



## TACKLING RESEARCH SOURCES

by the student editors of **TACKLING YOUR FIRST COLLEGE PAPER**,  
a Students Helping Students™ book

Chances are, you're not going to have enough time, patience, or interest to read through each of your sources in detail. And there's really no need to do this. What you do need to do is find information in your research that reveals something about your topic and your thesis.

There will be many sources from which you read just a few pages, or even just a paragraph. To make sure that you can find the critical information without wasting time, develop a system for how you'll work with each source. Here are a few suggestions:

- Check the book's table of contents to find the most relevant sections.
- Skim through the introduction. This is usually the roadmap to the book or article, and it will help you focus on the source's key sections.
- After you find relevant chapters or sections, read them and take notes. Write down enough information so that it will make sense to you when you read it later, but avoid taking down sentences word for word.
- Check out the footnotes in the relevant sections and the bibliography as discussed earlier.

You can use these steps as your guidelines and add your own, but just remember to have a plan of attack for each source rather than spending your valuable time browsing through pages after pages without a clear direction.