrow, focused topic with a helpful bibliography list

8. do background reading
   a. use index & table of contents to save time
   b. as you define your topic, you will switch between reading and searching the catalog

9. browse for more sources
   a. keep quality in mind
   b. be sure sources are not out of date
   c. start with a narrow base of sources, then broaden
   d. keep paper limits & deadlines in mind

10. form a hypothesis
    a. try to reach a new conclusion about your topic
    b. hypothesis: a question that guides your research; form this by:
       i. jotting down questions
       ii. asking, can you build an argument around this potential answer?
       iii. does that question address a broader issue in history?
11. draft a proposal: one page that answers:
   a. **what is your topic?** (briefly describe it)
   b. **what is your hypothesis?** (tell which particular question is driving your research)
   c. **what will your readers learn?** (new information? interpreting commonplace information in a new way?)
   d. **why will this be significant or interesting?** (discuss the relationship to broader issues in history)
   e. **what are your principal sources?** (give a short bibliography)
   f. **which methods will you use to evaluate your sources?**

12. write an annotated bibliography

13. talk to people about your topic

14. if you have to abandon a topic, do it early!