

Sources for Essays

Activity

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This activity is designed to familiarize students with both their university library holdings and a range of sources they can use in their essays. It increases information literacy by teaching specific skills, such as accessing digital databases, searching an online catalogue and navigating physical collections. When students feel equipped to handle basic research tasks on their own, they will do so more effectively and more frequently, which improves overall academic performance. This exercise also encourages students to work together.

Context and aim

The scavenger hunt is designed as a self-directed activity. Students are sent a Google Doc survey or MS Form. In groups, they input answers to scavenger hunt questions.

In your class, divide your students into four or five groups. Distribute the list of scavenger hunt questions to each group and provide them with the URL/VLE link to the survey for them to input their answers. Students should then go to the university library. They have twenty-four hours to input their answers into the survey. ONLY one person per group should submit this survey, so each group will need to discuss in advance who will be responsible for doing so. Once all groups have finished the scavenger hunt, the module tutor will compile the answers, calculate points and announce a winner.

You can introduce a variation of the scavenger hunt by linking the questions to a particular academic article or book chapter.

Preparation

Students should prepare for the activity by reading the following text:

Keir Waddington, 'Sources for Essays' in Tracey Loughran (ed.), *A Practical Guide to Study History: Skills and Approaches*, 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2026).

Description of activity: Scavenger hunt

Tutors: The below are 'sample' questions. You should adapt to reflect your own institution, holdings and subscriptions.

Task 1: Make a plan (5 minutes)

Students: Read through the questions and agree who will be responsible for entering your answers in the survey. Some of the questions are worth more than others.

Task 2: The scavenger hunt (23 hours)

- 1 In the most recent issue of the *American Historical Review*, who wrote the third article? [5 points]
ANSWER: (for volume 129, issue 2, June 2024): Elizabeth Chatterjee.
- 2 What is the first secondary source the author cites in this article? [5 points]
ANSWER: Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela and Daniel J. Sargent (eds), *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).
- 3 Using your library catalogue, what are the three most recent books on the bubonic plague that the library holds? Please list the author, title and publication details using the correct referencing system. [5 points for each book]
- 4 Using the library catalogue, find the Duke Classic's version of *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte in the library. What is the last sentence of the second paragraph on page 44? [5 points]
ANSWER: It was night: a candle burnt on the table; Bessie stood at the bed-foot with a basin in her hand, and a gentleman sat in a chair near my pillow leaning over me.
- 5 Use JSTOR to find the most recent journal article in English on the book *Jane Eyre*. [5 points]

ANSWER: Alice Diver, 'Jane Eyre and Social Justice: How to Survive a (Victorian) "Witch" Trial', *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, 9:2 (2020), pp. 209–42.

- 6 Name the book located on the shelves between [select two books]. [5 points]
- 7 In the library, books on what topic are shelved at the classification DD253-256.8? [5 points]

ANSWER: Hitler, 1933–1945. National socialism.

- 8 Look for DD256 and find a copy of Ian Kershaw's *The Nazi Dictatorship*. Take a selfie with the book (and post your selfie into the survey). [5 points]
- 9 Now that you have found Kershaw's *The Nazi Dictatorship*, turn to page 44. What is the book cited in footnote 45? [5 points]
- ANSWER: Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria 1933–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- 10 What is the difference between Kershaw's *Nazi Dictatorship* and his *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich*? [10 points]

ANSWER: One is a textbook (*Nazi Dictatorship*) and the other is a monograph.

- 11 If you wanted to find primary sources on German history, what floor and where in the library would you go, and what classification/call numbers would you look at? [5 points]
- 12 Using the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>) what source can you find related to Kristallnacht published in November 1938? [10 points]

ANSWER: David H. Buffum, 'Anti-semitic Onslaught in Germany as seen from Leipzig', 21 November 1938, Leipzig, American Consulate.

- 13 In volume 1 of *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, who is pictured on page 66, and what are they doing in the second picture? [10 points]

ANSWER: first picture is Alberta William King; second picture is Alberta Williams King directing the Ebenezer Baptist Church choir at the premiere of the movie *Gone with the Wind* in Atlanta.

- 14 Using the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>, what was the total number of voyages between 1514 and 1614, how many enslaved embarked and how many disembarked? Hint: use the 'summary statistics'. [5 points]

ANSWER: There were 1164 voyages (one ship sank); 386,292 enslaved embarked; 310,440 disembarked.

- 15 Using the Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/>) find P. H. Pease's letter to Abraham Lincoln. What is the first sentence on the second page of the letter? [10 points]

ANSWER: 'the geographical position of Florida is such that her return will follow of a necessity'.

- 16 On page 11 of the 6 January 1915 issue of *Punch* you will find the cartoon 'As Between Friends'. Which two animals represent the two countries? [10 points]

ANSWER: The eagle represents the United States; the lion represents Britain (England).

- 17 In *Visions of Mughal India: An Anthology of European Travel Writing*, ed. Michael H. Fisher, what did Peter Mundy's father do for a living? [5 points]

ANSWER: Peter Mundy's father was the son of a Cornish pilchard merchant from Penryn (Cornwall, England).

- 18 Using ProQuest, to whom did Richard Hakluyt dedicate his 1582 *Divers Voyages*? [10 points]

ANSWER: Dedicated to the great noble men of France.

- 19 If you wanted to find a digital copy of *The Times* newspaper from 1914, where would you find it? [5 points]

ANSWER: There are a number of answers here, depending on your institution's access to resources. It might be *The Times* Archive (Gale or via *The Times*), but the Wellcome Collection (<https://wellcomecollection.org/>) and the British Newspaper Archive (<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>) also have copies of *The Times*. The answer should *not* be Google.

- 20 In 30 minutes, see how many primary sources you can identify in your library. List the primary sources you were able to find. Include the title, the date of publication, the call number and why you think it's a primary source. [2 points per item]

Task 3: Enter answers (1 hour [recommended])

Remember that only one person per group will submit answers on the Google Doc, and that this must be done within 24 hours after your seminar concludes.