

### Chapter 1 : Outline - Handbook for Historians - Noreen Reale Falcone Library at Le Moyne College

*To present the basic structure of a term paper, article, or chapter (that is, anywhere from 4, to 12, words), two levels of headings should suffice, and that is what I've used for my Article Outline Example: Decimal format, which outlines Wells's article in only two pages. Here, the highest-level headings signal new sections of the.*

Completing a MLA outline will ensure that your research paper format is correct. The thesis statement should be complete, and the rest of the paper should be in line with it. Now you are ready to begin writing the key sections of the outline, for which uppercase Roman numerals should be used. The subsections should be numbered with capital letters. If the subsections need further categorizing, use numbers and then lowercase letters. The key sections and the subsections should provide facts that support the thesis. The key sections and subsections should not be written in phrases but in complete sentences. At the end of the research paper, wrap the outline up by writing a short conclusion. In addition to a reference page, in text citation is required when writing an APA style paper. When a student is assigned a college- level paper, an outline can also be required. All main headings in the outline should begin with Roman numerals, and the subheadings should begin with capital letters. Alternatively, Arabic numerals and lowercase letters can be used with full sentences for each outline main heading. How we can help Get a Free Outline Template An essay outline template tells the writer what material to insert, and it tells where the information should be inserted. It can also make writing the actually paper much easier even if the student is aware of the requirements and guidelines. Using an outline template can help the student organize the paper and eliminate the ideas that are not relevant to the purpose of the essay. A template allows the writer to correctly format, cite, and reference the paper. If you need help with writing a research paper, download a free research paper outline example at ProfEssays. We have over expert writers with PhD and Masters level educations who are all ready to fulfill your writing needs, regardless of the academic level or research topic. We understand the pressure students are under to achieve high academic goals and we are ready help you because we love writing. By choosing us as your partner, you can achieve more academically and gain valuable time for your other interests. Place your order now! Look no further than ProfEssays. You simply place an order with the writing instructions you have been given, and before you know it, your essay or term paper, completely finished and unique, will be completed and sent back to you. We understand students have plenty on their plates, which is why we love to help them out. Let us do the work for you, so you have time to do what you want to do!

### Chapter 2 : How to write an American History Research Paper

*As your research paper takes shape you will find that you need background on people, places, events, etc. Do not just rely on some general survey for all of your background. Check the several good dictionaries of biography for background on people, or see if there is a standard book-length biography.*

There are several types of outlines that can be used, including the alphanumeric outline, the full sentence outline and the decimal outline. Each type has its own pros and cons. It is a good idea for students to try each type and determine which works best for them.

**Alphanumeric Outline** The alphanumeric outline is the standard format most people learned in high school English. Each main heading, or topic, is noted by a Roman numeral and can be separated into two or more distinct classifications. These subheadings would be indented and then noted by a capital letter. The third level of subheadings can be separated into two or more distinct classifications and noted by Arabic numbers. The fourth level of subheadings can be separated into two or more distinct classifications and noted by lower-case letters. Not all headings or subheadings will be separated into further classifications.

**Full Sentence Outline** The full sentence outline is similar to the alphanumeric outline in that it follows the same format. The primary difference is that each topic, or thought, is written out as a full sentence. This can be helpful, as it ensures the complete thought is recorded on the outline and will not be forgotten when it comes time to write the paper. It is also helpful because these sentences can be transferred directly to the paper later.

**Decimal Outline** The decimal outline is similar to the alphanumeric outline. The primary difference between is that the decimal outline is written using decimals to note each heading and subheading. The main heading would be noted by a whole number. Each subheading would be noted by a decimal building from the main heading. For example, the main heading would be noted as 1. The first subheading under that section would be noted as 1. If there were another level of subheadings, that line would be noted as 1. The main benefit of using a decimal outline is that each section can be clearly identified back to the main heading. The decimal outline can be written as individual thoughts or in complete sentences.

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## Chapter 3 : Research Paper Outline Template Sample That You Can Use

*Research Paper Outline Examples* Once you've decided what topic you will be writing about, the next thing you should pay attention to is the scope of your paper or what you will be including in your discussion.

**Bibliography Definition** An outline is a formal system used to develop a framework for thinking about what should be the organization and eventual contents of your paper. An outline helps you predict the overall structure and flow of a paper. Why and How to Create a Useful Outline. Writing papers in college requires you to come up with sophisticated, complex, and sometimes very creative ways of structuring your ideas. Taking the time to draft an outline can help you determine if your ideas connect to each other, what order of ideas works best, where gaps in your thinking may exist, or whether you have sufficient evidence to support each of your points. It is also an effective way to think about the time you will need to complete each part of your paper before you begin writing. A good outline is important because: Use the outline to set goals for completing each section of your paper. It will help you stay organized and focused throughout the writing process and help ensure proper coherence [flow of ideas] in your final paper. However, the outline should be viewed as a guide, not a straitjacket. As you review the literature or gather data, the organization of your paper may change; adjust your outline accordingly. A clear, detailed outline ensures that you always have something to help re-calibrate your writing should you feel yourself drifting into subject areas unrelated to the research problem. Use your outline to set boundaries around what you will investigate. The outline can be key to staying motivated. An outline helps you organize multiple ideas about a topic. Most research problems can be analyzed from a variety of perspectives; an outline can help you sort out which modes of analysis are most appropriate to ensure the most robust findings are discovered. An outline not only helps you organize your thoughts, but it can also serve as a schedule for when certain aspects of your writing should be accomplished. Review the assignment and highlight the due dates of specific tasks and integrate these into your outline. If your professor has not created specific deadlines, create your own deadlines by thinking about your own writing style and the need to manage your time around other course assignments. How to Structure and Organize Your Paper. Purdue University; Lietzau, Kathleen. Writing Center, University of Richmond. Structure and Writing Style I. General Approaches There are two general approaches you can take when writing an outline for your paper: The topic outline consists of short phrases. This approach is useful when you are dealing with a number of different issues that could be arranged in a variety of different ways in your paper. Due to short phrases having more content than using simple sentences, they create better content from which to build your paper. The sentence outline is done in full sentences. This approach is useful when your paper focuses on complex issues in detail. The sentence outline is also useful because sentences themselves have many of the details in them needed to build a paper and it allows you to include those details in the sentences instead of having to create an outline of short phrases that goes on page after page. Steps to Making the Outline A strong outline details each topic and subtopic in your paper, organizing these points so that they build your argument toward an evidence-based conclusion. Writing an outline will also help you focus on the task at hand and avoid unnecessary tangents, logical fallacies, and underdeveloped paragraphs. Identify the research problem. The research problem is the focal point from which the rest of the outline flows. Try to sum up the point of your paper in one sentence or phrase. It also can be key to deciding what the title of your paper should be. Identify the main categories. What main points will you analyze? Create the first category. What is the first point you want to cover? If the paper centers around a complicated term, a definition can be a good place to start. For a paper about a particular theory, giving the general background on the theory can be a good place to begin. After you have followed these steps, create points under it that provide support for the main point. The number of categories that you use depends on the amount of information that you are trying to cover. There is no right or wrong number to use. Once you have developed the basic outline of the paper, organize the contents to match the standard format of a research paper as described in this guide. Choose either a topic outline or a sentence outline based on which one you believe will work best for you. Both topic and sentence outlines use Roman and Arabic numerals along with capital and small letters of the alphabet

arranged in a consistent and rigid sequence. A rigid format should be used especially if you are required to hand in your outline. Often when you start investigating a research problem [i. If your paper changes focus, or you need to add new sections, then feel free to reorganize the outline. If appropriate, organize the main points of your outline in chronological order. For a standard research paper of pages, your outline should be no more than four pages in length. It may be helpful as you are developing your outline to also write down a tentative list of references. Four Main Components for Effective Outlines. Purdue University; How to Make an Outline. University of Washington; Organization: Department of English Writing Guide. George Mason University; Plotnic, Jerry. University College Writing Centre. University of Toronto; Reverse Outline. University of North Carolina; Reverse Outlines: University of Wisconsin, Madison; Using Outlines. Considering Structure and Organization. Institute for Writing Rhetoric. How do you know whether to change the paper to fit the outline, or, that you need to reconsider the outline so that it fits the paper? A good way to check your progress is to use what you have written to recreate the outline. This is an effective strategy for assessing the organization of your paper. If the resulting outline says what you want it to say and it is in an order that is easy to follow, then the organization of your paper has been successful.

## Chapter 4 : How to Write a Research Paper - A Research Guide for Students

*The Basic Outline of a Paper* The following outline shows a basic format for most academic papers. No matter what length the paper needs to be, it should still follow the format of having an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Visit site An outline might be formal or informal. An informal outline working outline is a tool helping an author put down and organize their ideas. It is subject to revision, addition and canceling, without paying much attention to form. In a formal outline, numbers and letters are used to arrange topics and subtopics. The letters and numbers of the same kind should be placed directly under one another. The topics denoted by their headings and subheadings should be grouped in a logical order. All points of a research paper outline must relate to the same major topic that you first mentioned in your capital Roman numeral. Example of an outline: Early life in Stratford 1. Life of Anne Hathaway b. Romeo and Juliet b. Much Ado About Nothing c. Last two plays 2. Retired to Stratford a. Epitaph on his tombstone III. Concluding statement The purpose of an outline is to help you think through your topic carefully and organize it logically before you start writing. A good outline is the most important step in writing a good paper. Check your outline to make sure that the points covered flow logically from one to the other. Make the first outline tentative. What is the chief reason you are writing the paper? State also how you plan to approach your topic. Is this a factual report, a book review, a comparison, or an analysis of a problem? Explain briefly the major points you plan to cover in your paper and why readers should be interested in your topic. BODY " This is where you present your arguments to support your thesis statement. Remember the Rule of 3, i. Begin with a strong argument, then use a stronger one, and end with the strongest argument for your final point. Explain why you have come to this particular conclusion. Critically analyze your research data. Using the best available sources, check for accuracy and verify that the information is factual, up-to-date, and correct. Opposing views should also be noted if they help to support your thesis. This is the most important stage in writing a research paper. Here you will analyze, synthesize, sort, and digest the information you have gathered and hopefully learn something about your topic which is the real purpose of doing a research paper in the first place. You must also be able to effectively communicate your thoughts, ideas, insights, and research findings to others through written words as in a report, an essay, a research or term paper, or through spoken words as in an oral or multimedia presentation with audio-visual aids. Do not include any information that is not relevant to your topic, and do not include information that you do not understand. Make sure the information that you have noted is carefully recorded and in your own words, if possible. Plagiarism is definitely out of the question. Document all ideas borrowed or quotes used very accurately. As you organize your notes, jot down detailed bibliographical information for each cited paragraph and have it ready to transfer to your Works Cited page. Devise your own method to organize your notes. One method may be to mark with a different color ink or use a hi-liter to identify sections in your outline, e. Understanding the Internet A. What is the Internet 3. How to "Surf the Net" b. Accessing WWW Group your notes following the outline codes you have assigned to your notes, e. This method will enable you to quickly put all your resources in the right place as you organize your notes according to your outline. Read all the relevant notes you have gathered that have been marked, e. Summarize, paraphrase or quote directly for each idea you plan to use in your essay. Use a technique that suits you, e. Mark each card or sheet of paper clearly with your outline code or reference, e. Put all your note cards or paper in the order of your outline, e. If using a word processor, create meaningful filenames that match your outline codes for easy cut and paste as you type up your final paper, e. Before you know it, you have a well organized term paper completed exactly as outlined. The unusual symbol will make it easy for you to find the exact location again. Delete the symbol once editing is completed. Double check the facts and figures. Arrange and rearrange ideas to follow your outline. Reorganize your outline if necessary, but always keep the purpose of your paper and your readers in mind. Use a free grammar and proof reading checker such as Grammarly. Is my thesis statement concise and clear? Did I follow my outline? Did I miss anything? Are my arguments presented in a logical sequence? Are all sources properly cited to ensure that I am not plagiarizing? Have I proved my thesis with strong supporting arguments? Have I made my intentions and points clear in the essay?

## Chapter 5 : Types of Outlines for Writing Papers | Pen and the Pad

*A research paper outline is a helpful point-by-point plan, which makes your research paper writing easier. However, before proceeding to an outline you will have to take some pre-writing steps. They will be helpful in composing the best quality outline and, as a result, a great academic work.*

Take the number of pages the final draft of the paper is supposed to be, and multiply that by 3. This represents the approximate number of paragraphs your paper should have in it. Each of those paragraphs needs at least two, and preferably three details in it. Those details must come from your research. Ideally, related pieces of information should go together. If you are doing research on the history of siege warfare, you should not jump from the Persian siege of Amida to the siege of Vicksburg to the siege of Stalingrad and back again in the same paragraph. Instead, each of those major themes should be a separate group of paragraphs. Perhaps you will arrange them in historical order, with Amida coming first and Stalingrad last. Perhaps you will apply the lessons of Amida and Vicksburg to Stalingrad. Perhaps you will begin with Stalingrad before flashing back to Vicksburg and Amida. You can always shuffle the different parts of your outline around, but it is helpful to have an idea of what details belong in which portion of the paper. The early drafts of your outline will also help you see where the research you have already done fits, and what portions of your paper are weak.

Details, Details[ edit ] Details come in four basic types for many research papers. By CE, the Romans had stationed 15 legions along the Rhine. The third type of detail is a definition: Latifundias were large slave-run plantations in Roman-ruled Italy. The fourth type of detail is a direct quotation from one of your research sources, along with a date and location: Each of your details should be backed up with appropriate citations, whether these be footnotes, parenthetical notes, endnotes, or other attributions, from the source materials you are using. Research papers should have some kind of underlying story they wish to tell, whether that be the results of the War of the Spanish Succession, or the consequences of the Treaty of Westphalia. Your story should support the thesis, but you will impress your history teacher, and likely earn a higher grade, if you are doing more than merely reciting a laundry list of facts and figures. What is the Story? This is an extremely important part of your work. It provides the reader with some understanding of what will follow. Introductions help form perceptions of written texts, and most readers will think more highly of your work if it is well introduced. This is the hardest part of your writing, though producing a good introduction is helped through having an understanding of what it should contain. Firstly, it should outline the parameters of your work, such as the dates of the period studied, the geographical remit of the paper, and the basic subject matter of what you will be studying. Secondly, and more importantly, you should briefly introduce your thesis. This should only be done in the broadest terms in the introduction, and will be developed further in the body of your work.

Quotation Files[ edit ] Thanks to modern word processing tools on computers, it is possible to record your research notes directly into the same types of documents that you will use to write your paper. This can be an invaluable tool: Maintain a directory of sources on your computer means that you always have a resource to return to for future projects and papers. Careful selection of quotations in this manner will also create a summary of the article, book, or primary source in question. Bibliographies[ edit ] All good history papers should have a list of sources cited. This list is called a Bibliography, though these days it is likely to include as many periodical articles and websites, as it is to contain books. Bibliographies follow different formats at different institutions; it would be difficult to categorize them all. Secondary printed sources, such as periodical literature, is listed the same way, after all the primary sources are accounted for. Tertiary sources, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauruses, and textbooks, would be listed next in high school-level research papers. However, tertiary sources in general should usually be avoided for research papers written in college or graduate school although magisterial works such as the Oxford English Dictionary might be cited in order to nail down the intended meaning of an unusual word in an older primary source. Websites should be listed last. It is ironic on Wikibooks that we must caution against the prominent bibliographic placement of websites, but your grades are at stake here. While there are reliable websites available on the Internet, it is very difficult to determine their general usefulness or staying power as historical sources; the website author may suffer

bandwidth crunch, and take down the site. If you have questions about the suitability of a website, check with your instructor, and be prepared. In this way, you develop a lengthy list of materials that you have consulted as a scholar and as a reader, and you also have a handy reference guide for future papers. Some students keep separate bibliographies in separate subjects; you might have an American history bibliography file, a German history file, an Asian history file, and so on. Keeping a separate directory of these files allows you to develop a comprehensive background for future research.

**Bibliographical Format**[ edit ] There are numerous standards for formatting your bibliography. Every institution often has its own standards, and many professors choose one standard over another. Both are available in book form at libraries and bookstores. Here are some simple standards to get you started. In each case, you provide the name of the creator of the work, followed by the name of the resource set apart by underlines or quotations of some sorts. Then you indicate when the work was produced, and where, and by whom. Last name, first name. The Oracle New York: Last name of creator, first name.

**Due Dates for Bibliographies**[ edit ] Get your bibliography done early. Begin adding items in the proper format to a computer file within 24 hours of being assigned the paper. Expect to have at least one source in your bibliography for each page in length that the final paper is expected to be, if you are still in high school. Ideally, if your teacher does not set a deadline for completion of the bibliography, set your own deadline. Pick a day that is no more than one-quarter of the way through the time you have to write the paper. If you have four weeks to write the paper, you should have a more or less complete list of books in your bibliography by Friday of the first week. If you only have a week, have your bibliography complete by noon the day after it is assigned.

**Deadlines**[ edit ] Your instructor has set a specific due date for the paper. It may be that she has even set a specific hour of the day. It is unwise to assume you will be able to get an extension. Teachers have vacations, too; they set deadlines for their convenience. Plan to meet that deadline with time to spare. There are several ways to make sure you are not stressed and worried that you can get across campus and turn in your paper on time.

**Silver Rule**[ edit ] Do it more than once ahead of time. This is the silver rule: **Procrastination**[ edit ] Avoid procrastination. Check out a book, and photocopy one article. Note both down in your bibliography. Get it set up with templates for quotations and footnotes and page numbers. Get at least a few things typed into every file.

**Major Personal Due Dates**[ edit ] Set some personal due dates even if your instructor does not. Here are your critical due dates; note them down in your calendar or planning book, and put a sign up in your room:

*Writing an outline for a research paper can seem like a time consuming task, and you may not understand the value of it if you have never written one before. Outlines can help you structure your research and your final paper in much more efficient ways, though, so it is a good idea that you learn how to write one.*

How to Write a Research Paper Outline: Every student has to spend a lot of time in order to create a successful well thought out research paper. A research paper has to reflect your position on the topic and persuade the readers in its accuracy and truthfulness. A research paper outline is a helpful point-by-point plan, which makes your research paper writing easier. However, before proceeding to an outline you will have to take some pre-writing steps. They will be helpful in composing the best quality outline and, as a result, a great academic work. Before writing an research paper outline: Select an appropriate topic. Selecting a topic is a crucial factor for a successful research paper. Whether you select a topic yourself or not, it should work to your strengths and not weaknesses. An appropriate topic should be interesting to you and appeal to or provoke readers. After selecting a topic, take some time to figure out what kind of argument you want to support. You need to understand why it is important to you and why it might be important to others. Ask yourself "what is the aim of my thesis statement? Can it provoke a meaningful discussion that might change the world? How can I build a research paper on this argument? As soon as you have answers for these questions, you are almost ready to create a good outline for a successful research paper. Of course, most of the time only your professor will read a research paper you have created. However, you need to understand readers of your paper. Will the professor support your argument or will he have a counterargument? When defining your audience, you will comprehend what type of language is better to use: The overall style and tone of your research paper depend on the audience it is aimed at. There is no research paper without proper and thorough research. You will have to investigate a lot of resources in order to find effective evidence to support your argument. Firstly, you will have to find general information to support your thesis statement, then you will have to dig deeper. You will have to be aware of any counter arguments and evidence supporting them. This way you will master the topic and comprehend the pitfalls of your thesis statement better. References are the evidence of each of your arguments and the research you have conducted. You should prioritize them according to the importance and relevance to your thesis statement. Writing a good research paper outline When you are finished with pre-writing activities, created a good research paper topic, you are more than ready to make an effective research paper outline. An outline is a basement of your research paper from which you build up the whole paper. Each outline consists of three main parts the Introduction, the Body, and the Conclusion. For a successful and high-quality research paper, however, the more detailed outline you use the better.

### Chapter 7 : 8+ Research Outline Templates - PDF, DOC | Free & Premium Templates

*Conducting a research is no doubt an elaborate affair and with so many tasks to do, it is not uncommon to lose consistency if there is no outline. Thus, you should start your research with a research paper outline template so that you can be systematical throughout the research.*

The nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki The Cold War World War II The assassination of JFK These are some topics on which an American history research paper could be based, however in addition to this there are various other significant and interesting topics which can be researched on. To write a good research paper on history one requires keeping certain essential points in mind which include: Reading research paper samples to understand the flow of the research paper. Researching on the topic and compiling relevant information on the same. Making a research paper outline to structure and format the final paper. Writing the final paper in accordance with the appropriate research paper format. Mentioning all dates, events and happenings correctly and in a methodical sequence. Making a research paper title page in the appropriate format Citing all the sources referred to in the paper in a research paper bibliography page. Formulating a contents page for the paper. Making a research paper abstract of about 250 words giving a brief synopsis of the paper and the research tools used to write the same. Proofreading the paper after its completion to make certain that all the dates and events have been correctly mentioned. While writing such a paper the writer should try and keep the attention of the reader by providing as much information as possible but at the same time not straying from the topic. However, in addition to this for those requiring professional assistance to script such papers and essays, simply contact ProfEssays. The certified academic writers of ProfEssays. For more details on the services offered by our company get in touch with our 24 hours customer service department or chat with us live on our website. We assure our clients the finest quality of assistance and services. Looking for an exceptional company to do some custom writing for you? Look no further than ProfEssays. You simply place an order with the writing instructions you have been given, and before you know it, your essay or term paper, completely finished and unique, will be completed and sent back to you. We understand students have plenty on their plates, which is why we love to help them out. Let us do the work for you, so you have time to do what you want to do!

## Chapter 8 : Research Paper Outline Examples

*Example of an outline for a first year level history paper. Judge and Langdon Book Review/Research Paper - Example 1  
Judge and Langdon Book Review/Research Paper - Example 2.*

How to Write a History Research Paper 1. How do I pick a topic? How do I put this together? Research Guide and Writing Guide 1. Picking a topic is perhaps the most important step in writing a research paper. To do it well requires several steps of refinement. You do not write a paper "about the Civil War," however, for that is such a large and vague concept that the paper will be too shallow or you will be swamped with information. The next step is to narrow your topic. Are you interested in comparison? Once you reach this stage try to formulate your research topic as a question. You might turn that into the following question: By asking yourself a question as a means of starting research on a topic you will help yourself find the answers. You also open the door to loading the evidence one way or another. It will help you decide what kinds of evidence might be pertinent to your question, and it can also twist perceptions of a topic. For example, if you ask a question about economics as motivation, you are not likely to learn much about ideals, and vice versa. No one should pick a topic without trying to figure out how one could discover pertinent information, nor should anyone settle on a topic before getting some background information about the general area. These two checks should make sure your paper is in the realm of the possible. The trick of good research is detective work and imaginative thinking on how one can find information. First try to figure out what kinds of things you should know about a topic to answer your research question. Do you need personal letters? What background information should be included? Then if you do not know how to find that particular kind of information, ASK. A reference librarian or professor is much more likely to be able to steer you to the right sources if you can ask a specific question such as "Where can I find statistics on the number of interracial marriages? If Carleton does not have the books or sources you need, try ordering through the library minitex. Many sources are also available on-line. As your research paper takes shape you will find that you need background on people, places, events, etc. Do not just rely on some general survey for all of your background. Check the several good dictionaries of biography for background on people, or see if there is a standard book-length biography. If you are dealing with a legal matter check into the background of the judges who make the court decision and the circumstances surrounding the original incident or law. Try looking for public opinions in newspapers of the time. In other words, each bit of information you find should open the possibility of other research paths. Learn to use several research techniques. You cannot count on a good research paper coming from browsing on one shelf at the library. A really pertinent book may be hidden in another section of the library due to classification quirks. R4 is not the only source for magazine articles, nor the card catalog for books. There are whole books which are listings of other books on particular topics. There are specialized indexes of magazine articles. S62 and the Humanities Index Ref. See also Historical Abstracts Ref. Reference Librarians would love to help you learn to use these research tools. It pays to browse in the reference room at the library and poke into the guides which are on the shelves. It also pays to browse the Internet. If you do not already have a general background on your topic, get the most recent good general source on the topic and read it for general orientation. On the basis of that reading formulate as clearly focused question as you can. You should generally discuss with your professor at that point whether your question is a feasible one. Building a Basic Bibliography: If there is a specialized bibliography on your topic, you will certainly want to consult that as well, but these are often a bit dated. Building a Full Bibliography: Read the recent articles or chapters that seem to focus on your topic best. This will allow you to focus your research question quite a bit. Use such tools as Historical Abstracts or, depending on your topic, the abstracts from a different field and a large, convenient computer-based national library catalog e. For specific article searches "Uncover" press returns for the "open access" or possibly less likely for history "First Search" through "Connect to Other Resources" in MUSE can also be useful. Now do the bulk of your research. But do not overdo it. Do not fall into the trap of reading and reading to avoid getting started on the writing. After you have the bulk of information you might need, start writing. You can fill in the smaller gaps of your research more effectively

later. Write a preliminary thesis statement, expressing what you believe your major arguments will be. Sketch out a broad outline that indicates the structure - main points and subpoints or your argument as it seems at this time. Do not get too detailed at this point. On the basis of this thesis statement and outline, start writing, even pieces, as soon as you have enough information to start. Do not wait until you have filled all the research gaps. If you run into smaller research questions just mark the text with a searchable symbol. It is important that you try to get to the end point of this writing as soon as possible, even if you leave pieces still in outline form at first and then fill the gaps after you get to the end. Critical advice for larger papers: It is often more effective not to start at the point where the beginning of your paper will be. Especially the introductory paragraph is often best left until later, when you feel ready and inspired. The "second draft" is a fully re-thought and rewritten version of your paper. It is at the heart of the writing process. First, lay your first draft aside for a day or so to gain distance from it. You will probably find that your first draft is still quite descriptive, rather than argumentative. That is perfectly normal even for experienced writers even after 40 years and a good deal of published work! You will be frustrated. But keep questioning your paper along the following lines: What precisely are my key questions? What parts of my evidence here are really pertinent to those questions that is, does it help me answer them? How or in what order can I structure my paper most effectively to answer those questions most clearly and efficiently for my reader? At this point you must outline your paper freshly. Mark up your first draft, ask tough questions whether your argument is clear and whether the order in which you present your points is effective! You must write conceptually a new paper at this point, even if you can use paragraphs and especially quotes, factual data in the new draft. It is critical that in your new draft your paragraphs start with topic sentences that identify the argument you will be making in the particular paragraph sometimes this can be strings of two or three paragraphs. The individual steps in your argument must be clearly reflected in the topic sentences of your paragraphs or a couple of them linked. The Third or Final Draft: You are now ready to check for basic rules of good writing. This is when you need to check the diction, that is, the accuracy and suitability of words. Eliminate unnecessary passive or awkward noun constructions active-voice, verbal constructions are usually more effective ; improve the flow of your transitions; avoid repetitions or split infinitives; correct apostrophes in possessives and such. Make the style clear and smooth. Check that the start of your paper is interesting for the reader. Last but not least, cut out unnecessary verbiage and wordiness.

## Chapter 9 : How to Write an Outline for a Research Paper (with Pictures)

*An outline is a "blueprint" or "plan" for your paper. It helps you to organize your thoughts and arguments. A good outline can make conducting research and then writing the paper very efficient.*

Several of the panels on which Stephen Aron participated at the Aspen Institute this summer had Steps for Writing a History Paper Writing a history paper is a process. Successful papers are not completed in a single moment of genius or inspiration, but are developed over a series of steps. When you first read a paper prompt, you might feel overwhelmed or intimidated. If you think of writing as a process and break it down into smaller steps, you will find that paper-writing is manageable, less daunting, and even enjoyable. Writing a history paper is your opportunity to do the real work of historians, to roll up your sleeves and dig deep into the past. What is a history paper? History papers are driven by arguments. In a history class, even if you are not writing a paper based on outside research, you are still writing a paper that requires some form of argument. For example, suppose your professor has asked you to write a paper discussing the differences between colonial New England and colonial Virginia. It might seem like this paper is straightforward and does not require an argument, that it is simply a matter of finding the "right answer. You might argue that the main differences between colonial New England and Virginia were grounded in contrasting visions of colonization. Or you might argue that the differences resulted from accidents of geography or from extant alliances between regional Indian groups. Or you might make an argument that draws on all of these factors. Regardless, when you make these types of assertions, you are making an argument that requires historical evidence. Any history paper you write will be driven by an argument demanding evidence from sources. Remember that the staff of the History Writing Center is here to assist you at any stage of the writing process. Make sure you know what the paper prompt is asking. Sometimes professors distribute prompts with several sub-questions surrounding the main question they want you to write about. The sub-questions are designed to help you think about the topic. They offer ideas you might consider, but they are not, usually, the key question or questions you need to answer in your paper. Make sure you distinguish the key questions from the sub-questions. Otherwise, your paper may sound like a laundry list of short-answer essays rather than a cohesive argument. A helpful way to hone in on the key question is to look for action verbs, such as "analyze" or "investigate" or "formulate. Then, carefully consider what you are being asked to do. Write out the key question at the top of your draft and return to it often, using it to guide you in the writing process. Also, be sure that you are responding to every part of the prompt. Prompts will often have several questions you need to address in your paper. If you do not cover all aspects, then you are not responding fully to the assignment. For more information, visit our section, "Understanding Paper Prompts. Brainstorm possible arguments and responses. Before you even start researching or drafting, take a few minutes to consider what you already know about the topic. Make a list of ideas or draw a cluster diagram, using circles and arrows to connect ideas--whatever method works for you. At this point in the process, it is helpful to write down all of your ideas without stopping to judge or analyze each one in depth. You want to think big and bring in everything you know or suspect about the topic. After you have finished, read over what you have created. Look for patterns or trends or questions that keep coming up. Based on what you have brainstormed, what do you still need to learn about the topic? Do you have a tentative argument or response to the paper prompt? Use this information to guide you as you start your research and develop a thesis. Depending on the paper prompt, you may be required to do outside research or you may be using only the readings you have done in class. Either way, start by rereading the relevant materials from class. Find the parts from the textbook, from the primary source readings, and from your notes that relate to the prompt. If you need to do outside research, the UCLA library system offers plenty of resources. You can begin by plugging key words into the online library catalog. This process will likely involve some trial and error. You will want to use search terms that are specific enough to address your topic without being so narrow that you get no results. If your keywords are too general, you may receive thousands of results and feel overwhelmed. To help you narrow your search, go back to the key questions in the essay prompt that you wrote down in Step 1. Think about which terms would help you respond to the prompt. Also, look at the

language your professor used in the prompt. You might be able to use some of those same words as search terms. Notice that the library website has different databases you can search depending on what type of material you need such as scholarly articles, newspapers, books and what subject and time period you are researching such as eighteenth-century England or ancient Rome. Searching the database most relevant to your topic will yield the best results. You can also schedule an appointment with a librarian to talk specifically about your research project. Or, make an appointment with staff at the History Writing Center for research help. Visit our section about using electronic resources as well. Take stock and draft a thesis statement. By this point, you know what the prompt is asking, you have brainstormed possible responses, and you have done some research. Now you need to step back, look at the material you have, and develop your argument. Based on the reading and research you have done, how might you answer the question s in the prompt? What arguments do your sources allow you to make? Draft a thesis statement in which you clearly and succinctly make an argument that addresses the prompt. If you find writing a thesis daunting, remember that whatever you draft now is not set in stone. Your thesis will change. As you do more research, reread your sources, and write your paper, you will learn more about the topic and your argument. For now, produce a "working thesis," meaning, a thesis that represents your thinking up to this point. Remember it will almost certainly change as you move through the writing process. For more information, visit our section about thesis statements. Once you have a thesis, you may find that you need to do more research targeted to your specific argument. Revisit some of the tips from Step 3. Identify your key sources both primary and secondary and annotate them. Now that you have a working thesis, look back over your sources and identify which ones are most critical to you--the ones you will be grappling with most directly in order to make your argument. Annotating sources means writing a paragraph that summarizes the main idea of the source as well as shows how you will use the source in your paper. Think about what the source does for you. Does it provide evidence in support of your argument? Does it offer a counterpoint that you can then refute, based on your research? Does it provide critical historical background that you need in order to make a point? For more information about annotating sources, visit our section on annotated bibliographies. While it might seem like this step creates more work for you by having to do more writing, it in fact serves two critical purposes: Having dissected your sources and articulated your ideas about them, you can more easily draw upon them when constructing your paper. Even if you do not have to do outside research and are limited to working with the readings you have done in class, annotating sources is still very useful. Write down exactly how a particular section in the textbook or in a primary source reader will contribute to your paper. Draft an outline of your paper. An outline is helpful in giving you a sense of the overall structure of your paper and how best to organize your ideas. You need to decide how to arrange your argument in a way that will make the most sense to your reader. Perhaps you decide that your argument is most clear when presented chronologically, or perhaps you find that it works best with a thematic approach. There is no one right way to organize a history paper; it depends entirely on the prompt, on your sources, and on what you think would be most clear to someone reading it. An effective outline includes the following components: Be as detailed as you can when putting together your outline. Write your first draft. This step can feel overwhelming, but remember that you have already done a lot of work and--armed with your working thesis, source annotations, and outline--have all the tools needed. Do not feel that you have to work through your outline from beginning to end. Some writers find it helpful to begin with the section in which they feel most confident. Look at your outline and see if there is one part that is particularly fleshed out; you may want to begin there. Your goal in the draft is to articulate your argument as clearly as you can, and to marshal your evidence in support of your argument. Do not get too caught up in grammar or stylistic issues at this point, as you are more concerned now with the big-picture task of expressing your ideas in writing. If you have trouble getting started or are feeling overwhelmed, try free writing. Free writing is a low-stakes writing exercise to help you get past the blank page.