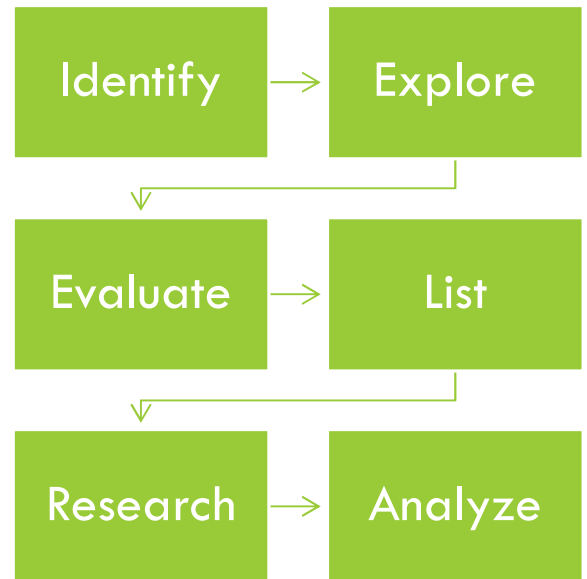


# CRAFTING A RESEARCH PLAN | ...to find your Irish Ancestors

## Six Simple Steps

1. First you will **identify** your research question, what is your target?
2. Then you will **explore** what you already know, in other words, gather your information!
3. You will **evaluate** your information, what else do you think might lead you to your answer?
4. Then you will create a **list** of all your possible resources that may aid you with your search.
5. You will create a plan by defining your **research** strategy.
6. Then you will **analyze** your findings.



### 1. Identify Your Research Question

- Focus specifically on:
  - Identity, or
  - Relationship, or
  - Activity
- Ask yourself
  - Who am I researching?
  - What do I want to know?
  - Where did they live?
  - When did they live?
  - Why am I researching?
- Write down your research question
  - Be clear and concise
  - Get specific and unique

### 2. Explore What You Already Know

- Review documents that you have
- Talk to your family
- Pull clues from family photos
- Check out that family bible
- Read those old letters
- Profile your target individual
- Summarize what you know and source this information

### 3. Evaluate Your Information

- Evaluate the information that you have looking for new clues
- Reframe your research question by adding this latest information in

### 4. List Possible Record Sources

- Brainstorm what records might help you answer your research question
- Vital Records – birth, marriage or death records often have additional pieces of information that can help your search
- Have you done a thorough census review? Did you notice if your ancestor was naturalized or a veteran?
- Did they own land? Are there deed records that might provide more information?

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- What church did they attend? What religion were they? In Irish research, this information can lead straight to the record sets that you need to explore.
- Have you investigated that FAN club – also known as the Friends, Associates, and Neighbors?
- Will and Probate records often list family members
- Immigration and Naturalization records could identify locations... search those US censuses that identify this status.
  - The **1870** census has a check mark for "Male Citizens of the U.S. of 21 years of age and upwards." If the person was a foreign-born citizen, this means that he had become naturalized by 1870.
  - The **1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930** censuses indicate the person's naturalization status. The answers are "Al" for alien, "Pa" for "first papers," and "Na" for naturalized.
  - The **1920** census indicates the year in which the person was naturalized.
- Other Types of Sources
  - Ships Lists – Immigrants often travelled with family groups
  - DNA Matches – Maybe a DNA cousin has the info that you need
  - Surname Groups
  - Death Records
  - Irish Naming Conventions
  - Facebook Focus Groups – Look for the groups that focus on a known location or surname and explore what they have to say, ask questions
  - Newspapers – search your relative's name with various spellings or search a location at a particular time
  - Electoral Rolls
  - Tax Lists
  - Emigrant Savings Bank Records
  - Workhouse Registers
  - School Records
  - Boston Pilot's Missing Friends postings – these can get specific about families
  - Historical Society Newsletters or Websites
  - Locality Guides
    - [FamilySearch Wiki](#)
    - [Cyndi's List](#)
    - [SWilson.Info](#)
- Irish Record Websites
  - [National Archives of Ireland](#)
  - [PRONI – The public record office of Northern Ireland](#)
  - [JohnGrenham.com](#) (Irish Ancestors)
  - [National Library of Ireland](#)
  - [RootsIreland.ie](#)
  - [GRONI – General Register Office of Northern Ireland](#)
  - [Ancestry](#)
  - [Ask About Ireland](#)
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [FamilySearch](#)
  - [Swilson.Info](#)
  - [Irish Genealogy.ie](#)

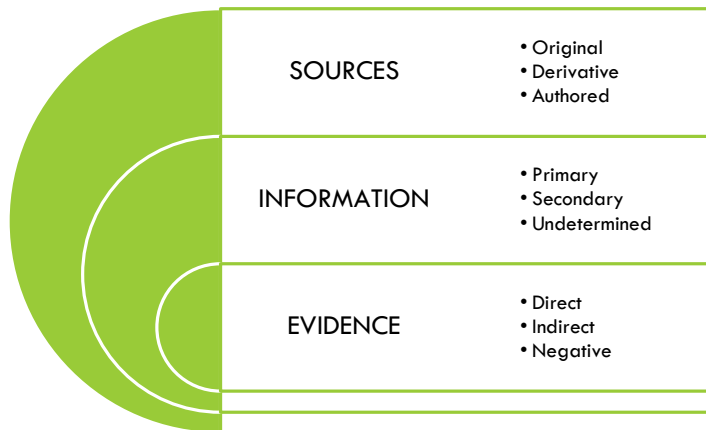
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## 5. Research Strategy Development

- Develop a step-by-step strategic research plan by allowing the evidence to guide you from one step to the next.

## 6. Analyze the Evidence

1. What kind of sources do you want to you find?
  - a. Is your source an **original** record?  
[a record made at the time of an event or shortly after]
  - b. Or is it a **derivative** [a record created from a prior record, transcriptions or abstract]
  - c. Is it an **authored** or narrative source? [a written product that presents the writer's own conclusions]
2. What information was provided in your source?
  - a. Was the information from a **primary** source, provided by someone who was there at the time of the event?
  - b. Or was it from a **secondary** source, someone who was told the information?
  - c. Or is the source of the information **undetermined**?
3. Where does your evidence lead your hypothesis?
  - a. Does the evidence answer your question **directly**?
  - b. Or when you combine it with other evidence, does it answer it **indirectly**?
  - c. Or does the **absence** of the evidence prove something to you? The absence of information where it should be is negative evidence.



This analysis will help you determine if you have solidly proven your findings with the strongest evidence. This is one step toward a defensible conclusion that meets the Genealogical Proof Standards.