

# WRITING HISTORY ASSIGNMENTS

## *History Department Guidelines* *University of Wisconsin Oshkosh*

Compiled by:

[Franca Barricelli](#)  
[Michelle Mouton](#)  
[Kim Rivers](#)

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# PART I: KINDS OF HISTORY ASSIGNMENTS

## I. BOOK REVIEWS

The purpose of a book review is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a particular book. It is different from a book report, which simply summarizes the content of a book. In a book review, you *also* report on the content of the book, *in addition to* explaining to your readers *what* you found to be its most valuable contributions or shortcomings. (Preferably you can do this without resorting to the first person ["I"]). Since readers assume that as a reviewer you are expressing your own opinions, it is unnecessary to preface your statements with "I think," or "in my opinion..."

To understand your own reaction to a history book, you must first read it carefully and critically. As a critical reader, you should ask questions of the book and note your reactions to it as you read. Your book review should then discuss those questions and reactions.

A standard structure for a book review includes:

- relating the author's main point – or thesis – at the beginning.
- describing the author's viewpoint and purpose for writing the book, noting any aspects of the author's background that are important for understanding his or her perspective.
- noting the most important evidence the author presents to support his or her thesis and evaluating its persuasiveness.
- concluding with a final evaluation of the book, possibly discussing who would find this book useful and why.

Maintain the same attention to structure and grammar that you would in any history paper – i.e. your review must have an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. Your introduction should discuss your thesis, and the conclusion should summarize your argument. The body should develop your thoughts and support your thesis with specific examples from the text.

### **BOOK REVIEW DOs**

#### **Tell the reader which book you are reviewing**

Place the complete publication data at the top of the review: author, title, edition (if applicable), place of publication, publisher, date of publication.

#### **Determine the thesis of the book**

What is the major thesis, or argument, the book makes?

What is the author trying to prove?

Are there any more "narrow" sub-arguments that support the overall thesis?

#### **Determine the book's evidence**

What evidence does the author use?

On what sources and secondary literature is the book based? How are they used?

### **Analyze the book critically**

What are its strengths and weaknesses?

What was good about it?

Be fair to the book and its author(s), but be honest to yourself as well. If you feel that the book is biased, say so and why. The reader of the review wants to know whether the book is worth reading!

### **Read Book reviews before you write your own**

Consult published book reviews in academic journals, such as the *American Historical Review* or the *Journal of Modern History*. Other sources for book reviews are the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The New York Times* and *The New York Review of Books*.

### **Think about history and politics**

History writing can be, and has been, highly political and partisan. In many cases, a history book has “an axe to grind.” Can you detect one in the book you are reviewing?

### **Use direct quotations sparingly**

One or two quotations should suffice to emphasize a particular point, or argument you are making in your review

### **Familiarize yourself with the University’s plagiarism policies**

Ask your professor if you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism.

### **Use either footnotes or endnotes**

See Part III: “Guide to Writing Footnotes and Bibliographies” below, or consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* if you are in doubt about the format of footnotes or endnotes.

### **Revise your review**

Leave your review aside for a day, and then get back to it and read it with a fresh eye. Aim for clarity and concision as you make your first revisions. No history paper – whether a book review, a short essay, or a research paper – is “finished” after the first draft!

### **Proofread your final draft**

Do not trust the spell check to do it for you. There is nothing like the critical and attentive human eye and intellect in a computer.

### **BOOK REVIEW DO NOTs**

#### **Do not merely summarize the book**

Chapter by chapter summary is not a book review; it is a summary of a book.

**Do not use the passive voice**

The reader wants to hear your opinion about the book.

**Do not neglect punctuation**

When in doubt, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or an English grammar book for proper punctuation.

**Do not overuse such phrases as**

“I thought it was interesting,” “In my opinion”, “The author says/argues....”.

**Do not use “this” to refer to the previous paragraph, sentence or word.**

Always avoid using “this” without the “thing” it modifies.

**Do not write wordy or long sentences**

Would you like to read such sentences?

## **HISTORICAL PAPERS**

The purpose of history papers is for you to interpret sources and arrive at a conclusion about the significance of your subject. It is not merely a description of “what happened”; rather, history papers must take the form of an argument in support of a thesis explaining how and why something happened and why it is important.

Every history paper, whether long or short, must be a work of persuasive writing. Based on your sources, you must provide a thesis statement at the beginning of your paper that reflects what you have concluded about your topic after a critical analysis of your materials (see **FOCUS ON SOURCES** below). The thesis statement is always an arguable or debatable point, so that your history paper becomes your own argument in favor of a particular historical explanation. Instead of merely summarizing material, you persuade your reader with enough evidence to convince him or her that your thesis is correct.

The body of your paper must support your thesis, paragraph by paragraph, by presenting evidence from your sources. You should also respond to counter evidence (information that seems to contradict or weaken your thesis) to persuade your reader that your original position is the more compelling argument.

**SHORT ESSAYS**

As their name implies, short essays are relatively brief assignments for papers roughly 4 to 7 pages in length. The topic and texts for short essays are usually assigned by your professor and can be framed in a number of different ways. You might be asked, for example, to analyze a source or group of sources and respond to a specific question about them. Or you might be asked to compare the views of two modern historians on a given problem or document. Whatever form your short essay assignment takes, it will require the same type of historical analysis.

To begin with, you should confront your sources directly, without being unduly influenced by the opinions of others. The purpose of writing history papers is for you to work with original

materials and consider them critically in light of further reading. You will want to read the source more than once, making notes whenever you find it appropriate in order to illustrate the aspect or aspects you will discuss in the essay. In substantiating your argument, you should be able to include an illustration, quotation, or other direct reference to the source under examination to prove every assertion you make. Your conclusions should be based on *your own* evaluation of your evidence. In this way, you refrain from turning your paper into a page-by-page commentary or paraphrase of your sources. Under no circumstances should it be a summary of another historian's work. Rather, your paper should be a logical and coherent explanation of your response to the assigned essay on the basis of your reading, with illustrations drawn from your sources for evidence.

To complete such an assignment successfully, you must

1. **Step One: Understand the assignment.** Make sure you read the assignment carefully and limit yourself to the topic provided by your professor. Believe it or not, failure to write about the topic that has actually been assigned is one of the most common problems with short history essays! If the assignment asks you to compare two views on a particular document, you must understand both the similarities *and* the differences of the two views and give approximately equal weight to each of them in your discussion. If the assignment asks you questions about a specific text, you must explore the issues raised by the question and present your analysis based on a close, critical reading.
2. **Step Two: Consider the significance of the material.** It is not enough to summarize the content of the texts (documents or books) you have read. Your essay must consider the significance of the issue you are examining. In a compare/contrast essay, your professor will expect that you examine not only the ways the two points of view are similar and different but the *meaning* of those similarities and differences. In writing the essay, you would be expected to discuss why a given similarity, or a difference, is important. You should also think about the historical context of your sources, using it as a way to explore the broader historical issues underlying the assignment.
3. **Step Three: Construct an argument in support of a thesis.** Like any history paper, a short essay must have a thesis that is supported by evidence presented in the body of the paper. Your thesis reflects what you have concluded about the issue after careful reflection on the assignment and any reading you have done for it. After stating it clearly in the introductory paragraph, you must be able to support your thesis with evidence taken from the texts under examination in the body of your essay.
4. **Step Four: Document your paper.** Even short essays require that you cite and document the sources of your information. (See Part III: Guide to Writing Footnotes and Bibliographies, below)

## RESEARCH PAPERS

The purpose of a research paper is to allow students to practice the craft of history writing at a more sophisticated level than is possible in other history assignments. Like shorter history papers, a research paper takes the form of argument supported by evidence. Unlike other assignments, however, a research paper requires that you find material about your topic outside of the course's assigned readings.

Choose a topic that can actually be researched by an undergraduate whose main reading language is English. You can start with a fairly broad area, but you will need to focus your topic as your research progresses.

#### How do I locate books that pertain to my subject?

1. **Read what your textbook** and other course books have to say about the topic. Your textbook can lay out the broad outlines of the material so you will have a better idea of terms to use when searching through databases.

**Locate general texts** about the period or subject you are studying and check those texts' footnotes or bibliography. Look also at bibliographical essays at the end of books or at the end of chapters to the course's textbooks. Remember that your textbook may have the most useful bibliographies you can find.

2. Go to the library to consult **scholarly encyclopedias and dictionaries**. World Book, Colliers, Encyclopedia Britannica and the like are **not** appropriate sources. Instead consult reference books written by specialists in the field. The entries that you find in these sources can expand on the general knowledge you have already learned from your course books. They can also give you some initial bibliography and point you toward related topics. Here are some examples for the Middle Ages:

*The Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (13 volumes) Ref. D 114 .D5 1982

*The Cambridge Medieval History* (8 volumes) Ref D 117.C32

*The New Cambridge Medieval History* (Ref)

*The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Ref)

*The Encyclopedia of Islam* (ref)

*The Oxford Dictionary of the Catholic Church* (ref)

*The Encyclopedia Judaica* (ref)

3. **Examine Polk Library's Online Catalog.** (<http://polkweb.uwosh.edu/>) Use either a keyword or subject search for your topic. If you have little luck with Polk's collections, expand your search to UW Madison's library catalog. (<http://madcat.library.wisc.edu/>) Use WorldCat (<http://www.uwosh.edu/library/web.html> then select WorldCat from list at the left) to expand your search further. Remember: Polk's collection is good, but it is limited. Other, larger libraries may contain books that are relevant to your topic. Interlibrary loan allows you to order books from virtually any library in the United States. (The interlibrary loan order form is available on-line at the Polk Library website.)

4. Remember always to **look through the bibliographies** of all the books and articles that you find. This can be the very best way to find sources.

5. **Ask your instructor for sources.** Most instructors are quite willing to assist your search for good books.

#### Where do I find primary sources?

Remember, primary sources are those original sources that date from the period you are studying: songs, movies, diaries, interviews, letters of correspondence, written works, etc. Often, you can find primary sources in the same ways that you find secondary sources.

- a. Look first in the bibliographies of course books and general texts on your subject. Usually the bibliographies will contain a separate section listing primary sources.
- b. Remember, too, that primary sources often come in collections of sources. i.e. a book edited by a modern historian containing extracts or whole sources from the period under consideration.
- c. Check the library catalogue and other databases for your topic plus the word “sources.” This search strategy will often turn up primary source collections.
- d. Despite the warning about using the internet for research below, it is possible to find primary sources on the web. Some useful examples include:

Internet Ancient History Sourcebook <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html>

Internet Medieval Sourcebook <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html>

Internet Modern History Sourcebook <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html>

Eurodocs <http://library.byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs/>

The Avalon Project <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/medmenu.htm>

- e. Ask you instructor for guidance.

May I use information from the web as primary and secondary sources?

Many professors discourage the use of the web for information about historical subjects. The internet is a great tool for research, but it is also a storehouse of misinformation. As a tool, the internet can help you locate information. Unfortunately, relying on the web *as a source of information* carries hazards. Generally speaking, it is safest to consult published journals and books—particularly journals and books published by prestigious organizations or publishers. In sum, then: Determining whether a source available over the internet is reliable or not is tricky. Err on the careful side and don’t hesitate to consult the instructor for advice. [But see notice above on primary source collections on the Internet]

Where can I find recently-written journal, magazine, and newspaper articles about my topic?

To find both journal/periodical articles and books, you should make use of on-line indices and some book indices.

For Periodicals alone, you can consult these paper volumes located on the index tables in the reference room.

*International Index to Periodicals 1907-1965*  
*Social Science and Humanities Index 1965-1973*  
*Humanities Index*

For items published after 1973, see the on-line versions of these last two indices listed under Wilson Journal Indexes on the library's web page.

See Polk Library's web page (<http://www.uwosh.edu/library/web.html>) for indexed articles. Hit "articles & more by subject." Good online indexes include:

Ebsco Academic Elite  
Wilson Journal Indexes  
Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe  
First Search

#### What if I cannot find the journal/magazine/newspaper I need?

1. Try getting the article from the full-text databases we have available online. Hit "articles & more by subject." Choose "Ebsco Online articles." To see which full-text journals are available, hit "Journals with some Full Text online!"
2. Order it through interlibrary loan (the order form is available on-line at the Polk Library website (<http://www.uwosh.edu/library/ill.html>)).

#### Where do I find old journal/magazine/newspaper articles?

1. For old magazine and journal articles, there is really only one place to go, the venerable *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* (Call no: Reference-Index Tables, 1st floor South A13 .R48.) These volumes are located in the reference section of Polk Library. Consult the volume pertaining to the period(s) you are interested in, then look up your subject. You will there find references to articles published in various magazines.
2. There is only one national newspaper that is well indexed, *The New York Times*. Consult the index for the relevant year, just as you would for the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature*.

#### Where do I turn for help at the library?

Ask a reference librarian (and tell them I sent you.) Reference librarians are there to help you, and they all enjoy working with students who are engaged in research.

## **HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS**

The purpose of a historiographical essay is for you to consider how different historians approach the same historical issues. Even when consulting the same body of information, historians do not necessarily reach the same the same conclusions. They are influenced by their personal backgrounds, by the times in which they live, and by their approaches to history, i.e. economic, intellectual, military, political, feminist, etc. The study of how historians write history is called historiography, and this assignment will give you some practice in the area.

Whatever the exact parameters of your assignment, your task is to compare the authors' views of the works chosen, noting the points on which they agree and disagree.

To complete such an assignment successfully, you need to choose your authors carefully. Follow these instructions:

1. **Step One:** Define your final topic. Once you have compiled your bibliography and done some reading, you should have a better sense of your final topic. It will be easier to write this paper if you set up your topic as a question, such as "Did the Venetians Deliberately Send the Fourth Crusade to Constantinople?"
2. **Step Two:** Then you should choose two or three of the secondary sources on your bibliography (or whatever the number required by your instructor). Select items that disagree with one another, at least in part. Works that were written some years apart in time often have differing viewpoints. For instance, many of the conclusions reached by Steven Runciman in *A History of the Crusades* have been modified by later historians.
3. **Step Three:** Read the works with a view to analyzing the authors' arguments and methodologies. It is not enough merely to recite the contents of the article. You must focus on why the author has written the article, what the peculiarities of his/her arguments are, what sources the author uses, etc. Give some thought to this part of the assignment and consult with the instructor if you are uncertain of how to proceed.

Your analysis should consider these three elements:

- a) **Understanding.** In this assignment, your most important task is to understand the two (or more) authors and explain their central ideas and arguments to the reader. This should constitute the bulk of your paper. You should also comment on the authors' approaches: are they interested most in political, economic, social, or intellectual questions? What type of sources do they use? In short, what are the authors' methodologies, in as far as you can determine them? You should also consider each author's own cultural values and assumptions. Where these are apparent, they should be brought to the reader's attention and related to the author's approach to the subject. *Contemporary Authors* is a good source of information on many authors' backgrounds. [Available in the database section of Polk Library's website.]
- b) **Context.** Historians do not write in a vacuum; their ideas always have some relationship to those of other historians. Pay particular attention to prefaces and introductions, which generally offer reasons for writing the article, and to passages which mention opposing views. Try to relate your authors' views to the general historiographical context of the subject, i.e. to the other books written on the topic.
- c) **Criticism.** Although you may not feel qualified to criticize your historians, do not hesitate to point out problems or inconsistencies where you see them to exist. Remember that the act of putting an author's ideas into historiographical context is also criticism.

4. **Step Four:** Compare the authors' ideas and construct an outline. Be sure that you indicate what the overall question is that each of your historians is trying to answer. Two pitfalls of historiographical writing should be avoided at all costs: first, do not write a narrative history of the events discussed in the articles; and second, do not write your own interpretation of events based on the articles. However, you should declare your opinion on the topic in the conclusion of the paper. Keep the focus of the essay on the articles themselves. There is no 'right' answer to any of these essays. However, that does not mean that one answer is as good as another. The best

essay will be one that presents a clear thesis that is argued in a logical manner and supported by appropriate references to the texts.

5. **Step Five:** Write the essay. You may consult other works for the essay, including other items on your bibliography. Some terms or people may be unfamiliar to you, in which case, the textbook or a scholarly dictionary or encyclopedia might be useful to you. Should you use other works, you must acknowledge their use in a footnote or endnote. [See Footnote section below]

6. **Step Six:** Proofread the essay and compose a second draft.

You should include a bibliography of all of the sources that you have used in the paper at the end of the assignment.

## PART II: WRITING STYLE

History is a written discipline. In order to learn it, we read. In order to express what we know about it, we write. Writing allows us to make our assertions clearly and to persuade our readers that our interpretation of the past is convincing.

Effective writing requires that one observe the common conventions of grammar: attention to structure, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and so on. If one were to use a sports analogy, one might assert that writing is like baseball – there are specific rules by which to play, and if the rules are broken, the game is compromised. Similarly, writing has rules for clarity of expression, and if writers disregard them, they compromise the meaning they want their work to communicate.

When writing a paper, follow these basic steps – and *never* hand it in without proofreading it carefully:

1. Write an outline. This will prevent you from wandering aimlessly once you begin writing the text.
2. Develop a thesis statement. Your thesis is a clear point of view (one sentence) that you want to demonstrate to the reader. A strong thesis statement is key to a well-structured paper. Avoid over-generalized theses like: “things changed from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries” or “the peasantry were always important in Europe.” Be specific, interesting, and clear. Remember: your thesis is the idea that you want your reader to learn from your paper. It is what the paper teaches your reader and what all the evidence/information you present in your paper should prove.
3. Find evidence in the primary sources, articles or books you are using that will support your thesis. An analytic historical essay should use primary sources or other books as evidence in the bulk of the paper. Textbooks should be used only to fill in historical detail or background where appropriate. They are never the main source of your analysis.

Use specific examples from the texts to support your points. You may use short quotes or describe the examples you are using. If you use a quote, be sure to explain to the reader why the quote illustrates your point.

4. Write a conclusion. Most student papers end with a simple summary of the paper. A genuine conclusion pushes the paper further toward a final, broad analytical point. Tell your reader something they did not know based on the materials you have collected and analyzed.

### THESIS

Some of the keys to a good thesis are:

1. It will take some sort of stand.
2. It will justify discussion.
3. It will express one main idea.
4. It will be specific.

## STRUCTURE

The classic structure for a student essay is:

### I. Introductory Paragraph

- A. Context
- B. Problem or Question
- C. Thesis Statement

### II. Informational Paragraphs

### III. Conclusion

## MECHANICS

1. Use the paragraph as the main unit of composition. Just as the structure of your essay is important, so is the structure of each paragraph. Each paragraph should express a clear idea that leads to the next paragraph. This means that each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence, indicating how the paragraph fits into your larger thesis. Follow this topic sentence with about 3-5 sentences that offer evidence to support your topic sentence. If you have a paragraph that goes on for much more than half a page (eight sentences), you probably have too many different ideas in one paragraph. Similarly, a paragraph of only one or two sentences is an undeveloped thought that needs support. Finally, end the paragraph with a sentence that sums it up and links to the next paragraph.

2. Make your transitions clear. Papers that shift abruptly from one thought to the next are usually using 'implied transitions'. The reader shouldn't have to read the writer's mind and fill in the blanks; state clearly the links that you are making between ideas. The use of the words 'thus,' 'therefore,' or 'however,' to start a paragraph is usually a sign that the writer hasn't really thought up a transition, and is trying to pull the wool over the reader's eyes.

## STYLE

Some types of writing are less effective than others. In general, in a student essay you should **avoid**:

### 1. Use of the passive voice

Instead of saying "Many laws **were passed** by the Hitler," write "**Hitler passed** many laws."

### 2. Use of the First-person ("I")

Instead of saying "I think that the Second World War was very destructive," write "The Second World War was very destructive."

### 3. Use of Second-person ("you")

Instead of saying "During the Nazi regime, you had to be careful with whom you shared your political views," write "During the Nazi regimes, Germans had to be careful with whom they shared their political views."

### 4. Present tense

Instead of saying "Hitler **is** a very good leader," write "Hitler **was** a very good leader."

### 5. Unsubstantiated value judgments

Peasants are always rebellious, so their rebellion after Luther's Reformation in 1525 was no exception.

6. Use of fluff and fillers

7. Generalizations

8. Be aware of your own judgments.

“The middle ages was an age of faith.”

9. Statements of the obvious, platitudes and cliches

10. Avoid questions.

In some kinds of writing, rhetorical questions can be very useful. In general in historical writing it is better to make a statement than to ask a question.

11. Conclusions that bring things up to the present

“Life for women was harder in the nineteenth century than it is today.”

There are a number of writing manuals geared specifically to history students that you may consult in addition to this web page. Among the recommended are:

J. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (Bedford/St. Martin's)

M. Hellstern, G. Scott, and S. Garrison, *The History Student Writer's Manual* (Prentice Hall)

R. Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing About History* (Harper Collins)

M. L. Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History* (Bedford)

W. K. Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (Oxford)

If you have specific questions about the rules of grammar, a few of the most common general writing guides include:

*The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago)

D. Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual* (Bedford Books)

D. Hacker, *Rules for Writers* (Bedford Books)

D. Rodrigues and M. Tuman, *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket Guide* ((W.W. Norton)

W. Strunk and E. B. White, *Elements of Style* (MacMillan)

## **FOCUS ON SOURCES**

### **A. PRIMARY SOURCES:**

Primary sources are documents that originate in the period you are studying.

If you are studying the American Revolution, the *Declaration of Independence* is an important primary source. If you are studying nineteenth-century family life, the diaries or letters of family members can provide first-hand information about people's thoughts, feelings, and daily rituals. Works of literature can be used as primary sources, as can tax records, peace treaties, law codes, birth and death certificates, political or religious treatises, photographs, songs, political speeches, pamphlets, newspaper articles – anything that was written at the time you are studying.

In general, when assessing primary sources, whether textual or visual, you should always ask the following questions of them:

- who is the author?
- when was the source composed?
- why did the author write it?
- who was the intended audience?
- what is the historical context in which the source was written and read?

A more sophisticated reading of the source will also include an assessment of any unspoken assumptions in it. Can you detect any implicit biases in the source?

Primary sources form the basic building blocks of historical writing. Because the discipline of history is based on interpretation, however, historians do not take the evidence provided by primary sources at face value. Different historians often arrive at very different conclusions about the meaning of the same source. In her guide to historical writing, M. L. Rampolla warns students against the common tendency to assume primary sources are “true” because they were written by eyewitnesses. She reminds us, as any police investigator could tell you, that eyewitnesses sometimes see the same things and remember them in different ways. Like good detectives, you should evaluate the evidence by approaching your sources analytically and critically.

#### **B. SECONDARY SOURCES:**

Secondary sources are “history books” or “history articles” – that is, published works containing modern historians’ interpretations of primary sources often centuries after those sources were written.

As with primary sources, secondary sources must be read critically and analytically to determine the historian’s particular point of view. This means that you should approach your secondary sources with the same questions you asked of your primary sources:

- who is the author?
- why did he or she write the book or article?
- who was the intended audience?

In addition to these questions, however, you have to identify the point the historian is making in writing the book or article. What is his or her argument? You can generally find the thesis at the beginning of the text. Once you have identified the thesis, you should be prepared to address the following:

- with what primary sources does the author support his or her thesis?
- what unspoken assumptions does the author make in arguing his or her point?
- are there detectable biases in his or her approach?

Pay special attention to *when* the source was published and consider the historical context of its publication. An article reviewing U.S. involvement in Russia in 2000 – after the end of the Cold War – may contain very different ideas from a review published in 1957, at the height of the conflict. At the same time, be on critical alert: you should not assume that newer interpretations are always better. Your analysis will depend on an informed reading of your subject.

Writing a history paper is always a balancing act between primary sources, secondary sources, and a discussion of the relation between the two. First you must examine your primary source material critically. Only then should you read *around* your subject in the secondary material by other historians. This way your conclusions will be based on *your own* evaluation of both your primary and secondary evidence.

# **PART III: GUIDE TO WRITING FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES**

When history students work on assignments for their classes, they usually have to consult books, articles, and other materials. Eventually, they will write papers about their research and draw on the material they encountered in these resources.

When any writer quotes directly from another work or paraphrases, that is, puts ideas from another author into his/her own words, the writer must cite that source. Such citations acknowledge that an idea was first put forth by someone else, and they direct interested readers to the place where more information about the topic may be found.

Learning how to compose citations is thus an important part of the writing process and should not be neglected. Students also commonly add to their papers a list of the resources that they have consulted, i.e. a bibliography. This guide provides instructions for creating both citations and bibliographies.

## **CITATIONS/FOOTNOTES**

History students should put their citations in footnote or endnote form (both are equally correct) and follow the guidelines set out in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Some other disciplines employ parenthetical references to indicate dependence on source material, but historians prefer footnotes and endnotes. Unfortunately, many students find the thought of writing footnotes or endnotes daunting and simply do not include them in their papers. Such students usually receive lower marks on their essays. In order to teach our students how to avoid that fate, the UWO History Department has drawn up this style sheet.

Here is a step-by-step guide to writing footnotes and endnotes. It is divided into two parts:

1. Part One explains how to create a footnote or endnote within a paper. The directions assume that most students will at least type up their papers on a word processor, such as Microsoft Word, and thus explains how to create footnotes within that program. [Students who use WordPerfect will find the directions useful as well].
2. Part Two explains the correct format in which to write up the citation once the student has learned how to create a footnote.

### **Part One: How to Create a Footnote or Endnote within Microsoft Word**

Footnotes and endnotes are notes added to the main body of a paper, in which the author directs readers to outside sources or adds extra comments of his or her own. Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page to which they refer, while endnotes are placed at the end of the paper. [If your professor expresses no preference, it is usually better to use footnotes, as they are easier for the reader to consult].

A superscript number at the end of the sentence signals the reader to look for a footnote or endnote. The same number is placed at the foot of the page for a footnote or at the end of the paper for an endnote. Footnotes or endnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper, starting from "1." Each citation requires a new footnote or endnote; under no circumstances should a student "reuse" footnotes. Creating a footnote is quite simple on a word processor.

When you reach a spot in the main text of your paper that requires a footnote, follow these directions:

1. Go to the Insert Menu in Microsoft Word, and click on “Footnote.” A dialogue box will appear: choose “Footnote,” choose “AutoNumber,” and hit “OK.”
2. The cursor will then appear within the footnote at the bottom of the page. Microsoft Word will automatically add a superscript number both to the main body of the text and to the note itself. *There is no need for you to add any numbering of your own.*
3. Type in the citation according to the directions in Part II.
4. Move the cursor back to the main body of the text and continue typing. You are finished. Follow the same directions for any subsequent footnotes.

## Part Two: How to Format a Footnote or Endnote According to *Chicago Style*

Once you have learned how to create a footnote within Microsoft Word, it is necessary to know what to write. A citation to an outside source must include specific information in a certain order; history students are not free to create their own style! Follow these directions for each kind of source that you may use.

Each example explains how to set up the first reference to a work. It is not necessary to repeat all of the information in each reference. Use a shortened version of the citation for the second and subsequent references to a source.

### **Books**

Books are probably the most common sources used by history students in their papers. Citations should include the author’s name (**first** name first), the title of the book (underlined or in *italics*; use the same system throughout the paper), publishing information (in parentheses), and the pages consulted, all separated by **commas**.

Here are a few examples of books by a single author:

<sup>1</sup>Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45.

Second reference:

<sup>2</sup>Baxandall, 34.

<sup>4</sup>M. T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 45-46.

If you have cited more than one work by the same author, include a short title in the second reference:

<sup>3</sup>Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 34.

<sup>5</sup>Clanchy, *Abelard*, 67.

Here are some examples of books by more than one author:

<sup>1</sup>Lina Bolzoni and Pietro Corsi, *The Culture of Memory* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1992), 45.

<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Lerner *et al.*, *Western Civilizations: Their History and Culture*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 1: 87-88.

[Here “1” stands for the volume number and “88-89” stands for the page numbers cited.]

Second reference:

<sup>2</sup>Lerner, 1:76.

or

<sup>2</sup>Lerner, *Western Civilizations*, 1:76.

<sup>2</sup>Bolzoni, *The Culture of Memory*, 78.

### Book in a Series

<sup>2</sup>Marianne G. Briscoe and Barbara H. Jage, *Artes Praedicandi and Artes Orandi, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 61* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 45.

(Here, *Artes Praedicandi* is the name of the book, and *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 61* represents the name of the series and the book’s number in that series).

<sup>4</sup>Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, *The Fathers of the Church, 18* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 56.

### **Journal Articles**

<sup>3</sup>Peter Brown, “Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change,” *Daedalus* 104, no. 2 (1975): 133-151.

[Here “104” is the volume number, “no. 2” is the issue number, and 133-151 are the page numbers.]

Second reference:

<sup>4</sup>Brown, “Society and the Supernatural,” 136.

or

<sup>4</sup>Brown, 136.

### **Items in an anthology**

**Primary sources** are often included in collections of many sources. They should be cited as in the examples below:

<sup>1</sup>Fulcher of Chartres, “The First Crusade,” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: Readings in the History of Western Christianity*, ed. Joel F. Harrington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 138-44.

[Here Fulcher of Chartres is the author of the source, “The First Crusade” is the title of the primary source,” and “A Cloud of Witnesses” is the title of the book in which the primary source was found.]

<sup>2</sup>John Pecham, “The Ignorance of Pastors,” in *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England*, edited by John Shinnors and William J. Dohar (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 130.

## Internet Sites

Basic citation components and punctuation

Author's Last Name, First Name, [author's internet address, if available] "Title of Work" or "title line of message," In "Title of Complete Work" or title of list/site as appropriate, [internet address] Date, if available.

### Article by a modern historian on a Web Site

<sup>1</sup> Peter Limb, “Relationships between Labour & African Nationalist/Liberation Movements in Southern Africa,” [[http://neal.ctstateu.edu/history/world\\_history/archives/limb\\_html](http://neal.ctstateu.edu/history/world_history/archives/limb_html)], May 1992.

### Primary Source on a Web Site

<sup>2</sup>Vasco da Gama, “Round Africa to India, 1497\_1498 CE,” in “Modern History Sourcebook,” [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.html>], 6 September 2002.

<sup>3</sup>Salvian. “Romans and Barbarians, c. 440,” in “Medieval Sourcebook,” [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/salvian1.html>], 6 September 2002.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

### Basic Directions

1. Primary and secondary sources should be listed in separate sections. Journal articles and encyclopaedia articles should be listed with secondary sources (do **not** list each genre separately).
2. Entries are placed in alphabetical order under each author’s **last name**. Because ancient and medieval authors usually do not have a “last name,” you should generally list them under their first name.
3. Each entry should be single-spaced within the entry. It should be separated from the next entry by 1 blank line. Information within in each citation is separated by **periods**.
4. The first line of each entry should begin at the left margin. Each subsequent line should be indented 5 spaces from the left margin. [This arrangement is called a “hanging indent.” Consult the help section in your processor for directions on hanging indents.]
5. When listing more than one item by the same author, it is not necessary to write the author’s name twice so long as the author’s name has been printed in exactly the same way for each work

(which is not always the case). For each subsequent reference in the bibliography, type five dashes and a period to begin the entry. See the example below.

Carruthers, Mary. *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

----- "Reading with Attitude, Remembering the Book." In *The Book and the Body*, edited by Dolores Warwick Frese and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 1-33. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

----- *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

## Examples

Here are examples of the major kinds of works typically included in undergraduate history assignment.

### Books

Books by modern authors are probably the most common sources used by history students in their papers. Citations should include the author's name (**last name first**), the title of the book (underlined or in *italics*), and the publishing information, all separated by periods. Here are a few examples of books:

#### Book by a single author:

Aston, Margaret. *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*. London: The Hambledon Press, 1984.

Clanchy, M. T. *Abelard: A Medieval Life*. Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997.

Wenzel, Siegfried. *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and its Middle English Poems*. Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1978.

#### Book by more than one author:

Briscoe, Marianne G. and Barbara H. Jage. *Artes Praedicandi and Artes Orandi, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 61*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1992.

**NB:** Note that the first author's name should begin with the last name first, while the second author's name is listed with the first name first.

#### Book edited by one or more editors:

Alexander, J. J. G., and M.T. Gibson, eds. *Medieval Language and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976.

Chance, Jane, ed. *The Mythographic Art: Classical Fable and the Rise of the Vernacular in Early France and England*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1990.

#### Translated Books:

### **By a modern author:**

Rossi, Paolo. *Logic and the Art of Memory*. Translated by Stephen Clucas. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

### **Primary sources:**

Augustine. *The Trinity*. Translated by Stephen McKenna, C.S.S.R., *The Fathers of the Church*, 18. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963.

Stahl, William Harris, Richard Johnson, and E. L. Burge, trans. *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*. 2 vols. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1971.

Stump, Eleonore, trans. *Boethius's De topicis differentiis*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978.

### **Item in an Anthology**

**Primary sources** are often included in collections of many sources. They should be cited as in the examples below:

Fulcher of Chartres. "The First Crusade." In *A Cloud of Witnesses: Readings in the History of Western Christianity*, 138-44. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Pecham, John. "The Ignorance of Pastors." In *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England*, edited by John Shinnars and William J. Dohar, 127-32. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998.

A similar method should be used for **essays and articles** collected into one book.

Areford, David S. "The Passion Measured: A Late-Medieval Diagram of the Body of Christ." In *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture*, edited by A. A. MacDonald et al., 211-38. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998.

Aston, Margaret. "Devotional Literacy." In *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*, 101-133. London: The Hambledon Press, 1984.

### **Journal Articles**

When citing a journal article in a bibliography, follow the examples below:

Bossy, J. "The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 25 (1975): 21-38.

Brown, Peter. "Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change." *Daedalus* 104, no. 2 (1975): 133-151. [Here "104" is the volume number, "no. 2" is the issue number. It is also correct to list the month of publication with the year; in this case, do not add the issue number]

DeVries, Kelly. "The Lack of a Western European Military Response to the Ottoman Invasions of Eastern Europe." *Journal of Military History* 63, no. 3 (1999): 539-559.

Mango, Andrew. "Turkey and the Enlargement of the European mind." *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 2 (1998): 171-192. or 34 (April 1998): 171-192. or 34 (1998): 171-192.

### **Sources on Internet sites**

#### Basic citation components and punctuation

Author's Last Name, First Name. [author's internet address, if available]. "Title of Work" or "title line of message." In "Title of Complete Work" or title of list/site as appropriate. [internet address]. Date, if available.

Vasco da Gama. "Round Africa to India, 1497\_1498 CE." In "Modern History Sourcebook."  
[\[http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.html\]](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.html). 6 September 2002.

Salvian. "Romans and Barbarians, c. 440." In "Medieval Sourcebook."  
[\[http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/salvian1.html\]](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/salvian1.html). 6 September 2002.