Reporting Historical Research

Paralleling the rise of realism in American literature was a rise in realism for historians, who began to take a more scientific and objective approach to gathering and interpreting evidence about historical events. Instead of writing to glorify or justify conquerors, historians would analyze and evaluate all the available evidence about an event before drawing any conclusions. Now you will have the opportunity to **investigate a historical event** by analyzing several different historical records about it, explaining the similarities and differences among the records, and drawing conclusions about the event.

Prewriting

Choose and Narrow a Topic

**Travel to the Past**   You investigate a historical event so you can draw your own conclusions about the event and its significance. When you read a single record of a historical event—the attack on Pearl Harbor or the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the fall of the Berlin Wall—you are likely to be reading information that represents only one **perspective,** or point of view, on that event. To understand a historical event fully, you need to examine a wide variety of sources representing all relevant perspectives on the event.

As you consider a topic for your paper, look for a controversial event that interests you and for which you will be able to find a variety of sources. You should also make sure that the topic is narrow enough to be covered well in a paper of 1,500 words. To choose an appropriate topic, follow the example in the student model below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What historical event am I interested in? | I’m interested in the Civil War. |
| How can I narrow this topic, if necessary? | I can focus on one important event: General Sherman’s march from Atlanta to Savannah. |
| Can I find a variety of sources on this topic? | Yes—records and newspaper accounts written during the war, memoirs and books written after the war are available. |
| Can I find sources representing all relevant perspectives on this topic? | Yes, there should be plenty of information representing various points of view, such as those of Northerners, Southerners, soldiers, and civilians. |

Answering the last two questions in the chart above might require some preliminary research. If you can’t find information representing different perspectives on the event, pick another event that lends itself to hearty investigation. If you’re not sure what historical event you’re interested in, thumb through a history book for intriguing topics or ask a history teacher to suggest interesting historical events for you to consider.

Consider Purpose and Audience

**Cover the Basics**Once you have narrowed your topic, you should consider your **purpose** for writing this investigative paper. Of course you want to inform your **audience**—most likely your classmates and teacher—about your topic. Avoid, however, simply compiling a collection of facts. Instead, focus on creating a historical investigation paper that synthesizes, or combines, information gathered from various sources, and include conclusions you draw about that information based on logical analysis.

Ask Research Questions

**What Do I Want to Know?**Clear **research questions** will help you focus your search for sources and will lead you to analyze the different perspectives on the historical event you’re investigating. The following chart shows the research questions one writer developed to focus his research on General Sherman’s March.

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **•** | What are the facts of Sherman’s March? | | **•** | What perspective is revealed by the written or spoken testimony of each group directly involved in or affected by the march? | | **•** | What were the perspectives of Northerners and Southerners not directly involved in or affected by the march? | |

Find Answers to Research Questions

**The Search Begins**Begin to track down the answers to your research questions with a general reference work. You’ll get an overview of your topic and gain valuable background information. In addition, an article in a general reference work usually mentions other sources you can use in your research. For this initial step, consult a print or CD-ROM encyclopedia, or search the Internet for sites or pages that contain related key words.

**Follow the Leads**   Once you have an overview of your topic, move on to specific sources that can help you answer your research questions. Be creative in developing a research strategy. Avoid restricting yourself to print sources available at your school or community library. Your most valuable information might come from an interview with a historian, a visit to a museum, a letter (or e-mail) requesting additional information, or a visit to an actual historical site. Some sources may lead you to other sources. The chart below lists some information sources in your library and community.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| INFORMATION RESOURCES | |
| **Library Resources** | **Sources of Information** |
| Card catalog or online catalog | Books and audiovisuals (separate catalogs in some libraries) |
| *Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature* or online periodical indexes | Articles from magazines and journals |
| Newspaper indexes, specialized reference books, and CD-ROMs | Newspapers (often on microfilm), dictionaries, encyclopedias, and bibliographies |
| Microfilm or microfiche and online databases | Indexes to major newspapers, back issues of some newspapers and magazines |
| **Community Resources** | **Sources of Information** |
| National, state, and local government offices | Official records |
| Museums and historical societies | Exhibits, experts |
| Schools and colleges | Libraries, experts |
| World Wide Web and online services | Articles, interviews, bibliographies, pictures, videos |

**The Hard Evidence**   Your topic may have generated so much interest that you might quickly find yourself buried under information. The following guidelines can help you avoid such a fate.

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| --- | --- |
| **•** | **Choose a balance of primary and secondary sources.**  A **primary** **source** is firsthand, original information, such as a letter, an autobiography, a work of literature or art, a historical document, or an interview with a person who participated in the event being researched. A **secondary source** is information derived from, or about, primary sources, or even from other secondary sources. Examples include an encyclopedia or CD-ROM, a documentary film, a biography, a history book, or an interview with a historian. (Sometimes a primary source may be included in a secondary source or another primary source—called an **indirect source.**For example, a book about Sherman’s March is the indirect source of a soldier’s letter describing the march.) For a paper on Sherman’s March, primary sources might include General Sherman’s memoirs. Secondary sources might include a book about Sherman’s March. |
| **•** | **Choose reliable sources.**  Don’t assume that all sources are reliable. Memory may be faulty or selective in an autobiography or memoir, and emotions may override facts in a letter or diary. A secondary source may be biased or slanted. Research as much as possible in journals and books published by reputable institutions such as major universities and well-known publishing companies. Factual information from such sources can generally be regarded as reliable and can provide you with a good basis for deciding whether other information you uncover is accurate and objective. The reliability of interpretations of facts can be judged only through logical analysis. |
| **•** | **Make sure your sources cover all relevant perspectives.**  Look for sources that tell the perspectives of all the major groups involved in the event. For instance, plenty of information about Sherman’s March is available from the perspectives of Northerners, Sherman and his troops, and Southerners, but less is available from Southern slaves. If information from a certain perspective is scarce, look for hints about what the group thought and felt in information written from other perspectives. |

Record and Organize Information

**Sources First**Using a separate note card or a separate computer file for each source, write complete and accurate information about all the sources you consult, even if you’re not sure you will use them in your paper. Include a short note describing the information contained in the source and estimating the value of the source. Such notes will turn your source cards into an **annotated bibliography.** Also, since your *Works Cited* list—the list of sources at the end of your paper—must contain specific publishing information, you will save time if you record that information on sources exactly as it will appear in the *Works Cited* list. Follow the guidelines below to make your source cards.

|  |
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| GUIDELINES FOR MAKING SOURCE CARDS |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **1.** | **Assign each source a number.** Later, when you are taking notes, it will save time to write a number instead of the author and title. (You might also use the author’s last name as a source code.) | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **2.** | **Record full publishing information.** Consult the Guidelines for Preparing the *Works Cited* List on page 611 and enter publishing information exactly as it appears for each type of entry you have. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **3.** | **Annotate each source.** Write a short note to remind yourself of the content and value of the source. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **4.** | **Note the call number or location.** This information will help you relocate the source quickly. | |

**Finding the Note Worthy**Now that you have selected, evaluated, and recorded your sources, take notes to answer your research questions. To get started, read each source to be sure that you understand the overall meaning. Then, use the following guidelines for taking notes. See page 607 for sample note cards.

|  |
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| GUIDELINES FOR TAKING NOTES |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **1.** | **Use a separate card, half-sheet of paper, or computer file for** **each source and item of information.** Separate cards or files make rearranging and organizing notes easier when you get ready to write. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **2.** | **Record the source number.** In the upper right-hand corner of each note, write the number (or author’s last name) you assigned each source to tell you exactly where you got the information. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **3.** | **Write a label or heading.** In the upper left-hand corner of the card or file, identify the main idea of your note so that you do not have to re-read each note to remind yourself what it is about. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **4.** | **Write the page number(s).** At the end of your note, write the page numbers from which the information comes. Page references, if available, are required for the documentation in your paper. | |

**Decisions, Decisions**   As you take notes, decide how to record each piece of information: Will you quote the information directly? summarize it? paraphrase it? Use the following guidelines to decide.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **•** | **Direct quotation** To capture interesting, well-phrased passages or a passage’s technical accuracy, quote an author directly and exactly, including punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Resist the urge to quote too much. Your task is to synthesize information and draw conclusions from it, not to stitch together a long series of quotations.  Enclose the passage in quotation marks and remember to use ellipsis points to indicate omissions from quoted text. Use brackets to explain words you have changed for the sense of a sentence. |
| **•** | **Paraphrase** If you want to use specific ideas or information from a source without quoting the source, paraphrase the information. Paraphrasing requires completely rewriting the information in your own words and style. |
| **•** | **Summary** Summarize information when you want to use the general idea presented in a source. A summary is highly condensed—typically one fourth to one third the length of the original passage. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3 | **source card number** |
| Sherman’s Purpose | **label** |
| Major Henry Hitchcock stated, “Evidently it is a material element in this campaign to produce among the people of Georgia a thorough conviction of the personal misery which attends war…” | **note (quotation)** |
| page 44 | **page number** |
|  | http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif |
| Major Henry Hitchcock observed that making Georgians completely aware of the terrible consequences that war brings to every individual was clearly part of Sherman’s plan. | **note (paraphrase)** |
| page 44 | http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif |  |
| Major Henry Hitchcock observed that Sherman’s plan included convincing Georgians of the miseries of war. | **note (summary)** |
| page 44 | http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif |

Analyze Your Information

**Accounting for the Records**The next step in the historical investigation process is to analyze your information. Begin by separating your note cards by their headings. For example, the student writing about Sherman’s March found that he had collected information from the perspectives of Northerners, General Sherman, Southerners, and slaves, and divided his note cards accordingly.

As you analyze the information you have gathered, you will probably find that your sources contain conflicting information or different interpretations of the same facts. How can you account for such differences? Here are a couple of questions you can use to analyze differences in your sources.

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| --- | --- |
| **1.** | **What is the background of the author of the information?** Is his or her perspective on the event likely to be biased because of that background? For example, a descendant of a Southerner whose plantation was destroyed by General Sherman’s troops might have a biased perspective on the march. |
| **2.** | **When was the information recorded or the source written?** While material written at the time of an event might have the quality of “eyewitness” news, material written after an event sometimes has the advantage of objectivity. For example, a professional historian writing a century after Sherman’s March has had the opportunity to examine all the records. What he or she writes is probably more objective than what a victim of Sherman’s March might have written. |

Here is one student’s explanation of an important difference between two historical records.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | **Difference between Sources:** The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives commended Sherman and his men for their “gallantry and good conduct,” when Sherman himself was aware that his men had been guilty of “acts of pillage, robbery, and violence.” |  |  | | --- | | **Explanation:** Congress commended Sherman’s men not only to reward their success but also to spread political propaganda and to increase morale. Sherman, on the other hand, was speaking long after the fact, reflecting honestly on his march through Georgia. | |

Write a Thesis Statement

**So, What’s Your Point?**How does all your research information fit together? What larger point, or general conclusion, does all the information support? Write a **thesis statement** in which you state your topic and your general conclusion about it. As you support that statement, you will use a combination of rhetorical strategies: **exposition, narration,** **description.** The following is a sample thesis statement for a historical research paper.

|  |
| --- |
| Northerners, General Sherman, Southerners, and slaves had powerful reasons for their different perspectives on Sherman’s March, and the historical record supports them all. |

Develop an Outline

**Divide and Conquer**   An outline provides an organizational overview of your paper, and allows you to ensure that your ideas flow in a logical progression, with adequate support for each idea.

First, sort your note cards into groups with similar labels—the information you have written in the left-hand corner of each card. The way you group the labels may immediately suggest the main sections or ideas of your paper. Then, decide how best to order these sections. You’ll probably need to use a combination of **chronological order** (the order in which events occur), **logical order** (related ideas grouped together), and **order of importance** (most important idea to least important, or the reverse). Finally, decide how to order the ideas within sections and which supporting details to use.

Now, put your information in a formal outline. A **formal outline** has numerals and letters to identify headings (main ideas), subheadings (supporting ideas and evidence), and details. It provides an overview of your research paper and can serve as a table of contents. Check with your teacher to see if you should attach a formal outline to the final draft of your paper. Here is part of a student’s formal outline for his historical research paper on Sherman’s March.

|  |
| --- |
| I.  Introduction      A. Overview of research      B. Thesis: Northerners, General Sherman, Southerners, and slaves had powerful reasons for their different perspectives on Sherman’s March, and the historical record supports them all.  II. The view from the North      A. Military importance          1. Grant’s chief of staff’s view          2. New York Times view          3. General Grant’s view      B. Conduct of troops          1. Southerners’ view          2. Public Resolution No. 4 |

Documenting Sources

**Give Credit Where Credit Is Due**Documenting a paper means identifying the sources of information you use in the paper, as you use them. The rules for *how* to document sources are clearly specified in whatever style guide you follow, for example, the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide. The rules about *what* to document are not so clear. Use the following guidelines to decide what to document.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| WHAT TO DOCUMENT | |
| **Yes** | Each direct quotation (unless it’s widely known, such as John L. Swigert’s famous understatement on Apollo 13: “Okay, Houston, we’ve had a problem here.”) |
| **Yes** | Any original theory or opinion that is not your own, even if not directly quoted. Since ideas belong to their authors, you must give the authors credit. Otherwise, you are guilty of plagiarism, a form of cheating. |
| **Yes** | Data from surveys, research studies, and interviews |
| **Yes** | Unusual, little-known facts or questionable “facts” |
| **No** | Information that appears in several sources or in standard reference books, such as the fact that William Tecumseh Sherman was a general in the Union army who led a march through Georgia during the Civil War |

**Point the Way**Sources of information enclosed in parentheses and placed within the body of your paper are called**parenthetical citations.** They point the way to the complete bibliographical information in the *Works Cited* list at the end of your paper. The parenthetical citation should be placed as close as possible to the material it documents without disrupting the flow of the sentence. This means that citations are usually inserted at the ends of sentences. The following example shows two sentences that incorporate material from two sources.

|  |
| --- |
| On November 12, 1864, Sherman set out with an army of 62,000 men on a 250-mile march from Atlanta to Savannah (Inglehart). His army destroyed a strip of land 60 miles wide and inflicted $100 million in damages (Holzer 172). |

Parenthetical citations should also be as brief as possible. For most citations, the last name of the author and the page number are sufficient. If the author is named in the sentence, you need give only the page number in parentheses. The following chart shows the form for the most common kinds of sources.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| BASIC CONTENT AND FORM FOR PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS | | |
| **Type of Source** | **Content of Citation** | **Example** |
| Sources with one author | Author’s last name and a page reference, if any | (Golay 36) |
| Separate passages in a single source | Author’s last name and page references | (Derry 386, 388) |
| Sources with more than one author | All authors’ last names; if over three, use first author’s last name and *et al.* (and others) | (Ward, Burns, and Burns 333) |
| Multivolume source | Author’s last name, plus volume and page | (Davis 1: 145–146) |
| Sources with a title only | Full title (if short) or shortened version | (March of Southern Men38) |
| Literary sources published in many editions | Author’s last name, title, and division references (act, scene, canto, book, part, or line numbers) in place of page numbers | (Shakespeare,Hamlet. 3.4.107–108) |
| Indirect sources | Abbreviation *qtd. in* (quoted in) before the source | (qtd. in Miles 175) |
| More than one source in the same citation | Citations separated with semicolons | (Miles 30; Sherman 64) |

**Follow the Forms**The ***Works Cited***list contains all the sources, print and nonprint, that you credit in your paper. You may have used other sources, but if you do not credit them in your historical research paper you need not include them in a *Works Cited* list. Use the following guidelines to help you prepare your *Works Cited* list.

|  |
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| GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE WORKS CITED LIST |
| **Center the words *Works Cited.***Ask your teacher whether the list should begin on a new page. |
| **Begin each entry on a separate line.** Position the first line of the entry even with the left margin, and indent all other lines five spaces, or one-half inch if you are using a word processor. Double-space all entries. |
| **Alphabetize the sources by the authors’ last names.** If there is no author, alphabetize by title, ignoring *A, An,* and *The*and using the first letter of the next word. |
| **If you use two or more sources by the same author, include the author’s last name only in the** **first entry.** For all other entries, put three hyphens in place of the author’s last name (---), followed by a period. |

The following sample entries are a reference for preparing your *Works Cited* list. Notice that you include page numbers only for sources that are one part of a whole work, such as one essay in a book of essays.

|  |
| --- |
| SAMPLE WORKS CITED ENTRIES |
| **Standard Reference Works** If an author is credited in a standard reference work, cite that person’s name first in an entry. Otherwise, the title of the book or article appears first. You do not need to cite the editor. Page and volume numbers aren’t needed if the work alphabetizes entries. For common reference works, use only the edition (if listed) and the year of publication. **Print Encyclopedia Article**  Tebeau, Charlton W. “Sherman, William Tecumseh.” The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Micropedia. 15th ed. 1995.  “Civil War.” The World Book Encyclopedia. 1998 ed.   **Article in a Biographical Reference Book**  “Ulysses Simpson Grant.” Abridged Encyclopedia of World Biography. 6 vols. Detroit: Gale, 1999. |
| **Books One Author** Derry, Joseph T. Story of the Confederate States. New York: Arno, 1979.  **Two Authors** Catton, William, and Bruce Catton. Two Roads to Sumter. New York: McGraw, 1963.  **Three Authors** Ward, Geoffrey C., Ric Burns, and Ken Burns. The Civil War: An Illustrated History. New York: Knopf, 1990. |
| **Four or More Authors**  Beringer, Richard E., et al. Why the South Lost the Civil War. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1986.   **No Author Shown**   The March of the Southern Men. Richmond: Dunn, 1863.   **Editor of a Collection of Writings**  Marius, Richard, ed. The Columbia Book of Civil War Poetry. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.   **Two or Three Editors**  Greenberg, Martin H., and Bill Pronzini, eds. A Treasury of Civil War Stories. New York: Bonanza, 1985.   **Bibliography Published as a Book**  Moss, William. Confederate Broadside Poems: An Annotated Descriptive Bibliography. Westport: Meckler, 1988.   **Translation**  Hess, Earl J., ed. A German in the Yankee Fatherland: The Civil War Letters of Henry A. Kircher. Trans. Ernest J. Thode. Kent: The Kent State UP, 1983. |
| **Selections Within Books**   **From a Book of Works by One Author**  Varhola, Michael J. “The Army.” Everyday Life During the Civil War. Cincinnati: Writer’s Digest, 1999. 129.   **From a Book of Works by Several Authors**  McMurry, Richard M. “The Atlanta Campaign.” The South Besieged: Volume Five of the Image of War, 1861–1865. Ed. William C. Davis. New York: Doubleday, 1983. 240–302.   **Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterword**  Simpson, Brooks D., and Jean V. Berlin. Introduction. Sherman’s Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1860–1865. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1999. |
| **Articles from Magazines, Newspapers, and Journals**   **From a Weekly Magazine**  Ebeling, Ashlea. “Battle Cry.” Forbes. 5 Oct. 1998: 78–80.   **From a Monthly or Quarterly Magazine**  Wert, Jeffrey D. “A Month Overrated: April, 1865 in the U.S. Civil War.” Civil War Times. May 2001: 20.   **Anonymous Author**  “South Rises.” U.S. News and World Report. 10 May 1999: 8.   **From a Scholarly Journal**  Brown, William O., and Richard K. Burdekin. “Turning Points in the U.S. Civil War: A British Perspective.” Journal of Economic History. 60.1 (216–231).   **From a Daily Newspaper, with a Byline**  Horwitz, Tony. “Shades of Gray: Did Blacks Fight Freely for the Confederacy?” The Wall Street Journal. 8 May 1997: A1.   **From a Daily Newspaper, without a Byline**  “The Latest Battle of Gettysburg.” New York Times. 4 July 1997: A18.   **Unsigned Editorial from a Daily Newspaper, No City in Paper’s Title**  “Humanity of the War.” Editorial. The Christian Recorder. 1 March 1862. |
| **Other Sources**   **Personal Interview**  Norton, Stewart. Personal interview. 14 Aug. 2001.   **Telephone Interview**  LaRue, Patricia. Telephone interview. 23 May 2001.   **Published Interview**  Burns, Ken. Interview with Alice Cary. “If Abe Lincoln Were Campaigning for President Today, He Wouldn’t Win.” TV Guide25 Jan. 1992: 13.   **Broadcast or Recorded Interview**  Burns, Ken. Interview with Terry Gross. Fresh Air. Natl. Public Radio. WHYY, Philadelphia. 29 Jan. 1997.   **Published Letter**  Sherman, William T. “To John Sherman.” 22 April 1862. Letter in Sherman’s Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1860–1865. Ed. Brooks D. Simpson and Jean V. Berlin. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1999.   **Unpublished Letter or E-Mail Message**  Gumble, Max. Letter to the author. 3 Sept. 2001. Westmoreland, Margaret. E-mail to the author. 30 Dec. 2001.   **Unpublished Thesis or Dissertation**  Bass, Patrick Grady. “Fall of Crisis: European Intervention and the American Civil War.” Diss. Claremont Graduate School, 1986.   **Sound Recording**   Songs of the Civil War. New World Records, 1976.   **Film or Video Recording**   The Civil War. Dir. Ken Burns. Videocassette. PBS Video, 1989.  **NOTE:** Always include the title, director or producer, distributor, and year. For DVD or video recordings, add a description of the medium (Videodisc or Videocassette) before the distributor’s name.  **Material Accessed Through the Internet** "American Civil War." Britannica Online. Vers. 1994–2001. Encyclopedia Britannica. 6 June 2001. http://members.eb.com/   **Article from a CD-ROM Reference Work**  Hassler, Jr., Warren W. “Sherman, William Tecumseh.” Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. CD-ROM. Grolier Inc. 2001.   **Full-Text Magazine, Newspaper, or Journal Article from a CD-ROM Database**  “Here Are the 10 Civil War Battlefields Listed as ‘Endangered’ by Trust.” Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, 27 Feb. 2001: K2031. Infotrac. CD-ROM. Gale Group, 2001. |

Reporting Historical Research

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| A Writer’s Framework |
| **Introduction**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Draw readers in with an interesting opener. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Give readers background information and an overview of your research. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Include your thesis statement. | |
| **Body**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Develop each main idea that supports your thesis. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Include facts and details from a variety of primary and secondary sources. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Arrange your ideas in a logical order. | |
| **Conclusion**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Restate your thesis. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Summarize your main points. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Bring the paper to a close with a concluding thought or a thought-provoking idea. | |

Revising

Evaluate and Revise Content, Organization, and Style

**Twice Is Nice**   To assess your writing effectively, read through your paper at least twice. The first time, evaluate and revise content and organization. Then, in your second reading, revise for style.

**First Reading:** **Content and Organization** The following chart can help you determine whether you have clearly communicated your research. If you need help answering the questions in the first column, use the tips in the middle column. Then, revise your paper by making the changes suggested in the last column.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Rubric: Reporting Historical Research | | |
| **Evaluation Questions** | **Tips** | **Revision Techniques** |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **1.** | Does the introduction draw readers into the research, give an overview of the research, and state the thesis? | | **Underline** the sentence that draws readers into the research; **bracket** the overview of research; **circle** the thesis statement. | **Add** a quotation or interesting detail to the opening sentence. **Add** overview information, or **elaborate** on existing information. **Add** a thesis statement. |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **2.** | Do several main ideas develop the thesis? Do facts and details support the main ideas? | | In the margin, **check** each main idea that develops the thesis. In the text, **double-check** at least one piece of supporting evidence for each idea. If there are not at least three main ideas and support for each, revise. | **Add** main ideas to develop your thesis; consult your outline and note cards for ideas you may have missed. **Delete** ideas that do not support the thesis. **Elaborate** on each idea with material drawn from your research. |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **3.** | Does the paper include summaries and paraphrases in addition to direct quotations? | | **Circle** all direct quotations. If direct quotations comprise more than 1/3 of the paper, revise. | **Replace** some direct quotations with paraphrases or summaries. |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **4.** | Are sources cited when necessary? Are the citations in the correct MLA format? | | **Place stars** by direct quotations and by facts that are not common knowledge. | **Add** documentation for quoted, summarized, or paraphrased material. **Revise** incorrect citations. |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **5.** | Does the conclusion restate the thesis and summarize the paper’s main points? Does the writer close with a concluding thought or a thought-provoking idea? | | **Bracket** the restatement of the thesis. **Highlight** the summary of main ideas. **Circle** the thought-provoking ending. | **Add** a sentence that returns the reader to the thesis of the paper. **Add** a summary of main ideas. **Add** a concluding thought or a thought-provoking idea. |

**Second Reading:** **Style** Your style, how you express your ideas, is important in a long and complex research paper. If every sentence begins the same way, such as with the subject and verb of a main clause, your paper may bore readers. You can make your paper more interesting by **varying sentence beginnings.** For example, you can begin some sentences with adverb clauses. Adverb clauses answer the questions *How? When? Where? Why?* and *To what extent?* Use the following style guidelines to evaluate and refine your sentence beginnings.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Style Guidelines | | |
| **Evaluation Question** | **Tip** | **Revision Technique** |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | • | Do many of the paper’s sentences begin the same way? | | **Underline** the first five words of each sentence. If most subjects and verbs are underlined, revise. | **Rearrange** and **combine** sentences to place adverb clauses at the beginning. Rephrase when necessary. |

**ANALYZING THE REVISION PROCESS**

Study these revisions, and answer the questions that follow.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | This revision model portrays a passage with revisions. | |

Responding to the Revision Process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1.** | Why is the information that the writer added to the second sentence necessary? |
| **2.** | Why did the writer decide to change the last sentence? |

Publishing

Proofread and Publish Your Paper

**Take Care of Business**   So that your readers will fully appreciate your historical research report, proofread it carefully. The last thing you want is for your readers to dismiss your work completely because they run into basic errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics. Therefore, take care to find and correct such errors. Having a peer help you proofread your paper is a good idea, too. You might be so familiar with your paper that you read over the errors.

**Everything You Wanted to Know About…**   Doing a research paper requires a lot of hard work. Now that you’ve done that hard work, don’t let your accomplishment go unnoticed. Find a larger audience for your paper. Here are some ways you might share your historical research paper with others.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **•** | Save your historical research paper as a writing sample to submit for a college or job application. |
| **•** | If the topic would be of interest to students in lower grades, send your paper to a teacher who teaches a related subject to those students. Consider scanning pictures of people and places involved in the event into your document to enhance its appeal to a younger audience. |
| **•** | Surf the Web to discover sites related to your historical research topic, and submit your paper for possible online publication. As you prepare your work for a wider audience, look for places where you might incorporate **visuals** and **graphics** such as maps, charts, tables, or graphs to make your information more accessible. |

Reflect on Your Paper

**Take Stock**   Writing thoughtful responses to the following questions will help you develop as a thinker, a writer, and a researcher.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **•** | How would you describe the extent of your knowledge of your topic before you researched it? |
| **•** | How did your research experience affect your understanding of your topic? How did it affect your understanding of the study of history? |
| **•** | If you had to list four fundamental principles of research for a student younger than you, what would they be? |