

Activity #1: Find the Author (or not)

(I've used David Walker as my example below, but you can use this activity for any author!)

- On the Library's databases page, choose "African American Newspapers, 1827-1998."
- Once you're in the database, you have several options.
 - Choose "Browse Publications" for a list of every newspaper in the database. You can sort this list by date in order to find a newspaper that fits the date range you're looking for.
 - You can also choose a particular newspaper from the list on the Archival Expert assignment sheet and, from this same screen, start typing it into the search box. The newspaper will appear, along with a list of years published.
 - You can also choose "Advanced search" and search by keyword, name, and a range of dates.
- As you play around with these options, try searching for David Walker in different ways. You can search by his name; you can search "Walker's *Appeal*" (in quotation marks); and you can search by date range. 1828 is the year Walker published his *Appeal*, but people were discussing it for several years afterward. So, you could try 1827-1835 to be safe.
- If you want to supplement your search, you can also try it in the "America's Historical Newspapers" database, also in the A-Z databases list. (This database contains all kinds of newspapers, not just those edited by African American editors. For example, abolitionist newspapers like the *Liberator*, the longest-running antislavery newspaper, are often excellent sources of information about many African American writers.)
- Another database you can try is Accessible Archives, also available on the library's databases page.
- When you try some of these searches, what do you find? Where and how did you find it? What do you learn about Walker that you didn't know before?
- Notice when you get frustrated and can't find anything. How can you search differently?
- Notice when you *still* can't find anything. Archival research is full of dead ends! Consider what you *can* look at, instead of what you're looking for. What are the newspaper's concerns? What does the absence of your author in the newspaper's pages tell you?