9th Grade
Term Paper
Reference Guide

History Department
John Burroughs School

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Introduction and Project Description

This year's term paper project will be a change in several ways. Here is the official History Department description of the 9th grade term paper assignment:

> *The 9th grade students working on this research project examine multiple causations. The research recognizes a variety of factors that may conflict; the author weighs their relative importance. This weighing of numerous variables and identifying of specific historians who promote these theories takes place in the thesis. The preface, which outlines the argument for the thesis, is approved before the rough draft is begun. The essay is 6 to 8 pages (1500-2000 words) in length and contains references to 7 sources, including a primary source.*

The biggest change from the previous year is that this year each paper must weigh multiple causations for a historical event. The thesis is the answer to a research question. For example, why did Brutus murder Julius Caesar? The thesis is the answer to that question. The thesis is expressed in the preface as a thesis statement. In the example above, the paper would explain and weigh the possible reasons for Brutus' murder of Caesar. The structure of the paper is based completely on arguing the thesis statement systematically and with evidence. The paper is not a report about an event or other topic but rather is a series of interpretations that attempt to answer the research question.

Students will be assigned a member of the library staff to assist in securing the best resources. The first four weeks of the third trimester will be devoted to instruction on how to complete the research paper, laying the foundation for independent work in the following years

Project Requirements

Preliminary Assignments—Students will be required to turn in a number of items in addition to the final copy of the term paper based on what the instructor requires. These smaller assignments will be spaced throughout the period of the term paper assignment. They are meant to assure student progress towards a successful final product. These are some of the assignments your instructor may have you complete:

1. Topic Choices—Many instructors require students to submit several possible persons or events ranked in order of preference with a brief explanation of the student's interest
2. Biography Brief—Most 9th grade students begin their research with a person of interest. The assignment may be a paragraph about the person or a timeline of the person's life, which may begin decades before their birth depending upon the events they were involved with. For example, a timeline of Julius Caesar's life would probably begin with the Gracchi brothers marking the beginning of the Late Republic. The student may be asked to rank several different events from the person's life that

could be the focus of the paper. Thesis questions for each event may be required. Your instructor will provide specific details.

3. Event Timeline—The student has narrowed their topic to a moment in time and provides a detailed recounting of events leading up to the event. While the Biography Brief gave a macro description of the time, the event timeline zooms into the event and provides a micro description of the event. A clear thesis question will probably be required.

4. Preliminary Bibliography—Student provide the instructor with a list of the works written in proper bibliographical form they have in their possession for their research.

5. Note cards—Students submit note cards so instructor may see they are recording all the necessary information to properly organize and document their paper. Students may be asked to begin organizing their note cards into sections or paragraphs for their paper and to assess the progress of their research, identifying topics in need of more research prior to writing the rough draft. A preliminary thesis statement may be required along with the assessment of research.

6. Outline—Students have a thesis statement and outline their proof, which may include topic sentences for their paragraphs and enumeration of the evidence to be included in each paragraph.

7. Preliminary Preface—Students submit a single-spaced typed preface. Some instructors may require that the original copy with the instructor's editing comments be submitted with the final copy of the paper.

8. Peer Editing—Most instructors in the 9th grade assign each student a peer editor for the writing process, and this work receives a grade.

Final Copy Requirements—All parts of the final copy must be stapled together and typed with an acceptable typeface (some instructors will assign preferred typefaces), in 12-point font. Students must also upload to JBNet or email an electronic copy of their essay and notes to their instructor. Instructors will provide instructions for this in class. Here are the parts of the hard copy:

1. Cover Page—cover page must be consistent with the sample in this guide. The cover page is not counted for numbering.

2. Preface—a clean, titled single-spaced copy. The preface is not counted for numbering.

3. Essay—Essay should be double spaced in 12-point font. Essay must include footnotes or endnotes. If using endnotes, they are placed after any Appendix items. The first page of the paper includes the title of the paper and is counted for numbering but is not numbered. Numbering of pages begins on page 2 with "page 2" (quotation marks omitted).

4. Appendix—Appendix items might include maps, diagrams, a family tree, or illustrations. Appendix items are referenced in the paper and titled at the top of each Appendix page. Appendix pages are counted but not numbered. Appendix items are not included in foot/endnotes. Rather, the source information is provided directly beneath each appendix item in the same format as the foot/endnote.

5. Annotated Bibliography—Sources listed in alphabetical order with an annotated comment for each.

Other Project Requirements

Research—Students must make sure their project is thoroughly and carefully researched. Part of the grade will evaluate research for both quality and quantity. Students should seek out a diversity of sources and points of view when preparing their term paper. Following are some more specific requirements for research.

1. **Sources Cited in the Essay**—Students must <u>cite</u> at least 5 of their sources in the body of the essay. Only one source of good repute found exclusively on the Internet may count towards the required sources to be used.
2. **Sources in the Bibliography**—Students must have at least <u>seven</u> sources in their final annotated bibliography. The annotations for each source should indicate where the student obtained the source, its relative usefulness, and how it was used in the project. Only one of the required seven sources may be found exclusively on the Internet.
3. **Primary Source**—Students must have at least one primary source in their bibliography and directly quoted in their paper. The source should be analyzed. Primary sources include materials like government documents, diary entries, eyewitness accounts, works or art from the time studied, newspaper articles from the time studied, transcripts of speeches, etc. Using primary sources helps students and historians to see history through the eyes of people who were there, which is helpful for making accurate interpretations. Consult with your 9th grade instructor about use of the ancient historians to fulfill your primary source requirement.
4. **Scholarly Periodical Source**—9th grade students are encouraged but not required to use scholarly periodical sources in their bibliography and cited in their paper. A scholarly periodical source is an article from a historical or other academic journal. These articles are focused arguments that can come in very handy when looking for quotes that support the student's thesis. They can be obtained from either paper journals or databases available through the Stamper Library. JSTOR is a particularly useful source for these articles.

Thesis & Argument—The most important factor in the student's grade and the overall success of the project is the presence and quality of a clear and logical <u>thesis statement</u> and <u>argument</u> of the thesis statement throughout the paper. The thesis statement must be complex and weigh several factors, and the sections of the paper must argue the thesis statement consistently and logically. It is imperative that the paper not just tell about an event or person. They must be focused on arguing the merits of a complex thesis. Students confused about this idea should seek immediate help from their instructor.

Organization & Time Management—Students must meet each deadline for preliminary assignments. To avoid plagiarism and provide proper documentation all students must carefully follow instructions for maintaining a note card system. All note cards should include a source code and page numbers for the exact location of the information within the source or indication that the source is from the Internet. In

particular, students must make sure when ding their research to clearly distinguish material they have copied verbatim into their notes from material they have paraphrased. Disorganization is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. Questions about paraphrasing should be addressed to their instructor.

Preparatory Work

Choosing a Topic—The basic rules for choosing a topic are that the subject of the term paper must be something from the Ancient or Medieval periods. Due to the paucity of written sources, topics prior to 500 b.c.e. tend to be more challenging. Philosophical and religious topics are more challenging. How did Socrates affect Athens would be a very difficult topic. A more tightly focused topic would be, why was Socrates executed? The former requires a challenging weighing of social, intellectual, economic and political conditions both before and after Socrates with an attempt to associate any observed changes with the teaching or actions of Socrates. Such a topic is more befitting of a graduate student than a college student, not to mention a 9th grade history student. The latter question asks about the factors for a singular event, certainly a more manageable assignment.

1. **Availability of Research**—Before settling on a topic, check the Stamper Library and other area libraries to make sure there is enough available material for a successful project.
2. **There Must be an Open-Ended Research Question**—A topic will not be good if there is no question surrounding it. For example, while the life Cleopatra is interesting, it does not readily contain a research question. Students who would like to do a paper on Cleopatra would need to come up with an open-ended question without an obvious answer about an event in her life. Why did Cleopatra pursue an alliance with Julius Caesar may not be a very good question because is has a fairly obvious answer. (Interestingly, why did Julius Caesar ally with Cleopatra rather than with her sibling might be a better question).

Some Suggestions for Topics—The following lists contain types of topics that have worked well for students in the past, as well as types of topics that have worked poorly. Students have done successful projects of all types, but some topics lend themselves to the requirements of the projects more easily than others.

Good Topics
• **Battles**—Why did one side win or lose? This topic has a ready-made research question. Moreover, the topic includes standard factors to consider—weapons, armor, leaders, experience of troops, condition of troops, types of troops, weather, and terrain to name just a few.
• **A Meaningful/Catastrophic Event**—Why did Pope Urban call for the Crusades? Why was a policy or program made? (Why did Tiberius Gracchus try to pass his land bill? Why did Constantine side against the Arians at the council of Nicea?) Why did

a policy or program succeed or fail? Why was a decision made? (Why did Hannibal choose to attack Saguntum?)

Less Successful Topics
- **Broad Topics**—Students will often begin with broad topics, but they must not remain broad. Trying to argue the outcome of an entire war or decades-long revolution is impossible to do well given the length constraints of the project
- **Eras**—Trying to argue why the Middle Ages or other era happened is likewise to broads. Trying to explain why a religion or philosophy took root is too broad.
- **People**—Failing to narrow your topic to a single event in a person's life often results in a broad survey report of a person, becoming a biography. Almost any person you read about will be involved in specific events. Keeping your paper about something that happened at a specific moment makes it less likely for you to write a report on a person.

Basic Research & Posing a Research Question

Basic Research—Once students have chosen a basic topic and made sure there are enough research materials, they should begin their basic research. Students should begin by seeking out as many sources as they can that seem relevant to their topic, which remembering that several people may be doing the same topic. If some books later prove to be irrelevant, that's ok. During this phase of the project, students should learn the important basic facts about their topic and how it fits into history. Consulting an encyclopedia about their topic is a good place to start. Students should begin compiling a list of key research terms that they add to throughout their research. Begin with general works that cover the topic being researched; consult the index for references to your key terms and use the table of contents to better understand how your topic fits into history. Read key sections. For example, if a student had chosen the Battle of Teutoburger Forest, a book about Augustus would be a good choice, as would one on the early empire. Students should seek to learn about the before and after as it pertains to the topic. This sort of research is especially important for students who begin with a broader topic. A general overview will usually provide the student with a point of interest or question that they can focus more closely on for the project itself. During the basic research phase, students should take factual notes that will let them place their topic into context. Students should also use their basic research to arrive at the research question if they did not have one at the beginning of the process. For example, a student who wants to write a paper on Charlemagne may find the *missi dominici* interesting. This may lead the student to pose a research question about the role the *missi dominici* played in Charlemagne's rule. At the end of the basic research phase, students should have a grasp of the context of their topic, they should have narrowed the focus of their paper, and they should be ready to pose a good research question if they do not already have one.

Posing a Research Question—Choosing a good research question is a critically important for the success of the term paper project. The answer to the research question is the paper's thesis; students should choose a question that will lend itself to

being answered with a complex thesis. Because the thesis must be complex, students should in all cases avoid a research question that can be answered with a simple yes or no. The research question must also be a question that would yield a good thesis statement for an answer:

- Why did X win the Battle of Y?
- Why did the X artistic movement arise?
- Why did the city of X grow so quickly during the Y century?
- How was X able to seize political power in Y during Z?
- What role did technology X play in event Y?

Notice that all of the above are impossible to answer with a yes or no answer. Also, they all lend themselves to answers that take a variety of factors into consideration and require argument. Students should seek to pose these types of research questions.

Focused Research—Once students have arrived at a good research question, the efficiency of their research should increase. The goal of the research in this phase of the project is to gather information that will make it possible to answer the research question posed by the student. Students should seek information that will provide them with the evidence not only to answer the question, but also to back up their answer with facts, quotations, and any other relevant evidence. This is the point in the process where students should especially consult primary sources, journal articles and more specialized sources. The librarians at the Stamper Library have provided a page filled with links and resources that may be valuable for students undertaking the 9th grade term paper project. This page may be found at the following URL:

http://library.jburroughs.org/studyguides/termpapers9.html

Notes should be taken in a well-organized manner on note cards so that they can be easily found and consulted during the preparation of the outline and the writing of the term paper itself. Once enough research has been completed, students will be ready to construct their thesis statement. Once the thesis has been complete, students will continue to research where necessary in order to make their argument as strong as possible. Following is a list of particularly helpful types of information:

- **Background Information**-Most of this should be found in the basic research phase. A common mistake for 9th grade students is to continue gathering basic background research. Determine what basic information is necessary to place your event in historical context. Then move on to information that develops and directly pertains to answering your thesis question. From you knowledge of background information you should be able to develop general categories that are necessary to cover in more detail. Stay focused on gathering information for these categories. For example, after gathering general information about Hannibal's attack on Saguntum a student would need to develop detailed information about "Pro-Roman Saguntines," "Pro-Carthaginian Saguntines," "Rebellious Spanish Tribes," "The Ebro Treaty," "Roman-Saguntum Relations" Each of these would become categories for your note cards. The student would take many note cards on each of these topics. The common

mistake for the 9th grade student is to continue taking note cards on Hannibal's attack on Saguntum.

- **Facts to Support Thesis/Argument**-This can include dates, statistics, names, anything factual to back up the assertions made in the thesis argument.
- **Quotations**-These are very important to use but the 9th grade student often misuses them. Thought must be given about those points that require or would particularly benefit from scholarly support. Quotations are normally not needed to substantiate a date or statistic. If these are in doubt, they should be explained in the paper or in an informational footnote. Reserve quotations for primary sources and quotations from historians that support points of the thesis statement.

Thesis Construction-To put it simply, the thesis statement is the answer to the research question. A thesis contains the main points of the paper's argument. This not a simple task and care should be taken in constructing the thesis. If a thesis is well constructed and research has been organized into logical categories, writing the essay itself becomes a simple task. The thesis should also be logically constructed. In other words, if one part of the paper's argument is dependent on another part of the argument, that element of the thesis must come after the material upon which it depends. A good thesis for this project will weigh the merits of several points that will be argued in the body sections of the essay. A strong thesis statement weighs the relative importance of factors. Following is a sample thesis statement with the points labeled for clarity.

Point 1 of Thesis

Main thesis point A

Main thesis point B

Although some historians accuse Hannibal of purposely attacking

Saguntum to instigate a war with Rome, Saguntum's support for Spanish

tribes rebelling against Carthaginian rule and Saguntum's status as a *fide*

of Rome in contradiction to the Carthaginian interpretation of the Ebro

Treaty left Hannibal no choice but to attack the city.

Writing the Paper

Outlining—A research paper is an expository essay, similar to those written in English. A point to prove is presented, an argument is developed in the body of the paper, and a conclusion is provided. Young writers often struggle with the research paper because they have an unclear idea of what they are trying to prove, so the first step before writing is to have a clear thesis statement. While conducting research, the student should focus on topics that are necessary to prove the thesis. These topics will become the paragraphs or sections of the paper. To create the outline, the student places these topics in logical order, which may be chronologically or by historical interpretation. Each method of ordering has its strength and weakness. Ordering by chronology allows the reader to more easily follow the flow of events, but the author may jump back and forth between historical interpretations. One paragraph explaining an early event may help prove how Hannibal's personal hatred for Rome caused him to attack Saguntum. The following paragraph explaining the next chronological event may prove how Rome violated the Ebro Treaty. In the other organization method, the paper could present all of the events that show Hannibal was forced to attack Saguntum (the main thesis point) and then explain the events that show how some might (incorrectly according to the thesis) blame Hannibal's personal hatred for Rome for the attack on Saguntum. In the second method, the reader is presented the different historical interpretations in separate sections, helping to keep them clear in the reader's mind, but events may be presented out of chronological order, causing confusion about the sequence of events. If the student is not weighing two different historical interpretations, presenting information in chronological sequence is usually best.

Once the student decides on how to organize the topics, creating an outline for the paper will help the student clarify the points to be made in proving the thesis and ordering the information to be presented. Below is a guide for creating an outline, which should develop easily from an ordering of the student's note card categories. In the guide below, the student writes the topic sentence for each paragraph so s/he clearly knows what will be proved in the paragraph and how it develops the thesis. Then list the evidence to be explained in the paragraph

I. Preface
    a. Introduce the historical event in the first sentence, identifying who, what, where, and when.
    b. Thesis statement
    c. Outline of major paper sections
II. Body Paragraph 1, often a background paragraph
    a. Explain in greater detail than in the preface the information necessary to know before proceeding with the proof of the thesis.
III. Body Paragraph 2
    a. Write your topic sentence for this paragraph
    b. List each fact/piece of evidence for the paragraph, for example
        i. Taking of Corsica & Sardinia
        ii. War indemnity

          iii.   Hannibal's Oath

IV. Body Paragraph 3
        a.   Write your topic sentence for this paragraph
        b.   List each fact/piece of evidence for the paragraph
 V. Continue the format body paragraphs 2 & 3 for each remaining body paragraph
VI. Conclusion
        a.   Reiterate thesis
        b.   Remind reader of point made by each body paragraph or section
        c.   General lesson

The above is only one example of how to prepare an outline. Your instructor should provide you with specific instructions on how the outline for your paper should be completed.

Writing the Preface—the preface in the 9th grade term paper follows a precise format that concisely informs the reader of the topic, the thesis statement, and the major sections of the paper.

1. In the first sentence of the preface state who, what, where, and when for the topic event
2. In the second sentence of the preface, state the thesis
3. In the remaining sentences, verbally outline the main sections of the paper. The best verbal outlines include clauses that explain how the main sections further the thesis.
4. Optional, thank any deserving individuals, such as a particularly helpful research librarian

Writing the Essay—Instructors will evaluate the essays based on the criteria they give students at the beginning of the assignment. All instructors, however, will place great importance on a clear thesis statement and systematic and logical argument of the thesis. Students should follow their outline closely in order to assure focus and a good defense of the thesis. Paragraphs should be well focused, and if a section has a complex thesis point, it should be broken into several paragraphs. It is also very important that the order of the thesis points in the essay sections themselves is consistent with the thesis statement. These points should be consistent everywhere the thesis statement appears (preface, introduction, and conclusion). Students should also proofread their work carefully for grammar, punctuation, and correct spelling. Acronyms should be clearly explained at their first occurrence, and students should clearly follow all format rules for footnotes/endnotes. A review of rules for citing material will be found in the next section of this guide.

Footnoting/Endnoting—Citations tell where you found the information that you have used in your paper. A footnote is a type of citation that appears at the bottom of the page on which the information appears. An endnote is the same as a footnote, except that it appears at the end of the essay. Footnotes and endnotes are numbered consecutively. Footnotes serve two crucial purposes. First, whenever you borrow someone else's ideas or words, you must give them credit. A footnote signals to your reader that the ideas or words that precede it are not yours. Second, they allow your reader to track down the source of your information if they want to learn more or double check your work. In accurate or sloppy footnoting can result in you inadvertently taking credit for someone else's work; this is plagiarism, a serious academic and school offense. Therefore, you need to be extremely careful when recording source codes and page numbers as you complete your note cards. Remember that your paper will be checked for plagiarism.

When to Cite a Source

1. When you use someone else's words (written or spoken), you need to include a footnote. You also need to put quotation marks around the material you are using, unless you are using a block quotation. Not doing so is still plagiarism, even if you properly footnote.

2. When you paraphrase someone's original opinions or interpretations, even if you alter the wording completely, you must cite their work

3. When you use someone's original research, you must also give him or her credit. All statistics, studies, court cases, laws, etc. must have citations. You do not require citations for *common knowledge*, material that you can reasonably conclude most people know. If you are unsure about what is common knowledge and what is not, ask your teacher.

Placing the Footnote numbers—Always place the footnote number at the end of the section you are citing. Put it after all punctuation, including quotation marks and periods. Every quotation requires its own footnote. If, however, a series of sentences paraphrase information from the same source, you can put one note at the end of that material; just be sure to include the page number(s) for all the material from your source.

Formatting Footnotes—Use your copy of *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* by Mary Lynn Rampolla for proper formatting of your footnotes. As you write your paper, you may want to simply record the source code and page numbers for the footnote and write the footnote later.

Footnoting the Same Sources Multiple Times—You will likely cite at least several of your sources more than once. You do not need to repeat the entire note. The next page contains a sample list of notes with explanations on how to deal with this situation.

Sample Note Page—Following is a list of sample notes. It doesn't matter if you use endnotes or footnotes, because the format is the same. The only difference is that footnotes go on the bottom of the page where the material citied is located. Otherwise, the numbering and formatting is exactly the same. These notes will show you how to correctly deal with notes from sources that you cite more than once. Your footnotes or endnotes must follow these rules in your term paper.

Note #1 is material from a JSTOR article. The citation is from page 246 of the article

[1]Helen M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (June 1999) 246. (obtained from JSTOR on June 21, 2008)

Note #2 is material from the exact same page of the same source as Note #1

[2]Ibid.

Note #3 is from the same source as Note #1, but a different page; this time from page 252

[3]Ibid., 252

[4]Thomas G. Paterson, "The Origins of the Postwar International System." In *Major Problems in American History Since 1945*, edited by Robert Griffith and Paula Baker (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001) 23.

[5]Ibid., 27

Note #5 is the same source as note #4, but it is page 27 instead of 23

[6]Hintjens, 265.

Note #6 refers back to the Hintjens source. Since there is another source(s) in between, instead of Ibid., you use the author's last name. Just include last name and page #

Notes on Footnoting—Please follow the rules from this page, along with the formats found in your copy of *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* by Mary Lynn Rampolla. Essentially, Ibid. is shorthand for the "the same place." Students can save time and effort by remembering these rules and applying them. Instructors will expect students to follow these rules and adherence to them will be calculated into the grade. Footnotes begin with #1 and continue throughout the entire paper. Numbering for footnotes should not start over on each page.