

ASSIGNMENT 5: DETERMINING SOURCE USEFULNESS

Assignment Purpose: To help you assess what kinds of sources are useful for research projects on various topics.

Assignment Details:

Think of a topic relating to Elizabeth that interests you. You might consider the *EEBO* assignment and the readings we've done so far in class. Use the Harvest catalog to find a book in Shields Library about this topic. It should be a secondary text published in the last ten years.

Go to the library and find the book on the shelf. *Don't read the book*. Examine the table of contents and the index, and *skim* the introduction. You shouldn't spend more than 30-40 minutes looking at the book.

Based on this cursory evaluation, write a 1-2 page paper describing what kinds of projects would this book be useful for. You might consider the primary texts, the methodological approach, and the topic(s) covered. Please also include a brief narrative of how you chose and found this book, and what problems, if any, you encountered with this assignment.

Some questions to consider as you determine how a researcher might use the book:

- What is the discipline? Is it about history? Literature?
- What are some primary texts the book will discuss?
- Was the introduction approachable and well-organized? If so, can you summarize the book's main argument in 1-2 sentences? If the book is a collection of essays, what is the main theme all the essays address?
- Use your imagination. What kinds of projects, different from this book, can you imagine using this book for? For example, a book on Elizabeth and sovereignty with one chapter on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* might be used in a research project on *Midsummer*. A book with one chapter on Elizabeth and the rhetoric of motherhood might be useful for a project on early modern motherhood more generally.

Finally, upload your paper to the course Smartsite to share with your classmates. As a class, you will have compiled an initial bibliography of the library's holdings on Elizabeth II! You might consult your classmates' papers later as you begin your research project.