

# paper-writing checklist

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## History 1307: United States History to 1865

Before submitting your paper, complete the following checklist.

### INTRODUCTION

- My introductory paragraph tells the reader the subject of my research, and defines key terms I will use in my thesis.
- My introduction contains a clearly-stated thesis which explains how and why something happened.

### PARAGRAPHS

- I have thought about how my paragraphs are arranged, and they are structured in a way that best supports my argument.
- I have checked to make sure that I completely tackle one part of my argument before moving on to the next, and I have checked to make sure that I do not unnecessarily revisit arguments I began earlier in the paper.
- Each paragraph is focused around a main idea ("mini-thesis"), which is stated in the paragraph's first sentence ("topic sentence").
- Each paragraph employs evidence supporting that idea. That evidence is analyzed; that is, I have used my own words to tell the reader why and how my evidence supports the topic sentence.
- Each paragraph has a workable transition from its predecessor.

### ARGUMENTATION

- I have thought about the arguments that could be marshaled against mine, and have addressed those through refutation or concession.

### QUOTING AND CITATION

- All material I have quoted appears between quote marks.
- I have minimized or eliminated block quotes. When I have used them, I have indented them on the left, single-spaced them, and not placed quotations at the start and end.
- Each time I bring in evidence that is not clearly common knowledge, I have cited the source of that information with a foot- or end-note.

- Each time I quote I have checked to make sure the quotation is properly integrated into the sentence.
- Each of my quotes clearly relates to a foot- or end-note which offers the source and page number of the quotation.
- For each of my quotes, it is clear who the speaker of the quote is, and the circumstances in which the speaker authored the quote (relevant time, place, and context).
- My foot- or end-note style conforms to the style in my style manual.
- I have included a bibliography of my sources, which conforms to the style of my style manual.

## STYLE

- Each page is numbered consecutively.
- I have used a common typeface, like Courier12, or Times Roman.
- I have double-spaced the paper, and have left one-inch margins at top, bottom, and sides.
- The title of my paper clearly relates to its contents, or to the question I have been asked to answer.

## EDITING

- I have proofread the paper for spelling and grammar errors.
- I have re-written the paper at least once, identifying and eliminating instances of:
  - passive voice
  - inconsistent tenses
  - subject/verb disagreement
  - dangling clauses
  - improper pronoun references
  - comma splices, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments
  - colloquial phrases
- I have read the paper aloud to myself or to someone else, listening for sentences that do not work.

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