

# History 101

## A Handbook for Students

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## I. INTRODUCTION

History 101 has been an integral and distinguished part of the History Department's curriculum for decades. It can mark the culmination of an undergraduate career and form the most rewarding experience of the history major. But 101 is not an easy course. Many students' memories doubtless include frustration and disappointment as well as satisfaction and pride. This handbook aims to make your 101 experience more productive and successful. It explains the goals of the course and the requirements of a feasible topic. It also provides suggestions on how to use the library, conduct research, organize and compose the paper, and revise the first draft into a final text.

You should see this handbook as the first but certainly not the last word on how to do history. The appendix "Further Reading" lists a few of the dozens of books on the subject, some of which you may wish to consult. Moreover, your 101 instructor will be your primary source (no pun intended) of information and guidance. But despite the variation of time periods, countries, and themes of 101 sections, and despite the specificity of advice you will need, this handbook presumes that there are principles and methods common to all those who do history.

### *The Purpose of the 101*

The tangible product of History 101 is a research paper of thirty to fifty pages. This thesis is based on your original research in primary sources. It engages you in interpretation of the materials of history, expanding your awareness of historical knowledge and the subtleties of information and imagination. At the same time, it helps you to develop a hands-on understanding of historical argument, posing a historical problem and answering it in a sustained argument based on your sources and your reading of the secondary literature.

The 101 seminar is designed to guide you in crafting this paper. The curriculum will vary from section to section, but generally the semester will proceed as follows: After a few weeks of common readings and discussions, you will propose a topic and construct a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Intensive research will begin in earnest, and during the next several weeks the number of class meetings may be reduced. After you have completed a substantial amount of research, you will write your first draft. This phase will be followed by discussion of the drafts by the entire seminar, in tutorials of two to four students, or in individual consultations with the instructor. The remainder of the semester will be occupied (as time permits) with additional research, revision of the draft, and production of the final version.

Your 101 thesis will build on factual knowledge and skills of analysis and research you have developed in previous coursework. Your instructor will lead you through the process. However, as for any piece of original research, you must take primary responsibility for the outcome. In this sense, too, it marks the capstone of your study of history at Berkeley.

### *Models for Your Paper*

There are two major models for a 101 thesis. First are previous 101 papers kept on file in the History Department Library (2337 Dwinelle Hall). Previous 101 papers can give you a sense of the scope of the project, i.e., how much research can be accomplished in a semester. A card index gives access by geographical area and subject matter. (The names have been removed from the title pages to protect the authors' privacy.) Examine a few papers related to your own research interests. Ask yourself questions about how the thesis was constructed: How has the topic been focused? How did the author define the body of sources? How successfully are larger historical questions integrated?

Second, you can look for models in scholarly historical journals. Journal articles can be found in the Periodical Room of Doe Library, in the stacks, in reading materials from your upper-division courses, or online, through the Berkeley library website or JSTOR, the scholarly journal archive (<http://www.jstor.org>). Scan a few issues of any journal related to your interests and look at how professional historians define their research. You are not asked to do as much research or to present so far-reaching an analysis. But in many ways, the scholarly article is a model for what you are doing.

## II. SELECTING A TOPIC

The starting point for the entire 101 experience is defining a feasible topic. The process, from initial brainstorming through gradual refinement, takes time and research of its own. You can begin thinking about a topic as early as your lower-division coursework. Exploring possibilities before your 101 semester is an excellent idea; you can do preliminary reading in secondary sources or try out ideas with previous instructors. Even if you start the semester with a blank slate, you can still find a good topic. However, you must make its definition an immediate priority. Finding a workable topic is the single most important factor in determining the success or failure of a 101 project.

### *Interest*

A primary consideration is interest, for your subject and sources must sustain your attention through a long period of hard work. Look back over your materials from previous courses, skim textbooks, think about books, films, or exhibitions that captured your attention. Keep in mind that your question must be historical — that is, interest is a starting point, but you must use it to pose a historical problem.

### *Value*

History is not simply about assembling facts. You must define your topic to be interpretive and analytical. For example, if you took as your topic “What happened in San Francisco during the earthquake and fire of 1906?” the only answers you could provide would be descriptive and antiquarian, that is, concerned with historical facts for their own sake. But if you posed the question as “How did the agencies of local, state, and federal government respond to the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906?” you would have the opportunity not only to describe what happened, but also to analyze it, and to shed light on the nature of government during the Progressive Era.

### *Originality*

Your topic should permit you to make an original contribution to our knowledge and understanding of history. Though you should avoid subjects already exhausted by previous scholarship, you are not automatically barred from every subject that historians have already treated. Often you can extend or modify an investigation already begun by someone else. Sometimes new material has come to light, enabling you to improve on an earlier analysis. In rare cases you may even be justified in re-covering old ground, if you can convince your instructor that previous interpretations are mistaken or inadequate.

### *Scope*

You must take care to limit the scope of your topic. It must be one that can be handled adequately in the time you have available. It must permit you to examine the full body of

relevant primary and secondary sources. And it must be framed in such a way as to allow you to make some original and significant factual or interpretive contribution in the scope of a thirty- to fifty-page paper. You will probably find yourself reducing the timespan or scope as you become more deeply involved. The more carefully you define your topic, the more intensively you can exploit the available materials, and the more likely that you will produce a successful thesis.

The trick is often to find a limited and manageable subject that opens up bigger historical questions. Those bigger questions can be the ones that initially define your interests; they can also emerge out of the process of your research. For example, starting from the changing status of women and the family in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, you may ultimately produce a thesis on San Francisco women defense plant workers during World War II. Along the way, you may find that your research brings you to new questions about race in the Bay Area or about labor relations. Or you may embark on a study of the Chinese Nationalist regime's relations to the West in the 1930s and find yourself focusing on international exchanges of scientific-technical personnel, then end up with second-order questions about technology and modernization.

### ***Materials***

As far as possible, History 101 papers should rest on primary sources (records and writings contemporaneous with the events studied) as distinguished from secondary sources (the writings of later historians and commentators). You need to take this into account in defining your topic, particularly if you are writing on a distant time or place. You may have thought of an exciting area of inquiry and asked significant questions you hope to answer. But without a body of primary source material, you do not have a thesis. Talk with your instructors about possibilities, and adjust your topic when necessary.

Examples of primary source materials include literary, philosophical, or religious texts, government documents (proceedings of legislative bodies and executive departments, reports, tax lists, census data), organizational records, newspapers and magazines, chronicles, memoirs, oral histories, autobiographies, journals and diaries, travel accounts, novels, published correspondence, maps, photographs, and material artifacts. They may be held in museums or repositories, kept in archives or manuscript collections, preserved on microfilm or microfiche, digitized and made available on the web, or published in the form of books, pamphlets, or edited documents collected by historians.

### ***Practicality***

Your topic must be feasible with respect to your ability to make proper use of your sources. You must have the quantitative skills, command of a foreign language, or access to classified documents if your research entails, respectively, analysis of census or probate records, reliance on non-English source materials, or investigation of a topic in twentieth-century diplomacy. If you are using sources not available at Berkeley (books from Interlibrary Borrowing, archival material in other locations), check to be absolutely sure you can get them in a timely fashion.

A further aspect of practicality is getting the advice you need. Ideally, your topic will mesh perfectly with the theme of the 101 section in which you are enrolled. In practice, you may find your interests or background take you in another direction. You should speak with your instructor about how to handle the situation. You may need to seek out additional help, for instance, from previous instructors.

### III. RESEARCH RESOURCES

Finding primary and secondary materials is a complex and challenging endeavor. Think of all previous research you have done in your classes to be a warm-up for this course. Do not underestimate the amount of time it will take to search for primary sources, and do not assume the search will be simple or straightforward. Secondary sources are not easy, either. Because you think something should exist doesn't mean it will be located where you expect to find it.

The best you can offer yourself is allowing enough time to shape your project around the resources you find available. Research should be understood as a major challenge of the 101 experience, and the more time, energy, and understanding you put into it, the better your paper will be. Your instructor and the library staff will help in any way they can, but you must be prepared to take on the research task as your primary responsibility.

#### *General Berkeley Library Collections Overview*

Whatever the blessings of the web, your project will almost inevitably start from the library. When historians (for instance, your instructors) insist on this, they are not being antiquarian curmudgeons. By its very nature, history draws on primary and secondary sources from the past. Only a tiny fraction of these are available online. More than that, original research requires you to discover something new, independent, and interesting. That often means going to exactly those sources that have not already been posted and analyzed to death.

Fortunately, you have access to outstanding library resources. The Berkeley library, one of the largest in the country, has over 9 million volumes and receives nearly 90,000 serial titles. The collections are dispersed among the Main Library, the Bancroft Library, Moffitt Undergraduate Library, two dozen subject specialty (branch) libraries, and off-campus storage. Doe Library is just one unit in the campus-wide library system and consists of the Main Stacks, General Reference, the Periodical Room, the Newspaper/Microform Room, Media Resources, Interlibrary Borrowing, the Reference Center, and more. The main and branch libraries maintain important reference sources on CD-ROM and provide an electronic gateways to online resources. A good part of the print collection is stored at the Northern Regional Library Facility (NRLF) in Richmond, and items must be requested online or at the main circulation desk.

The library system, obviously, is huge. You will want to get to know its facilities. You must take a tour if you have not already. Workshops give guidance in using the two online catalogs, GLADIS (for Berkeley) and MELVYL (and MELVYL Periodicals, for the UC system). For a schedule of tours and workshops see <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Instruction/>.

The library's website (<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu>) contains a great deal of information, perhaps overwhelmingly much. Useful resources within it include

- An Undergraduate's Guide to the Library  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Undergrad.html>



- Library Research Using Primary Sources  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/PrimarySources.html>
- Library Research Guides (exhaustive, but often useful)  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/rguides.html>

Your subject will determine what libraries on campus you will rely on. Some of these are obvious: the East Asian Library, for instance, for East Asian history. But you may be surprised to discover that a significant amount of material on the history of California agriculture is housed in the Bioscience and Natural Resources Library, or that materials on certain aspects of labor history are in the Business and Economics Library. Some of the campus libraries (for instance, the law library at Boalt Hall) have their own electronic or card catalogs. Ask your instructor for guidance.

For some topics the Bancroft Library can be a key resource. It is the major research center on the Berkeley campus for the history of western North America, particularly from the western plains states to the Pacific Coast and from Panama to Alaska, with greatest emphasis on California and Mexico. Other Bancroft collections, such as Rare Books and History of Science and Technology, support a wide range of research from early modern through modern European history. History of Science collects important materials on modern American and campus scientific research. The University Archives documents the history of the University and the campus. The Regional Oral History Office has a remarkable collection of interviews. As Bancroft is the special collections library, certain restrictions apply: all materials are paged and non-circulating, only pencils are used, and all photocopy requests are subject to copyright and preservation considerations. Registration is required of all readers.

### ***Reference Assistance***

A brief interaction with a librarian over the reference desk can save hours of footwork and prevent frustrating dead ends. Most campus libraries are staffed by trained personnel whose job it is to answer questions about finding material, onsite and off. The main library's Reference Center (<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/RefCenter/>) is located on Floor 2 of Doe Library.

### ***Interlibrary Borrowing***

The library can borrow materials — books, microfilm, dissertations — from other institutions off-campus. Easiest is to start with other UC campuses (MELVYL and MELVYL Periodicals catalogs). But you may also request materials from other libraries across the country. If you plan to rely on the Interlibrary Borrowing Service (<http://library.berkeley.edu/ILS/ibs.html>, 133 Doe Library), you must put in your request early in the semester. Usually books arrive within a few weeks, but sometimes they take longer. Be very careful about formulating topics that rely heavily on materials obtained from elsewhere.

### ***Off-Campus Collections***

There are thousands of repositories of primary documents. Most are beyond the reach of a one-semester thesis. However, some local archives (for instance, in the Bay Area or Sacramento) can be consulted for a 101 project. For ideas see the list of California archives at <http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/west.html#usca>. For collections further afield, if you make a strong case and plan well in advance, you may be able to get a travel grant. Usually this is most feasible for projects begun in advance of the 101 semester. Speak with your instructors about the possibilities. Sources for travel grants include the L&S Office of Undergraduate Research (<http://research.berkeley.edu/travel/tgur-info.html>) and the Department of History.

### ***Using Databases and Catalogues***

Plan to cast the broadest research net possible to discover relevant materials. For many subjects there are multiple access points, not a single path or research approach. At the same time, do your searching strategically. Ask your instructor about specialized databases, catalogues, and reference works in your field, or consult standard handbooks like *The American Historical Association's Guide to Historical Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Beginning from a secondary source recognized as reputable will save you time compared to searching blindly through GLADIS.

Once you have an entree into the literature, you can use library catalogs more effectively, starting from author names, title words, and subject headings. When you search, learn the Library of Congress Subject Headings. These subject terms are the standardized vocabulary for searches. You can find them in four large red volumes near the reference desk in any campus library.

### ***Internet Resources***

The web is a mixed blessing for historians. There is good material on it, including basic reference information and primary sources otherwise hard to access. But just about anyone can publish on the web, disregarding all standards of accuracy or competence. Information found online must be used as critically as information in a book. In documents made available on the web there can be gaps and omissions, just as in familiar print collections; and some materials in physical format give you clues to their history (printing, binding, etc.) that vanish in an electronic version. The web's networked structure can give you wonderful leads via links. Yet it defies all principles of organization built into a research library. And while browsing is pleasant, it can swallow up huge amounts of "research" time. Ask your instructor about gateway sites in your field.

## IV. HISTORICAL RESEARCH

You need some rough idea of your topic in order to begin researching. At the same time, only through the research itself will you finally figure out the real topic and thesis. The usefulness and significance of the primary materials you initially select will emerge only as you read them.

### *Using Secondary Materials*

Although your paper will be written mostly from primary sources, you will also need to consult secondary materials. Secondary materials serve three principal functions in your research. First, they establish the general contours of your period, provide a sense of its major events and developments, and present **facts** about your topic or issues relating to it. But it is absolutely essential that you do not stop at this point. You need to read secondary sources critically.

Thus the second purpose of using secondary accounts is to understand their **interpretations** of history. For example, if your topic is the role of John Pym in the Parliament of 1640, you need to read widely enough to recognize that there have been many interpretations of the English Civil War, and that, in particular, two major lines of interpretation have dominated. Understanding this will let you see how historians have worked with their facts. And even if your topic treats a subject overlooked by historians, you can still relate your findings to the period's larger issues. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you read the works of other historians:

- When was this study written? Is it still reliable? Has it been superseded or challenged by other work?
- Who is the author? What is his or her purpose in writing? What is the thesis?
- How does the author approach the subject? What can you tell from the way he or she organizes the study?
- What kinds of sources does the author use? Do other historians of the same period or subject rely on different sources?
- Is the argument convincing? Why or why not?
- What assumptions does the author make: about historical causation, the role of ideas in history, the importance of class relations or of individuals' actions ... ?
- What questions doesn't the author answer? Are aspects of his or her interpretation contradictory or underdeveloped?

When you have read several interpretations of the same thing, you will start to see the general areas of historians' disagreement and their differences in method and presentation of evidence.

Finally, secondary sources can be invaluable in offering **clues to other sources, primary or secondary**. Unless you specifically want a textbook overview, you should question the usefulness of any work that does not contain footnotes or endnotes. Good secondary sources always contain notes, and sometimes a bibliography or bibliographic essay. All can be mined for primary sources, as well as for references to additional secondary materials.

You may wonder about the order in which to read primary and secondary sources. Should you refrain from secondary reading until your primary research is completed, in order to approach the sources without preconceptions? Or should you read all the secondary literature first, gaining a thorough background before tackling primary research? There is no one right way to do it. The following advice represents one solution:

1. Read a few books and articles, to familiarize yourself with some of the major issues and interpretations, and to extract citations to source materials.
2. Immerse yourself in primary research, with occasional forays into secondary materials when you need more bibliographic references or clarification about a fact or event.
3. Return to the secondary literature before you begin to write your rough draft, so that you can place your own interpretation or thesis in a historiographical context.

It should be clear from this discussion that **you need to read secondary sources critically, purposefully, and selectively**.

Secondary sources range from large overviews to specialized monographs to research articles in the scholarly literature. More than may have been the case in your previous research, you will need to exploit the full range of materials. That means looking for articles as well as books — and that can mean using specialized databases to find them, as your instructor can show you how to do.

### ***Reading Primary Sources***

The core material for your paper, of course, will come from primary sources. Your instructor will help you locate specialized guides to primary materials in your particular area. The previous section of this handbook also indicates some of your resources. Regardless of your specific topic, it is important that you follow up each lead until you are reasonably certain that you have located all the pertinent and available materials. The quality of your paper may depend heavily on your ingenuity in this historical detective work.

The quality of your paper will also depend on your skill in analyzing primary sources carefully and critically. As you go, keep in mind the following questions. (Of course, some of the questions may not apply to all source materials; you bring different questions to a diary or photograph than to a census.)

- Who created the item you are examining? What do you know about the his or her religious beliefs, socioeconomic background, political affiliation? How might these factors affect his or her point of view?

- When was the item created or written? Under what circumstances and for what purpose? Was it intended for public or private use? (For instance, would you expect transcripts of Richard Nixon’s private conversations to sound like his press conferences?)
- If this is a written document, what kind of language does it contain? (Informal? official? poetic? earthy? satiric?) If it is a material artifact, what conventions of style and substance does it invoke?
- What assumptions does the item’s creator make? (For instance, when a Jacksonian politician talks about the rights of “all Americans,” does he really mean “adult white males”?)
- What questions could the item answer? What questions can’t it? What other sources or kinds of sources might you need to examine?

### ***The Mechanics of Research***

The essence of historical research is extracting from your sources (sometimes voluminous or scattered) the materials that are relevant to your topic, and, equally important, recording and arranging those materials so that they are readily usable for analysis and composition. The first test of your scholarship is the availability of the information you have gathered. Information buried somewhere in a hodgepodge collection of paper means lost time and shoddy synthesis. While highlighted and annotated photocopies serve many purposes, you can find yourself lost in huge stacks of paper. Thus nearly all historians (and successful 101 authors) rely on careful notetaking.

Individual scholars work out through trial and error their own methods for taking and filing notes. Since, however, your research experience may be limited, you may find it helpful to adopt some modification of the system suggested below. Along with the standard index-card format (for easy portability, physical sorting, and rearrangement), you may consider word processing documents (for text searching), database files (text searching and other sorts of sorting), or packaged bibliographic software. But if you are not already up to speed with a software package, this is probably not the time to try it out.

A note-taking and note-filing system is the only way you can be sure to have the information you have gathered ready at hand. You need to be able to find material quickly, so your system should have some chronological and topical logic. For many scholars, the simplest approach is to record each item of information on a separate slip or card (or in a separate record in your computer software). You can then provisionally arrange the entries chronologically within topical subdivisions. The payoff comes not only in keeping track of your research, but when preparing to write a particular section. When you look for the notes relevant to that point, you can avoid leafing through dozens of notebook pages (if you want to write on full-sized pieces of paper, at least consider a ring binder!) or alphabetically arranged sources. You need not adhere to this system if you feel more comfortable with another; what is important is that you devise a system and stick to it. Though you will doubtless need to revise your method as you go, you will save time and avoid confusion by faithfully using the best one you can devise from the outset.

You need three different kinds of notes: bibliographic references, notes on primary sources, and notes on secondary sources. You can keep these on different sizes or colors of index cards, or in different segments of a computer file. It is essential that you keep a careful list of all your sources, primary and secondary, with full bibliographic data (see the appendix “Technical Instructions” below). You will truly save yourself much trouble by assembling this information when the source is in your hands.

For primary sources, the kind of notes you take will depend on your method and the character of your sources. If you are writing on metaphors of time in Japanese poetry of the Tokugawa era, you would need to quote extensively from primary documents, in order to convey a sense of the language. If you are investigating comparative urbanization patterns in post-independence African states, you would present data in the form of maps, tables, appendices, etc. Here photocopying from primary sources, particularly ones that do not suit themselves to verbal rendering, can be a better use of time than taking notes. Tailor your efforts to these factors. And continually ask yourself: “How many quotations can I conceivably use in a thirty- to fifty-page paper?”

In taking notes on secondary sources, you want two things: facts and interpretations. Your notes may be as brief as is compatible with clarity, but remember that what seems clear at the time you take a note may be ambiguous several weeks later when you are writing. The facts presented by a secondary source should be summarized unless you think you may want to quote a certain passage verbatim in your paper, or unless a statement is so important that you will need the exact wording. Be extremely careful to differentiate in your notes between your own words and those of the source. (Quotation marks have a place in your notes.) Do not waste time taking extensive notes on a well-indexed source that will be at your elbow when you write your paper. Indeed, to avoid the proliferation of notes, and the temptation to use someone else’s phrasing instead of your own, you may wish to take notes on a secondary source only after you have finished reading it, and then to jot down only the essential points.

In notes on primary and secondary sources, be sure to get attributions and contexts straight. It is easier to get it right the first time than to go back and check. Develop a checklist of the information you need, perhaps keyed to different areas of an index card. A standard index card format could look like this:

- **At the top left**, keywords for quick scanning or sorting.
- **At the top right**, identifying information about the source: publication information for a book (with page numbers!), short description of an archival document, photograph, or material artifact.
- **In the body** of the card, notes, summaries, thoughts, or quotations.
- **At the lower right**, library call number or collection location.

Keep your notes safe, away from roommates’ pets, cooking, or practical jokes. If you take notes on the computer, back them up!

### ***A Last Word about Research***

You can do a prodigious amount of research and still produce a mediocre paper. But the obverse is not true: skimpy research rarely results in an excellent piece of historical writing. When it comes to the 101 paper, there is no substitute for hard work. The sooner you take this to heart, the happier you will be with the outcome.

## V. HISTORICAL COMPOSITION

Your research will in many ways be the easier part of your 101 paper. The more difficult task will be making sense of the material you find — structuring it, presenting it clearly and concisely, developing an argument supported by your evidence and leading to a logical conclusion. As you begin to think about writing your paper, you will want to keep in mind the following considerations.



### *Organization*

For a paper of this size, organization is important. Different historians have different ways of imagining their projects. It is worth reflecting on your own previous experience. For some historians, a research paper is something like a chain, a narrative or argument leading directly from Point A to Point B. These historians tend to organize things in a linear fashion, cutting and pasting in a word-processed outline or filling in gaps in a long deck of index cards. For others, a project is a puzzle with pieces to be moved around on a surface as they try out various possible fits. Some historians work with visual maps in their heads: circles around concepts or events, lines between them suggesting connections. The physical analogue of these diagrams is the desk covered with stacks of papers or cards.

The problem of organization should be tackled as soon as the vague outlines of your thesis begin to take form in your mind. What are the logical divisions of your subject? What elements should be given prominence, and which parts subordinated? In what order should different aspects be treated? Is your subject best suited to a narrative or analytical framework? Will it make most



sense if you develop your paper thematically or chronologically? Historians organize their material along a wide variety of approaches, including some borrowed from the humanities and social sciences. The nature of your material may dictate, or at least suggest, the model you should use.

In the end, writing is linear. (Hypertext may be starting to change that.) And for linear papers, outlines are essential. Start making tentative outlines early in your research, as full as your knowledge permits. You and your instructor will probably agree on a date for submitting a formal outline, together with a bibliography. You will doubtless find that your first draft or your final paper do not conform exactly to the initial outline. Indeed, as you move further into your work, you may find that your paper should be organized quite differently from what you assumed at the outset. This is perfectly normal. An outline is not a prescriptive straitjacket, but a useful preliminary tool. You may want to rewrite it as you go or develop it in fuller detail.

### *Writing, Hands-On*

Research is endlessly seductive; writing is hard work.

Barbara Tuchman

Writing your paper is at once your most important and most difficult job. There is no paper without writing. But good writing requires an enormous amount of care, hard work, and time. Students consistently underestimate the time and effort it takes to write polished prose. (A general rule: for every week of research, allow yourself two weeks of writing and revision.) Research **is** easier than writing, and if you are like most scholars, you will never feel that you have exhausted every possible source. But postponing writing in order to run down an elusive piece of evidence is a real mistake. For many students, intentionally or not, it becomes a way of avoiding the main business of sitting down to compose. Most research papers benefit not from the extra week of research, but from the extra week of writing and rewriting.

You may previously have succeeded at composing a short paper at the computer the night before it was due. But you cannot write a good 101 paper that way. Force yourself to begin writing before you really think you are ready. (Most people never think they are ready.) Everyone knows how hard it is to get the actual writing underway, especially as you may not see at the outset just how the paper is going to develop. The only solution is to start writing, without worrying too much at first about style. You can write more manageable sections first instead of starting with the introduction; you can write paragraphs before knowing exactly where they will end up. This is because it is much easier to edit later drafts than it is to get the initial one on paper. Writing early is the only way to begin to structure your material, to see where the paper is heading. It is also the only way to find the holes in logic and evidence that only further research and careful rethinking can fill.

The first full draft represents your first major attempt to present the results of your research in cogent written form. You should write a draft that closely resembles what you want your final paper to be. Leave as few gaps in your argument as possible; wrestle with your ideas and language until you find the most satisfactory interpretations and modes of expression. **Don't put**

**off the solution of knotty problems until the final draft.** This is more than practical advice; it is an intellectual strategy. For the goal of this phase is to use the act of writing to promote energetic and critical thinking.

Writing early and continually will improve the quality of your final draft immeasurably, and it will make you feel much better, too. A 101 paper becomes much less formidable when you can see it taking shape day by day.

### *Good Historical Writing*

Historians have traditionally held it to be their task to tell as accurately as possible what happened. Indeed, your first goal is to create an accurate and unbiased account. A further goal, of equal importance, is to assess the significance of your findings. The best historical writing usually combines precise factual recounting with judicious analysis and interpretation. In both of these dimensions, you want to produce a thesis that invites readers in and carries them along.

The writer of history, I believe, has a number of duties *vis-à-vis* the reader, if he wants to keep him reading. The first is to distill. He must do the preliminary work for the reader, assemble the information, make sense of it, select the essential, discard the irrelevant — and put the rest together so that it forms a developing dramatic narrative.

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Your paper should present an argument, a point of view, a critical judgment of your own. It ought not to be a formless pile of facts or disconnected topical analysis. Even more than a shorter paper, the 101 essay needs the structuring of a thesis. Make sure the thesis statement gets placed up front, in the first one or two paragraphs (or, stretching it, three). The greater scope of the 101 paper does **not** require correspondingly inflating the length of the introduction.

Your thesis will emerge from the way you choose to construct your paper, from the points you emphasize, from the ways you relate your findings to the interpretations of other historians and the larger context of your subject. You may not know what your thesis is when you begin your research and writing. However, it should emerge by the time you complete your first draft. If at the time the first draft is written, you are still unclear about what your thesis really is, you need to sharpen your focus, reconsider your organizational structure, and/or think in greater detail about the place of your findings in the larger historical context.

It is poor scholarship to begin with a fixed hypothesis and select only that evidence that supports it. You may start out with certain ideas about what you are likely to find, but you need to test and refine your hypothesis as you go. In short, your evidence should suggest your argument, rather than your argument dictating what evidence you seek. If you have a hypothesis for which you have little direct evidence, you may choose to present it in phrases such as “Further research may show . . .” or “We can logically infer . . .” In any case, distinguish between those conclusions grounded firmly on research and those that are speculative.

Historical arguments are delicate things. You are seeking to persuade your readers to accept your telling of the story. You can do this most effectively, however, when you avoid bludgeoning them. Good historical arguments acknowledge that other interpreters might see things otherwise. You should treat counterevidence and counterarguments with respect — and seek to turn them in your own direction. Good historical arguments also come to terms with the complexity of real-world causes. You can argue a thesis without suggesting that your story, and it alone, explains everything at stake.

### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism is the appropriation and imitation of the language or ideas of another, representing them as one's original thoughts. This denies the real author credit, and it voids the purpose of the 101 thesis. It should go without saying that your 101 paper must be your own work.

In practical terms, a writer is plagiarizing whenever he or she

- Does not cite a source from which material was directly or indirectly taken, or
- Uses more than two words in succession from another author without putting the phrase in quotation marks.

Thus one can cite the source used and still be guilty of plagiarism if a direct quotation is not indicated by the use of quotation marks. When in doubt, err on the side of caution; formulate your paraphrases without looking directly at your source text. Rules about plagiarism apply equally, indeed emphatically, to sources on the web. Beyond the conventional rules for footnoting, remember that if you cite or quote from a primary source contained in a secondary work, you must give credit in the footnote to both.

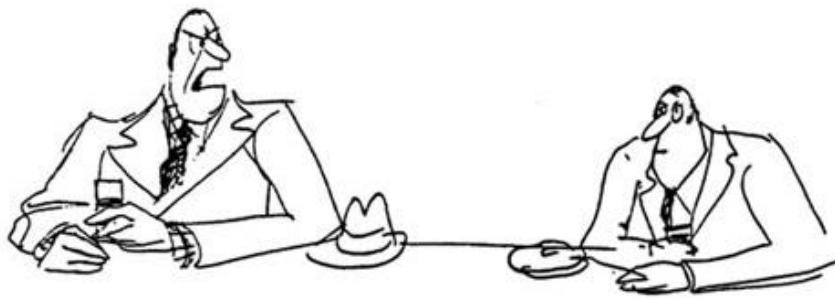
At the same time, matters of common knowledge (ones that take no great pains to establish) do not require footnotes. For a sense of what needs footnoting and what does not, examine professional historians' writings. If you are at all uncertain whether something needs to be footnoted, check with your instructor. Every instructor prefers to help students avoid plagiarism than to try to catch them in it.

### ***The First Draft: A Checklist***

Before handing in your first draft, read it through at least once with the following questions in mind. They are hard to apply to your own writing; but try to get some distance and give it a try. If your 101 section provides you with the opportunity to read other students' drafts, this checklist may also offer criteria for evaluating them.

1. **Argument.** Is the overall problem clearly defined? Is the thesis sharply developed? Are the relationships between main ideas and supporting ones plain? Are there internal contradictions in your argument? Does the paper indicate a firm understanding of the relationship between the particular problem you are investigating and the larger history of the period?

2. **Structure.** Does the paper's organization enhance or impede understanding of your thesis? Does the paper have an introduction, body, and conclusion that follow each other logically and give the paper coherence and unity? Is the purpose of each paragraph plain, and does it lead logically and clearly to the next? Does the paper repeat itself?
3. **Evidence and documentation.** Do you proceed fairly from examples to generalizations? Do you present sufficient evidence to warrant your conclusions? Do your footnotes convey all the necessary information? Do you cite the sources most appropriate and convincing to your argument?
4. **Prose.** Have you reviewed and tuned your writing?
  - Is your tone appropriate to your subject, audience, and task? Does the voice express confidence while respecting differences of opinion?
  - Is your language burdened with clichés? Can you cut out verbosity and rephrase for concision? Do your long sentences need to be pruned or divided? Have you used fancy words (renunciate, cognizant, emotion) where straightforward equivalents would be more direct (give up, aware, feeling)?
  - Is the prose as forceful as it could be? Do you use active constructions ("Charlotte kicked the ball") in place of the wordy and ineffective passive ("The ball was kicked by Charlotte")? Have you hedged your argument unnecessarily with weasel words (perhaps, somewhat, rather)? Have you relied on meaningless crutches (in fact, basically, actually)?
  - Are the quotations integrated gracefully? Do you use the most interesting and compelling ones? Are they too long? Do you explain their significance, or leave them hanging?
  - Have you proofread for errors in grammar, spelling, word choice, and punctuation? Are the verbs in the past (i.e., historical) tense? Have you checked for typos?



*“Hopefullȳzise”! Did I understand you to say “hopefullȳzise”?’*

## ***Revising***

The chance to hand in a first draft, receive criticism, and then revise is one of the unusual features of History 101. The revision phase of a 101 can be the most creative and satisfying one. It may be only during this period that you solve the paper's organizational problems — or realize the full significance of your research. Use the time to rethink and rewrite. These suggestions should help make revision more productive:

1. **Make an extra paper copy** of your first draft, if you have not done so already. Reserve it for your own revisions, alongside those suggested by your readers.
2. **Reread your paper.** After getting some distance, try to read it as though someone else wrote it. How does the paper flow? Are transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections smooth? Note any corrections or new ideas you want to incorporate. Read the draft out loud, preferably in the company of someone whose judgment you trust. You will be surprised how your ear catches the awkward rhythms, inadvertent rhymes, and meaningless sentences that your eye missed.
3. **Incorporate your instructor's comments.** Go see him or her with any questions. Don't stop with the specific corrections; think about further questions they raise.
4. **Go back through your notes.** Did you leave out important material? Do you discover good quotations that you can now integrate? Do certain notes suggest themes or interpretations you hadn't considered before?
5. **Cut and paste.** One of the hardest things may be to see your work as malleable. A typed paper, even a first draft, has a seeming permanence that inhibits revision. But go to work with pen or pencil, even a pair of scissors and tape. Or copy the electronic text into a new file and open it up. Start moving paragraphs around; try to shake the paper up. Can you make it read better? Can its logic be more compelling?
6. **Subordinate your material to your thesis.** First drafts are often unfocused, poorly organized, and too long. The reason is that the author has not yet decided what to say. With a few weeks' distance and help from others, you should have a better idea of your thesis. Once you do, be ruthless in organizing the paper around it. Cut out any sentence, paragraph, or section that you cannot justify in terms of the thesis; eliminate sources that, while neat, are not germane. Remember, a 101 paper is not an encyclopedia entry; it is a selective and interpretive presentation of evidence in support of a thesis.
7. **Research.** Limit yourself to that research which is essential to the paper. Remember, your time is better spent rewriting and rethinking than gathering more notes.
8. **Reread the checklist for the first draft.** Have you improved the paper as much as possible?
9. **Leave enough time** for final typing or printing. The task will probably take longer than you imagine. This time you will have to get the whole citation apparatus perfect and proofread especially carefully for typos. And this is the stage when toner cartridges run out, typewriters

break, and print queues fill with other jobs. You will be much less harried if you build in a margin of error.

I am sorry to have wearied you with so long a letter but I did not have time to write you a short one.

Pascal, to a friend

## VI. EVALUATION

Your instructor sets the specific criteria for grading your final draft and other coursework. In many cases, your grade on the final paper will be your final grade in the course, but your class participation, prospectus, and other work may make a difference.

Some general guidelines can be applied to assessing a piece of historical research. The components of a superior 101 paper include:

- Thorough research
- Critical thought applied to the reading of source materials
- An original and persuasive argument
- Attention to organization and logic
- Clear and forceful prose
- Careful documentation of evidence

101 papers do not succeed if:

- Imaginative hypotheses are unsupported by specific evidence.
- Facts are presented without argument or interpretation.
- Conceptual or interpretive brilliance is obscured by carelessness in matters of form and expression.

At the end, we hope that **you** will be satisfied and pleased with the outcome. The 101 thesis is a major piece of original work. It displays **your** initiative, **your** effort, **your** creativity. It can be the capstone of your study of history at Berkeley, and that is the real test of the product.

## APPENDIX A. TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS

In preparing manuscripts, historians follow certain broad technical standards. Your 101 thesis, a formal research paper, needs to satisfy these standards. When you are first struggling with them, they can seem petty. But they provide a common set of guidelines for all historical writing. They allow your readers to focus on your content, instead of getting distracted by the formalities of your writing. They simultaneously provide — and this is essential — the necessary documentation of your evidence and sources.

The detailed standards for your paper will be set by your instructor. (Specific fields have specific conventions, for instance, regarding Romanization of foreign languages.) Certain practices are followed in common, however. Grammar and spelling go without saying. Punctuation, quotation, capitalization, abbreviations, formatting headings and subheadings, use of numbers and symbols: detailed guides to such things can be found in the standard handbooks on the preparation of manuscripts. Anytime you are uncertain, you should consult them. In fact, you would do well to get the most recent edition of one of the two major handbooks and keep it ready for constant reference:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999.

Your instructor may specify which of these he or she prefers. Many of the manuals for history students listed in the appendix “Further Reading” contain similar information.

### *Citations*

Nearly all guides give directions on citations. That is because citations are absolutely essential to your paper. Your reader should always be able, from your notes and bibliography, to find the works and the passages you cite. That is the goal; its realization is trickier. Citation forms have never been definitively standardized and therefore vary in the historical literature.

History papers generally do not use the parenthetical format familiar in the social sciences or literature. Instead they combine footnotes (or endnotes) with a bibliography. This is because historians frequently find themselves citing archival material that is hard to abbreviate in parenthetical format. They sometimes also make use of the discursive footnote, which contains other comments or information along with citation information.

Your instructor may give you specific guidelines for your field. The examples given below follow Turabian’s *Manual*. The note style of the *MLA Handbook* is slightly different. (Relevant here is the section “Other Systems of Documentation” dealing with endnotes and footnotes, in the appendix to the *MLA Handbook*. Standard MLA parenthetical style is hard to adapt to history.)



## Notes

Citations are keyed to particular spots in the main text. Either footnotes or endnotes are appropriate for your thesis, unless your instructor specifies one format. Endnotes are generally easier for the author preparing a typewritten manuscript. Footnotes are generally easier for the reader, as they allow for reference to notes without flipping pages. Most word processing programs can automatically format either way and readily convert between them. (One nameless but popular program, unfortunately, tends to move the last footnote of one page onto the next.)

Notes are numbered consecutively through the whole paper. Do not restart them on each page. They should be signaled with arabic numbers (**not** roman numerals or symbols) raised a half-line above the text. Footnote text is displayed with an initial indentation and another superscript numeral; endnote text, with an initial indentation and the numeral (no superscript) followed by a period.

On first mention in the notes, full names of all persons (including authors and editors), the complete title, and all publication information should be given. After first mention, last names are sufficient, followed by a short title. Each note must contain the page or pages cited. The abbreviation *ibid.* (capitalized when the first word in a sentence) should be used to refer to the exact work cited alone in the previous footnote. However, if the first footnote cites works A and B, and the second only B, the short B citation must be repeated instead of *ibid.* For book titles, either italics or underlining is acceptable.

Formatting varies somewhat in different styles. A few examples give the sense:

<sup>1</sup>David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 42-44.

<sup>2</sup>Edmund Burke, III, and Ira M. Lapidus, ed., *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies, vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 44.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>5</sup>Sheldon Rothblatt, "The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English-Speaking World," in *The European and American University Since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*, ed. Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19.

<sup>6</sup>Carl E. Schorske, "Politics and the Psyche in Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal," *American Historical Review* 68 (1961): 945.

<sup>7</sup>Rothblatt, "The Limbs of Osiris," 20, 22-23; Schorske, "Politics and the Psyche," 948.

<sup>8</sup>J. L. Heilbron, Robert W. Seidel, and Bruce R. Wheaton, *Lawrence and His Laboratory: A Historian's View of the Lawrence Years*, 17 May 2002 <<http://www.lbl.gov/Science-Articles/Research-Review/Magazine/1981/index.html>>.

These examples (given in Turabian citation format, except for the website) are for common sorts of secondary works. For more, see the usual handbooks. A bewildering variety of special cases exists; for most, but not all, standard formats have been defined. Manuscript sources, physical artifacts, and materials obtained on the web require special sorts of citations. When in doubt, look it up; if flummoxed, ask your instructor. In all cases, the goal is to provide **all** necessary information for any reader to track them down.

### ***Bibliography***

The formal bibliography, with items arranged alphabetically by authors, editors, corporate entities, or titles, is still the standard form for papers. Primary and secondary materials should be separated; often subcategorization of primary sources is a useful device. The categories in which you organize your bibliography will depend heavily on your topic: for instance, “Manuscript and Manuscript Collections,” “Government Publications,” “Newspapers,” “Printed Diaries, Reminiscences, and Collections of Letters.” The goal is to provide an overview of all your materials, in a form convenient for consultation.

Each entry should be single-spaced with hanging indentation. Double spacing is appropriate between entries; triple spacing, before and after category designations. The format of a bibliography entry is **different** from that of the corresponding footnote or endnote. Among other differences, the first author’s last name is placed first, full pagination is given instead of specific page numbers, and the elements of the citation are separated by periods. You can learn bibliographic software to do the reformatting, or you can do it yourself.

The bibliography entries of the examples above would look so (again in Turabian format):

Burke, Edmund, III, and Ira M. Lapidus, ed. *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*. Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies, vol. 3. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Heilbron, J. L., Robert W. Seidel, and Bruce R. Wheaton. *Lawrence and His Laboratory: A Historian’s View of the Lawrence Years*. 17 May 2002 <<http://www.lbl.gov/Science-Articles/Research-Review/Magazine/1981/index.html>>.

Keightley, David N. *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Rothblatt, Sheldon. “The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English-Speaking World.” In *The European and American University Since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*, ed. Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock, 19-73. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Schorske, Carl E. “Politics and the Psyche in Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal.” *American Historical Review* 68 (1961): 930-46.

Again, special cases abound, for which you should consult the standard manuals.

## APPENDIX B. FURTHER READING

### *Guides for History Students*

- Benjamin, Jules R. *A Student's Guide to History*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: St. Martin's 1998.
- Bennett, James D., and Lowell H. Harrison. *Writing History Papers*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1979.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Brundage, Anthony. *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1997.
- Hellstern, Mark, Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. *The History Student Writer's Manual*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998.
- Marius, Richard. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 1999.
- Marwick, Arthur. *What History Is and Why It Is Important: Primary Sources, Basic Problems of Writing History, Common Pitfalls in Historical Writing*. Bletchley: The Open University Press, 1970.
- Ponsot, Marie, and Rosemary Deen. *Beat Not the Poor Desk*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1982.
- Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1998.

Some of these should be available for perusal in the History Department Library (2337 Dwinelle). You may also want to consult an online guide by a Berkeley History Ph.D.:

Rael, Patrick. *History Writing Guides*. 17 May 2002  
<<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/WritingGuides/researching/html/index.shtml>>.

### *Writing*

- Anderson, Richard. *Writing that Works*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989.
- Baker, Sheridan. *The Practical Stylist*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.
- The Chicago Manual of Style*. 14<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Crews, Frederick C. *The Random House Handbook*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999.
- Lanham, Richard A. *Revising Prose*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
- Morrison, Samuel Eliot. "History as Literary Art." In *By Land and By Sea: Essays and Addresses*, 289-98. New York: Knopf, 1953. Reprinted in *The Harvard Guide to American History*, ed. Frank Freidel, 3-8. Rev. ed. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1974.
- Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Towards Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998.

***Historiography, Nature and Philosophy of History (Some Highly Arbitrary Suggestions)***

Appleby, Joyce, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob. *Telling the Truth about History*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1994.

Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946.

Gay, Peter, and Gerald H. Cavanaugh, ed. *Historians at Work*. 4 vols. New York: Irvington, 1975.

Handlin, Oscar. *Truth in History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Hughes, H. Stuart. *History as Art and as Science: Twin Vistas on the Past*. New York: Garland, 1985.

Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Tuchman, Barbara W. *Practicing History: Selected Essays*. New York: Knopf, 1981.