



## Writing a History Paper

“Historians must rely on the fragmentary records that survive from a time period under study, which necessarily reveal just part of the story. For these reasons, the guiding principles behind all historical writing must be *selection* and *interpretation*: the thoughtful selection of topics and questions that seem most interesting, and the responsible interpretation of sources in order to construct meaningful arguments.”

Wewers, Dan. "A Brief Guide to Writing the History Paper." *Writing Program*. Harvard College, 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2013. <<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic649329.files/BG%20Writing%20History.pdf>>.

### Research Methodology – The Historical Method

- The process by which ***information is gathered, critically analyzed*** and ***synthesized*** in the form of an historical truth or argument.
  1. Define your topic/create your question
  2. Determine your sources, primary and/or secondary
  3. Critically analyze the information from sources
  4. Create a Thesis Statement and Present your findings/historical truth or argument

### Define your topic/create your question

#### Types of Questions

Abstract or Conceptual	A logical exploration of an idea. For example: Is censorship acceptable under some circumstances?
Concrete	Requires analysis of evidence. For example: How many hours of practice does it take to master a musical instrument?
Problem	The answer requires a solution. For example: How can authorities get people out of their cars and on to public transportation?
Design Challenge	Requires the creation of a plan to solve the problem. For example: What tool can we create to help students critically evaluate the websites they visit?

## Sources – Primary and Secondary

### Primary Sources

“Primary sources provide first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. They are created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Often these sources are created at the time when the events or conditions are occurring, but primary sources can also include autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories recorded later.”

"Primary Sources: What Are Primary Sources?" *Primary Sources: What Are Primary Sources?* Yale University, 2008. Web. 25 Jan. 2013. <[http://www.yale.edu/collections\\_collaborative/primarysources/primarysources.html](http://www.yale.edu/collections_collaborative/primarysources/primarysources.html)>.

### Secondary Sources

“A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them.” They include sources such as books, articles (from journals, newspapers, encyclopedias) etc.

"Primary vs Secondary Sources." *Primary vs Secondary Sources*. Princeton University Library, n.d. Web. 25 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html>>.

## Gather, Organize and Analyze Information

### How to Take Notes



“For visual mapping, outlining, writing and making presentations, use Inspiration® 9, the ultimate thinking and learning tool. Brainstorm ideas, structure your thoughts and visually communicate concepts to strengthen understanding with the Diagram and Map Views. To take notes, organize information, and structure writing for plans, papers and reports, use the integrated Outline View to focus on main and supporting ideas and to clarify thinking in written form. With Inspiration's Presentation Manager, transform your diagrams, mind maps and outlines into polished presentations that communicate ideas clearly and demonstrate understanding and knowledge.”

"Inspiration - Comprehend. Create. Communicate. Achieve More." *Outlining, Writing, & Brainstorming Using Mapping, Graphic Organizers and Other Visual Thinking Techniques*. Inspiration Software Inc., 2013. Web. 25 Jan. 2013. <<http://www.inspiration.com/Inspiration>>.

## Create a Thesis Statement

Appearing in the first paragraph of your paper, a Thesis Statement is a one or two sentence summary of your argument or analysis. It should accomplish these goals:

- Test your ideas by stating them in one or two sentences
- Is a tool to organize and development your argument
- Provides the reader with a guide to your essay
- The “answer” to your essay question is your thesis statement

"How to Write a Thesis Statement." *Writing Tutorial Services*. Indiana University, 30 Jan. 2008. Web. 25 Jan. 2013.

Example of a good thesis statement:

The poodle is an intelligent breed of dog that is easy to train, adaptable to many situations and superior as a family pet.

## Elements of a History Paper

Harvard University has created an excellent guide to writing a History paper which can be located at

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic649329.files/BG%20Writing%20History.pdf>

We will consider this document in class.

## Citing Sources



Easybib is an online tool for creating a **Works Cited** list or **Bibliography**.

Go to [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com)

If citing a website, click on **Website** and then paste the URL into the box.

*Easybib* will find the sight, then it may ask you to fill in any missing details. Go back to the site and check for this information.

Click on **Create Citation**.

If citing a book, click on **Book** then type in the title. *Easybib* may give you a couple of options, select the correct one then **Create Citation**.

Once you have entered all the sites and books you used for your project, click on

- **All**, then
- **Print as a Word Document**, then
- **Click to Continue Without Registration**, and finally
- **Click Here to Download your Bibliography in MS Word**. Print.

## In-Text Citations

### Parenthetical References (In-Text Citations)

*Parenthetical References* or *In-Text Citations* are references placed within the body of your writing that document ideas, information, data, opinions and quotations that you have taken from your sources. **Remember, you must always give credit to the authors whose ideas or information you have used in your *Works Cited List* and in the body of your writing through *In-Text Citations*.** The In-Text Citation and the Work Cited List are linked and it is clear to the reader from where/whom the idea or information came.

After a statement or piece of information you have obtained from a source, use the following format:

For a Book:

*(author's last name page #)*

(Pugnetti 262)

If two or more books in your Works Cited list are by the same author, add the date

*(author's last name date, page #)*

(Pugnetti 2010, 262)

For a Journal article:

*(author's last name page#)*

(Anderson 70)

If two or more articles in your Works Cited list are by the same author, add the date

*(author's last name, date, page #)*

(Anderson 2012, 70)

For a website:

*(author's last name page#)* \*\*if these are indicated

Or refer to the *Works Cited* list and use the first part of the citation, usually the title

*("Deciding to Get a Dog")*

### ***Why You Need a Dog – An Essay by Ms. Cameron***

You need a dog, preferably a poodle. There are many good reasons and unpredictable benefits to dog ownership, but there are important things to consider before you make this addition to your family. When considering a specific breed, think carefully about your lifestyle and whether or not your habits and the dog's needs will be a good match ("Deciding to Get a Dog"). Purchasing a dog, especially a pure bred, can be expensive. To keep costs down, you may want to consider going to the SPCA and adopting a mutt (Anderson 70). Importantly, know what you are looking for in a dog and do some breed research. Because of their high intelligence, joyful personality and amazing good looks, (Pugnetti 262), I would choose a poodle.

#### Works Cited

Anderson, Jessica. "Take the Bite Out of Pet Costs." *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* 66.10 (2012):

69-72. *Ebsco*. Web. 07 Dec. 2012.

<<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/delivery?sid=37fe3006-e19f-4246-936b-168cadba0b3c%40sessionmgr104&vid=4&hid=107>>.

"Deciding To Get a Dog." *Deciding To Get a Dog*. Canadian Kennel Club, n.d. Web. 07 Dec. 2012.

<<http://www.ckc.ca/en/Default.aspx?tabid=111>>.

Pugnetti, Gino, and Elizabeth Meriwether. Schuler. *Simon & Schuster's Guide to Dogs*. New

York: Simon and Schuster, 1980. Print.