

Strategies for Graduate Research in Sociology

I. **Control your Research**, rather than the reverse. Steps can include, in order:

1. **Begin at the Very Beginning.**

Before you do more than jot a few notes on the back of an envelope, create a place for:

- A DETAILED Record of Where and How You Search – DATE, Location, People you speak to as well as FULL title / Call number / Database name - whatever it will take to get you back here
- Useful things you find – articles, artifacts, graphics, pictures, recordings, etc.

You will need:

- Citation Software – Endnote, Refworks, Zotero or some combination.
- Electronic Storage – Always have a separate backup. Save to the backup at least once a week.
- Place and system for paper files.

2. Create a **Pallet of Research Possibilities** – List types, including:

- Guides
- Books
- Articles
- Media
- Reference Works
- Interviews
- Site Visits
- Data

3. Create a **Project Budget** for both time and money.

- Time-Line from present to completion, with discrete steps along the way.
- Expenses for travel, copying, access fees, subscriptions, and so on.

4. Run a **Project Sampler** – a few items, short time period.

5. Adjust Pallet and Budget, and set out. As you go, **Document Everything.**

6. **Check** Pallet and Budget on a regular basis, adjust as needed.

7. Allow enough time to **Fine Tune Results.**

8. **Keep a copy** on hand of your final product before turning it in.

9. **Thank everybody** you can think of, with notes for much effort at all.

10. File a paper copy in some **Personal Permanent Archive.**

II. Brief Checklist of Sources

1. Reference Works

- Encyclopedias
- Handbooks
- Annual Review

2. Books

- Main Catalog
- WorldCat
- Google Scholar

3. Articles

- Sociological Abstracts
- SocIndex
- International Bibl of the Soc Sci
- Web of Science
- Historical Abs / Am H & Life /
- Other indexes

4. Newspapers

- Electronic full text
- Microfilm

5. Dissertations

- Dissertation Abstracts
- CRL for many European

6. Government Docs

7. Data

- Acquire
- Analyze

8. Visual Sources

9. Web Sites

10. Interviews