# UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

# The History Student's Handbook

## A Short Guide to Writing History Essays

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

History is a discipline based on synthesis, interpretation, debate, and analysis. 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 different from as an argument that is merely asserted, which, though often written using confident language, lacks evidence and analysis. 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.

**Historical Method**

Historians usually use the *inductive* rather than the *deductive* method when writing essays. The inductive method involves moving from the specific (a focused topic and research question) to the general, using fact- and interpretation-based analysis of discrete historical evidence to arrive at conclusions that reflect on phenomena beyond the topic under investigation. The deductive method, by contrast, involves moving from the general (a hypothesis, theory, or informed assumption) to the specific and arriving at conclusions by testing the validity of the initial assumption. Although certain historians employ the deductive method (or a "top down" approach), most employ the inductive method (or a "bottom up" approach) to allow for an open-ended inquiry into their topic without preexisting assumptions.

**Finding a Topic**

Sometimes your instructor will assign a specific topic for investigation and provide the research materials necessary to complete the paper. More commonly, you will select your own subject and then search for materials. The topic should be one that is interesting to you. A topic that engages your interest will be more enjoyable to research and write about, result in more valuable findings, and 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 focused and narrow?* In most undergraduate history essays, the topic must be highly focused. A topic that is too broad usually results in essays that are summaries rather than argument and analysis. To some extent, this will depend on the length of the

essay. In short essays of only five or seven pages, the topic will normally be a discrete historical event that unfolded over the course of a short period of time. In longer essays, multiple events and a longer time period may be possible.

*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 originality and probative 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. The topic should contribute to existing scholarship and should not be excessively petty.

*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 graders 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 these criteria.

## Formulating Research Questions

After choosing your topic, develop one or two questions that you must answer to contribute 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, read them more effectively, and avoid the tendency merely to narrate facts and events with no specific purpose in mind.

It is important that your research questions are answered using proper historical research techniques. They should also reflect the time period and subject matter being studied, and avoid anachronism, modern prejudice, moral judgement, and bias. For example, a question such as "How could people believe in witchcraft in early modern Europe?" is not appropriate because it is not empathetic to the time period, and a question such as "What would have happened if Adolf Hitler won World War II?" is not appropriate, because it is counter-factual, or ahistorical.

Research questions should be open-ended (rather than having simple yes-no answers) and have the potential to offer complex answers that will advance research and knowledge. Thus, avoid questions such as "How many people died during the Vietnam War?" or "When did Marco Polo travel to China?," which are easily answered and will not lead to valuable conclusions. Beginning research questions with phrases such as "To what extent," "How did," "Why did," or "In what ways," are helpful ways to produce open-ended, empathetic questions. Because history uses an inductive

rather than a deductive method, avoid questions are that framed as hypotheses subject to testing.

**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 and can be researched using tertiary sources.

Primary sources are documents or artifacts written or created during the time period 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 they come from a reliable institution.

**Examples of Primary Sources**
Diaries and journals
Newspapers and magazines
Census data and statistics
Church records (parish registers)
Vital records (birth, marriage, and death certificates)
Fictional literature (poetry, novels, and plays)
Non-fictional literature (scholarly treatises, propaganda, conduct books)
Official government 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 on 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
Dissertations are the result of masters- and doctoral-level research projects
Book reviews are historians' critiques of monographs and collections

Tertiary sources summarize, consolidate, or identify primary and secondary sources but do not offer original testimony or conclusions. They can help with locating materials on your topic quickly and efficiently.

**Examples of Tertiary Sources**
Tables of contents, timelines, and indexes
Concordances (lists of words used in bodies of work)
Databases (often located through library websites)
Encyclopedia entries
Footnotes and bibliographies (useful for citation-mining to find relevant sources)

## 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 been superseded by later scholarship)
Books or journals published by university presses or other academic presses
Works with extensive notes and/or bibliographies
Internet sources from reliable institutions

Students must be cautious when seeking information on the internet. Be wary of materials from interest groups, certain political parties or individuals, fringe news outlets, and social media. Just because the opinions expressed on these sites are published, this does not make them true or reliable. Official government and major news outlets may be reliable, but you should verify all information gathered from these sites. Never reference *Wikipedia*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, or similar online sources unless this is explicitly allowed in the assignment. When in doubt, ask your instructor about using internet sources.

## Interrogating Sources

In addition to evaluating the overall quality and value of a source, it is also necessary to interrogate sources, or ask a series of questions about them. Reading historical sources presents challenges for historians because they are not always (or even usually) objective accounts of the past. To use the source effectively and account for its limitations, it is necessary to interrogate each source by asking and answering a series of questions. As a starting point, for each source ask the "five W's":

**Who** wrote the source?
**When** was the source created?
**Why** was the source created?
**Where** was the source created?
**What** does the source reveal about historical events?

In some cases, it might not be possible to answer each of these questions. For example, some sources are written anonymously, and the author remains unknown. In the case of manuscripts and similar documents, it can be difficult to date the sources precisely, or to know where they were produced. For most sources, deeper levels of interrogation are necessary to make the most effective use of the source and ensure that your interpretation of it is not limited by simply accepting the source at face value.

**Questions for Primary Sources**

*Is the source authentic?* Is the source what it purports to be? Historians use techniques such as paleography (examining handwriting), philology (examining language structure), diplomatics (assessing conventions, formulae, and protocol at the time the source was allegedly written), and the dating of paper and ink to ensure authenticity. Not all techniques will be possible unless the historian is uses the original document.

*How reliable is the source?* Was the author in a position to comment on the historical events? Was she or he present when the events occurred or is this third-party testimony? Is it based on immediate reporting or later reflection? Is the account consistent with other versions of the event being examined?

*Is there evidence of influence or bias?* What compelled the author to produce the source? Were they asked to prepare it and, if so, does this impact its content? Did the author's (or influencer's) position, beliefs, prejudices, gender, or other factors, motivate them to narrate events in a certain way? Be cautious not to assume bias merely because of the presence of these factors; evidence must also be present in the text. Was the work subject to censorship, political correctness, or other factors that may have distorted the text?

*Is there evidence of unwitting testimony?* Unwitting testimony is evidence that was not intended to be provided by the author, but which can be helpful in revealing cultural norms and beliefs, the author's personal opinions, or interpretations of events. Sometimes, unwitting testimony can be more useful to historians because authors become "witnesses in spite of themselves." By contrast, witting testimony is deliberate or intentional evidence given by the author, which might have been designed to communicate a specific meaning or message and can sometimes be less valuable.

**Questions for Secondary Sources**

*What methodology or theory is employed in the source?* Does the author rely on empirical evidence, statistics, debate, analysis, a particular theory or type of historical inquiry? Does this approach suggest strengths or limitations in the analysis? Does it reflect a valid historical methodology?

*Is the author qualified to produce the source?* Is the author a fully-trained historian or other professional? Do they have sufficient expertise in the subject matter discussed in the source? This question is particularly important if non-refereed, online sources are being considered for use.

*Who or what is the intended audience of the source?* Was it written for academics, students, the public, government officials, or museum attendees? How does this impact the quality or effectiveness of the source for historical research?

*What is the author's source base?* Is the source grounded in primary or secondary sources? What is the balance between different types of sources and is this balance effective in producing high-quality scholarship? How are the sources used (for example, as background, evidence, or critical engagement)? Are there limitations in the sources (for example, incomplete sets of records on a particular event), and are there weaknesses in how the sources are used (for example, too much dependence on unreliable testimony)?

*What are the author's arguments and conclusions?* Is there a clearly stated thesis statement or argument? Does it answer the research questions and reflect the evidence presented? Does it develop from a natural spirit or logic of inquiry? Is it based too much on assertion and inference rather than evidence and analysis? Does the evidence used suggest another argument or interpretation?

The answers to these various questions do not necessarily render a source useless for historical research, as all sources have strengths, weaknesses, and limitations, but they should be considered and balanced with other sources to arrive at the most accurate, fact- and interpretation-based understanding of the topic under investigation.

## 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. Tertiary sources such as indexes and tables of contents can help you locate the information you need without having to read material that is not helpful in answering the research questions. Good writers will have their argument and structure laid out in the introduction and conclusion and will often begin paragraphs with topic sentences. These will help you determine the usefulness of a source or a 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 is often best, because this reduces the recording of irrelevant information and might be easier to organize later. Above all, your notes should focus on answering your research questions. 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 (see Part IV below) and page numbers of all quoted and paraphrased materials. Failure to do so may result in a desper-

ate return to the library to find citation details that you should have recorded in the first place. Careless notetaking is also a leading cause of unintentional plagiarism, which is discussed in more detail in Part II.

**Composing a Thesis Statement**

After you have read and taken notes on your source material, 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 proven throughout the paper, and all your evidence must relate to the thesis statement. A good thesis statement is one whose argument is *aggressive*, *sustainable*, and *needs proof* to be correct. A weak thesis statement is one whose argument is obvious to the reader, cannot be proven objectively or using the sources under examination, or has already been extensively demonstrated. Be careful not to develop a thesis statement that contains broad generalizations or personal opinion, or that lacks empathy for the past (such as imposing modern ideas onto older historical events). 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 need proof.

*World War I was the result of various international power struggles in Europe.* This statement is sustainable and needs proof, but it is not 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 needs proof. It also indicates the paper's structure, which is an optional component of a thesis statement.

**Preparing a Proposal**

At this stage of the project, your instructor might ask for an essay proposal. The proposal's purpose is to convince the instructor 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 one and four pages long, and may also be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of sources (see Part IV.) The proposal – which must be written in prose, not point form – answers the following:

✓     What is your topic and how is it defined (thematically, chronologically)?
✓     What is/are your principal research question(s) and why?
✓     What sources are you going to use? Why are these the best sources?
✓     Is there a methodology or theory you are applying and why is it appropriate?

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, develop a more persuasive argument, or even abandon the project and begin a new one.

**Assembling Notes and Preparing an Outline**

Now that you have a thesis statement that needs to be proven, it is time to 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 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.

# 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. 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 political science, 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 several tasks. It reveals your topic and its relevance, establishes the chronological and thematic parameters, provides any necessary definitions, and states the argument and the manner in which the paper will proceed to prove the thesis statement. 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 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 told, 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 often the result is 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 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 ten sentences. (For example, this paragraph contains 150 words and seven sentences, and the next paragraph contains 122 words and six sentences.)

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 summarize 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. It is also common to include numerous "signposts" throughout the essay returning the reader to the key aspects of the argument that were demonstrated in the paragraph, or in a closely related series of paragraphs.

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 in Part I 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 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 correct method 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 ending quotation mark; 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 is subsequently 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."[5] 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 to form a sentence, do not place two or more footnotes sequentially to cite various sources ([4][5][6]). Instead, reference the sources together in a single note at the end of the sentence, in the order the sources were used in the sentence (see the 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 ref-

erence note gives credit to the author of an idea or statement and 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 research and are, therefore, subject to interpretation. It is not necessary to cite sources for facts that are common knowledge or not subject to interpretation (such as when a war was fought or when a monarch reigned). 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.

Finally, because you will provide 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, as demonstrated in Part IV.

## Economy of Citations

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, contains too much material that is common knowledge, or has 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 suggests a random use of evidence placed into your paper without using your own 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, employ economy of citations by citing the source material only once, either at the start or end of the related section, rather than using multiple footnotes. However, if the same material is being used in more than one paragraph, use a new note for each paragraph.

## Plagiarism, Writing Assistance, and AI Software

Plagiarism occurs when an author, either deliberately or without the exercise of reasonable judgment, passes off the writing or ideas of another as their own. Directly copying a sentence or paragraph without putting this material in quotation marks is also plagiarism, whether or not a citation is provided. 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 citations 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.

Writing assistance software should be used with extreme caution. It is acceptable to use the spelling and grammar tools available in software such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs. These tools can assist with basic grammatical issues such as sentence structure, punctuation, diction, and imprecise or passive text in your own writing. However, most instructors explicitly forbid the use of artificial intelligence (AI) software, such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Grammarly, and others, especially when its primary use is to produce generative text that did not originate from your own research and writing. Some instructors may allow AI tools to be used in certain types of assignments, but without explicit instructions permitting its use, avoid using this software or plagiarism may be suspected.

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic dishonesty. If instructors suspect that plagiarism has been committed, they may submit the essay to the Faculty for review. This can lead to formal sanctions such as failure on an assignment or in a course, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Therefore, students must be extremely careful to avoid committing this offence.

## The Conclusion

The conclusion to the essay helps the reader understand the relevance of the themes examined throughout the paper. It is often described as a "pyramid," moving inductively 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 contributed 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 grammar, illogical statements, poor argumentation, or lack of evidence to prove the thesis statement. You might find that one paragraph belongs in a different place, or that the introduction does not lay out the argument 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 greater clarity and precision and a taut, logical argument. After rewriting the paper (twice, if time allows), proofread it carefully to identify and correct spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.

**Time on Task**

Good essay writing takes a lot of time and effort. One of the mistakes students often make is beginning the process too close to the due date, which forces them to make hasty and sometimes erroneous decisions when it comes to topic and source selection, reading, organization, and writing. Generally, it takes approximately one hour of pre-planning and research, and one hour of writing and rewriting, per page of the essay. Thus, for example, an eight-page essay requires approximately 16 hours to produce and may take longer depending on the complexity of the topic and the availability of source material. When possible, essays should be started at least two weeks before their due date to allow for the full process discussed in this handbook to be carried out. In addition, instructors are usually willing to offer feedback on topic selection, the suitability of sources, thesis statements, and outlines, provided there is enough time available before the essay is due. This is another good reason to begin the essay as early as possible.

# Part III: Reviews and Analyses

Reviews and analyses are similar in content, style, and structure, but examine different types of writing. Reviews assess the argument, methodology, strengths, and weaknesses of secondary sources produced by historians. These can range from the review of an academic article, 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 ranging from dozens to 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 background, 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 historical 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. This should be your own argument, which emerges from your critical interrogation of the work, rather than the author's argument.

**The Body**

The body of reviews and analyses is used to answer questions about the work or works under consideration. While it is not necessary – or sometimes even possible – to answer all these questions, or to devote equal space to each one, the report should be as comprehensive as possible. A key goal in evaluating the source is to reflect on the questions discussed in Part I ("Interrogating Sources"), which will be different depending on whether the source is primary or secondary.

Depending on the nature of the material under examination, additional questions may arise during the reading of the work or preparation of the report that can be addressed.

✓ **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 addressed, and how these contribute to the source's overall theme. 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, secondhand 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.

## 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, passages of special merit, or demonstrating comprehension of the text. If a single work (whether secondary or primary) is under review, quotations and paraphrased passages from that work should be followed with a parenthetical citation that includes the page number. For example, (35). All other citations, such as other sources used to support the analysis, should be placed in footnotes, as discussed in Part IV below. If several documents or books are being reviewed or analyzed, use footnotes rather than parenthetical form.

## 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.

# Part IV: Style and Referencing

Presentation, writing style, and 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: weak presentation, writing, or referencing will always result in lower grades. 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 should be typewritten, using an easily readable serif (as opposed to sans serif) 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. If the essay is to be submitted as a paper copy, do not put it 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 limit for the paper. As a rule of thumb, ensure that your essay is no more than 10% below or above the word requirement. 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 and remember that the title page and bibliography do not count toward the page or word limit for the essay.

For examples of a properly-formatted title page, essay page, and bibliography, see appendices I–III below.

## Grammar and Style

Historians use the standard conventions of the English language to communicate their findings to their audience. To be understood and persuasive, your writing must conform to the basic rules of grammar and punctuation. 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, 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 (defined as 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 Conventions

There are several common conventions used when writing historical scholarship, some of which are unique to Canada. For dates, use day-month-year format (19 February 2024), spell out centuries (eighteen hundreds, nineteenth century, nineteenth-century ideas, *not* 19th century), and use numbers for years (2024, *not* two thousand and twenty-four). When giving other numbers, spell them out up to ninety-nine (two, thirty-four, sixty-six), but use numerals for numbers that are three digits or more (102; 348) and use commas for numbers of four digits or more (9,408; 207,000). Always spell out numbers if they begin a sentence (Four thousand died in the battle). For times of the day, use numerals (5:30 p.m. *not* five thirty p.m.). Currency can either be spelled out (fifteen dollars, forty-three million dollars) or stated using symbols and numbers ($15; $43 million), provided this convention is used consistently throughout the essay.

Another common convention involves when to capitalize. Capitalize all proper nouns (House of Commons, King Louis XVI, Buckingham Palace, Aunt Joyce, Professor Smith, Province of Alberta) but do not capitalize common nouns (the commons, the king, the palace, my aunt, the professor, the province). However, capitalize common nouns if they begin a sentence (Presidents are elected, not appointed). For monarchs and popes, use a Roman numeral after their name (Charles III, *not* Charles the Third). Always capitalize days of the week (Tuesday), holidays (Thanksgiving), geological eras (Paleozoic) (but not historical periods [medieval, early modern]), deities and words that refer to deities (God, Allah, the Almighty), religions and major religious writings (Catholic, Islam, Bible, Talmud), military forces and ships (Royal Air Force, Second [or 2nd] Canadian Armoured Brigade, HMCS Victoria), wars (World War II, Seven Years' War),

the first letter of scientific names (Canus lupus familiaris), the names of Indigenous groups (Iroquois, and the word Indigenous if used in the context of people), trademarked brand names (Kleenex, Scrabble), and the titles of songs, books, and paintings (*Rhapsody in Blue*, *The Communist Manifesto*, *The Mona Lisa*), which should also be italicized.

In Canada, it is common convention to use British-English spelling. This includes the use of "ou" in words such as "colour" and "labour"; "ll" (instead of "l") in words such as "traveller" and "cancelled"; "re" (instead of "er") in words such as "centre" and "theatre"; and "ogue" (instead of "og") in words such as "catalogue" and "dialogue". Another common British usage is to distinguish between verbs and nouns using "s" or "c"; for example, "Stephen practises violin" (verb) versus "Mary has a law practice" (noun). However, words ending in "ize" ("colonize") should include a "z" (American spelling), not an "s" ("colonise") (British), and certain words should use common North American rather than British spelling (tire *not* tyre). It is also normal convention to use the serial (or Oxford) comma in lists, which provide greater clarity: "red, blue, and green" *not* "red, blue and green". Finally, italicize foreign words that are not commonly used in the English language (*rex dei gratia*, but carte blanche), and include diacritical marks in foreign words (coup de grâce, garçon) by inserting symbols.

## 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 ("state-

23

ment 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. Also ensure that you do not shift between past and present in different sentences or paragraphs throughout the essay: not "Stalin wrote" in one sentence and then "He also writes" in the next. Generally, history papers are always written in the past tense.

4. **Incomplete sentences and run-on sentences**. Incomplete sentences, also called sentence fragments, 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. Run-on sentences include two or more complete clauses (or sentences) that are not correctly joined together, such as "I love coffee I drink it all the time." This should read "I love coffee. I drink it all the time" or "I love coffee, and I drink it all the time."

5. **Comma splices and semi-colon misuse**. A comma splice 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, so 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. Semi-colons should only be used to separate items in a list that also contains commas (which is a rare occurrence) or to join two complete sentences that relate closely together (such as "The coffee was fresh; I had a cup.") Semi-colons are not used in place of commas; when in doubt, use a comma instead.

6. **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; 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.

7. **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.

8. **Misusing the apostrophe**. Apostrophes are used only to indicate possessives. 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", when the "s" is not silent; thus, "Dickens's writings" and "Yates's poetry," but "Dumas' novels." 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 "hamburgers," not "hamburger'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."

## Note Format

History instructors will insist that you use, consistently and correctly, the referencing format for footnotes or endnotes described in the most recent edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. 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 prefer footnotes for ease of reference. These notes should normally be in the same font and size as the main text (12pt) although it is acceptable to set footnotes in a smaller font (10pt) if they are disruptive to the flow of the essay. Notes must be numbered consecutively from the beginning of the paper, and although the note number in the main text must be in superscript (eg. [14]), in the note itself it can be in superscript or in regular font followed by a period (eg. 14.). 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 place notes, and to add or delete notes throughout the writing and rewriting processes.

It is difficult to anticipate all forms that notes can take because there are so many different types of sources that can be used. 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. Latin abbreviations are no longer used in notes because they can lead to confusion or error, particularly when material is moved around during rewriting. These phrases include *ibid.* ("in the same matter"), *op. cit.* ("in the work cited"), *idem.* ("by the same author"), and *supra* ("above"). However, as these abbreviations were once commonly used, they will often be found in the notes of published sources.

References to entire books may omit page numbers, while references to specific pages within books, and to articles and chapters within edited collections (whether in their entirety or in part) should indicate page numbers following the publication information. Avoid citing large page or chapter ranges (eg. pages 27–122 or chapters 2–6). It is better to indicate the precise pages or chapters that are relevant to the point being argued. The standard is to use as few numbers as possible; for example, instead of pages 246–249, use 246–9. In some older books that do not have page numbers, "signatures" are cited instead, which are combinations of numbers and letters. For example, a page might show "B2" at the bottom. In this case,

when citing a quotation or paraphrased passage, use "B2r," which refers to the *recto* or front of the page, and B2v, which refers to the *verso*, or back of the page. In online publications that are not paginated, it is common to cite paragraph numbers (eg. "para. 14") if these are listed on the publication, or section headings (eg. "Note Format"), instead of page numbers.

**Examples of Citations**

Examples of citations are provided below for the main types of sources used by historians. Each includes the proper format for notes (**N**) and bibliographies (**B**) which, although they include the same information, are presented in slightly different formats. The main differences are the order of the author's name (eg. "John Smith" in notes and "Smith, John" in bibliographies) and the placement of commas, periods, and parentheses to separate the various elements of the citation. After a source has been cited the first time in the essay, use short-form citation (**S**) for all subsequent references to the same work.

### 1. **Single-Author Books**

The different elements of book citations are separated by commas in footnotes and periods in bibliographies. 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.

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

**S** Parrish, *American Curiosity*, 43–56.

**B** Parrish, Susan Scott. *American Curiosity: Culture of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. [Note that page numbers are not provided in the bibliographical citation.]

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

**N** 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).]

**S** Harriot, *Briefe and True Report*, 36.

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

In the case of books written anonymously or when the author is unknown, which are common for primary sources produced in earlier centuries, begin with the title of the work.

Some books have national, corporate, or organizational authors.

**N** 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".]

**S** *Manuscripts of … the Marquis of Salisbury*, 56. [Note the use of an ellipsis (…) to remove unnecessary works and keep the citation brief.]

**B** 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.

## 2. **Multi-author books**

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

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

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

**B** Winks, Robin W., and Lee Palmer Wandel. *Europe in a Wider World, 1350-1650*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. [Note that names for second and subsequent authors are in firstname lastname format.]

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

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

**S** Briggs, *Crime and Punishment*, 56.

**B** Briggs, John, and others. *Crime and Punishment in England: An Introductory History*. London: UCL Press, 1996.

## 3. **Edited Collections and Essays or Documents Within**

For complete references to collections of essays or primary sources, indicate the editor, using "and others" if there are three or more editors.

**N** H. V. Bowen and others, eds., *Britain's Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1550-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

**S** Bowen and others, eds., *Britain's Oceanic Empire*, 68.

**B** Bowen, H. V., and others, eds.. *Britain's Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1500-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

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.

**N** 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), 169-79.

**S** Crosby, "Infectious Disease," 172. [Note that it is not necessary to repeat the book title or editors.]

**B** Crosby, Alfred W. "Infectious Disease and the Demography of the Atlantic Peoples." *The Atlantic World in the Age of Empire*, edited by Thomas Benjamin and Timothy Hall. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

## 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.

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

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

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

**B** Grotius, Hugo. *The Free Sea*. Edited by David Armitage. Translated by Richard Hakluyt. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004.

## 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.

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

**S** Blackstone, *Commentaries*, 2: 345.

**B** Blackstone, William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

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.

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

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

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

## 6. **Journal Articles**

For journal articles, place the title in quotations marks and underline or italicize the title of the journal. Note the volume (30), year of publication, and page 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.

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

**S** Flores, "New Citizens, New Rights," 89-90.

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

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

**N** 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 online file instead of the .html file. If in doubt, consult the printed version.

Articles that are only on the internet and are not available in print should include the URL and paragraph number, if available. Because this is a published article that will not change, it is not necessary to include the date the article was accessed.

**N** 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 (2002), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_colonialism_and _colonial_ history/toc/cch3.3.html, para. 31. [Note that the URL is not hyperlinked.]

## 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 an e-book or transcribed into a webpage) you must provide the URL and, if the website is subject to revision, the date on which the material was accessed. Some examples of citation from electronic sources are below:

**N** Martin Luther, "Address to the Nobility of the German Nation (1520)," in *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*, accessed 15 May 2021, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/lu-ther-nobility.html.

**N** 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, accessed November 19, 2018, http://vagen-web.org/hening/vol02-06.htm.

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

**N** 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. It is acceptable in these cases to include the section in which the reference will be found. For example, chap. 2, "The Death of Sir Walter Ralegh."]

## 8. **Book Reviews**

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

**N** 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): 151–2.

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

**B** 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): 151–2.

## 9. **Well-Known 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.

**N** William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 2.3.12–16.

**N** *King James Bible*, 1 Corinthians 13.9.

## 10. **Magazine or Newspaper Articles**

References to magazine articles are similar to journal articles:

**N** Heather Pringle, "Alberta Barren," *Saturday Night*, June 1997: 30.

**B** Pringle, Heather. "Alberta Barren." *Saturday Night*, June 1997.

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).

**N** 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.

**N** Emily Badger, "The Uncomfortable Politics Behind the History of Urban Fires," *The Atlantic*, 22 August 2012, http://www.theatlantic.com. [Note that the access date is not necessary unless the article is subject to revision.]

## 11. **Articles in Encyclopedia or Dictionaries**

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

**N** 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.

**S** Robison, "Kidd, William," 205.

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

Well-known reference books, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* or *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, do not need to be accompanied by the facts of publication, unless there is potential for confusion or unless a specific edition has been used. Give the source and the title of the entry but eliminate the entry's author unless it is relevant to the argument of the essay.

## 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.

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

**B** Al-Rabea, Meshal. "Orphaning the Victorian Child: A Study in Eight Victorian Novels." PhD diss., University of Calgary, Canada, 2007.

## 13. **Archival and Manuscript Sources**

The method of referencing archival sources differs depending on where they are housed. In general, the source should be described as fully and as consistently as possible, citing author, title (in quotation marks, because they are not printed sources), the archive where the document is housed, its series (or fonds), and its shelfmark (library locator information). It is best to refer to the archive's website or to books that reference documents from that archive to determine how the reference should appear. Unknown information may be silently omitted. 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.

## 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.

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

**N** 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.

**N** 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":

**N** William Camden, *The History of … Princess Elizabeth* (London, 1675), 309, quoted in E. P. Cheyney, "International Law under Queen Elizabeth," *English Historical Review* 20 (1905), 660.

**S** Camden, *History of … Elizabeth*, quoted in Cheyney, "International Law," 662.

## 16. **Explanatory Notes and Multiple References**

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

**N** Clinton L. Evans, *The War on Weeds in the Prairie West: An Environmental History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002). Evans argues that a fundamental economic relationship existed between people and weeds in subsistence societies. This relationship determined 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 being referenced. These works should be separated by semi-colons and listed in the order they appear in the text.

**N** 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, social media pages, and physical artifacts. For detailed explanation on how to reference this material, consult the latest edition *Chicago Manual of Style* (available online in its entirety via the University of Calgary library) or one of the sources listed in the Further Resources section below.

## Bibliographical Format

A bibliography is a list all sources that were consulted while researching and writing the essay. As a result, some works might be listed in the bibliography that are not otherwise referenced in the essay. However, avoid "padding" the bibliography with citations that are not relevant or that were used as finding aids, such as tertiary sources. The main difference between notes and bibliographical entries is how the information is presented, rather than what information 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, as demonstrated above. 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. See Appendix III for an example.

## 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 a normal bibliography, 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.

# Appendices

**Appendix I: Sample Title Page**

The Rights of Men and Women in Early-Revolutionary France and England

by

Jane Smith (12345678)

HTST 201

Dr. Stephen Jones

October 15, 2018

## Appendix II: Sample Essay Page

Between 1670 and 1780, the English parliament passed many laws designed to protect the property of wealthy gentlemen. These laws upheld ancient elite privileges and enabled landholders to turn common areas into enclosed private property, so that the land could be used more efficiently for revenue. In order to ensure success in the face of resentment and protest, much of this legislation came to comprise a "Bloody Code," in which the number of capital offences, especially regarding trespass or theft of property, rose from about 50 to over 200. There was, however, a decline in the number of executions during this time period. Douglas Hay argues this was because the new Bloody Code allowed elites within the legal system – the king, judges, JPs, and private prosecutors – to show "majesty" and "mercy" toward those who committed capital offences by reducing the severity of punishment.[1] This would reinforce the English social hierarchy by making the elites appear to be benevolent to the commoners, and would encourage acceptance of the new land policies. Peter King argues that the real decision makers were the common jurors, who were unwilling to apply the Bloody Code when they perceived it was too malevolent, especially when the new land policies were involved.[2] An examination of the game law offences heard in the Old Bailey courthouse in London in the eighteenth century provides a way to evaluate these theses. This investigation reveals that elite and common court participants carefully balanced the nature and severity of the charge, testimony of witnesses, character of the defendant, and likely sentence, ultimately employing discretion to ensure that justice was carried out with fairness and common sense, without being arbitrary or malevolent despite the severity of the Bloody Code.

[1] Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," in Douglas Hay, et al, eds., *Albion's Fatal Tree* (New York: Pantheon, 1975), pp. 17-63.
[2] Peter King, "Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800," *The Historical Journal* 27 (1984): 25-58.

## Appendix III: Sample Bibliography

Bibliography

*Primary Sources*

Cranmer, Thomas. "An Exhortation Concerning Good Order and Behaviour." In *Certain Sermons Appointed to be Delivered and Redd*. London, 1574.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/PDF/Wiv.pdf (accessed 4 February 2016).

Smith, Thomas. *De Republic Anglorum*. Edited by L. Alston. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906.

*Secondary Sources*

Abel, Ernest L. "'Who Goes Drunk to Bed Begets but a Girl': The History of the Renaissance Medical Proverb." *Journal of the History of Medicine* 54 (1999): 5-22.

Amussen, Susan. "Social Hierarchies." In *The Elizabethan World*. Edited by Susan Doran and Norman Jones. London: Routledge, 2011.

Nicholls, James. *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2009.

Shephard, Alexandra. *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Withington, Phil. "Intoxicants and Society in Early Modern England." *The Historical Journal* 54 (2011): 631-57.

Withington, Phil. "Company and Sociability in Early Modern England." *Social History* 32 (2007): 291-307.

# Further Resources

The most recent edition of the following resources should be consulted for additional guidelines on researching, 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.*