

History Research Paper Guidelines

In this handout you will find tips and advice on writing a paper for your history classes. The sections below will assist you at any stage of the project.

The sections are outlined as follows:

- A. Getting Started
- B. Writing the Paper
- C. Citing sources: footnotes (or endnotes) and bibliography
- D. Important Points to Remember
- E. Basic Paper Guidelines
- F. Other Helpful Websites
- G. Sample Excerpt of Paper with Footnotes and Bibliography

A. Getting Started

When writing a research paper in history, you will be asked to compose a narrative based on one or more primary source documents. What is a primary source? A primary source is an actual record from the past, such as a diary, government document or law, letter, photograph, speech, stamp, state papers, speeches, contemporary travel accounts, census data, diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies. or other items created by people who lived through an event (such as a speech given by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill).

You will also be asked to include secondary sources to help support your argument. What is a secondary source? Examples of secondary sources include your textbooks, and biographies. You may combine relevant documents if you wish to do so. When composing analyses, you will typically need to answer a set of questions provided to you by the instructor. A good tip is to develop your responses to the question (s) to ensure a well-developed, analytical response.

For example, let's pretend that that your instructor assigns you a paper that asks you to research a president of the United States. For example, if you select Franklin Roosevelt, do not provide a sweeping narrative just about the former president; instead, research for and select one or more documents related to a specific topic or theme, such as documents related to the attack on Japan on 7 December 1941. You could then argue in your thesis that the attack was premeditated, and then discuss, using your document (s) as support.

So to reiterate, select one or more documents, and begin to formulate your ideas about what it is you wish to argue about. For example, staying with our Roosevelt concept, if you find a document related to Franklin D. Roosevelt, and instead of Pearl Harbor you would like to develop a thesis that argues Roosevelt's first and second New Deals worsened the economy rather than helped it, you would first locate one or more primary source documents about the first New Deal, then research your argument further, looking for source documents on the second New Deal, then find secondary sources that support your ideas.

B. Writing the Paper

The title page (center title of paper, no bold or italic, and keep the entire title page in 12 point font; hit enter five times then type your name, hit enter, the course number, hit enter, then the date you submit the paper) is followed by an introduction in which you outline the topic, raising the questions that you hope to answer in the main body of the paper, as well as indicating the methods by which you intend to do so.

The main body of the paper contains the main narrative of your paper. Be sure that it has recognizable structure or organization. In this section, you provide the background to your document, discuss the document in length, and approach your document.

Here are some ways to begin to construct your paper. Always follow the specific guidelines assigned to you by your instructor, but this gives you some general ideas about how to begin the writing process.

The first approach is to place the source in its historical context and classify the source. The next ten tips may be of use to you when you begin the writing process. Some points and questions to consider:

1. First, you may wish to develop a thesis statement. Create an informed, scholarly statement (one sentence) about your subject. The tips that follow will then allow you to create a well-structured research paper. Keep in mind that depending on what your research shows, your thesis statement will need to be modified, or even rewritten as the original idea you came up with may change.
2. Who wrote your document? What was/is known about the author? (you may wish here to include a BRIEF biographical component of the author. If the author is unknown, contact the instructor for assistance.) What kind of work was it?
3. Where, when, and why was it written/what was the purpose of the document?
4. To what audience was it addressed?
5. What was/is known about this audience?
6. Note: If the author was a woman, did her gender have any ramifications for the following or interpretation of her oral/written work?
7. What were the important conventions and traditions (such as [select one or more] legal, religious, social, and/ or cultural norms) governing this kind of source?
8. Evaluate the source as a source of historical information. How typical was this source (a question that you may wish to investigate as a way to shape your overall argument)?
9. What problems, arguments, ideas and values, if any, did it share with other sources from this period?
10. What other evidence can you find to corroborate your conclusions? Include this discussion at the end of your paper. Given your research, was the intent of the document successful? Yes or no? Defend your original thesis and all conclusions drawn from this document. Carefully summarize your overall analysis and findings.

Remember that you must properly cite the document you select in both footnotes and in your annotated bibliography. Typically, you will be assessed on:

- The development of your thesis and content (avoid generalizations and defend all assertions/conclusions)
- Writing clarity (concise, well-written, clear, and coherent narrative).
- The organization of your essay. All paragraphs should be well-developed [does not move away from the central focus of the analysis], and follow a chronological structure.
- All sources must be cited with a footnote, and included in a bibliography. If the instructor requires an annotated bibliography, typically one cites the source, then includes a brief explanation of the type of source.
- Conclusions and Defense

C. Citing sources: footnotes (or endnotes) and bibliography

Every time you make a statement that is not common knowledge, and every time you quote from a book or source, **you must employ a footnote** (footnotes appear at the bottom of the page whereas endnotes appear at the end of the paper, but before the bibliography), giving the source of your information. Footnotes look the same as a bibliography, except the author's first name goes first, then the last name, and the city, publisher, and year are in parentheses, followed by a comma and the page number you are citing from. Indent the first line only. Here are some examples of footnotes (**note: footnotes are always in 10 point font**):

¹ W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Augustus* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1971), 29.

² *Ibid.*, 55.

³ Lucian. *Selected Satires of Lucian*, ed., trans. Lionel Casson (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 89.

Ibid is a Latin term, which loosely means the same book. For example, if you are citing a quote or using information directly from Fowler's book, you use the full citation the very first time you cite the book. But what happens if you cite Fowler's book again, just a paragraph later? Then you put *Ibid.*, page #. *Ibid* is followed by a period, a comma, and then the page number (s) you use. You only use *Ibid* if you cite the very same book twice in a row, without using any other source in between. If you use a citation from a different book, then you list the full citation, and the next time you use a book you already cited, just use the author's last name, comma, and page number. Note: if you cite more than one page, use pp. before the page numbers. Here are examples:

¹ Deborah Sawyer, *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1996), 19.

² Livy. *The Early History of Rome: Books I-V of the History of Rome from its Foundations*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 27.

³ Sawyer, pp. 21-28.

In a term paper you begin footnote numbering at the beginning of the paper and carry it through the entire paper. The footnotes belong at the bottom of the page to which they refer. To do this in Microsoft Word, click Insert, Footnote, make sure Footnote is checked, and click OK. Repeat this step anytime you wish to insert a footnote.

If you are unsure as to how to cite a source, just ask your instructor.

The bibliography should be arranged alphabetically with the last name of the author first, then their first name, then the title of the book in italics, the city it was published in, the publisher, and the year it was published. **Example: Author's last name, author's first name. *Title of Book*. City published in: Publisher's name, year it was published.**

Be sure to include primary as well as secondary sources in your bibliography. Remember, primary sources are those created during the period under investigation and include documents, state papers, speeches, contemporary travel accounts, census data, diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies. Secondary sources are reconstructions and interpretations of primary sources. Encyclopedia articles **are not acceptable** for your bibliography. The following websites may be helpful:

The Preparation of Historical Essays (includes compiling a bibliography) from the University of Toronto.

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/history/undergraduate/essays.html>

Reading, Writing, and Research for History: Research Papers – a Working Bibliography from Bowdoin College:

<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/WritingGuides/researching/papers/html/bibliography.shtml>

D. Important Points to Remember:

In addition to content, each analysis will also be graded on your use of grammar and proper citation format (please make sure that you use the Chicago School/Turabian format.)

All students must follow the Turabian method of citation, which entails the use of footnotes, not parenthetical citations. Instructions for this method are found at the following websites:

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/turabian.html>

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/ummu/guides/art/turabian.html>

<http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/within.htm#Turabian>

Students who wish to use any other websites must clear it with the professor first. Unless approved, encyclopedias are not allowed for this project. Journal articles are encouraged. Please see the instructor for more recommendations.

No internet sites, that are not online journal databases, will be acceptable sources unless indicated by the professor as otherwise. You may not use Wikipedia. In addition to content, each paper will also be graded on your use of grammar and proper citation format (please make sure that you use the Chicago School/Turabian format.) All other citation formats, such as MLA, will not be accepted.

E. *Basic Paper Guidelines*

1" margins on top, left, right, and bottom

12 Point Font, preferably Times New Roman, for all submitted assignments

All Assignments Must Be Typed

All footnotes must be single spaced, and in 10 pt. font (footnote text)

All use of quotations must be cited

Bibliography in proper alphabetical order

Cite All Information That is Not Your Own, or Quoted from a Source

Double-Space Everything (except footnotes)

Indent the first line of each new paragraph

No Extra Spaces in Between Paragraphs

No Report Covers or Folders, and No Rubber-banding or Folding of Assignments

One-Sided Printing Only

Page Number in Header or Footer, justified right

Print in Black Ink on White Paper Only, and Staple (or clip) in Upper Left Corner

Title page required for all assignments

F. *Other Helpful Websites:*

Adding footnotes or endnotes, Microsoft

<http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?>

[AssetID=RP010981931033&CTT=6&Origin=RC010981921033](http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?AssetID=RP010981931033&CTT=6&Origin=RC010981921033)

Checklist for Writing History Papers, University of Chicago

<http://blogs.ucls.uchicago.edu/apmme/2009/09/24/checklist-for-writing-history-papers/>

Comments on Essays, University of London

<http://personal.rhul.ac.uk/unra/373/essay-comment-bank.html>

Guide to Writing History Papers, Southern Oregon University

<http://www.sou.edu/history/carney/writing.htm>

How to Write a Good History Paper, Emory University

<http://www.history.emory.edu/undergrad/writingguide.html>

Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students, Bowdoin College

<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

Short Handbook for Writing History Papers, University of Illinois-Chicago

<http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~stone/boyer#manual>

Some Tips for Writing History Papers, Cornell University

<http://falcon.arts.cornell.edu/prh3/257/classmats/papertip.html>

Studying History, North Carolina State University

<http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/slatta/>

Writing Guide, Boston University

http://www.bu.edu/history/writing_guide.html

Writing History Papers, Lancaster University

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/haywardp/hist213/writing.htm>

G. Sample Excerpt of Paper with Footnotes and Bibliography:

In Roman society, from its earliest inception to its end, the structure of family revolved around the *paterfamilias*.¹ The role of the Roman women did not change much, as her world usually centered on domesticity. Her typical day revolved around raising children and running her household, but the Roman woman would also assist her husband with his farm or business. Occasionally, she might have worked as an artisan or beautician, and may have even had a business of her own. The woman's position in the family was always second to that of her husband, and, within this type of structure, there "would appear to be little room for female liberation."² Roman women of all social classes would definitely be bound to their husbands, and the men would retain all rights to the women's person and property, with very few exceptions. Often suppressed in terms of worship, women had few rights. Evidence also exists that demonstrates from roughly from 50 B.C. to 14 A.D., women were also discouraged from marrying outside their immediate private sphere. Hence, marriages were tightly controlled and probably arranged. This custom would have effectively restricted the men Roman women encountered, as well as limited their exposure to religion and other societies.³ During the reigns of Julius Caesar, and later Augustus, "all women, regardless of their age, were in a state of permanent ritual and jural subordination to their husbands, fathers, or guardians."⁴ The father also controlled all of his children, no matter their age, and the woman had no legal rights to her children.⁵ Many wives could also not initiate separation or divorce, no matter how her husband may have treated her.⁶ This demonstrates an imbalance in gender hierarchy; this was no more evident than in religious worship.

1 See John A. North, *Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Classical Association, 2000), 19.

2 Deborah Sawyer, *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1996), 19.

3 Livy. *The Early History of Rome: Books I-V of the History of Rome from its Foundations*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 27.

4 Sawyer, 21. Note, "Secondly, like most of the evidence we have for women in Rome, her life story is told by a man, her husband." See Susan Martin, "Private Lives and Public Personae" at <<http://www.dl.ket.org/latin2/mores/women/womenful.htm>> (1 November 2001).

5 Lesley Adkins and Roy A. Adkins. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1994), 339.

6 See Ibid., 340. See also James Malcolm Arlandson, *Women, Class, and Society in Early Christianity: Models from Luke-Acts*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 191. Private worship of Cybele did take place, as many different cults dedicated to Cybele did exist. See Ibid., *passim*.

SAMPLE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adkins, Lesley and Roy A. Adkins. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome*. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1994.

Arlandson, James Malcolm. *Women, Class, and Society in Early Christianity: Models from Luke-Acts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997.

Bipsham, Edward, and Christopher Smith, eds. *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome and Italy: Evidence and Experience*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Bridenthal, Renate, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard, eds. *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.

Burkert, Walter. *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Carcopino, Jérôme. *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire*, 2nd ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968.

Livy. "The Dionysiac Scandal in Italy" *History of Rome: Book 39*.
<<http://www.csun.edu/~hcfl1004/sc-baach.html>> (27 November 2001)

_____. *The Early History of Rome: Books I-V of the History of Rome from its Foundations*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960.

Lucian. *Selected Satires of Lucian*, ed., trans. Lionel Casson. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968.

Perpetua. *Medieval Sourcebook: St. Perpetua: The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity 203* <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html>> (26 November 2001).

Suetonius. *The Twelve Caesars*. London: Penguin Books, 1989.