



The Genealogical Proof Standard

Define Research Goals	Search Repositories	Cite Each Source	Analyze Quality	Test Evidence	Correlate Information	Resolve Conflicts	Proof Solid
<p>Identify the Objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statement to prove • question to answer • hypothesis to test <p>A Research Plan identifies where we will search & helps focus on goals.</p> <p>A Research Log tracks the progress of the investigation.</p>	<p>Conduct a reasonably exhaustive search in reliable sources for all information that is or may be pertinent to the Identity, relationship, event or situation.</p> <p>Source provenance is the tracking of each representation of a source back to the original.</p> <p>Images:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photocopy • Digital image • Etc. <p>Handwritten/Typed Copies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcript full, exact copy • Extract partial, exact copy • Abstract condensed version with all important details 	<p>Include complete, accurate citation to each source for each item of information we use.</p> <p>Citing sources gives credibility to the research and confidence in the research of others. It also aids analysis.</p> <p>Source: an artifact, book, document, person, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original: first oral or recorded form • Derivative: from/of that original source <p>Derivatives that might be treated as Originals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplicate Original: made at the same time • Image Copy • Record (Clerk's) Copy: usually entered in a register 	<p>Analyze the collected information to assess its quality as evidence.</p> <p>Information is data that constitutes a source.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: firsthand (participant or eyewitness) • Secondary: secondhand (non-participant) 	<p>Evidence is the body of facts indicating whether some-things is true or valid.</p> <p>Evidence is the body of facts indicating whether some-things is true or valid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct: answers the re-search question. • Indirect: relevant, but cannot stand alone. • Negative: absence of data or information. 	<p>Sources must be fully independent of the other sources. Order sources by validity to compare and contrast.</p> <p>Original sources typically carry more weight than derivatives.</p> <p>Primary information typically carries more weight than secondary.</p> <p>Indirect evidence can carry just as much or more weight than direct.</p>	<p>Resolve any conflicts caused by evidence that contradicts each other or contrary to the research question.</p> <p>Primary information can still be wrong.</p>	<p>Arrive at a proof argument that is soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion.</p> <p>In a proof argument:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the problem • Identify the known resources. • Present the evidence with source citations and analysis. • Discuss any conflicting evidence. • Summarize the main points and write a conclusion. <p>Any proof statement is subject to re-evaluation when new evidence arises. New information can support, question, or disprove your current conclusion.</p>

Sources:
 Board for Certification of Genealogists. *The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual*. Orem, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2019
 Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007.
 Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Analysis: A Research Process Map*. Washington, DC: Board for Certification of Genealogists, 2006.
 Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1997.