Finding Sources

Gathering Information for Essays which Require Research: Background

Gathering sources is much more complex than it used to be. For starters, there are more resources available. Secondly, information can be gathered in a number of places. Your primary places for locating sources will be:

- The library
- Other computer sources (CDRoms, etc.)
- The internet/world wide web

This section provides an overview of important concepts and techniques in gathering information for research essays. You should read this section before going to more specific information on types of sources, documentation, etc. and before trying the sample exercies.

The library
If you go to the library, you will find that the old card catalog, which only lists books, has been replaced by a computer in most libraries. If you are doing research on a fairly new topic, this will be fine. However, not all libraries have their entire collection on line. So, if you are looking for information on say, the Civil War, and think that some older sources might be useful to you, be sure to ask the librarian if the library still maintains their card catalog. If they do, you should check there AS WELL as checking the computer.

The computer in the library usually will have instructions attached to it. Most library systems allow you to search by title, author, or subject headings, and most are cross-referenced. If you know which books you want, or know a specific author who has written books about the field that you are researching, then go ahead and use the title or author categories in the computer. You also may find it very helpful to use the

subject heading category, which will offer you more options for the books that might be useful to you in doing your research.

The subject heading category allows you to put in key words that might lead to books in your interest area. Don't limit yourself, though, by putting in words that are too narrow or too broad. If your search words are too narrow, you will not find many sources; on the other hand if they are too broad, you will not find the search useful either.

Key words are words that relate to your topic but are not necessarily in your thesis statement (note that it will be most helpful if you have a clear idea about your topic before you begin this type of research, although research can also help to narrow your thesis). For example, if you are searching for information about women in the Civil War, it would be too broad to enter just "women" and "war." You would find too many sources this way. It might also be too narrow to enter the name of a specific woman--you probably need more historical context. Try key phrases such as "women and Civil War" or "girls and Civil War." You want to find as many books that might be helpful on the subject that you are searching, without providing yourself with so much information that you lose sight of your original topic.

You will also discover that there is another great way to find books that might be helpful to you. As you find books on your topic listed in the computer, you can then track those books down on the shelf. After a few minutes of searching on the computer, you will start to see that certain books have call numbers (the number on the book's spine that tells its location in the library) that are similar. After you finish your work on the computer, ask a reference librarian, or follow the signs on the walls to locate the call numbers that correspond with your books. When you get to the section where your book is located, don't just look at that book. Look around, too. Sometimes you will find great resources that you were unaware of just by looking on the shelf. Because libraries are generally organized by topic, you can often find some real "gems" this way. Also check the index in the front or the back of the book (the one in the back is always more detailed, but not all books have one) to be sure that the information you are looking for is in the book. A book can have a great title, but no information. On the other hand, a book that doesn't seem to go along with what you are doing can turn out to have a lot of usable information.

Books are generally a great resource--they often contain a lot of information gathered into one place, and they can give you a more thorough investigation of your topic. As you are reading a book, journal article, or newspaper article, you should keep the following questions in mind, which will help you understand how useful the book will be to you.

1. Is the book or article biased in a particular way? For instance, is the book or article written by a person who is a member of a particular religious group, or a particular environmental group, for example, which would "color" their interpretation?

2. Does the author agree or disagree with my thesis?

3. Is the information presented accurately, to the best of your knowledge? Is the author him/herself using valid sources?

Periodicals

Magazines (including Time or Newsweek) are called periodicals as they are published periodically (weekly, monthly, etc.). When you are doing research in the library, a great place to look for information is a publication called *The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*. This is a book which lists, by both author and subject, the names and locations of articles written in that particular year about a particular subject.

Most libraries only keep the most current issues of these magazines on the shelf. The rest are bound

together in collections, usually by year. These are usually kept in a separate room (in the basement, to my experience!) where you can go and look at them. Usually, the location is a place called "the stacks," which is where you go to look for periodicals that are older than the current issue. Remember that you can't take these out of the library. If you find articles that you want to take home, you need to photocopy them. Newspaper articles are sometimes in the bound periodicals, but are more often found on microfiche or microfilm.

Make sure to distinguish betwen general interest magazines and professional journals; this is an important distinction in college-level research.

Microfiche or microfilm is a device which can be extremely frustrating. Don't hesitate to ask for help from your nearby reference person. Microfiche or microfilm comes in two forms--small cards of information (fiche), or long film-type strips of information (film). Once you insert these into the microfiche or microfilm machine (and there are separate machines for each), you will be able to see the text of the article that you are looking for. Often, you will have to scan through quite a bit of film to find what you are looking for. Microfiche and microfilm are kept in boxes, and sometimes you have to request the date that you are looking for. Don't give up! With persistence, you can find some wonderful resources on microfiche and microfilm.

Other computer resources (CDROM, specialized databases etc)
Many libraries today, especially if they are larger libraries, have information available on CDROM or through what are called specialized databases. Be sure to tell a reference librarian what you are working on, and ask her advice on whether or not there is information available on CDROM or through a specialized database.

CDROM's often are put out by groups such as History Societies (there is an entire set on the Civil War, for example). Government documents are currently available on CDROM and often offer updated information (census data, for example). The reference librarian can tell you which CDs might be the most helpful and can help you sign them out and use them.

There are many specialized databases. Some examples are ERIC, the educational database, and Silver Platter, which offers texts of recent articles in particular subjects (yep, the whole article is available right through the computer, which is often less time-consuming than looking through the stacks for it) The American Psychological Association has the titles of articles on specific subjects (psychology, sociology, etc). Sociofile is another example. Ask your reference librarian to see exactly what is available. One good thing about specialized databases is that you already know the source and orientation of the article. You also know that the source is a valid and reputable one. You will need the reference librarian's help getting into specialized databases--most libraries require that the databases have passwords. Warning: Bring your own paper if you plan on doing this type of research! Many libraries allow you to print from the databases, but you must supply your own paper.

Internet/World Wide Web Research
Internet research is another popular option these days. You can research from home if you have internet search capabilities, or you usually can research from the library. Most libraries have internet connections on at least a few computers, although sometimes you need to sign up for them in advance. Even if there doesn't seem to be much of a crowd around, be sure to sign up on the sheet so that you don't have someone come along and try to take your spot.

Internet research can be very rewarding, but it also has its drawbacks. Many libraries have set their computers on a particular search engine, or a service that will conduct the research for you. If you don't find what you are looking for by using one search engine, switch to another (Lycos, Excite, Web Crawler,

and HotBot are all good choices).

Internet research can be time consuming. You will need to search much the way you would on the library database computers--simply type in key words or authors or titles, and see what the computer comes up with. Then you will have to read through the list of choices that you are given and see if any of them match what you think you are looking for.

WARNING ABOUT INTERNET AND WORLD WIDE WEB RESEARCH: There are a lot of resources on the internet that are not going to be valuable to you. Part of your internet research will include evaluating the resources that you find. Personal web pages are NOT a good source to go by--they often have incorrect information on them and can be very misleading. Be sure that your internet information is from a recognized source such as the government, an agency that you are sure is a credible source (the Greenpeace web page, for example, or the web page for the National Institute of Health), or a credible news source (CBS, NBC, and ABC all have web pages). A rule of thumb when doing internet research: if you aren't sure whether or not the source is credible, DON'T USE IT!! One good source to help you determine the credibility of online information is available from UCLA: Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources. Check out the Content and Evaluation and Sources and Data sections.

Taking notes, paraphrasing, and quoting

Taking notes is an important part of doing research. Be sure when you take notes that you write down the source that they are from! One way of keeping track is to make yourself a "master list"--a number list of all of the sources that you have. Then, as you are writing down notes, you can just write down the number of that source. A good place to write notes down is on note cards. This way you can take the note cards and organize them later according to the way you want to organize your paper.

While taking notes, also be sure to write down the page number of the information. You will need this later on when you are writing your paper.

What do I take notes on?

Good question. You should take notes on ideas and concepts that you think are important to include in your paper. You also can include supporting examples that you think would be helpful to refer to. You should NOT write the words down exactly as they appear on the page, unless you are putting them in quotations. Otherwise, you might accidentally write them into your paper that way, and that would be plagiarism. Be sure to write down the page number that you are working from in case you want to refer back to it. Click here to learn more about Taking Notes.

Using quotes, or What if I want the exact words?

If you come across a passage in your reading and it seems to you that the author's language is more accurate, more touching, or more informative than you could create, then you should write that sentence down exactly as you see it, with quotation marks around the sentence(s). You must be very careful to record the page number that this information is from, because you will need to include it in your paper. Quotes should not be used terribly often--if your paper is nothing more than a series of quotes strung together (and yes, we have all written those!) then you need to go back and include more of your own information. Click here to see an example and to work more with using quotations.

What about summarizing and paraphrasing?

Summarizing and paraphrasing are similar to quoting in that you are recording the author's ideas. However, when you are summarize or paraphrase, you record ideas as opposed to exact language; the language is yours. Once again, be sure to jot down the page number--you will need it later. Any time you summarize or paraphrase, you MUST acknowledge the source of your information. Not only is it a professional requirement, it is a way to avoid plagiarism. To see an example, read more specific information, and work

with exercises, check out Summaries and Paraphrases.

Documentation
Any time that you use information that is not what is considered "common knowledge," you must acknowledge your source. For example, when you paraphrase or quote, you need to indicate to your reader that you got the information from somewhere else. This scholarly practice allows your reader to follow up that source to get more information. You must create what is called a citation in order to acknowledge someone else's ideas. You use parentheses () in your text, and inside the parentheses you put the author's name and the page number (there are several different ways of doing this. You should look at your course guide carefully to determine which format you should be using). Two standard formats, MLA and APA, stand for the Modern Language Association, and the American Psychological Association. Check out more specific information on how to document sources.

FINDING SOURCES

Using sources to support your ideas is one characteristic of the research paper that sets it apart from personal and creative writing. Sources come in many forms, such as magazine and journal articles, books, newspapers, videos, films, computer discussion groups, surveys, or interviews. The trick is to find and then match appropriate, valid sources to your own ideas.

But where do you go to obtain these sources? For college research papers, you will need to use sources available in academic libraries (college or university libraries as opposed to public libraries). Here you will find journals and other texts that go into more depth in a discipline and are therefore more appropriate for college research than those sources written for the general public.

Some, though not all, of these sources are now in electronic format, and may be accessible outside of the library using a computer. The SUNY Empire State College web site includes a useful list of online learning resources.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Primary sources are original, first-hand documents such as creative works, research studies, diaries and letters, or interviews you conduct.

Secondary sources are comments about primary sources such as analyses of creative work or original research, or historical interpretations of diaries and letters.

You can use a combination of primary and secondary sources to answer your research question, depending on the question and the type of sources it requires.

If you're writing a paper on the reasons for a certain personality disorder, you may read an account written by a person with that personality disorder, a case study by a psychiatrist, and a textbook that summarizes a number of case studies. The first-hand account and the psychiatrist's case study are primary sources, written by people who have directly experienced or observed the situation themselves. The textbook is a secondary source, one step removed from the original experience or observation.

For example, if you asked what the sea symbolized in Hemingway's story "The Old Man and the Sea,"

you'd need to consult the story as a primary source and critics' interpretations of the story as a secondary source.

EXERCISE 6: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

ON-LINE CATALOG

An on-line catalog has replaced card catalogs in many libraries as a means of listing and indexing what is in the library. You use an on-line catalog the same way you use a card catalog: look up a source by author, title, or subject. (So don't feel intimidated if you haven't yet searched on-line; anyway, the directions are right on the screen.) Most of the searches that you do for a research paper will be subject searches, unless you already know enough about the field to know some standard sources by author or title.

When using an on-line catalog or a card catalog, make sure to jot down the source's name, title, place of publication, publication date, and any other relevant bibliographic information that you will need later on if you choose to use the source in your research paper. Also remember to record the call number, which is the number you use to find the item in the library.

MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

Magazines are written for the general public, so they contain articles that do not present a subject in depth.

Journals are written by and for professionals in various fields and will provide you with in-depth, specific information.

Your professors will expect you to use some journals; in fact, the more advanced your courses are, the more you should be using journal articles in your research (as opposed to magazine articles).

How do you find articles to answer your research question? It's inefficient to go through volumes of magazines and journals, even if you could think of appropriate ones. Most magazine and journal articles are referenced in either an INDEX or an ABSTRACT. For further explanation of journals, magazines, and different types of sources (from The Auraria Library serving colleges and universities in Denver, Colorado) click here. (link submitted by Amy Pass)

INDEXES & ABSTRACTS

An index lists MAGAZINE or JOURNAL articles by subject. Find the correct subject heading or keyword to search for articles. Write down all the information for each article. Check the index's abbreviation key if you can't understand the abbreviations in the entry. Make sure to write down all of the entry's information so you can find the article IF your library carries the magazine or journal. If not, you can use the information to request the article through interlibrary loan.

Specific indices (the "correct" plural of index) exist for journals in just about every field of study (Business Index, Social Science Index, General Science Index, Education Index, and many more), while there's only one major index to general interest magazines (The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature). Many libraries

have many of these indices on their on-line systems; check with the reference librarian if you have a question about indices available on-line.

An abstract is like an index with a brief description of the article's content added. You'll soon see that it's great to be researching in a field that has an abstract, since this short explanation can help you make an early decision about the relevance of the article to your research question or working thesis.

A bound, printed abstract takes two steps to use. The first step is the same--find the appropriate subject heading in the index portion and write down all of the information in the entry. Note that the entry will also include a number or some kind of an identifying code. Then use the number or code in the "abstracts" portion to find a description of the type of information that's in the article.

Many libraries have abstracts in CD-ROM form. Because indexes will be accessed in different ways and because the technology is changing so rapidly, follow the on-screen instructions and/or ask the reference librarian.

Again, if an article seems appropriate, write down all of the entry information so you can find the article in your library or through interlibrary loan and so you'll have the information for your works cited or references list at the end of your paper.

NEWSPAPER INDEXES

The most commonly used index to newspaper articles is the New York Times Index, organized alphabetically by subject. Find the appropriate subject heading and jot down the information so you can find the article, which is usually on microfilm, unless you're dealing with a very recent issue of the Times. Your local newspaper also may publish an index, which may be useful if you are researching local history or politics.

REFERENCE BOOKS

There are many general reference books that may be useful to your research in a variety of ways.

1. General Encyclopedias (Britannica, Americana, etc.)
2. Specialized Encyclopedias (e.g., music or medical terms)
3. Facts on File, Statistical Abstracts
4. Other reference books

Encyclopedias provide background information about a subject. Note that you should confine your use of encyclopedias to background information only, since their information is too general to function as an appropriate source for a college paper.

Specialized encyclopedias and dictionaries provide background in specific fields (e.g., a dictionary of music terms, a biographical encyclopedia of American authors, explanations of legal terms).

Facts on File and Statistical Abstracts provide brief bits of statistical information that can aid your research. For example, if you're doing on a paper on airline safety since deregulation, it's a safe bet that you

can find statistics on airline safety problems in one of these reference books.

Other reference books abound (e.g., Book Review Digest, medical and legal dictionaries, etc.). Take time, at some point, to browse your library's shelves in the reference section to see how many different types of reference books exist and to consider how you may use them. It will be time well spent.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADING INDEX

The Library of Congress provides an indexing system; most academic libraries index their books using Library of Congress subject headings. The Library of Congress publishes a Subject Heading Index listing all of the subject headings that they use.

Why bother knowing this information? The Subject Heading Index is a good tool for you as a researcher. If you're not getting exactly the right books you need through your on-line subject search, check this index to find the appropriate subject heading to use.

If you are finding too much information, check this index to see at a glance all of the various headings and sub-headings for the subject. You can get an idea of how to narrow down and focus your subject simply by scanning these various headings and sub-headings.

Just note that these subject headings relate to books only. Magazine and journal indexes and abstracts will use their own subject headings (but the Library of Congress headings can at least give you an idea of the types of headings to use).

BOOKS

The important thing to remember here is that, by the time a book is printed, the information is at least a couple of years old. So if you're doing research that requires very recent information, a newspaper, magazine, or journal is your best bet.

If currency is not an issue (and it's not, in many cases), then a book's fuller treatment of a subject is a good choice.

It's also useful to move from virtual cyberspace into actual, physical space and "real time" when you search for books. That means that you should get yourself into the library. Sometimes a look through the stacks (the shelves on which the books are located) will turn up additional information that's relevant to your research question or working thesis.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The Internet provides access to A LOT of information. There are databases with lists of sources (e.g., the ERIC database is a good one to use if you are researching anything dealing with education or the social sciences). The Internet provides access to many on-line catalogs so you can review the types of books available in the field (and carried by that particular library).

The Internet also provides access to a few full-text electronic journals (which means that you can read and print the article right from the screen). Government information (e.g., policy statements, laws, treaties etc.) are also widely available in full-text format.

You can even find other writing resources.

The Internet can link you up with individuals who might have expertise on the topic you are researching. You can find these people by joining electronic discussion groups (newsgroups) or maillists. These forums are usually categorized by topic (e.g., a maillist on ECOLOGY). By posting a question to the group or maillist, you can obtain useful information from knowledgeable people willing to share their expertise.

The one big problem with the Internet is that you sometimes need to sift. . . and sift. . . and sift through it to find exactly what you want. You also have to be critical of what you find, since anyone can post and even change anything that's out there in cyberspace, and you won't necessarily know if someone answering your query is really an expert in the field. But if you persevere, and even if you just play around with it, the Internet can offer some gems of information in a quick, easy way.

KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE

Don't underestimate the power of interviewing knowledgeable people as part of your research. For example, if you're researching a topic in local history, consult the town historian or a local resident who experienced what you're researching. People who have "been there" and "done that" can add a real richness to your research. (Who better than a former Olympic athlete to provide information about the emotional effects of athletic competition?)

You can consult knowledgeable people in print as well. If you find one or two names that keep popping up in your research (if others consistently refer to these names and list works by these people in their bibliographies), then you should consult sources by these people, since it's likely that they are considered experts in the field which you are researching.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

If your library doesn't carry the book or journal article that you need, you probably can get that source through interlibrary loan. The one catch is that it may take 3-4 weeks' time to get the source from another library. Starting your research early will assure that you have time to get the sources that you want to consult.

One big tip for using interlibrary loan: the librarian will need full and specific information to order the material. So get in the habit of writing all of the information down as you compile your list of sources. For books, write down the author, title, publisher, place, and date of publication. For articles, write down the article title, journal title, author, volume, date, span of page numbers, and the name, year, and page number of the reference source in which you found the article listed. The library needs this information to order your source.

REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

Don't be afraid to approach this person, who really is there to help you.

One BIG TIP for working with a reference librarian: you'll get more help the more specific you are. The librarian will immediately be able to suggest a number of places to look if you tell him that your research question is "Why is smoking being banned in public places?," or if you tell her that your thesis is "Smoking should be banned in the workplace because of health, safety, and economic reasons." On the other hand, if you tell the librarian that you're researching "smoking," you won't get as much direct help because the topic is so vast.

Next Step

EXERCISE 6: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

You're writing a research paper on the homeless problem in your town or city. Which of the following sources would be a primary source for you and which a secondary?

1. A report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: "Drifting Apart: New Findings on Growing Income Disparities Between the Rich, the Poor, and the Middle Class," 1990
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

2. An interview with two homeless persons in your town.
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

3. A book entitled The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare by Michael Katz, 1989.
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

4. An article entitled "The Culture of Poverty" in On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences.
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

5. An interview with a sociology professor who teaches a course that explores the homeless problem.
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

6. A book by Karl Marx entitled Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, 1887.
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

7. Statistics on the number of homeless in New York State from the State Census Office
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

8. An interview with the head of a homeless shelter.
   ○ Primary Source
   ○ Secondary Source

EXPLANATION

EXPLANATION EXERCISE 6

Numbers 2, 7, and 8 (interview with homeless persons, statistics on homelessness in NYS from the Census Office, interview with the head of a homeless shelter) are primary sources because these sources have first-hand knowledge of or raw data on your topic. Numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are all sources that have analyzed and interpreted data from primary sources.

EXERCISE 8: DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SUMMARIES AND PARAPHRASES

Below is a quotation followed by three samples, one of which inadvertantly plagiarizes. See if you can identify what each sample is (a paraphrase or a summary), and see if you can "catch" the one that inadvertently plagiarizes.

Quotation:

> "Empire State College has a policy describing the conditions under which students may be warned or withdrawn from the College for such unethical academic behavior as plagiarism, forgery, misrepresentation, or other dishonest or deceptive acts which constitute grounds for warning or administrative withdrawal" (CDL Student Handbook 5).

Samples:

1. The Student Handbook states that the College may dismiss students who in any way present others' work as their own (5). [MLA format]

2. According to policy in the Student Handbook, Empire State College may take punitive action (including dismissal) against students who act fraudulently. Fraudulent action includes using the words or ideas of others without proper attribution, falsifying documents, or depicting the words of others as one's own (1992, p. 5). [APA format]

3. The Student Handbook states that the College has a policy that describes the different instances under which students may be withdrawn from the College. These instances include plagiarism, forgery, misrepresentation, and other instances that show dishonest or deceptive practice (1992, p. 5). [APA format]

EXPLANATION

EXPLANATION

Number 1 is the summary; it has condensed the source and articulates the main idea. Number 2 is an appropriate paraphrase. The writer has used her own words and sentence structure to relate the essence of the source. Number 3 is a paraphrase that inadvertently plagiarizes because it retains too much of the source's language and sentence structure.

Evaluating Sources

EVALUATING SOURCES

It's not enough just to FIND SOURCES; you need to ask both specific as well as general questions to determine whether your source answers your RESEARCH QUESTION. There are four questions to ask when evaluating sources:

1. How Well does the Source answer the Research Question?
2. Is the Information Provided by an Expert?
3. Is the Source Valid?
4. Is there a Variety of Sources?

HOW WELL DOES THE SOURCE ANSWER THE RESEARCH QUESTION?

The way you decide if the source has appropriate information for you is by consulting the table of contents and indexes in a book; in an article read the captions under pictures and diagrams, and then read the first sentence of every paragraph.

For example, if you've asked how an emigrant group has changed the culture of your particular community, a general magazine article on recent emigrants from Europe may not answer that question directly.

IS THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY AN EXPERT?

You want to consider your sources' credentials. A person who has considerable experience and training in an area is an expert. That expert's informed opinion can greatly substantiate your point of view.

For instance, if your RESEARCH QUESTION asks about the safest way to dispose of medical waste, your uncle, who works in hospital maintenance and has an opinion on everything, may tell you stories about what he's seen, but he should not be regarded as an expert in the field of medical waste disposal. As a source, his usefulness is limited.

IS THE SOURCE VALID?

1. Is the information presented objectively from an unbiased viewpoint? Do you, for example, accept a claim from the National Association of Tobacco Growers that nicotine is not an addictive drug?

2. Do the authors let you know their sources of information? Be careful of a newspaper article that attributes a quote to "an informed source" without telling the reader who that source is.

3. Do the authors let you know their research methods as well as results? You may want to think twice about using a source that claims that 9 out of 10 doctors recommend surgery for dimples when you don't know how many or what kind of doctors they surveyed.

4. Is the research current if currency is important? If you're writing a paper on nuclear waste disposal, a report written in 1952 is not valid.

You need to ask all of these questions to make sure that your sources are good ones to use.

IS THERE A VARIETY OF SOURCES?

Another thing to keep in mind is that you want to collect a variety of perspectives and opinions on your topic. Therefore you won't want to rely too heavily on one author, or look for material on just one aspect of your topic.

For example, if you are comparing the leadership styles of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, you don't want to use five books by Bruce Catton. Neither do you want to use six sources on Lee and only two on Grant.

Next Step

EXERCISE 5: EVALUATING SOURCES

You're writing a paper with the following research question:

> Has the modern women's movement forced the Roman Catholic Church to consider allowing women to take leadership positions within the Church?

Which of the following sources would you initially evaluate as useful to you?

1. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968.
2. An article entitled "The History of Women and the Church" in a 1992 copy of the journal Church and Society.
3. A book, Growing Up Catholic: An Infinitely Funny Guide for the Faithful, the Fallen, and Everyone In-Between.
4. A book entitled Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism.
5. An article entitled "A Symposium on the Catholic Ethic and Feminism," in the International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society published in 1995.
6. An article entitled "Feminism Corrupts the Church" in The Catholic Digest magazine published in 1995.

Source #1.

The *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* might seem like a good place to start. However, the last edition to come out was in 1968. Therefore the information is this specialized encyclopedia is very dated. Also, this source is not very strong in religion. You'd probably be wasting your time using this as a source.

http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writer/evalep2.htm

Source #2.

This article, "The History of Women and the Church" in a 1992 journal *Church and Society*, should be an excellent source for background reading. Note that it is at least 3 years old, so it will not chronicle most recent events of attitudes. As a journal article (as opposed to a magazine article) you should expect it to go into some depth about the subject. Remember, journals are written for people specifically, and often academically, interested in a particular field--and not for a general readership. Such a source might bring you up to speed about your topic, but it might not yield information that's specific or focused enough for you to use as a source in your paper.

http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writer/evalep3.htm

Source #3.

The title of this book, *Growing Up Catholic: An Infinitely Funny Guide for the Faithful, the Fallen, and Everyone In-Between*, should indicate that this source is not appropriate, since it takes only a humorous view of the Church, and because it is a guide book, not a serious analysis. It would only be good as a source for an anecdote that you might use in your paper.

http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages\writer/evalep4.htm

Source #4.

The book, *Feminist- Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism* is one that you will probably not find very useful, except as background reading on feminism. By skimming the Table of Contents and the Index you can quickly see if there is any mention of women and the Catholic Church.

http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writer/evalep5.htm

Source #5.

An article entitled "A Symposium on the Catholic Ethic and Feminism" in *the International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* published in 1995, should be a good source for your paper. This article is published in a journal, so it will have some depth, it is recent, and the word "symposium." in the title suggests that it will provide many viewpoints on the subject of feminism and the Catholic Church.

http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writer/evalep6.htm

Source #6.

An article titled "Feminism Corrupts the Church" in the *Catholic Digest* magazine will only be moderately useful to you. First of all, the title of the article suggests an obvious bias with the verb "corrupts." Generally you want sources that deal as objectively as possible with your subject. Secondly, this is a magazine article, written for general readership, so it will not go into depth on the subject. However, it might be useful to read as background on the negative response to feminism in the Church, and it might help you build a case that the Church is promoting an anti-feminist attitude.