

## Exploration 9: Learning American Memory Collections

### Investigative Question

What are the steps to planning an American Memory Search?  
Library of Congress searching is like going on an expedition.  
Get ready for exploration by packing "search term" supplies.



Leaving Camp Muir

Western History/Genealogy Department,  
Denver Public Library (Library of Congress)

**Step 1:** Describe your topic. Think about dates, people, places, and facts that you know. Organize your thoughts from broad ideas such as explorers to specific terms such as Lewis and Clark.

**Step 2:** What questions do you have about your topic?

**Step 3:** Thinking about what you know about your topic and your questions, what are some key words that might help you locate information? Brainstorm synonyms for key words, keeping in mind the language we use today may be different than language used in the past. See [Synonym List](#) for historical words related to various topics within your packet.

**Step 4:** How will you search in American Memory? Strategy examples include: search across all collections, browse collections limited by Topic, Time Period, Format or Place, search within one collection.

Search Strategy	Collections that hold promise*	Search terms

\*To locate potential collections, search across all collections with your key words. Notice the collection titles that come up. Go to those collections and search within those collections. Browsing the collection descriptions on the following pages may be useful.

Don't forget to save the items you find. Make sure that you copy the **exact title** (in bold under the thumb nail on the bibliographic record) or the **permanent URL** or the **bibliographic record**.

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**To assist your searching in American Memory, brainstorm keywords for each of your topics.**

Topic:	Topic:	Topic:
Keywords:	Keywords:	Keywords:

### Search suggestions:

- try searching across all collections
- try searching across a list of collections limited by Topic, Time Period, Format or Place
- try searching in an individual collection