



The History Student's Handbook

A Short Guide to Writing History Essays



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Introduction

History is a discipline based on interpretation, debate, analysis, and synthesis. Because of this, history essays are more than narrative accounts of the past. The purpose of a history essay is to communicate useful conclusions about past events in a purposeful and persuasive manner. History essays that are mere narratives of historical events without being analytical are, therefore, of limited value. Analytical essays are also called argumentative ones, because you are trying (which is what *essayer* means in French) to convince the reader of your point of view. The argument developed throughout the paper must be persuasive, which means that it is supported with evidence and analysis. This is not the same as an argument that is merely asserted, which, though often written using confident language, lacks evidence and analysis. In order to make your argument as objective and persuasive as possible, use counter-arguments and counter-evidence to show why your idea is the more correct one.

No matter what historians choose to study, our principal task is to understand events with objectivity (without bias) and in relation to their proper historical context, which is also known as empathy. This means examining and explaining events of the past according to the beliefs, rules, and customs governing that society, rather than according to one's personal beliefs, one's own culture, or the modern world. For example, it would not make sense to criticize a seventeenth-century absolutist government on the grounds that it was not democratic, because the notion of democracy was not established until much later. Such arguments are anachronistic, which means imposing modern ideas on the past. This approach does not maintain historical perspective or empathy because people cannot be expected to hold ideas that did not exist in their time.

Displaying objectivity and perspective also means not making moralistic arguments or value judgments. We are often troubled by the amount of violence in history and are shocked to learn about abuses of what we today call human rights. Although statements about the particular immorality or injustice of an individual or state are not always out of place in historical essays, we must be careful to take into account the prevailing norms and practices of the period in question. Your job is to explain how and why an event occurred, not to criticize the fact that it occurred. It would be inappropriate to argue that the Spanish should not have conquered the Aztec in the sixteenth century, because the simple fact is that these events did happen. Objectively explaining events that seem amoral to you does not mean that you morally agree with what happened, but rather shows that you can understand these events in their proper, historical context.

Part I: The Pre-Writing Process

Writing a history paper requires much more than just sitting down at a computer. It involves a lot of early planning, detailed research, critical thinking, skilled organization, and careful writing and rewriting. The first rule of essay writing is to start early so that you have plenty of time to follow these steps. An essay that is hastily conceived, researched, organized, or written will inevitably be lacking in essential components, which will always result in a lower grade.

Finding a Topic

Sometimes your instructor will assign a specific topic for investigation and provide the research materials that are necessary to complete the paper. More commonly, you will be required to select your own subject and then conduct a search for materials. The topic must be one that is interesting to you. A topic that engages your interest will be more enjoyable to research and write about, will result in more valuable findings, and will sustain your enthusiasm for an extended period of time. If you feel compelled to choose a topic about which you have a strong moral or ethical opinion, be careful to gather materials that express opinions on all sides so that your own biases do not overwhelm the paper. The topic you choose must also be relevant to the themes, questions, or issues addressed in your course. Reviewing your class notes or speaking to your instructor about a topic raised in class or readings will help you select a topic that will contribute specific knowledge to the course. After selecting a topic, ask yourself the following questions:

Is the topic sufficiently narrow? If not, you might not be able to do justice to the topic in the prescribed length or scope of the assignment.

Is the topic feasible? If there are not likely to be enough sources available, or if you do not have the necessary technical or language skills, think about another topic.

Does the topic have enough probative and provocative value? Because the key purpose of writing a history essay is to put forward an argument, a topic about which a lot has been written or about which there is no debate might not lend itself to these goals.

Can I use the subject to demonstrate my ability to research, interpret, organize, and convey important ideas? These, in addition to a good writing style and presentation, are the aspects of the paper that professors are evaluating.

If the answer to any of these questions is “no”, consider revising your topic or choosing a new one. Most people will select and reject several topics before finding one that meets all of these criteria.

Formulating Research Questions

After choosing your topic, form one or two questions that you must answer in order to make a contribution to knowledge in the subject area. Preparing such questions in advance, even though they are likely to change as you perform your research, will help you choose appropriate sources and avoid the tendency merely to narrate facts and events with no specific purpose in mind. For example:

*To what extent was World War I caused by international power struggles?
Did these power struggles exist for a long period, were they short-term, or were they immediate?*

Finding Sources

After arriving at your topic and principal research questions it is time to look for appropriate source materials. Remember to use the range and number of sources required by your instructor. Many history essays will require the use of both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources are documents or artifacts that were written or created in the time you are studying. They can be manuscripts (handwritten), which are sometimes transcribed and assembled into digital collections or books; typed, unpublished documents (such as letters and memoranda); or published documents (such as novels or court cases), which are sometimes available as, or assembled into, books. Primary sources are not always easy to find and sometimes their availability will help to determine or narrow your project. The internet is sometimes a good place to look for primary sources, provided that they come from a reliable institution.

Examples of Primary Sources

Diaries and journals
Newspapers and magazines
Census data and statistics
Fictional literature (poetry, novels, and plays)
Non-fictional literature (scholarly treatises, propaganda, conduct books)
Official records (memoranda, position papers, charters, court cases)
Artifacts (coins, stamps, maps)

Secondary sources are scholars' interpretations of primary sources or critiques of other scholars' ideas. Secondary sources can be found in university and public libraries and the internet using search engines such as *JSTOR* and *Historical Abstracts*, which may be accessed through the University of Calgary library website.

Examples of Secondary Sources

Journal articles provide the results of research on a focused subject
Monographs are books that address, in detail, a single subject

Edited collections are essays bound in a book covering a single subject
Book reviews are historians' critiques of monographs and collections

Evaluating Printed and Internet Sources

Always evaluate the usefulness of a source before devoting too much time to reading it. Poor sources often lack the academic rigour that is present in better sources and their use can result in weak argumentation and errors of fact or interpretation.

Examples of Poor Sources

Popular history (works written by amateurs or published by non-academic presses)
Textbooks and class lecture notes (these works are not well referenced)
Encyclopedia and dictionaries (good for facts but not analysis)
Works with obvious biases that are unsupported by reputable historical evidence
Personal web sites or sites that come from a commercial institution
Works that do not look scholarly or professional (no notes or poor quality)

Examples of Better Sources

Works whose argument is still relevant (it has not become outdated or superseded by more recent scholarship)
Books or journals published by university presses or other academic presses
(these works have been reviewed by other scholars prior to publication)
Works with extensive notes and/or bibliographies
Internet sources from reliable institutions

Students must be extremely cautious when seeking information on the internet. Be wary of websites from interest groups, such as those that promote wildlife preservation, holocaust denial, certain political parties or individuals, and even certain types of news. Just because the opinions expressed on these sites are "in print," this does not make them true or reliable. Reliable internet sites are usually (though not always) those with extensions such as .edu (an educational institution) and .ca, .uk, and .gov (material deriving from Canadian, British, and American governments). Major news outlets, such as CNN, BBC, CBC, etcetera, are likely to be objective, but you should verify all information you get from these sites. Avoid sites ending in .com, as these are commercial sites that can be purchased by anybody. Never reference *Wikipedia* or similar online sources. Material that appears elsewhere in print (especially academic journal articles) should be cited instead of the electronic version. When in doubt, ask your instructor about using internet sources.

Reading and Note Taking

Historians read source material carefully and smartly. It is not always necessary to read every word, nor to read an entire book or article if the material you require is represented in a small portion of the complete work. Good writers will have their argument and structure laid out in the

introduction and conclusion and will begin each paragraph with a topic sentence. These will help you determine the usefulness of a source or portion of a source quickly. While reading, take notes that will help you understand, evaluate, and synthesize your subject. Although some students prefer today to take notes on a computer, a pad of paper or an index card is best, because this will reduce the recording of irrelevant information and will be easier to organize later. Above all, your notes should focus on answering your research question. Direct quotations should be recorded sparingly, because they will be used sparingly in the essay. Instead, paraphrase and summarize the author's argument. Before moving on to the next source, jot down your own ideas about the source, so that you can build on this in the essay. Remember to record the complete citation (author, title, place and date of publication) and page numbers of all quoted and paraphrased materials. Failure to do so may result in a desperate return to the library to find a source you should have recorded in the first place.

Preparing a Proposal

At this stage of the project, your instructor will sometimes ask that an essay proposal be submitted for review or grading. The purpose of an essay proposal is to convince the reader that the project is sustainable, that the sources selected are sufficient and useful, and that a persuasive argument can or has been formulated. Proposals are normally between two and four pages long, and might also be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of sources (see part IV below.) The proposal—which must be written in prose, not point form—answers the following questions:

- ✓ What is your topic and how is it defined (thematically, chronologically)?
- ✓ What is/are your principal research question(s) and why?
- ✓ Why is your project interesting and important?
- ✓ What sources are you going to use? Why are these the best sources?
- ✓ Is there a methodology you are applying and, if so, why is it appropriate?
- ✓ What preliminary conclusions have you formed?

Once the proposal is returned with comments, it might be necessary to focus the topic more, return to the library for additional sources, modify your research questions, find a more persuasive argument, or even abandon the project and begin a new one.

Composing a Thesis Statement

After you have read and taken notes on your source material, and possibly submitted a proposal to your instructor for feedback, it is time to prepare a thesis statement, or argument. This statement, usually consisting of one, complex sentence, is the answer to your principal research

question, not the question itself. It is the sole argument to be proven throughout the paper and all of your evidence must relate somehow to the thesis statement. A good thesis statement is one whose argument is *aggressive, sustainable, and stands in need of proof* to be correct. A weak thesis statement is one whose argument is obvious to the reader, cannot be proven objectively, or does not stand in need of proof. Be careful not to develop a thesis statement that contains broad generalizations or personal opinion. Consider the following examples:

World War I was the worst war in history. This statement is aggressive and stands in need of proof, but it is not sustainable because it is a personal opinion that cannot be proven in an objective manner.

World War I was a conflict between European powers. This statement contains a weak, obvious generality without an argument to be proven. It is not aggressive and does not stand in need of proof.

World War I was the result of various international power struggles in Europe. This statement is sustainable but it is not very aggressive and is too broad to be proven.

World War I resulted from the coming together of various long-term and short-term international power struggles, best characterized by a series of preconditions, precipitants, and triggers. This statement is aggressive, sustainable, and stands in need of proof. It also indicates the structure of the paper, which is an optional component of a thesis statement.

Assembling Notes and Preparing an Outline

Now that you have a thesis statement that needs to be proven, develop an outline. Sometimes it is helpful to “brainstorm” the topic for five minutes. Take out a piece of paper, set a timer, and write down everything you know about your topic in a flow chart. When the timer goes off, look at your results and pull the ideas together to form various sub-themes of your topic. Then prepare the outline, which will help to ensure that the paper is highly organized, focused on the thesis statement, and contains all the evidence necessary to prove your argument. For example:

- I. Introduction: state topic and thesis statement, give structure of paper
- II. Preconditions (“Long term” causes)
 - a. Anglo and Franco-German Rivalry (arms race)
 - b. Triple Entente and Triple Alliance
 - c. African imperialism
- III. Precipitants (“Short term” causes)
 - a. Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand
 - b. “48 hour ultimatum”
 - c. The Forming of Alliances
- IV. Triggers (“Immediate” causes)
 - a. Schlieffen Plan
 - b. Invasion of Belgium
 - c. British ultimatum
- V. Conclusion: restate thesis statement; why is this paper important?

Outlines can be much more complex than the one in this example. They often include the specific pieces of evidence that will be used to prove each theme and sub-theme. Good writers often go through several outlines before arriving at one that will result in a top-quality essay. After you have completed the outline, look at each theme to be addressed closely and identify any weak areas. Once the outline is completed to your satisfaction, assemble your notes in the order you will need them during the writing process. It might be necessary at this point to make a final trip to the library to research specific items.

Time on Task

There is no rule about how long the pre-writing process should take. This will depend on the complexity of the topic, the length of the assignment, and the amount of research that needs to be conducted in order to develop an effective thesis statement and outline. As a general guideline, undergraduate essays normally require about one hour of research per page of the essay; thus, an 8-page essay will require about 8 hours of work before the writing process begins. This is also generally true of the writing process. An 8-page essay (with about 300 words per page) will take approximately 8 hours to write, plus additional time for revision and proofreading. The entire process of developing a topic, conducting research, preparing a thesis statement and outline, writing the essay, and completing final revisions will, therefore, take about 20 hours to complete an 8-page essay, and longer for essays of greater length and complexity. The best way to manage your time is to begin the essay well in advance of the due date, and work steadily though not necessarily exclusively on it until it is completed. Instructors recognize the importance of this “time on task,” and grade essays with the expectation that this level of commitment has been devoted to the preparation of essays.

Part II: The Writing Process

There are numerous techniques writers use to prepare the draft of an essay. Some begin with the introduction and write the paper to its conclusion. Others write paragraphs for each theme, assemble the paper, and then write the introduction and conclusion. Whatever system you use, all history papers are written for a certain audience, and they all require an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Audience, Voice and Tense

Essays are always written for an audience, which is the person who will be reading the paper. Unless you are told otherwise, assume that your audience is a person exactly like yourself: mature, intelligent, and interested, with a similar educational background and body of knowledge but not necessarily an expert. This is sometimes called the “enthusiastic amateur” audience. Do not assume that your audience is your instructor – even though this is usually the case – and that, therefore, you do not have to explain key terms or write in a manner that reflects clarity, conciseness, and precision. If you or a fellow student would require a definition, clarification, or explanation, then provide these to your reader.

Always write in the active voice. This means writing prose that is direct and persuasive. Passive writing is weak, wordy, and less compelling. An example of passive writing would be, “You should try to make sure that your writing is done in the active voice,” instead of the shorter and more compelling version written above. It is also passive to place the verb before the subject in a sentence. Voice also refers to who is doing the speaking. Be careful to indicate whether the ideas you express are your own or are derived from a primary or secondary source. Although it is acceptable today to use the pronoun “I” to indicate your own voice, ensure that it is used in an objective rather than a subjective manner. (When in doubt, speak to your instructor.) Historians, as opposed to writers in related disciplines, such as literature and sociology, generally write about the past in the past tense and reserve the present tense only for present-day events. Using words that imply the past tense infuse a correct historical perspective into your writing.

The Introduction

An introduction fulfills a number of tasks. It reveals your topic and its relevance, establishes the chronological and thematic parameters of the paper, provides any necessary definitions, and states the argument and the manner in which the paper will proceed to prove the thesis state-

ment. If your topic is one that has been debated by historians, it will also be necessary in the introduction to position your argument within the current debate. Although the introduction is often referred to as a “reverse pyramid,” moving from the general to the specific, do not begin your paper with broad generalities and rhetorical statements such as “Since the beginning of time” or “Throughout recorded history.” Be careful that your introduction, and indeed the entire paper, does not contain value judgments or subjective ideas, such as “I think World War I was a bad war that should not have happened,” which reveal poor historical perspective and are impossible to prove using historical evidence. In most undergraduate history papers, the introduction is one paragraph long, although papers written for senior courses might be several pages so that the nature of the debate can be explained fully. The introduction is normally about 10% of the total length of the paper. Although many students write the introduction quickly in order to move to the body of the essay, this is a mistake. A clear, concise, and precise statement of your topic, thesis, and structure sets the tone for the essay and can make the difference between “A” and “B” papers.

The Body

The body of the paper is where you introduce each theme, explain its relevance to the thesis statement, and offer the evidence, interpretation, and critical and abstract thinking necessary to prove your argument. The structure of your essay will depend on the topic and the thesis. Contrary to what we are often taught, the formulaic “five paragraph essay,” with an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion, is rarely useful. Instead, the essay will require as many paragraphs as you have themes and sub-themes to develop. Nor should essays be structured according to the strategic placement of “stronger” and “weaker” arguments. There is no place for a weak argument in a history essay. The structure of most history essays is either chronological (maintaining the timeline of events), thematic (discussing similar types of evidence, events, individuals, or works together), or a combination of the two so that you can reflect on cause (why something happened) and effect (what changes it caused).

Essays are always written in paragraph form and lengthier papers (15 pages or more) are sometimes divided into sub-headings to indicate the transition between themes. Sub-headings are discouraged in shorter papers because the result is usually an essay that is choppy and poorly organized. Avoid the use of paragraphs that are too small or too large. Small paragraphs, usually of only one or two sentences, are ineffective and suggest poor organization and journalistic-styled writing (that is, writing for a popular rather than an academic audience). Large paragraphs, of greater than one page, suggest that the author has not taken enough time during

the outline stage to group the evidence together effectively. As a rule of thumb, good paragraphs are about 100 to 250 words long, or five to eight sentences. (For example, this paragraph is 146 words in length and the next paragraph contains 201 words.)

Paragraphs contain more than a recitation of facts. Each paragraph must have “singleness of purpose,” also called “unity.” That is, it must have a central idea, normally stated as the first, or topic, sentence. It must have evidence that proves the contention of the central idea. It should also have a conclusion that summarizes the findings reached within the paragraph. Some paragraphs end with a transition to the next idea by showing how the central idea in one paragraph logically leads to the central idea in the next. Depending on the length of the paper, each theme will likely require the preparation of several paragraphs, which, in addition to each paragraph having a central idea, should collectively prove the contention of the theme. In the first theme of the outline provided above, entitled “Preconditions,” the central contention is that World War I had several “long-term” causes. This would be proven through several paragraphs (one on Anglo/Franco-German Rivalry, one on the alliance system, and one on African imperialism), each with a central idea but each also ultimately contributing to the broader contention about long-term causation. This process continues until you have completed each of the themes and sub-themes listed in the outline.

Using Quotations Effectively

Direct quotations from primary and, less frequently, secondary sources can be useful when offering evidence to prove your thesis statement. They should be used sparingly and only when the quotation might be misinterpreted or confused if paraphrased. Papers that are strung together with a series of direct quotations usually indicate that the author has not offered an original or argumentative analysis. When they are used, quotations must reproduce exactly the original author’s words, including spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. If any words are added to the quotation for reasons of grammar or coherence, they must be set off in square brackets ([]). An ellipsis (...) must be used to indicate where words are omitted in a quotation. It is no longer necessary to begin or end quotations with ellipses. Here is an example that uses the first sentence of this paragraph: “Direct quotations ... can be useful when ... prov[ing] your thesis statement.”

Short quotations of four lines or fewer should be incorporated into the text of the essay and enclosed in double quotation marks (“ ”). Quotations within quotations, as in “Tom said, ‘I want to go home,’ and promptly left,” should be placed in single quotation marks. Even single-

word quotations – such as Foucault’s use of “power” – are placed in double quotation marks. When incorporating quotations, the entire sentence should be written so that it reads in a correct grammatical form; there must not be a noticeable shift in tense. Commas and periods are placed inside the quotation marks; semi-colons, colons, and questions marks that did not form part of the original quotation are placed outside the quotation marks. Lengthy quotations – those of more than four lines – are offset one inch from the left margin and do not require quotation marks. These “block quotations” should be used sparingly and only if the quotation will subsequently be discussed in detail. In most instances, instead of quoting directly, paraphrase the author’s words and cite this as you would a quotation. The source of all quotations must be referenced.

Reference Notes and Introducing Sources

Historians use the *Chicago Manual of Style* for citing primary and secondary source material. This means using complete footnotes or endnotes and bibliographies rather than the abbreviated or embedded (also called parenthetical) referencing method used in other social sciences and humanities disciplines. In particular, the common APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) methods are not acceptable for history essays, and writers who do not use the proper method will normally be penalized. Reference numbers are placed in superscript outside all punctuation at the end of the sentence. For example, “Historians use the *Chicago Manual of Style* for citing . . . source material.”¹ Occasionally, it is necessary to place a reference number within the sentence; this occurs when, for example, only a portion of a sentence is being attributed to another author, while the remainder is your own idea. In such cases, the reference number should be placed after the portion derived from the other source. In general, however, it is preferable that reference numbers be placed at the end of the sentence or paragraph to which it refers. If more than one source has been used, reference the sources together in a single note at the end of the sentence (see example in Part IV).

Reference notes allow the reader easy access to the material used when writing the essay. Historians often work with material that is difficult to access, or that has been printed in numerous editions. If a fact or quotation is to be checked, the fullest possible citation is required. In addition, a reference note gives credit to the author of an idea or statement and also demonstrates to the reader the amount of effort and care that has been put into the paper. Always reference material or ideas derived from another source, regardless of whether it is paraphrased or quoted. Ensure that the sources of all statistics are cited; although these often appear to be “objective facts,” they are the result of numerous decisions made by

an author during the course of research and are, therefore, subject to interpretation. It is not necessary to cite sources for facts that are common knowledge (such as that World War I was fought between 1914 and 1918), which might be defined as material that all university students know before commencing their studies. Some instructors will also allow you to treat as common knowledge any lecture material discussed in class, although you should always check with the instructor first.

Although there is no rule about how many footnotes or endnotes are required in an essay, approximately three or four per page is average. An eight-page essay with only four or five notes in total is either under-referenced or contains too much opinion and assertion and not enough facts and evidence to prove the argument. On the other hand, eight or ten notes per page suggest a random use of evidence placed into your paper without using your own debating and analytical skills to explain and engage with the material. In situations where you are citing from the same source or sources throughout a paragraph or a series of sentences, it is normal to cite the source material only once, either at the start or end of the related section, rather than using multiple footnotes. However, if the material is being used in more than one paragraph, use a new note for each paragraph.

Finally, because you will be providing complete references in the notes, it is not usually necessary to indicate the title of articles or books in the body of the essay. For example, instead of writing, “In his article entitled ‘Cleansing and Clarifying: Technology and Perception in Nineteenth-Century London,’ Christopher Otter argues that...,” simply write “Christopher Otter argues that...” and include a footnote indicating the complete title and reference. After you have introduced an author by name for the first time, subsequent references should include only the author’s last name, such as “Otter further argues that...” When it is deemed necessary to include the title of the work within the body of the essay – normally only when you are discussing multiple works by the same author – the titles of articles, chapters in books, and unpublished documents are placed in quotation marks, and book titles are italicized.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when an author, either deliberately or without the exercise of reasonable judgment, passes off the writing of another as his or her own. Plagiarism includes using key words, rewording a sentence or paragraph, or using another author’s ideas, without providing a citation to the original source. To avoid plagiarizing another’s work, accurately reference all direct quotations (which should be enclosed in quotation marks) and paraphrases, ideas or information derived from another

source, and all concepts that are not common knowledge. It is also plagiarism to use extensive paraphrasing from only one or two sources, even if notes are used; the majority of words and ideas in an essay should be your own. Plagiarism also occurs when an author submits work that is borrowed, purchased, ghostwritten, submitted for credit in another course, or has been extensively edited by a third party. Because plagiarism is a serious form of academic dishonesty and can result in formal sanctions, students must be extremely careful to avoid committing this offense. When in doubt, you should contact your instructor.

The Conclusion

The conclusion to the essay helps the reader understand the relevance of the themes that have been examined throughout the paper. It is often described as a “pyramid,” moving from the particular (restating your thesis statement) to the general (explaining why your conclusions are important). Do not merely summarize the paper and be careful not to introduce new evidence in the conclusion. Make sure that you answer the “so what?” question by explaining how and why your paper has made a contribution to the subject matter. This is a good opportunity to show how your study has wider implications and to suggest a new direction for research into this topic. Like the introduction and the body, the conclusion is a vital component of your paper and must not be neglected. Keep in mind that it is the last thing your instructor will read before assigning a grade. It should be about 10% of your paper.

Rewriting and Proofreading

Once the draft of your paper is complete, rewriting begins. If possible, set the draft aside for a few days and return to it with a fresh eye. Read the paper over slowly – some authors prefer to read the paper aloud – and identify and correct weak grammatical constructions, illogical statements, poor argumentation, or lack of evidence to prove a central idea or thesis statement. You might find that one paragraph belongs in a different place, or that the introduction does not lay out the argument very clearly. Take this opportunity to correct these errors. Check your diction to ensure that every word you have used is the right one. In English, very few words have exact synonyms, so select the correct word and not one that is merely close in meaning. The re-writing process is vital to the success of an essay because, when properly and carefully done, it usually results in the reduction of non-essential prose, leading to more clarity and precision and a taut, logical argument that has no superfluous elements. After rewriting the paper (twice, if time allows), proofread it carefully to identify and correct spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors and pass the paper to a friend who can find other mistakes.

Part III: Reviews and Analyses

Reviews and analyses are similar in content, style, and structure, but examine different types of writing. Reviews, or critiques, assess the argument, methodology, strengths, and weaknesses of secondary sources produced by historians. These can range from the review of a single monograph or collection of essays, to that of several books, chapters, and articles written by one or more historians. Analyses assess the content, argument, and historical context of primary sources written at the time you are studying. Whereas reviews usually evaluate works of several hundred pages, document analyses can assess works as short as a single page and often evaluate several documents at the same time. Like essays, reviews and analyses need to be interpretive and critical, although they usually accomplish their goals in a limited number of words, usually between 500 and 1500, or 2-6 double-spaced pages. It is important to think of this type of report as a short essay, which means that it, like a research essay, contains an introduction, argument, body, and conclusion.

The Art of Criticism

Criticism, or evaluation, is at the heart of reviews and analyses. A good report can tell other historians whether they should read a book or document, what they can expect in terms of content and argument, and in what ways they should be cautious while reading the material. It is not sufficient merely to summarize what has been written. You must also engage with the material in a meaningful way. Authors, whether of secondary or primary materials, make many decisions and encounter many obstacles when writing their work, most of which you will not be aware of while reading. Respecting this complex process should prevent you from criticizing just for the sake of doing so. Criticism must be constructive and you must be able to back your criticism up by drawing upon your own knowledge or your careful analysis of the material at hand. It is not enough to write, “I do not like the way the argument is developed” or “this author was obviously biased”. What is wrong with the argument and how could it be made better? What is the nature of the author’s bias and how can it be overcome?

The Introduction

The introduction should begin by stating the author and title of the work or works under consideration. The introductory paragraph can also indicate the author’s intentions for the work, the argument that is developed therein, and situate the themes of the work within other, relevant works. In the case of a document analysis, situate the work within its proper his-

torical context by reflecting on when and why the document was written. Like essays, good reviews and analyses will have a thesis statement, which is the argument you will be making in the review. For example, in a book review you might argue that: “In his book *Innocence Abroad*, historian Benjamin Schmidt offers a revisionist analysis of Dutch activities in the New World and shows that, contrary to received wisdom, these activities were critical to the development of Atlantic expansion.” In a review of several works on a similar theme, you might argue that: “Over the past two decades, historians have developed deeply polarized views on the origins of the American Revolution.” In an analysis, you could argue that: “In *The Prince*, Nicolò Machiavelli demonstrates his debt to classical forms of government, while also recognizing that true governance is based on the immediate needs of the society that the government serves.” All of these theses are active in that they make a strong statement and stand in need of proof, which it is the purpose of the report to provide.

The Body

The body of reviews and analyses is used to answer a number of questions about the work or works under consideration. While it is not necessary – or sometimes even possible – to answer all of these questions, or to devote equal space to each one, the report should be as comprehensive as possible. Depending on the nature of the material under examination, additional questions may arise during reading of the work or preparation of the report that need to be answered.

- ✓ **What issues, topics, and themes does the work or works cover?** It is neither necessary nor desirable to summarize each work, or chapter, or document. Instead, discuss the chronological and thematic sweep of the material, the main issues that are addressed, and how these contribute to the overall theme of the work or works. It is important that you show a sound understanding of the material.
- ✓ **What is relevant about the author(s) and the audience?** What other works has this author (or these authors) written to which this work contributes? Are there specific aspects of the author’s or authors’ background (race, religion, education, nationality, etc.) that affect (positively or negatively) the author’s interpretation? Who was this work written for, did this help to determine the methodology or argument, and was this goal accomplished? Was the work or works prepared to advance a specific political, intellectual, or social agenda? If so, does this strengthen or weaken the material? If more than one work is under consideration, do some of the other works answer similar questions differently because of alternate personal views or audiences?
- ✓ **What historical genre and theoretical approach best fits this material?** Is this biography, economic, cultural, social, intellectual, environmental, political, military, or religious history? Does the author or authors employ a feminist, Marxist, Whig, Annales, or revisionist methodology? Are there interdisciplinary approaches used that fit into more than one genre or theoretical approach? Is or was the author or authors associated with a specific school of thought or branch of literature? Why

and to what extent should historians be skeptical when reading this material? Was there a propagandist or rhetorical purpose to the material?

- ✓ **What evidence and type of argument does the author or authors use?** If a review, is the work based on primary or secondary research? Is the primary research based on archival documents or printed sources, or a combination of the two? If several works are used, how does each work or author vary in evidence and argument and what strengths and weaknesses do the different approaches present? If an analysis, does the author use personal experiences, second hand information, other types of documentation, or rhetorical methods? Does the choice to use certain evidence result in a skewed interpretation? Is there a failure to consider evidence or works that challenge the interpretation presented? Does the evidence presented suggest an alternate interpretation to you than was suggested by an author? Is the interpretation based on hard evidence (facts), assertion (personal opinion), or inference (informed opinion)?
- ✓ **How and how well is the information presented?** Is the work organized and structured well? Is the argument developed chronologically or thematically, or does the author use a combination of both? Are important themes and terms properly and sufficiently defined? Are there sufficient references to back up the argument? Does the writing flow well or is it turgid or technically flawed to the point of causing problems for the reader? Are there intelligent transitions from one theme to the next? If a review, does the introduction properly introduce the main themes of the book and provide the argument, and does the conclusion reflect well on the issues addressed? If this is a document analysis, keep in mind the time period in which the work was written and assess its merits based on those times rather than the present.

The Conclusion

The concluding paragraph should comment on the overall significance of the material under consideration. What new questions has the author (or authors) brought up or answered? If a review, what further work needs to be done on the subject now that this material has been written and evaluated? If an analysis, what individuals or writings were affected by the document or documents under consideration? This is also an opportunity to reflect on the overall strengths and weaknesses of the material. For example, if the author or authors has placed too much emphasis on one theme to the exclusion of another, this is noteworthy. So too is a particularly strong writing style, or an especially novel approach to the topic, field, or to historical scholarship in general. Do not use the conclusion, or any part of the report, to mention minor matters of style (such as occasional typographical errors). Instead, focus on issues of importance to historians, such as the contribution of the material to its historical fields.

Quotations and Referencing

Although quotations should be used sparingly in reviews and analyses, they are often useful when relating an author's specific argument, the use of new or peculiar terms, or passages of special merit. If a single work

(whether secondary or primary) is under review, quotations and paraphrased passages should be followed with a parenthetical citation that includes the page number. For example, (p. 35). If several documents or books are being reviewed or analyzed, or if other sources are cited, use the formal referencing style appropriate to research essays, as discussed in Part IV below.

Part IV: Style and Referencing Guide

Presentation, writing style, and proper referencing are as important as the argument itself. When done properly, these elements of the essay show the reader that you are serious about the study of history and organized and concerned about your work. Make no mistake about it: essays that are poorly presented, written, or referenced will always negatively affect your grade. Most importantly, it only takes a few extra minutes to make sure that your paper is well written and properly formatted.

Presentation

The entire essay must be double spaced and written in paragraph form, not block form. This means that (unlike this handbook) the first line of each paragraph is indented and there is no additional space between paragraphs, merely the standard double-spacing. Essays must have a title page, which includes a proper title for your essay (not “History Essay” or “Essay #1”), your name and student number, instructor’s and teaching assistant’s name (if applicable), course number and section (if applicable), and the date. Essays must be typewritten, using an easily-readable font (Times New Roman or Garamond are favourites), in 12-point, with 1 inch margins all around. Do not use coloured paper, fancy fonts, or irrelevant pictures or drawings. Do not put your paper into a duotang or have it bound. Instead, a staple (rather than a paper clip, which can fall off) in the upper-left corner is preferred.

Most instructors will give a word limits for the paper. When an instructor gives a page limit, it is with the understanding that a page has about 300 words, so a 10-page paper is 3000 words. Pay careful attention to the page or word limit. Cramming more words in using smaller margins and smaller fonts will not escape the eye of your grader, and some instructors will refuse to grade papers that are too long. The ability to write within a prescribed limit is much more challenging than writing a long, tedious paper, and instructors are also testing your ability to write in a concise and precise manner. Put page numbers on all pages except the title page. Remember to put page numbers on the bibliography, although neither it nor the title page are counted in the page or word count for the essay.

Grammar and Style

Historians use the standard conventions of the English language to communicate their findings to their audience. In order to be understood and persuasive, your writing must conform to the basic rules of grammar and style. Write in a clear, concise, and precise manner. Simple, direct

writing is always preferable to writing that appears as if a thesaurus was frequently consulted. Work hard to purge your writing of colourful adjectives, adverbs, superfluity, repetition, and unwarranted complexity. Essays are always written in formal language that displays historical objectivity and seriousness of purpose. They must not contain contractions (such as *don't* and *can't*), journalistic-styled writing (usually defined by tiny sentences and paragraphs designed to be read by a popular audience), sarcasm or attempts at humour, indignance or disrespect for events that occurred in the historical past, or exclamation points for emphasis.

Common Grammar and Punctuation Mistakes

Especially when frequently or carelessly committed, many common grammar mistakes reflect badly on the credibility of the author. Essays that are poorly written will always result in a lower grade. Here are ten common errors that graders dislike.

1. **Dangling participles and modifiers.** These occur when you modify the wrong noun or verb in a sentence. To write, for example, that “If well written, you could get a high grade on the essay,” suggests that you need to be well written, not the essay. The sentence should read “You could get a high grade on the essay if it is well written.” Here is another example: “I saw the Calgary Tower walking downtown.” Was the Calgary Tower walking downtown or were you? The sentence should read, “While walking downtown, I saw the Calgary Tower.”

2. **Subject-object and subject-verb disagreements.** Sometimes called singular-plural disagreements, these occur when you alter the tense of a sentence part-way through. For example: “*We* study history because *you* can apply the skills elsewhere” changes the tense from the plural (“we”) to the singular (“you”). Writing “John’s statement of grievances were presented to the president” is incorrect because the singular subject (“statement of grievances”) shifts to a plural verb (“were presented”). The sentence should read: “John’s statement of grievances was presented to the president.”

3. **Shifts between past and present tense.** A similar lack of agreement occurs when you write, for example, that “King Henry VIII *was* important because he *is* responsible for the English Reformation,” or vice versa. As a general rule, history papers are always written in the past tense.

4. **Incomplete sentences.** Also called sentence fragments, these are independent or subordinate clauses that do not have a subject or verb. *Such*

as *this sentence*. In this example, there is no subject. Instead, the first two sentences must be joined together using a comma to be complete.

5. Colloquialisms, clichés, euphemisms, and metaphors/similes.

Though colourful, these literary devices are usually tiresome, imprecise, and misleading. It is colloquial to write that “World War I was horrible,” and it is a cliché to write that during World War I, “Europe was going to hell in a handbasket.” A euphemism is a polite, yet often meaningless term used to cover up reality; it should be used sparingly. A short person is not “vertically challenged” and a trash collector is not a “sanitation engineer.” Metaphors and similes, while not prohibited, should be used with caution. Writing statements such as “Henry VIII was the Winton Churchill of his generation” or “Hitler was like a rabid dog” obscure more than they reveal.

6. Incorrect homophones and diction. Homophones are words that sound the same as other words, but differ in meaning and spelling, such as *throne* and *thrown*, *principal* and *principle*, *cite* and *site*, *coarse* and *course*, *knight* and *night*, *whether* and *weather*, *to* and *too*, etcetera. Be careful to use the word that is correct contextually. Some words are not homophones but sound similar enough that they are used incorrectly in many essays, such as *accept* and *except*, *tenet* and *tenant*, *affect* and *effect*, *then* and *than*, and *report* and *rapport*. When in doubt, consult a dictionary to ensure that the word you are using is the correct choice.

7. Comma splices. This error is the result of either joining two independent clauses without using a conjunction, or joining two complete sentences together using only a comma. Thus, “The coffee was fresh, I had a cup” is incorrect. Use either “The coffee was fresh. I had a cup”; “The coffee was fresh, and I had a cup”; or “The coffee was fresh; I had a cup.” It is also incorrect to separate the subject from the object: “Canada, is a very large country” is wrong, while “Canada is a very large country” is correct.

8. Misusing the apostrophe. Apostrophes are used only to indicate possessives, not for pronouns that refer to an antecedent noun. Thus, “the man’s car,” the “girls’ hockey team” (in which there is more than one girl, forcing the apostrophe to go after the “s”), and “women’s history” (in which the possessive for the plural is placed before the “s”) are all correct. The same rules apply to possessive forms of names that end in “s”, such as “Dickens’s writings” and “Yates’s poetry.” Writing “Spain was it’s own worst enemy” is incorrect because “its” is a pronoun that refers to the antecedent noun “Spain” and not to a possessive. The sentence should read: “Spain was its own worst enemy.” Finally, do not use apostrophes to form plurals: “The Smiths live here” is correct; “The

Smith's live here" is not. One eats "hamburger buns," not "hamburger bun's."

9. **Confusing "that," "which," and "who".** "That" is used in restrictive clauses and "which" is used in non-restrictive clauses. Thus, "It was these two factors that led to the war" is correct because "that" refers to an essential (restrictive) component of the sentence. "The Great Reform Act, which gave many middle-class men the right to vote, was passed in 1832" is correct because "which" refers to a non-essential (non-restrictive) component. The sentence would still read correctly if the non-restrictive clause was removed: "The Great Reform Act was passed in 1832." "Who" is used to refer to a person: "It was Caroline who came to dinner," not "It was Caroline that came to dinner."

10. **Hyphens and Dashes.** A hyphen (-) is used to join compound words that cannot be spelled as a single word. The words *caffeine-free* and *mass-produced*, for example, and words that might otherwise be misinterpreted (such as *re-creation* instead of *recreation*) require hyphens. Standard compounds, such as *birthrate* and *cooperation*, do not. Hyphens are not used to set off an independent clause. Independent clauses that are too distinct from the sentence to use commas should be set off by dashes, which are twice the length of a hyphen (–). The sentence "There is no consensus – nor need there be – about this matter" is correct; using hyphens in place of the dashes in this sentence, however, would lead to confusion: "There is no consensus-nor need there be-about this matter."

Notes and Bibliographies

When to reference has been discussed in Hart II above. How to reference is also of critical importance. History instructors will insist that you use, consistently and correctly, the referencing format for notes and the bibliography that is described in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Referencing methods used in other disciplines – such as APA, MLA, etc. – are not appropriate in History and will result in a lower grade or, possibly, a refusal to grade the essay until the proper format has been used. The remainder of this part will provide explanations and examples of proper note and bibliographical formats.

Proper Note Format

Footnotes (single-spaced at the bottom of each page) and endnotes (double-spaced at the end of the essay before the bibliography) in history essays differ only in their placement. You can use either footnotes or endnotes (not both) in your essay, although instructors generally prefer footnotes for ease of reference. These notes should be in the same font

and size as the main text (12pt) and numbered consecutively from the beginning of the paper; do not use Roman numerals or special characters and do not begin the numbering again with each page or section. All word-processing programs have built-in footnote and endnote functions that make it easy to number and place notes, and to add or delete notes throughout the writing and rewriting processes.

Because it is difficult to anticipate all possible forms that notes can take, the key is to be consistent and clear, providing sufficient information to enable the reader to locate the source. This might include author(s), title and subtitle, name of editor(s) and/or translator(s), edition or volume number, publisher and place and date of publication, and page numbers. Any information that is missing, which is often the case with older publications, should be omitted without comment. Second and subsequent references to sources are made using “short form” reference. References to entire books should omit page numbers, while references to one or more pages or chapters should be indicated following the publishing information. Avoid citing large page or chapter ranges (eg. pp. 27-122 or chaps. 2-6). It is better to indicate the precise pages or chapters that are relevant to the point being argued.

Although it was once common to use Latin abbreviations in notes, such as *idem.* (by the same author), *op. cit.* (in the work cited), *loc. cit.* (in the place cited), and *et al.* (and others), these are no longer used. The sole remaining exception is *ibid.* (in the same matter), which is used if the reference is precisely the same as the previous one in all ways except for the page number. Many prefer to use short form instead of *ibid.* because it avoids confusion and minimizes errors that might occur when restructuring the essay. In addition, as shown in the examples below, it is no longer necessary to use “p.” or “pp.” to indicate a single page or multiple pages, although it is still acceptable to use these abbreviations.

1. Single-author books

Book citations are written as a single sentence separated by commas. Title are capitalized and italicized (underlining is also acceptable in place of italics provided it is consistent throughout the paper), with subtitles separated by a colon. The publishing information (city: publisher, year) is placed in parentheses. If the reference applies to the entire book, no page number is necessary. Otherwise, put the relevant page number(s) after the year of publication.

¹ Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 87.

Second and subsequent references to sources are made using “short form” reference, which include the author’s last name, a short version of the title, and the page number.

⁵ Parrish, *American Curiosity*, 43-56.

Books that were written in previous centuries should indicate as much information as is available, and retain original spelling.

⁶ Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfort, 1590). [Note that there is no publisher information available. If the year of publication is written in Roman numerals, such as “MDXC”, this should be changed to standard numbers (1590).]

Some books have national, corporate, or organizational authors.

²³ Great Britain, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationer’s Office, 1885), 45. [Note that the highest authority, “Great Britain”, is indicated first, followed by the next highest authority, “Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts”.]

2. Multi-author books

For books with two authors, the authors’ names should be listed as they appear on the title page.

¹² Robin W. Winks and Lee Palmer Wandel, *Europe in a Wider World, 1350-1650* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11-15.

¹⁶ Winks and Wandel, *Europe in a Wider World*, 17.

If there are three or more authors, use “and others,” which is preferable today to the Latin “et al”.

⁸ John Briggs and others, *Crime and Punishment in England: An Introductory History* (London: UCL Press, 1996), 7.

¹³ Briggs, *Crime and Punishment*, 56.

3. Edited Collections and Essays or Documents Within

For complete references to collections of essays or primary sources, indicate the editors.

² H. V. Bowen and others, *Britain’s Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean World, c. 1550-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴ Bowen, *Britain’s Oceanic Empire*, 68.

When a specific essay or document is being referred to in an edited collection, refer to the author and title of the specific work you are using. The title is placed in quotation marks, while the book's title is italicized.

¹⁶ Alfred W. Crosby, "Infectious Disease and the Demography of the Atlantic Peoples," in *The Atlantic World in the Age of Empire*, ed. Thomas Benjamin and Timothy Hall (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 169-179.

¹⁸ Crosby, "Infectious Disease," 172.

4. Translated and Edited books

For books that have been edited or translated, place the original author first and indicate the name of the translator after the title.

²³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995), 27.

⁵⁶ Hugo Grotius, *The Free Sea*, ed., David Armitage, trans. Richard Hakluyt (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), 45.

5. Multi-Volume or Multi-Edition Works

For books with multiple volumes, indicate the total number of volumes after the title and indicate the specific volume number being used before the page number.

⁹ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1: 153.

¹¹ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, 2: 345.

When there are multiple editions of a book, indicate the edition being used, using "2d ed.," "3rd ed.," etc., "rev. ed." for revised editions, or "enl. ed." for enlarged editions. It is not necessary to indicate the edition number if it is the first.

⁴ Thomas H. Greer and Gavin Lewis, *A Brief History of the Western World*, 8th ed. (Toronto: Nelson, 2002).

⁷ Greer and Lewis, *Brief History*, 56.

6. Journal Articles

For journal articles, place the title of the article in quotation marks and underline or italicize the title of the journal. Note the volume (30), year of publication, and pages numbers following a colon. Most journals number pages consecutively throughout an entire year; however, when a journal

begins each issue with page one, it is necessary to indicate the issue number after the volume (30:3). If the entire article is being cited, give the start and end pages. If less material is cited, give only the pages that are relevant.

⁵ William V. Flores, "New Citizens, New Rights: Undocumented Immigrants and Latino Cultural Citizenship," *Latin American Perspectives* 30 (2003): 87-100.

⁸ Flores, "New Citizens, New Rights," 89-90.

Some journals have distinct series, which reuse the volume numbers. In such cases, the series must be noted.

¹⁵ Carole Shammas, "The Space Problem in Early United States Cities," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 57 (2000): 505-542.

Journal articles accessed electronically that originally appeared in print (that is, in a permanent, paper version) should be referenced as above, using the original page numbers, and without citing an internet URL (uniform resource locator). Correct page numbers will be found by downloading the Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) version of the on-line file instead of the .html file. When in doubt, consult the printed version. Journals that are only on the internet and are not available in print should be referenced as follows:

⁴⁸ Daniel Gorman, "Wider and Wider Still?: Racial Politics, Intra-Imperial Immigration and the Absence of an Imperial Citizenship in the British Empire," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3.3 (2002), muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_colonialism_and_colonial_history/toc/cch3.3.html (accessed 5 January 2009), para. 31.

Note that because this article is not elsewhere available, the URL, date the article is accessed, and paragraph number is cited.

7. Internet and Electronic Resources

The use of electronic resources is becoming increasingly common and because there is so much variety of resources their citation must be as clear as possible. When using an online PDF version of a printed book or journal, it is acceptable to reference the work as if you consulted the original printed version, as described above. If the printed work has been modified in any way (for example, turned into e-book or transcribed into a webpage) you must provide the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and the date on which the material was accessed. Some examples of citation from electronic sources are below:

¹⁹ Martin Luther, “Address to the Nobility of the German Nation (1520),” in *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*, www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-nobility.html (accessed 15 May 2005).

⁸ Virginia Assembly, “Act CII, Run-aways, Laws of Virginia, March, 1661-2,” in *Statues at Large, Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from ... 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening, transcribed by Freddie L. Spradlin, <http://vagenweb.org/hening/vol02-06.htm> (accessed November 19, 2014).

¹⁴ Bartholomew Las Casas, “Amerindians and the Garden of Eden,” *Western Civilization Documents CD-ROM* (Upper Saddle: Prentice Hall, 2004), doc. 10.4.

²¹ Ken MacMillan, *The Atlantic Imperial Constitution: Center and Periphery in the English Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), chap. 2, Kindle edition. [Note that in this example, page numbers cannot be cited because this depends on the font size chosen by the reader.]

8. Book Reviews

Book reviews are referenced by the author of the review, not of the book being reviewed.

¹³ Heather J. Coleman, review of *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, by S. Fitzpatrick, *Canadian Journal of History* 36 (2001): 151-152.

¹⁵ Coleman, review of *Everyday Stalinism*, 151.

9. Plays, Poems, and Biblical References

Well-known plays, poems, and Biblical references that carry act, scene, section, or chapter, line, or verse numbers do not need to be referenced with publication information unless the edition being used is important to the discussion of the texts.

¹² William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 2.3.12-16.

¹⁸ *King James Bible*, 1 Corinthians 13.9.

10. Magazine or Newspaper Articles

References to magazine articles are similar to journal articles:

⁴⁷ Heather Pringle, “Alberta Barren,” *Saturday Night*, June 1997: 30.

Citations to newspapers include the month and day of the issue but can leave out page numbers. Cite the edition if the paper has more than one (ie. morning and evening).

²¹ Ora Morison, "Older job seekers feel 'not very good' about prospects," *Globe and Mail*, August 22, 2012 [Note: the article *The* is left off the title *Globe and Mail*.]

If you accessed the article online, provide the URL. Use only the main entrance to the newspaper or service if the full URL will quickly become invalid, as is usually the case.

¹⁹ Emily Badger, "The Uncomfortable Politics Behind the History of Urban Fires," *The Atlantic*, 22 August 2012, <http://www.theatlantic.com>.

11. Articles in Encyclopedia or Dictionaries

The use of dictionaries and encyclopedia should generally be avoided. However, historians often cite biographical dictionaries:

³² William B. Robison, "Kidd, William (ca. 1645-1701)," in *Absolutism and the Scientific Revolution, 1600-1720: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Christopher Baker (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 205.

³⁴ Robison, "Kidd, William," 205.

Well-known reference books do not need to be accompanied by the facts of publication, unless there is potential for confusion. Give the source and the title of the entry, but eliminate the author of the entry even if it is known.

⁴⁵ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Dee, John."

⁶⁷ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, "Russell, Charles."

12. Dissertations and Theses

Dissertation and thesis titles are placed in quotations marks because they are not published. Also include the type of thesis and the place and year of completion.

³ Meshal Al-Rabeaa, "Orphaning the Victorian Child: A Study in Eight Victorian Novels," (PhD diss., University of Calgary, Canada, 2007), 87.

13. Archival and Manuscript Sources

The method of referencing a source from an archive differs depending on the archive where it is housed and the collection in which it is found. In general, the document should be described as fully and as consistently as possible, by citing author, title, the archive where the document is housed, and its shelfmark (library locator information). When in doubt, refer to the archive's website or to books that reference documents from

that archive. Unknown information may be silently omitted. The following example is taken from a document housed in the British Library.

³⁴ John Dee, “Brytanici Imperii Limites,” British Library, Additional Manuscript 59681, fols. 21-25.

³⁹ Dee, “Brytanici Imperii Limites,” fol. 37.

Many manuscript sources provide numbers only on the front page of a folio rather than on the front and back. In such instances, use *r* and *v* to refer to recto (front) or verso (back) of the page; using the example above, fol. 37*r* or fol. 23*v*.

14. Interviews

If you are referencing an interview that was broadcast or published, the citation should include the name of the person interviewed, the title of the interview (if applicable), the interviewer's name (if this was you, write “interview by the author”), the medium (e.g. book, television show) where the interview appeared, and the date of the interview.

⁴² Margaret Thatcher, “Britain's Iron Lady,” interview by Barbara Frum, *The Journal*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 27 September 1983.

⁴⁵ Isaac Bashevis Singer, interview by Harold Flender, in *Writers at Work: The “Review” Interviews*, ed. George Plimpton, 5th ser. (New York: Viking Press, 1981), 85.

References to interviews that you have conducted or that have not been published or broadcast are referenced as follows:

³⁴ Horace Hunt [pseudo.], interview by Ronald Schatz, tape recording, 16 May 1976, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg. [Note: in this example, the interview has been deposited in an archive. The use of “pseudo.” after the name indicates this is a pseudonym.]

³⁵ Karl-Heinz Mehlan, interview by Annette F. Timm, Anna-Sabine Ernst and Donna Harsh, tape recording, Rostock, Germany, 1 June 1996.

15. Citations from Secondary Sources

Although authors are generally expected to examine the works they cite, it is sometimes necessary to cite a quotation from a secondary source if the original is not available, using “quoted in”:

⁵ William Camden, *The History of ... Princess Elizabeth* (London: E. Flesher, 1675), 309, quoted in E. P. Cheyney, “International Law under Queen Elizabeth,” *English Historical Review* 20 (1905), 660.

16. Explanatory Notes and Multiple References

Occasionally, it is desirable to place narrative in notes in order to contextualize a discussion without delaying the development of your argument.

⁴⁵ Clinton L. Evans, *The War on Weeds in the Prairie West: An Environmental History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002). Evans argues that there is a fundamental economic relationship between people and weeds in subsistence or non-capitalist societies. This relationship determined both how agricultural societies developed and how weed control would be conducted.

It is sometimes necessary to put several sources into one footnote, if all the sources refer to the material that is being referenced. In such cases, works should be separated by semi-colons.

¹⁷ Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought, 1603-42* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 34-56; Brian Levack, *The Civil Lawyers in England, 1603-1641: A Political Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 43-67; Johann Sommerville, "English and European Political Ideas in the Early Seventeenth Century: Revisionism and the Case of Absolutism," *Journal of British Studies* 35 (1996): 168-94.

17. Additional Material

There are many other types of material that can be referenced, such as music scores, videos, documentaries, statutes, legal cases, and physical artifacts. For detailed explanation on how to reference this material, consult the latest edition *Chicago Manual of Style* or one of the sources listed in the Further Resources section below.

Proper Bibliographical Format

A bibliography is a list of all the sources that were consulted in the course of researching and writing the essay. As a result, some works might be cited in the bibliography that are not otherwise referenced in the essay. The main difference between notes and bibliographical entries is how the information is presented, rather than what is presented. Entries are alphabetized by the author's last name or institution and the various elements of the reference are separated by periods instead of commas. Short titles are not used in bibliographies and page ranges are only used for journal articles. Primary and secondary sources are usually separated, although it is not always necessary to separate them further unless an extensive list of sources has been used. If this is the case, primary sources can be divided into sub-categories such as "Manuscripts", "Electronic", and "Printed", and secondary sources can be divided into, for example, "Books", "Articles and Chapters", and "Dissertations". Always think of

the audience's needs when creating and using these categories. What follows is an example of a properly-formatted bibliography, using some examples from the previous section.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Manuscript [use only when manuscript sources have been consulted]

Dee, John. "Brytanici Imperii Limites." British Library, Additional Manuscripts 59681.

Great Britain Public Record Office. Patent Roll, C/66.

----- . State Papers, 14/164. [Note: The three-em dash (-----) is used when the author's name is the same as the last entry, in this case, "Great Britain Public Record Office".]

Electronic [use only when electronic sources have been consulted]

Luther, Martin. "Address to the Nobility of the German Nation (1520)." In *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-nobility.html> (15 May 2004).

Printed [use only when printed sources have been consulted]

Blackstone, William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. [Note that the publishing information is not placed in parentheses.]

Harriot, Thomas. *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. Frankfort, 1590.

Great Britain Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House*. London: Her Majesty's Stationer's Office, 1885.

Secondary Sources

Brown, Christopher L. "The Politics of Slavery." In *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael Braddick. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Coleman, Heather. Review of *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, by S. Fitzpatrick. *Canadian Journal of History* 36 (2001): 151-152.

Flores, William V. "New Citizens, New Rights: Undocumented Immigrants and Latino Cultural Citizenship." *Latin American Perspectives* 30 (2003): 87-100.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Random House, 1995.

Greer, Thomas H. and Gavin Lewis, *A Brief History of the Western World*, 8th ed. Toronto: Nelson, 2002. [Note that only the first author's name is reversed.]

Parrish, Susan Scott. *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Winks, Robin W., and Lee Palmer Wandel. *Europe in a Wider World, 1350-1650*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Annotated Bibliographies

Instructors will sometimes request that an annotated bibliography be submitted, either with the essay or with a research proposal that precedes the essay. This uses the same format as that shown above, except that a brief statement summarizing the source and showing why it is being used in the paper accompanies each entry. Annotations should be approximately 25 words in length. For example:

Sharpe, James. *The Bewitching of Anne Gunter: A Horrible and True Story of Deception, Witchcraft, Murder, and the King of England*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Using the evidence of a case that came before the Court of Star Chamber in 1611, Sharpe shows the importance of contemporary belief systems and the workings of the law in early modern England.

Further Resources

The most recent edition of the following resources should be consulted for additional guidelines on writing and referencing history essays.

Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers.

Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*.

William Kelleher Storey and Towser Jones. *Writing History: A Guide for Students*.