

### Step Three—But wait! What do I do with all of this?!? Extracting the important stuff



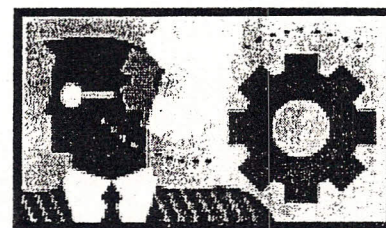
Sometimes research can seem really daunting. “There’s all this stuff! What do I do with it?” The trick is to ask meaningful questions of the sources you are using. What happened and when are important, but you also want to know why and how things happened and what difference these events made in history. When you’re researching, it might help to organize what you are finding into at least four main categories:

- Facts
- Historical context
- Causes or contributing factors
- Impact and significance

### Step Four—Why does this matter? Pulling it all together through synthesis

Just like a historian, you will find much more information about your subject than you have the space or time to convey to your audience. You will need to *synthesize* what you find by developing a historical argument, or thesis, which defines what you will try to prove through your project. What matters when you are telling this story? Keep these things in mind when making decisions about what is important enough to include in the story:

- Cause and effect
- Change over time
- Connection to the “big picture”
- What is the larger meaning of this story?
- Why and how did events develop as they did?
- So what? Why did this person/idea/event make an impact in history?



Thesis  
Evidence  
Conclusions

### Step Five—Now how do I tell the story? Communicating an historical interpretation through NHD projects



Your NHD project is your opportunity to present your conclusions to a public audience. While it’s important for your project to be creative and interesting, the heart of a good NHD project is not glitz—it’s a *well-defined and communicated argument supported by evidence*.

- A solid NHD presentation will:
- clearly express your conclusions with solid organization
  - articulate and prove your case (thesis + evidence)
  - match visual or verbal message and evidence
  - tell the story—find a way to reach your audience

