How History is Made: A Student's Guide to Reading, Writing, and Thinking in the Discipline

HOW HISTORY IS MADE: A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO READING, WRITING, AND THINKING IN THE DISCIPLINE

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ABOUT THIS PROJECT

OVERVIEW

Members of the UTA History Department have drafted this project with the intent of offering students a single text that explains the terms, ideas, and skills necessarty to succeed in the discipline of history. Each major section offers insights into the critical thinking, reading, and analysis commonly used by historians, as well as some practical tips for researching and writing an essay on a historical topic. Like the concepts they attempt to explain, sections are linked together, allowing readers to read this text in the order that makes sense to them and/or their instructors. Insights and corrections are welcome.

CREATION PROCESS

This project was the brainchild of Kimberly Breuer and Scott W. Palmer, and was developed under the guidance, encouragement, and funding of the UTA Libraries' UTA Cares Grant and especially Michelle Reed. Stephanie Cole and Brandon Blakeslee took over much the writing and formatting (respectively) at a crucial stage of the project, but several members of the UTA History Department have contributed, including Kimberly Breuer, Scott W. Palmer, Gerald Saxon, Charles Travis, Andrew Milson, James Sandy, David Baillargeon, Evelyn Montgomery, Alex Hunnicutt, and Greg Kosc.

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AUTHORS' NOTE

Scott W. Palmer and Kimberly Breuer conceived of the project and received a UTA Cares Grant to make this work possible. They also provided the initial organization and recruited contributing authors to the project. Stephanie Cole took over the project when it was stalled and her revisioning brought it to completion. She has written or revised most chapters in this book. Kimberly Breuer guided the entire project and acted as final editor

and keeper of revisions. And Brandon Blakeslee created most of the interactive elements and links within the text to make the user experience more enjoyable. All four contributed original content to the textbook.

We would like to thank our colleagues who provided content or who test drove the piloted version of this work in their Historical Methods classes. We are also grateful to our students who piloted the project and offered insights and suggestions–and who, we hope, will continue to do so!

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INTRODUCTION

It is likely that advocates of every discipline believe their subject is unique, but in history we know it to be true. Every subject, every family–indeed everything–has a history, which makes most everyone a historian of a sort. This pervasive familiarity with history (bolstered by requirements for students in public schools to complete courses in US history in some states) has a political side as well. In the last few hundred years, with the rise of nation states, communicating a shared understanding of the history of one's country has become an important part of building a cohesive identity and establishing patriotic feelings. Many, if not most, adults legitimately claim a degree of ownership of the past. They want to know about the history of their country, their ethnic group, their state, their family.

While this widespread thirst for stories about the past creates an audience for historians, it can complicate the process of writing history. In every era, including our own, both politicians and historians have debated the validity of some claims about the past. Some of these debates emerge from honest differences in interpretation from limited source material while others emerge from competing political positions. We think the best outcome for students of history is that they will learn the difference between the two, and thus not be subject to someone else's claim about "what history tells us." One benefit of this book–and the introductory historical

research methods course it is usually attached to–is that helps students build the critical thinking skills necessary to discern what is behind such debates and whether one side has a better argument than the other.

A less lofty, but an equally important, goal for this book is that those who read it will learn how to do well in history courses by developing the ability to read, research, and write according to the standards established in our discipline. Becoming familiar with how historians customarily approach questions about the past–as well as learning to how to read critically, research efficiently, build strong arguments based on evidence, and write with clarity–are the lessons that will give history students not only a leg-up in their history courses, but provide important, marketable skills useful in other courses and in many careers.

If you remember nothing else, we hope that the main lesson you gain from reading this book is that within the professional *discipline of history* (unlike the history that everyone owns) there are standards for research and writing about the past. In a historical methods course, you will practice those skills and then test your mastery of them (we hope) by completing your own historical research paper. The first four units of this book–"Thinking Historically," "Reading Historically," "Researching Historically," and "Writing Historically"–offer descriptions of the essential skills. The fifth unit–"Performing Historically"–offers advice about presenting your research findings as well as a bit about some of the careers open to those with an academic training in history. Dive in, so that you too can know what it means to think like an historian!

Stephanie Cole

PART I.

THINKING HISTORICALLY

Historians are about a lot more than impressing readers with cool facts about the past. To know the import of those facts, and to put them into a coherent story, they must develop essential skills in critical thinking and organization. In simple terms, they sift through a great deal of raw data, evaluate it, and create lucid reports for others to read. In history terms, our data are primary sources, our evaluation method rests on assessing the influence of various elements of the specific context, and our "reports" can be anything from research papers to books on a single topic, called monographs, to digital and media artifacts.

While it is the point of this chapter to expand on the above sentence, you should read it resting in the knowledge that learning to succeed as a history student will provide you with many of the same skills needed for professional success. As do those in any number of professions including law, business, and teaching, historians frequently begin with data that can be both extensive in quantity and contradictory in quality, and

so must determine what is most important; they have to resolve contradictions and ultimately tell a coherent story, one that their audiences find compelling and meaningful. In essence, history requires essential critical thinking skills, including judgment, synthesis, and creativity.

As is often the case, the best way to begin to develop higher-order thinking skills is break them down into manageable chunks and practice putting them into action. This chapter starts by defining the term *history* and explaining a bit about how the discipline of history is structured. As scholars, historians must build on the knowledge of others, rather than pursuing stories and information for its own sake. They participate in the academic project—a phrase often used to capture what scholars do when they consider how new knowledge relates to current understandings. The nature of historical thinking—evaluating and ranking types of evidence, figuring out how to weave together fragments of meaning, knowing when to recognize historical fallacies and other sloppy thinking patterns—forms the core of the chapter. Once you've oriented yourself toward some of the main ideas behind historical thinking, you'll be ready to move onto the next section—Reading Historically—which focuses on perhaps the most essential skill historians (and history students) possess, that is, how to read all sorts of documents critically.

CHAPTER 1.

WHAT IS HISTORY?

Though you have likely spent a good part of your education sitting in history classes and reading history books, you probably have not really thought deeply about how to define the subject. In many ways, it's easier to start with what history is not: It is not simply a record of what happened in the past. For one thing, clearly too much happened yesterday alone—let alone ten, one hundred, one thousand years ago—to record. People ate meals, chose which socks to wear, kissed someone new, scanned their Twitter feed, etc., etc. History is not even a record of important things that happened in the past, because that definition raises the question of what counts as important and who gets to decide. If those new lovers kissing for the first time were Antony and Cleopatra—whose relationship redirected Egyptian history—or if the meal inspired an immigrant activist by reminding of her roots, then those seemingly mundane actions were critical. Deciding what is important—which among myriad of past events should be retold, the order to put them in, how to phrase stories so that they reach the right audience—that is what history is. As historians James Davidson and Mark Lytle put it, "History is not 'what happened in the past;' rather it is the act of selecting, analyzing, and writing about the past."

Historians are tasked with finding evidence about the past and then deciding what to do with it. They research, evaluate, and write using what past actors have left behind. That means that the historical narratives scholars (including you!) create actually depend upon scholars' interpretations of extant evidence— on what we call "primary sources." **Primary sources** are those produced by the actors of the time and can run the gamut from oral histories to government documents to Hollywood films to material culture and beyond. Historians also keep in mind other historians' writings, or **secondary sources**. Historians seek as many sources from as many different perspectives as possible, and scrutinize each one carefully, in the attempt to overcome any biases infusing those sources. Yet, no matter how skilled the researcher there will be gaps in the sources that require interpretation. Gaps or silences in the record merit attention, meaning that historians must consider why some perspectives are not found in archives or in published scholarship. The reason may be perfectly harmless, such as the warehouse fire in 1921 that destroyed the 1890 U.S. Census manuscript schedules (the millions of records left by enumerators who went house-to-house with questionnaires). The resulting silence about literacy rates among immigrants (or a number of other topics that rely on Census records) for that decade is frustrating and has certainly diminished our knowledge of the past, but historians do not need to explain the silence beyond noting this accident of history. At other times, silences speak directly to the experience of those under study, such as the shortage of written records by enslaved peoples. In this case, the silence must be explained by the pernicious decision by

White legislators to limit the literacy of enslaved Americans and is itself a part of the history of slavery. In sum, historians must be adept at not only ferreting out sources and assessing their meaning, but also evaluating the meaning of what remains hidden. Writing history is at heart the art and science of deciding how to stitch together what remains of the past in a way that is meaningful to readers in the present.

Where does the (social) science part come from? Though gaps in the record mean that we can never know everything about the past–and thus a certain amount of art and interpretation is necessarily a part of history–historians mimic scientific processes, posing and testing hypotheses and placing weight on the use of peer review before publication. Guidelines about the value of a source, rules about how you record where you find it, and advice on how to present your findings when you present them to the public (or just your instructor) are all part of an effort to create reliable scholarship that can be replicated—the key elements of reason. Writing and teaching history successfully depends upon your ability to understand and master those guidelines. Indeed, your obligation to take this course reflects the opinion among historians that while we know a good deal of art shapes our interpretations, we still value the role of scientific inquiry in our discipline. You have been assigned this book because your instructor wants you to think like an historian.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

It's worth pointing out that while the present-day discipline of history is marked by shared standards of practice, historians as a group debate virtually everything, from what should be studied to the precise cause and effect of almost every event. While historians today no longer embrace the notion of cyclical history (that time is not linear, and events reoccur repeatedly) or providential history (that God is directing all events for a particular outcome), they do sometimes accept a progressive view (that humanity is constantly improving). Most contemporary historians, however, exist somewhat closer to a postmodern view of history—that is, that a pure understanding of the past is unknowable, but that learning as much as we can about the past from our current (changing) perspectives helps us learn more about ourselves and our own time.

These different **philosophies of history** are part of the long-term history of history. In the past century though, with the rise of **professional history**, the history of history involves chronicling and analyzing historical debates–discussions in which some historians lobby others to revise previous interpretations of past people and events for a range of reasons. Some of these debates stem from differences in political perspective, some emerge out of access to new sources or new ideas about how to read old sources. Other conflicts between historians happen because of a difference in epistemology—roughly speaking, because some historians emphasize the ability of culture and ideas to shape the importance of economic/material

infrastructure, and other historians see it the opposite way around (that is, that certain geographies or other material structures permit or promote what sort of ideas and cultural artifacts develop).

History graduate students and professional historians spend a good deal of time thinking about the implications of these different philosophies. While the really old philosophies (cyclical or providential history) are seldom discussed, the newer ones based upon political and epistemological differences are at the heart of many lively debates among historians. For most readers of this text, it's enough to understand that such distinctions exist, and to be aware of the fact that historical interpretations vary not only over time, but between competing points of view. The section below, which explains historiography, and guidance in the next part Reading Historically, will give you some tools for discerning interpretive points of view. Awarness of differences and understanding where they come from will be among the most important critical thinking skills you develop as a history student.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Writing about the past has changed over time. In other words, history has a history, and the fancy term for how historians recount and analyze previous interpretations of the past is "historiography." **Historiographical change** refers to the fact that over time, historians have altered their explanations of past events, and the discipline of history keeps track of, and continuously reconsiders, these changing interpretations; writing

about historians (or the history of history as opposed to the story of the past) is called **historiography**.

One of the easiest ways to grasp the importance of historiography involves looking at a subject such as slavery in the United States, for which the history has changed dramatically over the last one hundred years. The first professional historians of slavery wrote in the very years in which state and local governments were establishing and justifying racial segregation. Their interpretations of the "peculiar institution" (as slavery was sometimes called) fit in with their society's world view, and often suggested slavery was benign or at least a critical part of the process of "improving" those of African descent. As legal segregation, the concept of eugenics, and other types of racialized thinking came increasingly under attack over the course of the twentieth century, such views were criticized and the historians of slavery more often focused on the violence and dehumanizing elements of the institution. As the Civil Rights Movement led to the outlawing of segregated education, it opened the door to new scholars with new perspectives. Critical race studies today–scholarship that assesses the many ways that the justification of racial slavery has shaped U.S. politics and society–has a decidedly different view of enslaved peoples than did the history written in the past. The scholarship about the history of race also actually has within it a variety of perspectives, including differences between historians about how the global economy, technology, religion, gender and/or disability shaped the experience of the enslaved, those who claimed ownership, and those who fought for and against the institution of slavery.

Though other historical topics may not have seen shifts

as dramatic as the scholarship on slavery, every subject has experienced some shifting over time. As you read **secondary sources** on historical topics that interest you, try to become conversant with some of the most prominent historiographical debates for your own periods of interest. Most scholarly history essays have an historiographical section, that is a section near the beginning that notes how previous historians have approached the same topic, or ones closely related to the subject under study. Historians touch on earlier interpretations in order to show how their own work will add to what we already know, perhaps by pointing out errors in the use of a **primary source** or how a particular philosophical or political assumption unfairly limited analysis. More likely for student researchers, this reference to earlier interpretations will point to a gap–by place, or era, or perspective–that the student's research can help fill. Because it will fill a gap in what we know, the historical research presented is thus more meaningful, a positive reason to be aware of the historiography of your subject. A negative reason also exists: Those who don't consider current knowledge risk "reinventing the wheel" or worse, erring in interpretation because of unfamiliarity with a major finding by an earlier historian. Whatever side motivates you as a student, it's important you attempt to learn the historiography of topics in which you hope to specialize.

CHAPTER 2.

WHAT IS HISTORICAL ANALYSIS?

The principal goal of students in history classes and historians in practice is to master the process of **Historical Analysis.** History is more than a narrative of the past; the discipline cares less for the who, what, where, and when of an event, instead focusing on how and why certain events unfolded the way they did and what it all means. History is about argument, interpretation, and consequence. To complete quality historical analysis—that is, to "do history right"–one must use appropriate evidence, assess it properly (which involves comprehending how it is related to the situation in question), and then draw appropriate and meaningful conclusions based on said evidence.

The tools we use to analyze the past are a learned skill-set. While it is likely that the history you enjoy reading appears to be centered on a clear and direct narrative of past events, creating that story is more difficult than you might imagine. Writing history requires making informed judgments; we must read primary sources correctly, and then decide how to weigh the inevitable conflicts between those sources correctly. Think for a moment about a controversial moment in your own life—a traffic accident perhaps or a rupture between friends. Didn't the various sources who experienced it—both sides, witnesses, the authorities—report on it

differently? But when you recounted the story of what happened to others, you told a seamless story, which—whether you were conscience of it or not—required deciding whose report, or which discrete points from different reports—made the most sense. Even the decision to leave one particular turning point vague ("it's a he said/she said unknowable point") reflects the sort of judgment your listeners expect from you.

We use this same judgment when we use primary sources to write history; though in our case there are rules, or at least guidelines, about making those decisions. (For precise directions about reading primary sources, see the sections on "Reading Primary Sources" in the next chapter). In order to weigh the value of one source against other sources, we must be as informed as possible about that source's historical context, the outlook of the source's creator, and the circumstances of its creation. Indeed, as they attempt to uncover what happened, historians must learn about those circumstances and then be able to evaluate their impact on what the source reveals. Each actor in a historical moment brings their own cultural biases and preconceived expectations, and those biases are integral to the sources they leave behind. It is up to the historian to weave these differences together in their analysis in a way that is meaningful to readers. They must compare differences in ideologies, values, behaviors and traditions, as well as take in a multiplicity of perspectives, to create one story.

In addition to knowing how to treat their sources, historians and history students alike must tell a story worth telling, one that helps us as a society to understand who we are and how we got here. As humans, we want to know what caused a particular outcome, or perhaps

whether a past actor or event is as similar to a present-day actor or event as it seems, or where the beginnings of a current movement began. ("What made Martin Luther King, Jr. a leader, when other activists had failed before him?" "Were reactions to the Civil Rights Movement similar to those of the current Black Lives Matter movement?" "How similar is the Coronavirus pandemic to the 1918 flu pandemic?" "Who were the first feminists and what did they believe?") Even small aspects of larger events can help answer important questions. ("How did the suffrage movement (or Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, or the gun rights movement, or …) play out in my Texas hometown?")

The very essence of historical analysis is about analyzing the different cause-and-effect relationships present in each scenario, considering the ways individuals, influential ideas, and different mindsets interact and affect one another. It is about figuring out what facts go together to form a coherent story, one that helps us understand ourselves and each other better. But such understandings, or indeed what exactly counts as "coherent," can change with each generation. That's where you and your interests as a student of history come in. Of key importance to the discipline is that our analysis of an event or individual is tentative or impermanent. The job of historians is to study the available evidence and construct meaningful conclusions; therefore, when new evidence and perspectives (including yours!) present themselves it may very well alter our understanding of the past.

As the section on historiography pointed out, a significant part of historical analysis is integrating new understandings of past events and actors with history as

it already written. We don't want to "reinvent the wheel" or simply retell the same story, using the same sources. Even as scholars provide new perspectives or uncover new evidence, revising what was thought to be known, they cannot simply ignore previous historical writing. Instead they need to address it, linking their new understanding to old scholarship as a part of building knowledge. Sometimes the linkage is a direct challenge to past explanations, but more likely new historical writing provides a nuance to the older work. For example, a scholar might look at new evidence to suggest a shift in periodization ("actually the rightward shift in the Republican Party began much earlier than Ronald Reagan's campaigns") or the importance of different actors ("middle-class Black women were more critical in the spreading of Progressive reforms in the South than we once thought"). Because historians are concerned with building knowledge and expanding scholarship, they choose their subjects of research with an eye toward *adding* to what we know, perhaps by developing new perspectives on old sources or by finding new sources.

For another view on historical thinking, this one offered by the American Historical Association, see "What does it mean to think historically?"

CHAPTER 3.

HOW HISTORIANS APPROACH HISTORY: FIELDS AND PERIODIZATION

Writing history means much more than just re-telling old stories. **Primary sources** can be tricky; some contain internal references or unique vocabulary and interpreting them takes skill. Getting a handle on the vast number of secondary sources produced on many topics also requires training. While you will develop your skills with primary and second sources in this course, many of the best insights will come only with years of experience. In their efforts to build solid knowledge about the past, professional historians—those trained formally in the research and writing of history—inevitably specialize in a field of study. As experts in one or two fields, they can focus on the unique properties of their genre of historical records and put some limits on the secondary literature with which they must be familiar.

Typical fields of study focus on specific geographic areas, a single scholarly approach, and/or set time period. The list of courses offered by your history department will give you an idea of a few such fields: British Empire, History of Science and Technology, US Women's history, Military history, and Texas, 1845-present. Below you'll find an explanation of how scholars go about defining fields of study, including historical eras. As you read this chapter, consider not only how the definition of historical

fields and periodization has shaped the history profession and your course of study as a history major, but also how the process reflects larger philosophical assumptions that undergird the discipline. Such assumptions change though—might the present era be another one in which common approaches to the past shift into new configurations?

HISTORICAL FIELDS

On one hand, history departments throughout the US are dedicated to investigating the totality of the human experience, or at least the past for which we have historical records. But on the other, these departments are also the product of contemporary historical forces, and so tend to be particularly reflective of the dynamics that shaped the country. To wit, Anglo cultural influence and attention to the "rise of the West" long shaped the history written by Europeans and Americans. In any given department, therefore, you will likely find plenty of faculty specializing in some element of US, European, or Atlantic history. Political and social movements during the lives of contemporary historians have also had an impact. While economic, political, and military history continue to be popular sub-fields in US history, following the Civil Rights movement, newly integrated departments (by race, gender, and sexual orientation) have increased attention in scholarship and teaching to "social" histories, or history from below. Histories of laborers, women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ and disabled communities as well as a whole gamut of social movements have caught the interest of historians and

history students alike, and the sub-fields associated with these movements have proliferated.

Of course, most major history departments around the country attempt to also have a faculty member (or sometimes two) from each of the following regional areas: Middle East/North Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Latin American, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australasia. In an increasingly interconnected, globalized world, comparative history has grown in importance and new fields focusing on Atlantic, Pacific, World, transnational, and borderlands history have sometimes supplanted the teaching of history focused on a nation state. With the exception of Atlantic history, which took off during the Cold War and was part of an overarching search for common ground among the allies facing down the Soviet Union, these more expansive fields have become increasingly resonant in the post-Cold War era, which has been characterized by intense globalization and its attendant global labor market, supply chain, and transculturation.

Within these geographic outlines, when pursuing research most historians specialize further in either by approach or time period, or both. Though their teaching subjects can be broader, historians might call themselves experts in the US Civil War, Modern European women's history, or the cultural and intellectual history of the Ming Dynasty. Apart from the requirements of fluency in other languages, the differences between sources that focus on modern military developments differ quite a bit from those concerning Confucian ideology, and rarely would one historian feel comfortable working with both sorts of **primary sources** or try to keep track of the **historiographical developments** in two such divergent

fields. As a result, historic sub-fields usually have thematic angles as well, including aspects of technological, economic, political, legal, military, diplomatic, environmental, social, intellectual, or cultural history. The latter fields encompass still more sub-specialties based on gender, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, and legal status. The instructor in your US women's history class might actually be a specialist on women, gender, race, and sex in the nineteenth-century US South.

While the permutations are not endless, they do allow for some fairly narrow fields of study, as scholars sometimes need decades to develop the necessary knowledge base. Yet just because historical specialization allows ease with sources, methods, and approaches to the past, it does not follow that as a beginner you cannot contribute to scholarship. Often enough, those who have a unique perspective see connections that those long familiar with a story do not. Moreover, learning by attempting to explain the past from your perspective will bring past actors alive to you as well as assure that you grasp just what it is that historians do.

Historical Fields at UTA

- History Majors at UTA:
    - While there is nothing wrong with becoming an expert in individual nation-state or time period (or time period of a nation state) at UTA we want to offer you a broad range of history of which to

explore from professors who are proficient in various regions, periods, and types of history. We also want to encourage you to explore and so to get a major at UTA you have to take a variety of courses both nation specific as well as more broad.

    - Check out the UTA History Courses in the Undergraduate Course Catalog for a full list of courses offered by the History Department at UTA (note: not all classes are offered every semester or every year)

- History Minors at UTA:

    - Say you love history, after all who doesn't, but it just doesn't fit in your class schedule, consider one of UTA's History Minors. With curated focuses like History of Technology and Science, Geography, and Military History, or a "build your own" generic History minor, the UTA History Department offers a broad range of courses for History Minors as well.
    - Find out more about History Minors at UTA

HISTORICAL PERIODIZATION

Another significant way that historians find entry into the vast amount of human experience is to categorize it by blocks of time, or **historical periods**. At a basic level the names given to historical periods simply provide

other options for historical study, in the same way that a historian might specialize geographically or by methodological approach. Fields such as "Nazi Germany" or "Colonial America" both illustrate how political events often define the blocks of time that historians mark for study and do so without controversy.

But more fundamentally, historians' efforts to identify appropriate historical periods can be *very* controversial and is at the heart of what we do. Because the point of establishing accepted historical periods is to help facilitate historical analysis, historians hope to identify periods that have stable characteristics. For example, Victorian England, named after a monarch who ruled from 1837 to 1901, marks a period of rising industrialization, the expansion of British political control around the world, and a transformation of social rules, especially those concerning women and sex. (Perhaps you've heard of the era when people put skirts on piano legs and pasted fig leaves on the genitalia of ancient statues.) Scholars of Victorian England suggest that the expansion of empire was in fact related to the increased prudery and expectation of restraint on the part of women. The justification for imperial control rested on ideas of racial superiority, which in turn rested upon an emerging cultural myth about "English ladies" who were ostensibly quite different from newly colonized women of color with a more casual approach to sex.

But the scholars who identify historical periods are themselves embedded in a specific point in time. Their biases or limited perspective can lead them to over- or under-estimate the importance of an invention, or cultural event, or a popular person of their own era.

Indeed, scholars in the late nineteenth century—Victoria's own contemporaries—started using the label "Victorian England" while she was still alive. Since then, some British historians have questioned the term, arguing that the characteristics we attribute to the period stretch well beyond the limits of her reign. Other historians have defended the term, emphasizing the link between Queen Victoria herself and the many new cultural and social conventions that marked the era—and so the appropriateness of referring to much of the nineteenth century as "Victorian" remains a topic of debate. Likewise, various other blocks of time—the "twentieth century" or the "Renaissance"—regularly inspire discussion about whether they designate a stable period of time or when exactly a period (such as the Renaissance) began and ended.

Another element of periodization is the effort to identify **watershed moments**. In nature, a *watershed* is a spot in a river or stream where the lay of the land forces the water to change the direction in which it flows. Watershed events are those occurrences that altered human behavior or ideology in significant ways. For example, the invention and deployment of nuclear weapons changed not only diplomacy and politics in the postwar era, but also many Americans' sense of security and thus family priorities. Both diplomatic and gender historians see the deployment of atomic bombs in the late 1940s as a watershed moment. Or to take an example from your own lives: Adults living through the current Covid-19 pandemic are already refering to "the Before Times" as a shorthand reference to an earlier historical period, one in which our lives operated differently than they do after the spread of the virus. The lasting changes

in technology and the workplace alone indicate the pandemic will be a watershed moment and that "pre-pandemic" and "post-pandemic" will almost certainly periodize the history of public health, work, and education–at a minimum–for future historians.

But like the process of defining historical periods, the identification of historical watersheds leads to a great deal of debate. Is an event identified as a watershed really the moment in which everything changed? Was one person—or their ideas about politics or technology—a "game changer"? Whereas one historian might see the increasingly insularity of 1950s family life as stemming from the fears brought on by the watershed event of the atomic bomb, another might see that development in family life as connected to rising affluence, and suggest that the true watershed moment was not the bomb, but rather the decision of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to fund research and development for American businesses after the war. Such is the stuff of history and historical debate. After a few more tips on how to analyze historical evidence, make inferences, and avoid historical fallacies (keep reading), you will be able to join some of those debates yourself.

CHAPTER 4.

EVALUATING EVIDENCE

One of the preeminent guidelines of historical analysis is that all historians **evaluate their sources** to determine their quality and accuracy. Beyond determining whether a source is primary or secondary, it is imperative that historians use their knowledge to judge the nature of sources and how they should be used. Remember, each primary source carries with it the biases of its author. These biases alter the presentation of information, as many historical sources are written with clear purpose and intention. Take for example a newspaper editorial written in Atlanta during the American Civil War. Before even reading this document, we need to understand that such an editorial is most likely written from a pro-Confederate source and will therefore be presenting the best possible version of current situation in the war. This source is still very useful for revealing the attitudes of pro-Confederate actors, but information within it about Union troop movements or Union soldiers' attitudes cannot be accepted as fact. The author's bias and the historical context of the source's creation should be noted up front by anyone looking to analyze such a document. We call this information "inherent bias" – in the activity below, you will be able to practice your critical thinking skills by finding inherent bias in a particular document/context.

Finding Inherent Bias

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=372#h5p-15

With the understanding of what biases are likely to be present comes the realization that some claims by historical actors may not be entirely true; that is, they are not agreed upon, verifiable from multiple points of view. But again, just because they are not **historical facts**, they still offer value to those historians seeking to explain opinions and attitudes of a particular place and time.

MAKING HISTORICAL INFERENCES AND AVOIDING HISTORICAL FALLACIES

A key element to the historical analysis process is making **Historical inferences**. Historians take a collection of facts and then infer larger understandings and conclusions. In order to answer the how and why questions of historical analysis and research, historians need to gather all the possible evidence, vet it for bias and authenticity, understand the larger picture presented by these facts, and then make logical conclusions based on what they have learned.

Historical fallacies come about due to false reasoning on the part of historians. Their arguments may be built upon shaky logic by not considering inherent biases or by using incomplete and corrupted evidence. Fallacies can come about by not considering multiple points of view or perspectives in gathering documetary evidence, or from lack of complexity when analyzing causality, or from imposing modern sensibilities upon actors in the past, or from not considering change over time. Presented as rational and well supported conclusions, fallacies are incredibly dangerous as they actively spread misinformation and cover up objective historical arguments. Fallacies can be created both intentionally and unintentionally, depending on their authors, the subject matter, and the influence certain arguments can have. One powerful example of a historical fallacy is that the American Civil War was fought over the powers and rights bestowed upon individual states. This argument clouds the immense role that slavery played as the primary cause of the war. Certainly, the causes of the Civil War are complex, but by arguing that it was simply about states' rights, one is presenting an overly simplistic and incorrect version of history that is damaging in countless ways.

Fallacy is incredibly dangerous in historical work as an established and believed fallacy can impede the proper and well-vetted historical analysis from being accepted, sometimes for generations. These historical fallacies can be weaponized and used for political purposes while always slowing the progress of solid historical work. If historians are constantly working to undo the entrenchment of fallacy, they are slowed in progressing their fields. A powerful historical fallacy can be used to

motivate devastating events and have countless times in world history.

In order to avoid historical fallacy, we must be open-minded to proper historical analysis, understand and view multiple perspectives in any event, and focus on determining the difference between facts and biased opinions masquerading as such. By allowing the historical analysis process to take place in full, we as a society can push dangerous fallacy aside and arrive at objectively determined historical conclusions.

CHAPTER 5.

THE STAKES OF HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP

One last point before you get started doing history on your own. Getting the process right—learning how to read, research, and write as historians do—is essential as historians think and work in a manner unique to our discipline. Above all, historians weigh the specific context—the impact of new ideas, the influence of a cultural milieu, of the pressures of a unique geography, the crisis brought on by economic change—when explaining why past events occurred as they did. Rather than relying on trans-historical or unchanging notions about human nature or economic theory, historians believe that each event happened within a unique set of factors. They try to assess which elements of a society's culture or economy (or myriad other elements) had the greatest impact on the individuals involved. New historical interpretations have helped beleaguered groups gain awareness of a past community and a better understanding of their own identity; likewise, good history has aided policymakers in drafting ideas about how they might address social problems. Clearly getting it wrong has an impact as well, leading to misunderstandings about the past and fights over primacy of interest.

INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC

Much of your focus as a history major is on academic history–reading historical monographs, analyzing primary sources, learning the narrative of events that led to a war or new invention or a major social shift. Too much time focusing on the work of professional historians might tempt you to think that historians just do history for other historians and so doing bad history will only affect a small group. But that is simply not true. There are several ways historians interact with the public at large. For example:

IN HISTORY CLASSES

While it is much easier to appreciate the necessity of, say, medical research in our daily lives, the reality is that historical scholarship is just as important because it is foundational to individuals' identities, worldviews, and the collective consciousness of larger groups. Crucially, individuals' worldviews inform their political opinions and choices; the consequence of such decisions, especially in democratic republics, is the adoption and promulgation of policies, ranging from domestic issues to foreign policy. Getting the story and analysis right is, therefore, a massive responsibility. Perhaps the most important "public" which historians engage are their students. Most state and private universities require some type of history class for graduation, and historical surveys tend to garner the highest enrollments. These surveys are useful because they offer both a long-term and broad perspective to students. To carry all of this off, however, historians must be master synthesizers, integrating economic, political, social, and cultural histories into the

classroom. At the same time they must be specialists, since they are also expected to perform their own research (contributing to our larger store of knowledge) while familiarizing themselves with the major primary and secondary sources in their area of expertise.

THROUGH ORGANIZATIONS

Upon first blush, specialization may seem needlessly obscure and, admittedly, sometimes the purveyors of such knowledge can come off as pedantic. Specialization, however, serves an important societal purpose. Most importantly, the insights and facts established by specialized monographs are the foundation for what students ultimately end up reading in their textbooks. By amassing a number of these monographs we are able to offer specific facts and craft larger narratives about certain issues. Historians are sometimes called upon to testify in court when context is needed trying a case, and their scholarship can also become central to a written court brief. Sometimes their expert knowledge can make the difference as in the recent SCOTUS decision *Obergefell v. Hodges*. The court's majority decision written by Justice Anthony Kennedy pointed out that social and legal aspects of marriage have changed over time, and to buttress this point he cited amicus briefs submitted by the two most important historical organizations in the U.S.: The American Historical Association and The Organization of American Historians. Additionally, lawmakers and executives at all levels of governance often consult historians when trying to understand specialized topics, or when they are wrestling with how to combat long-standing issues.

THE INTERNET (SOCIAL MEDIA, PODCASTS, ETC.)

One of the gratifying aspects of becoming a historian is that you will over time begin to piece together your own worldview and opinions – all of which will continue to evolve. And, since historical training promotes specialization and persuasive argumentation, historians are well-positioned to extend those arguments to the broader public. While some historians subscribe to the notion that their job is to produce scholarship and then allow it to diffuse to the public via incorporation into textbooks and curricula, it seems fewer and fewer historians believe in such traditional notions. Over the last few years with the explosion of social media, blogs, and podcasts, historians have seized upon the opportunities inherent in these platforms. So, while many rightly decry "fake news" stories spread on social media, historians and other academics are busy doing their best to flood newspapers, the Twittersphere, blogs, and the airwaves/podwaves with expert opinions.

The list of new sites and podcasts is truly expansive, but one stands out. The *Washington Post*, realizing that people were thirsting for expert opinions in the wake of the 2016 election, hired a couple of historians to launch the blog "Made By History," which solicits thoughtful op-ed pieces written by historians. They started in 2017 and just expanded their staff in 2019. Another important tool that historians have utilized recently is the vaunted Twitter thread. Since so many primary sources are freely available online and Twitter also allows you to add photos of documents, many historians have used Twitter to try to

educate or correct popular misconceptions. Efforts by historians have been crucial to correcting the media and helping to foster informed debate. Recently, one popular historian went on NPR's morning show to say that in her research she found no evidence that women used contraception or abortion services in the nineteenth century, and Lauren MacIvor Thompson, a specialist in female reproductive rights, responded with a Twitter thread and several links to point out how laws, such as the Comstock Law of 1873, made it impossible for women to speak forthrightly about these issues so euphemisms had to be employed. MacIvor Thompson's thread went viral and NPR quickly posted a correction. MacIvor Thompson's expertise was quickly recognized, and she was then asked for an interview by *The Atlantic* for a piece on suffragists and the birth control issue.

WHY HISTORICAL METHODS ARE IMPORTANT

Okay, so what if historians interact with the public in a variety of ways, some seen while others largely unseen, if doing history well takes practice and training then the public at large won't be able to tell if you do bad history, right? Well no. Consider the cases below of people who played fast and loose with the facts or were lazy in their contextualization.

CASE 1: NAOMI WOLF (NOT A HISTORIAN, BUT WITH A PHD)

And here is a case that shows why the historical method is very important. What happens when someone calls out your facts and methods on air? Be sure to watch the embedded video in the first link.

Yelena Dzhanova, *The Cut,* "Here's an Actual Nightmare: Naomi Wolf Learning On-Air That Her Book Is Wrong"

and the follow-up: *New York Times,* "Her book in limbo, Naomi Wolf fights back"

CASE 2: DAVID MCCULLOUGH AND *THE PIONEERS*

What happens when your peers call "bias" and "whitewashing" of history and suggest that you are promoting a historical fallacy?

Rebecca Onion, "No Man's Land: Review of David McCullough's The Pioneers" in *Slate*

and Andrew Wehrman's Twitter thread on McCullough

History is in fact everywhere, because everything has a history. But not all history-based productions are equal. Professional scholars are not the only ones who like to claim the mantle of "historian." Amateur historians, journalists, politicians, political pundits, and filmmakers also publish/produce works of history of varying sophistication. In this book, you'll learn about the standards of the scholarly discipline of history in the hopes that you'll become an advocate of history that follows guidelines. The stakes are high, and it's not easy. But this book will help you find the way.

PART II.

RESEARCHING HISTORICALLY

Given the importance of finding appropriate sources, both **primary** and **secondary**, historians must develop good research skills. Paramount among these skills is knowing where to look to find sources that are off the beaten-track, not just those whose creators used the best keywords for search- engine algorithms. Digital repositories, published and archival resources, sources that are not written (such as numerically based sources that must be translated, maps, and oral interviews) all can and often should be consulted, depending upon one's research question. Sections in this chapter offer some guidance in understanding how these sources are created, collected and preserved, and currently accessed.

While the challenge of the hunt, as well as immersing oneself in **primary sources** can be fun—who doesn't like to read other people's mail?—collecting the information from those sources is still governed by the **standards of**

scholarship (a topic in the next chapter, but it might behelpful to read it out of order). In "Researching Historically" you'll find advice on how to narrow your topic enough to make it "researchable" in a few weeks, as well as how to take notes effectively. Every historian eventually establishes a set of research habits that suit their style of learning and writing, but before you settle on a path, spend some time experimenting with the suggestions found here or recommended by your instructor. Above all, get started early on your research so that you leave plenty of time to consider multiple options to get the best primary sources, or to refine your historical questions based on the sources you have located.

In closing, as you learn new ways to find and organize information, consider keeping notes on your process. Such a "meta" list–that is, not what you found but what you did to find materials and keep track of them–might help remind you the next time you have to research a question for another assignment, in some later class. But better yet, the knowledge you gain here is the basis of skills many employers want. Those skilled in historical detective work are some of the best researchers around, and someday soon, you may well want to remember the transferable skills and experiences you developed as a history major.

CHAPTER 6.

CHOOSING AND NARROWING A TOPIC

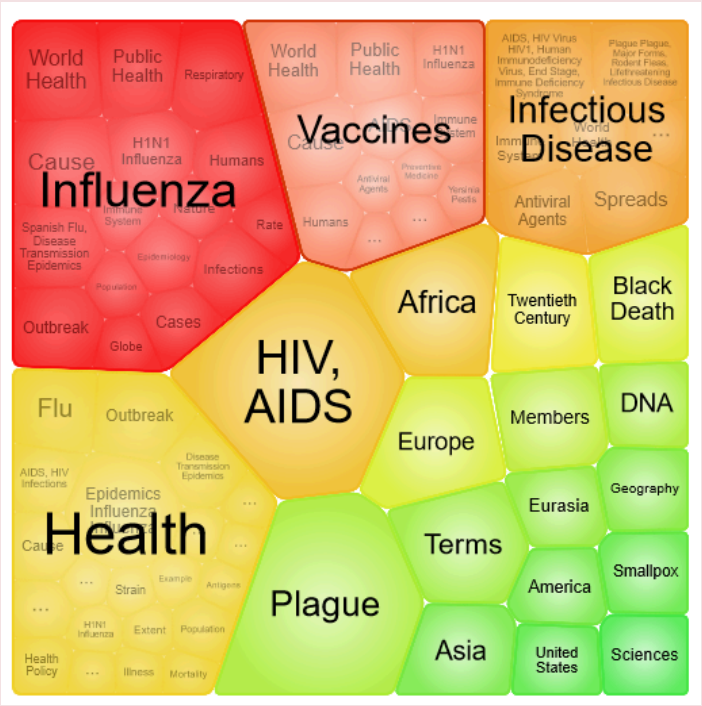
CHOOSING A TOPIC TO RESEARCH

Students often struggle to **choose their topics** of study or interest and therefore do not know where to start when it comes to the work of a history class. Here are some points to consider:

The most important element in choosing a topic for an undergraduate history class is to make sure that you can remain interested in the topic. Start by listing subjects, time periods, scenarios that interest you. Then consider whether or not you might want to focus on an individual, a singular event, a movement that crossed several eras, or some other aspect of the past. You might also consider what kinds of sources interest you—personal correspondence or diaries? Political speeches? Videos? Scientific treatises? Maps? Advertisements? Some of the best research papers focus on a narrow range of sources, but because they are examined within a new framework, or particularly in-depth, they yield fascinating new analyses.

Topic Finder and Term Clusters

For those with access to UTA's databases, you can "map" terms that interest you on Gale Virtual Reference library and see related terms for entries in GVRL's resources. For example, if you put in "pandemic" and "history" you get citations to a number of related individuals and events of previous pandemics in global history. See this link to Gale Virtural Resource Library and click on "Topic Finder" at top of page. https://login.ezproxy.uta.edu/login?url=https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?p=GVRL&u=txshracd2597



The second most important element is to ascertain whether you can access the sources necessary to answer your research question. Are primary sources available? Do you know—or can you find—some of the secondary

resources, that is, the historians who have preceded you and have written about the topic? [See Locating Sources] You may be particularly interested in ancient or medieval history, or the history of an indigenous people far removed from the United States. Unfortunately, the older the primary source or the further removed from the US experience it is, the less likely it is to be accessible to a public university student. Sometimes you can find a unique digitized or published set of primary sources but counting on such a find is risky. You might, however, be able to find contemporary sources on the representation of your topic—say nineteenth-century "gentlemen archaeologists" who studied those distant peoples, or twentieth-century newspaper or magazine articles that discussed an ancient find—thus allowing you to at least see how others from a more modern era have portrayed those times or individuals that interest you. Remaining flexible and creative when honing your topic is key.

Occasionally, a professor will direct students toward specific topics or otherwise offer parameters. In this instance, make sure you understand the scope, or timeline/focus, of your topic. Is your instructor looking to see if you can analyze change over a broad swath of time—centuries—or (more likely) to explain the motivations of an individual or what happened at a specific point in time? What sort of allowances will your instructor make for your own take on the topic? Does your instructor have in mind a particular sort of primary source analysis, such as considering maps or the artifacts of popular culture? Even with assigned topics, you should be able to find a research question that will interest you and be accessible to you with a bit of creativity.

NARROWING DOWN YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION

Once you have chosen your topic or subject, it is time to frame your project by asking the right **Historical Questions.** Questions form the backbone of historical analysis and direct the historian as they complete the research portion of the assignment. By developing a proper set of questions, historians can set effective and efficient parameters on their research as they begin to study their accumulated evidence. For example: What role did women play in the American Revolution? This question defines both the subject matter of the research (women) and the time period (American Revolution) while also directing our reading of the documents. We are now going to look for women who played active roles during the war, as well as the impact of those actions. But it would be wise to narrow your topic further still if you only have a semester in which to produce your paper. You might do so by place or time. What role did women in Massachusetts play during the opening years of the Revolution? Or what was the contribution of a particular woman—say for example how did Mercy Otis Warren affect the development of Revolutionary politics of Colonial Massachusetts?

You'll notice by this last question that the historical question you ask should define the scope of your research in such a way that you will be able to isolate your subject quite a bit. Though you started with a broad interest—women in the American Revolution—your research question has allowed you to focus on a person who left sources, and a problem that needs answering—what did Warren do in the context of her

own community in the years leading up to the American Revolution? For the most part, undergraduate students of history tend to attempt subjects that are too broad for fear that they will not be able to "fill up ten pages" (or twenty or five) unless they aim broadly. But this assumption sets them up for failure, in that trying to tackle a large question, well-trodden by other historians, they are unable to demonstrate the primary source analysis skills that their professors most want to see. Although you should consult closely with your instructor, the best rule of thumb is to *narrow your topic into a question that has specificity by time, place, and primary source collections*.

Don't worry though. Most research topics lend themselves to multiple historical questions, any one of which would make a decent research paper for an undergraduate student. By answering these with proper analysis of evidence historians are capable of crafting well-supported arguments and conclusions.

RECAPPING: HOW TO MAKE SURE YOU FIND A TOPIC FOR YOUR PAPER THAT WORKS

1. Be curious about a topic for which there exists primary sources –either in a local archive, in published primary sources, or a digital collection. What would you like to know? Brainstorm with many questions. Perhaps you might start with:

- An event (a strike, an invention, a battle, a treaty, a new law): what was the cause? Who was responsible? Why him/her? Why did it happen when it did? Can I compare it to some similar

event, and thereby evaluate what was unique about this cause/outcome?

- An on-going trend (protests, women smoking, anti-tobacco movement): what was it like for people involved in this trend? Why did they make the choices they did? Why not other ones? How did they choose to participate?
- Individual's or groups' motivations and responses – what motivated an individual? How did others understand an event or a remarkable individual? What led a group to organize?

2. Choose the best answerable problem from these questions. This involves narrowing the question, so that rather than asking about motivations generally, your research question might be "Why did x act as she did during the debate over the initial passage of this legislation?" OR "What were three major concerns for y when he was involved in that on-going trend?" Some suggestions for narrowing include:

- Considering a specific time period (the background or ten years after a new invention)
- Assessing the impact in a different location, such as a town you know something about, or have access to the newspapers for.
- Focusing on a single individual and tracing their own experience in the context of a an important event or emerging trend.
- Being pragmatic; narrow your question in light of available primary sources to answer your question.

3. Draft an argument or hypothesis based on that question, and make sure it's grounded in an historical context (that is, not a trans-historical "people are like this" explanation). For example,

- X pursued this legislation because she was inspired and educated by her father, who was also a reformer.
- This enslaved man who corresponded with his master in the 1850s spoke in a sort of code, rarely revealing sincere anger or irritation.

For further help in narrowing down a topic check out Learning to do Historical Research which has additional helpful resources

CHAPTER 7.

LOCATING SOURCES

WHY YOU CAN'T JUST GOOGLE FOR YOUR HISTORY RESEARCH PAPER

If you are like most Americans in the 21st century, when you have a question, you head straight to a Google search box (or shout "Alexa" or "Hey Siri" or <insert your favorite internet search engine here>). If you're looking for just the right primary and secondary sources, however, trusting a generic web search is not the best approach. Why that is relates to the specialized nature of historical sources. When you're shopping for shoes, you don't expect to find them right at the main entrance of the local mall; you know that at a minimum you need to walk through the mall to find a store that sells shoes. In the same way, expecting Google to provide you with a scholarly work (meaning peer-reviewed and with properly cited sources) or the best primary sources for your research paper on the first or second page of a search is sort of like walking into that mall and thinking one of the first ten items you'll see will be those hard-to-find Doc Martens in your size.

Hints for database searc

In other words, the same place that can list "coffee shops near me" is NOT the best place to locate a scholarly book on the United Daughters of the Confederacy and

their early twentieth-century efforts to build Confederate monuments across the South. Nor is it the quickest place to find comprehensive, reliable sources about when those monuments were built in your hometown. To find scholarly and historical sources that you can trust, it's best to start with libraries, secondary sources, and primary source databases that specialize in the subjects you want to research.

START WITH YOUR LIBRARY'S WEB PAGE

Though you have most of the world's knowledge in the browser box of your smart phone, you still need the library and librarians. Libraries remain the go-to resource for students because they:

- categorize information;
- specialize in academic, or peer-reviewed scholarship;
- employ librarians.

Librarians are experts in library science, which is the study of how to manage information. They consider what sort of information users need, and how best to organize vast troves of information so that users can find the best information, in terms of accuracy and specificity. Smart students regularly turn to resource guides from their university libraries, because those guides curate what their library has access to. (Another reason to avoid starting with a generic search engine is that they inevitably point you to information behind pay walls that your own University may provide for free—or rather because you pay student library fees.)

For example, try exploring UTA Library's History Subject Guide. This guide points out the best places to find articles from academic journal, databases for primary sources on a series of topics that are available in UTA's library, and even a short video reminding you of the differences between primary and secondary sources.

CONSULT AN ACADEMIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Note also that at the top of the page, there is "Background information" that points you to a reference guide. *It is a VERY good idea to start any research project by looking up your topic in at least one, and if possible, more than one academic encyclopedia.* While Wikipedia has improved dramatically over the last several years, it remains uneven and without official academic oversight that limit errors and informational gaps. A good research library will have access to literally thousands of encyclopedia covering historical topics. Encyclopedia for history topics cover every conceivable subject; at UTA, there are three different encyclopedia on race and racism, the *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema,* the *Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns,* and even the *Encyclopedia of Swearing.* You can search the catalog to find them (see below), but there are also two good databases that bring together many different academic encyclopedia:

- Gale Virtual Research Library https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/start.do?p=GVRL&u=txshracd2597
- Credo Reference https://search-credoreference-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/

There are also good online encyclopedic databases including:

- The Handbook of Texas if you are pursuing a topic on Texas history. (Not all states have such a collection, and no state has one as comprehensive that for the state of Texas. But see, for example, North Carolina's NCPedia or Minnesota's MNopedia
- Many museums and historical societies keep online resources, such as the National Women's History Museum's biographies of women.

Why start with such public history sites rather than just a plain Google search box? Experts (mainly historians) vet the material and so such sites are more reliable for research purposes. See UTA library's Guide to Evaluating Websites.

Encyclopedia not only give you the basic information, but most also give a short bibliography at the end of the article, which is a great place to find secondary (and sometimes primary) sources to help with your own research. They might also be written by an expert who has published a book or article on the subject (which you would find out by putting the author into an article database such as JSTOR or a larger publication database such as WorldCat.

Finding a Book Using the UTA Library's Website

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=304#oembed-1

SEARCH THE LIBRARY'S CATALOG

Using your library's search can be a bit overwhelming. While the best strategy is to dive in and use trial and error, but here are a few guidelines and a video to help you learn the ropes:

- Using the advanced search is virtually always better than the basic search, because it allows you to focus on history sources and topics.
- Using 2-3 broad search terms and keeping open "all fields" will insure not missing important possible sources, though it may provide thousands of results. Use the filters in advanced search for a more precise listing.
- If you are looking for a good **secondary source** (such as a monograph for an assigned book review or a good journal article for background research), consider this method:
    - navigate to the "Content type" box. Click boxes for book/ebook (and include book

chapter and journal/ejournal if you are not required to find books alone).

    - check the box for "peer-reviewed publications" in the bottom left.
    - exclude "newspaper articles" at the bottom of the page.

- If you are looking for primary sources (or you have too many options) after putting in a couple search terms in "all fields," use the filters on the left side to whittle down the search so that it focuses on what you need.
    - For published primary sources, use the bar on the left to limit the publication date to the period you are interested in. (Say you want to know what doctors and public health experts said about pandemics in the twenty years after the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic: put in "pandemic" and "influenza" in the search boxes, and then limit the publication date to 1918-1938. You might also limit the content type to books, journal articles, conference proceedings and other publications written by physicians and public health experts. If you wanted to see just what they were putting out for popular/public consumption, you could skip publications and just click "newspaper articles" and "magazines."
- Another alternative is to put in a broad topic and under Content Type check "archival materials." In

UTA's search catalog, if you put in "Mexican War" in the search terms and checked "archival material" you will get many of Special Collections holdings on this topic.

Remember this advantage to searching your library's database: it's free for students. If you do search on the open web and hit a pay wall, always check to see if your library subscribes.

USE LIBRARY DATABASES

Library databases are enormously helpful in finding peer-reviewed secondary sources (as well as primary sources, but more on that below). But just as figuring out the best ways to search in your library's main catalog takes some trial and error, databases such as JSTOR, Project Muse, Academic Search Complete require experimenting with search terms and judicious use of filters.

HINTS FOR DATABASE SEARCHES FOR SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Use "Advanced Search" rather the basic search box
- Limit your search to History journals (In JSTOR there is a specific "Journal filter")
- Restrict the publication date to the past couple of decades if you get many options (unless you want to consider how historians have changed their approach to a topic over time).
- In Keyword searches, you can add search terms and/or change the connections between the terms. Use "near 5 [words]" to link terms, rather

than "and." For example, if you want to research cholera epidemics in nineteenth-century America, use "nineteenth century" and "epidemics" and "United States"/"American" (If you allow "and" as the connector, any article with both of the terms can show up. "Near 5" means the terms must appear together, which increases the likelihood it will be on your topic. If you discover that many of your search terms are bringing up unwanted articles (say on some other nation in North America) you can add a search box connected with "Not" (as in "Not" "Canada").

- If you locate a good article—one that is very close to what you are looking for—pay close attention to its footnotes to find more books and articles on your topic. We call this method of locating sources "footnote mining" (see below for more information).

PRIMARY SOURCE DATABASES

Make sure to check your library for collections of primary sources on a variety of historical topics, from colonial America to nineteenth-century Britain; from the US Immigration history to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Some databases are mostly documents, but others include video or maps. Your library pays a subscription fee for these databases, and they are rich resources for undergraduate research papers. Moreover, they are mostly text searchable, which can help you find just the information you are looking for.

Some of UTA's excellent databases (all located in "Databases A to Z") include:

- African American Communities
- Alexander Street Videos
- American Indian Histories and Cultures
- American Antiquarian Society (premier library of 19th century popular publications)
- Chronicling America (early 20th century publications)
- Eighteenth Century Collections Online
- Immigration records of the INS
- Newspapers, including full runs of the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Dallas Morning News.*
- North American Immigrant Letters, Diaries, and Oral Histories
- North American Women's Letters and Diaries
- Sabin America, 1500-1926
- Women and Social Movements

OTHER DATABASES

Several public online (free) databases can help you with your research. A few of the most important ones are below, separated by geography and time period.

- Library of Congress
- British History Online

- Historical Archives of the European Union

If you are looking for archives that house primary sources for a particular person, event, time and/or place that are not covered in the databases above, you can likely find it in WorldCat, a union catalog that itemizes the collections of almost 18,000 libraries in 123 countries. WorldCat can be difficult to search, so be patient in trying different keywords and filtering results. While search WorldCat from your institution, you'll notice that you can choose to limit the search to items available in your library. You can also see the availability of items in nearby libraries, which perhaps maybe be close enough for you to visit. If they are not, contact your library for information about Interlibrary Loan (ILL). (See below). Keep in mind that unique primary sources that have not been digitized often cannot be shared via ILL.

As a last resort, you might try using that Google search box, placing "archives" and the place, event, or peoples you are interested in. The following document is a collection of open-access (see: free) primary source databases that have been organized by region/topic. While it is not an exhaustive list, it is for sure a good place to get started Primary Source Databases

Using a Primary Source Database

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=304#oembed-2

BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOUND IN TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER SYNTHETIC WORKS

All good textbooks—both for survey classes and for more specialized topics—have a "for further reading" list at the end of each chapter. These lists often cover some of the most significant books on the topics, which means you might find them very helpful in providing background for your own research, or in pointing you toward other sources (see footnote mining below).

Consider, for example, the excellent "Recommended Reading" lists at the end of each chapter of American Yawp, a textbook used in many US History courses.

FOOTNOTE MINING

One of the best methods to find targeted sources—ones that hit close to the topic you are interested in—is to follow the research path of scholars who have gone before you. Using one of the methods above—that is, searching your library catalog search, an encyclopedia collection,

JSTOR or other databases—select secondary sources that represent well your topic. Then look closely at the footnotes. Is the author citing newspapers articles from a newspaper your library has a subscription to? Are there more articles that you could find in your library's digital collections? Are they referring frequently to a significant historical figure who might have papers that have been published or digitized, and thus locatable in the Library of Congress, WorldCat, or in a web search?

Once you have the leads from mining the footnotes of another scholar, return to the methods above to check for accessibility from your library. If you cannot find it at your library and it's the type of document that can be loaned between libraries (that is, not unique or rare), consider using Interlibrary Loan to gain access. (see below).

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Using ILL is a terrific way to get sources that are not available in your library or on the web. ILL is a service provided free to students and you should definitely take advantage as it can put the best (that is, most targeted to your topic) resources at hand with a few clicks on your keyboard. But it does take some planning ahead. You cannot, for example, leave research to the last minute and expect your local librarian to deliver resources from neighboring libraries within hours.

To use ILL, search your library's web site and fill in the form. Having as much information as possible about the source you located will be helpful when trying to locate and borrow items from a neighboring institution.

ASK YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

Last, but not least, when you are working on a research project, consider using the skills of the experts in research information—your institution's reference librarians. These professionals do not have to know about your topic specifically to help you, as they know how to find information on virtually any topic. Make an appointment via email or chat with the reference librarian in charge of history resources at your institution early on in your research process. Be ready to explain your topic, your efforts so far to find information, and perhaps to provide a link or copy of the sources you've found most helpful.

CHAPTER 8.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

While a larger and larger proportion of primary sources have been digitized, there will always be physical archives. In this section, you'll learn what archives are, why they exist, and how to take advantage of them. Sifting through actual documents and artifacts from the past can be great fun, and if you have the opportunity to visit an archive as a part of writing a historical research paper for a class, you should do so. Read up here and consider visiting an archival collection near you to locate unique sources.

Archives are the documents and records from individuals, organizations, and governments that have been preserved and made available to researchers because of their enduring value. Archives aren't just for historians, of course, they are saved for everyone. They are important because they provide evidence of activities and tell us more about individuals and institutions. They also tell stories and increase our sense of identity and understanding of cultures, societies, and human actions. They can even be used to protect hard-won civil, political, legal, and economic rights and to ensure justice. The bottom-line is archives are important to understanding the past and to documenting and protecting our rights as citizens.

LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

Chances are you have used libraries in the past for leisure reading, special programs, school projects, or a host of other activities. Libraries and their look, feel, and organization are familiar to most of us. Not so much archives. On the most basic level, libraries and archives are information providers, though they deliver information in different ways, and the type of information they contain is often different.

For example, libraries contain published works (books, journals, magazines, newspapers, electronic databases, etc.) *created* to educate, inform, and entertain, while archives contain mostly unpublished materials produced by individuals, organizations, and governments through normal day-to-day activities and only later are *saved* because they tell us something important about the past. A library's collection is not unique, since most of the works it acquires are produced in multiple copies and sold to other libraries across the country. Archival holdings, however, are unique. You won't find archival records in one repository duplicated anywhere else. There is an old cliché that says "libraries are for readers, while archives are for writers." All sorts of people use libraries, but those planning to create knowledge for others use archives. While there are exceptions to this cliché, of course, we hope you get the point.

Because of their unique holdings, archival institutions oftentimes have well developed preservation, conservation, and security plans in place designed to protect and preserve their collections. After all, if an archival document is destroyed or stolen, it can't be replaced. The limiting factor for libraries to replace

missing items is money—does the library have the funds to purchase replacements? As a result, most libraries allow their materials to circulate outside the library and then replace lost and stolen items as needed. Archival materials are almost never allowed to leave the archives because they can't be replaced.

Libraries and archives also process materials differently. Generally speaking, libraries catalog resources at the item level. You can search a library's online catalog by subject, author, title, keyword, etc., and find discrete items focusing on your subject. Archives collections are maintained and processed at the collection level, and many collections have literally thousands of items in them (some considerably more). Rather than cataloging individual items in archival collections, archivists produce finding aids for collections as a whole. These finding aids, rather than library catalog records, are the access tools for researchers. You can read more about how finding aids work below, but archives are also staffed by archivists, who help researchers as part of their jobs. Don't hesitate to ask them for help!

For a full discussion of the principles behind collecting for archives and the pathway to becoming an archivist, see the chapter on archiving as a profession – "Becoming an Archivist."

ARCHIVES IN THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH REGION

If you're ready to work with an archive as part of your research project, there are plenty of options in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. These archives could be important for any number of different research topics from those

pertaining to local history or to federal history, from cultural or religious history, to the history of technology or politics and many different topics in between.What follows is a list of ***some*** of the archives in the DFW metroplex, along with links to their homepages. Accessing their websites will give you information about the types of historical sources they have and what their use policies are.

City Archives

Dallas Municipal Archives

Dallas Public Library Special Collections (has a number of collections focusing on Dallas)

Fort Worth Public Library Genealogy, History, and Archives Department (houses numerous Fort Worth collections)

Most of the public libraries in the suburbs have local history collections too. Many of these collections also contain archival materials.

County Archives

Tarrant County Archives

Museum Collections

Amon Carter Museum of American Art

Dallas Historical Society

Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, Library and Archives

Dallas Jewish Historical Society

Dallas Museum of Art Archives

Documentary Arts, Dallas, Texas African American Photography Archive

Fort Museum of Science and History, Library and Archives

Frontiers of Flight Museum Research Library

Perot Museum of Nature and Science

University Collections

SMU Bridwell Library Archives

SMU DeGolyer Library

SMU Hamon Arts Library Bywaters Special Collections

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary J. T. and Zelma Luther Archives

TCU Library Special Collections

Texas Woman's University Library Woman's Collection

University of Dallas Library Archives and Special Collections

University of North Texas Library Special Collections

University of Texas at Arlington Libraries Special Collections

University of Texas at Dallas Library Special Collections

RESEARCHING IN ARCHIVES

As mentioned earlier, archives are different animals than libraries, and their policies and procedures reflect this. When visiting an archive for research purposes, be prepared to follow their rules, but also try to understand why these rules are in place. Remember, archival repositories hold unique collections that are impossible to replace, so user policies are more restrictive than those of libraries.

Most archives have a similar set of policies and procedures, including requiring you to register once you arrive to conduct research. In most archives, you will be asked to register as a user by showing some form of personal identification and completing a user form

(which the archives will keep to document your visit). You may also be asked to lock up purses, backpacks, notebooks, and other non-essential items, only bringing paper, pencil (ink is prohibited in most archives because an errant mark can damage materials), or a computer into the research room for note-taking. A staff member will then conduct a reference interview with you to find out about your research focus and to help determine if, or how, the archives' collection can help.

Once appropriate collections are identified, an archivist may provide a finding aid to each collection you want to use. A finding aid is an important access and descriptive tool for archival collections. Finding aids reveal information about who or what organization created the collection, the scope of the topics reflected in the collection, the dates of the materials in the collection, and a container list, showing what is in each box of the collection. By using the finding aid, you will be able to request specific boxes and folders from the collection. (A helpful site to finding aids in a number of archival institutions across Texas can be found at Texas Archival Resources Online.)

At this point, the archives staff will probably ask you to fill out "call-slips," where you request specific boxes and/or folders from the collections you are interested in. The staff will retrieve the boxes/folders and bring them to you in the research room. Don't be surprised if they give you one box at a time and require you to sit at a table that is being monitored by staff and/or video cameras. Keep in mind that security is a priority in all archival institutions. You will not be allowed to take the materials out of the research room, so your research must be conducted when the archives is open. Budget your time accordingly,

keeping in mind that archives have limited hours, and archival research takes time and is unlike using books and other sources, which have indexes and other precise access tools.

Be sure when taking notes from an archives collection that you include bibliographic information that you will need later in order to cite the collection and its contents in your footnotes and bibliography. Many finding aids will show you how to cite a collection, but not all will. If the finding aid you are using doesn't give you the bibliographic citation, then record the complete title of the collection, the collection's unique identifying number (if it has one), the box and folder numbers you used, as well as the folder titles. As long as you have this information, then you will be able to write your footnotes and bibliography using any footnoting style and format.

When you find material that you want to copy or scan, then ask the staff about the archives' copy policy. Some archives will allow you to scan documents using your phone or camera, while others may require that all copies and scans be done by staff members, who will charge you a fee to defray costs. If you think that publishing some of the items you are using may occur in the future (or even if there is only a remote possibility), then be aware that some archives have publication fees associated with the reproduction of archival materials in books, videos, advertisements, television, and other products, especially if these products are commercial in nature (as opposed to being sponsored by non-profits). It never hurts to request the archives' fee schedule, so you will have this information.

Once you have completed your research, then return the archival boxes/folders to the staff member at the

reference desk, retrieve the personal items you locked up when you registered, and depart. If you find that you have questions after leaving the archives, feel free to contact the archives staff to get the answers. They are happy to help.

CHAPTER 9.

ORGANIZING RESEARCH: TAKING AND KEEPING EFFECTIVE NOTES

Once you've located the right primary and secondary sources, it's time to glean all the information you can from them. In this chapter, you'll first get some tips on taking and organizing notes. The second part addresses how to approach the sort of intermediary assignments (such as book reviews) that are often part of a history course.

Honing your own strategy for organizing your primary and secondary research is a pathway to less stress and better paper success. Moreover, if you can find the method that helps you best organize your notes, these methods can be applied to research you do for any of your classes.

Before the personal computing revolution, most historians labored through archives and primary documents and wrote down their notes on index cards, and then found innovative ways to organize them for their purposes. When doing secondary research, historians often utilized (and many still do) pen and paper for taking notes on secondary sources. With the advent of digital photography and useful note-taking tools like OneNote, some of these older methods have been phased out – though some persist. And, most importantly, once you start using some of the newer techniques below, you

may find that you are a little "old school," and might opt to integrate some of the older techniques with newer technology.

Whether you choose to use a low-tech method of taking and organizing your notes or an app that will help you organize your research, here are a few pointers for good note-taking.

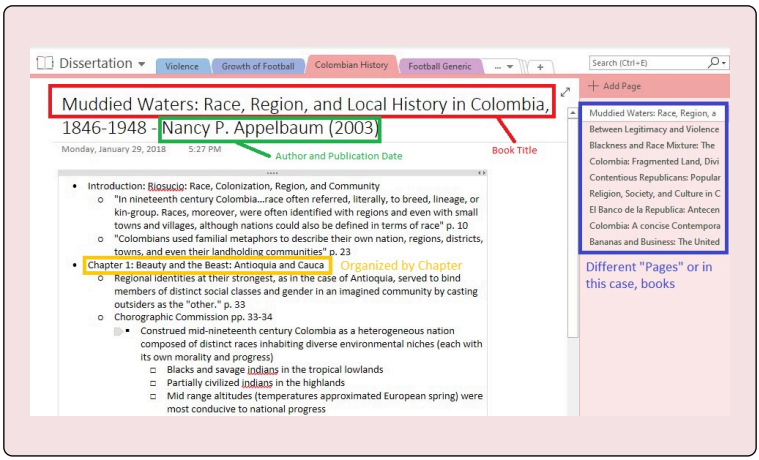
PRINCIPLES OF NOTE-TAKING

- Start out how you mean to go on, and guard from the beginning against losing notes.
    - If you are going low-tech, choose a method that prevents a loss of any notes. Perhaps use one spiral notebook, or an accordion folder, that will keep everything for your project in one space. If you end up taking notes away from your notebook or folder, replace them—or tape them onto blank pages if you are using a notebook—as soon as possible.
    - If you are going high-tech, pick one application and stick with it. Using a cloud-based app, including one that you can download to your smart phone, will allow you to keep adding to your notes even if you find yourself with time to take notes unexpectedly.
- Never fail to write down source information.
    - When taking notes, whether you're using 3X5 note cards or using an app described below, *write down the author and a shortened*

title for the publication, along with the page number on EVERY card. We can't emphasize this point enough; writing down the bibliographic information the first time and repeatedly will save you loads of time later when you are writing your paper and must cite all key information.

- Start thinking analytically about the argument as soon as you can. Use those ideas to label and organize your notes.
    - Include keywords or "tags" that capture why you thought to take down this information in a consistent place on each note card (and when using the apps described below). If you are writing a paper about why Martin Luther King, Jr., became a successful Civil Rights movement leader, for example, you may have a few theories as you read his speeches or how those around him described his leadership. Those theories—religious beliefs, choice of lieutenants, understanding of Gandhi—might become the tags you put on each note card.
    - Note-taking applications can help organize tags for you, but if you are going low tech, a good idea is to put tags on the left side of a note card, and bibliographic info on the right side.

Example from OneNote



ORGANIZING RESEARCH- APPLICATIONS THAT CAN HELP

USING IMAGES IN RESEARCH

If you are able to physically visit on archive, or occasionally when you have a volume that you've received from Interlibrary Loan, you may be pressed for time. In this instance, using the camera feature on your phone can preserve information so that you can digest it later. Managing these photographs is an important task.

- If you are in an archive: **make your first picture one that includes the formal collection name, the box number, the folder name and call number** and anything else that would help you relocate this information if you or someone else needed to. Do this BEFORE you start taking photos of what is in the folder.
- If you are photographing a book or something

you may need to return to the library: **take a picture of all the front matter** (the title page, the page behind the title with all the publication information, maybe even the table of contents).

Once you have recorded where you find it, resist the urge to rename these photographs. By renaming them, they may be re-ordered and you might forget where you found them. Instead, **use tags** for your own purposes, and carefully name and date the folder into which the photographs were automatically sorted. There is one free, open-source program, **Tropy,** which is designed to help organize photos taken in archives, as well as tag, annotate, and organize them. It was developed and is supported by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. It is free to download, and you can find it here: https://tropy.org/; it is not, however, cloud-based, so you should back up your photos. In other cases, if an archive doesn't allow photography (this is highly unlikely if you've made the trip to the archive), you might have a laptop on hand so that you can transcribe crucial documents.

USING NOTE OR PROJECT-ORGANIZING APPS

When you have the time to sit down and begin taking notes on your primary sources, you can annotate your photos in Tropy. Alternatively, **OneNote,** which is cloud-based, can serve as a way to organize your research. OneNote allows you to create separate "Notebooks" for various projects, but this doesn't preclude you from searching for terms or tags across projects if the need ever arises. Within each project you can start new tabs, say, for each different collection that you have documents from,

or you can start new tabs for different themes that you are investigating. Just as in Tropy, as you go through taking notes on your documents you can create your own "tags" and place them wherever you want in the notes.

Another powerful, free tool to help organize research, especially secondary research though not exclusively, is **Zotero** found @ https://www.zotero.org/. Once downloaded, you can begin to save sources (and their URL) that you find on the internet to Zotero. You can create main folders for each major project that you have and then subfolders for various themes if you would like. Just like the other software mentioned, you can create notes and tags about each source, and Zotero can also be used to create bibliographies in the precise format that you will be using. Obviously, this function is super useful when doing a long-term, expansive project like a thesis or dissertation.

CHAPTER 10.

DATABASE BUILDING

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to popular belief, historians **DO** dabble in numbers, databases, and other math-like things you thought you'd never use again once you passed Math 101. But don't sweat it. You can use databases to answer some interesting historical questions, and if you take it step-by-step, can actually be fairly painless.

What sort of database questions do historians ask? Here are some examples:

1. Which American voters were most likely to cast their ballot for Abraham Lincoln in 1860? Did this change by region? Were urban residents more likely to be Democrats in 1860 than rural ones?
2. Did the arrival of public universities to Texas in the 1860s and the increased access to higher education lead to greater job opportunities for Texans in the 1870s and 1880s?
3. How was the transatlantic slave trade between Africa and the United States affected when Great Britain outlawed the Atlantic slave trade in 1807?

These possibilities are just the proverbial "tip of the iceberg." Aggregate data, the kind that comes from

censuses, election results, and shipping manifests, often provides the best glimpse into ordinary people's lives. Databases are especially valuable for insight into people who, for one reason or another, did not leave many first-hand accounts. The Slave Voyages databases https://slavevoyages.org/ is compiled by a team of scholars from thousands of manifests and ships logs from vessels that crisscrossed the Atlantic between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries and provides invaluable information on the middle-passage.

The problem with these primary sources, however, is that they are most helpful when they are looked at in the aggregate, rather than in their raw form, reading it as a single primary source like a speech or a set of letters from a famous person. It's difficult to try to make sense of a census enumerator's listing of the information from a single street, or to try to draw conclusions about changes in the slave trade by looking at a couple of different slave ship logs. Put another way (to address question number 2 above): we can only know whether Americans were more literate in the 1870s by looking at the census information about literacy for all Texans in two different censuses (1870 and 1880). If we only counted the number of individuals marked literate on a single street, even if we did found the same residents living on the same street for both 1870 and 1880 and learned how many more told the census enumerator they were literate in 1880 but not 1870, we'd only know about literacy for those Texas residents, not whether new universities sparked a statewide trend.

1870 and 1880 US Census Data

Below is a comparison between the 1870 and 1880 U.S. Census section on illiteracy.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=233#h5p-12

Census records for the U.S. can be found at census.gov

The answer to this problem—of how to answer historical questions about trends among ordinary people—is to create a database that you can feed into powerful analysis programs, such as IBM SPSS Statistics or GIS. In the paragraphs below, you'll find an explanation of the basics for creating databases. There are also links at the end of the chapter to a more technical look at database construction.

One of these challenges is that the informational content of historical sources must be converted – sometimes in several ways – before it is useful as data; and several methodological choices must be made during this process. There are numerous 'right' ways to do this and these will vary based on the specific goal and on the sources used. The 'modelling' of historical data is a difficult process, but worth the up-front effort invested in creating a solid, workable design that accurately reflects your data and your project goals.

SOURCES, INFORMATION, AND DATA

Information may be defined as what the sources provide. **Data** may be defined as what the database(s) needs. The historian's challenge is to consider how to transform information into data.

You may encounter unique issues converting sources into a useful database resource that are not encountered by other database users. These problems generally occur as a result of two inevitable realities of historical research:

- At the outset of your research you may do not know precisely what kinds of analysis you will want to undertake with your data
- You will likely be unable to anticipate the full extent and scope of the information contained within your source base

Historical research is often unpredictable; unexpected new lines of inquiry frequently emerge along the way. The more you become familiar with available sources, the more likely these developments are to occur. This makes database design difficult. You should be prepared to make adjustments and changes as you go.

The design of your database will have a direct effect on how useful your data will be. Errors at the design phase can make data entry more laborious and difficult; and, more seriously, such errors will have a significant impact upon the database's ability to retrieve data. It is essential that the initial design of the database be as 'correct' as possible to minimize the need for retroactive restructuring down the line. Even then some redesign is inevitable.

The information historians encounter rarely comes neatly packaged. In fact, sometimes it can be so buried that only a great effort considerable deduction can reveal the hidden information. Often the information is in long narrative form marked with individual quirks. In other cases, it may come in the form of images, sound or video recordings, each of which present unique challenges to database design and manipulation. Even more structured sources like tax rolls, deeds, or census records present certain challenges. Uniformity and regularity, the two defining characteristics of databases, are almost non-existent in the historical record.

Understanding the 'shape' of the data is essential to understanding how databases in general work and how your specific database functions. All databases preserve data in tables containing regular, uniform vertical columns and horizontal rows. Your information will need to be entered, and probably modified to some extent, to fit these. Inevitably, you will need to manipulate your information to conform to the structure of the database tables. Some compromise will occur between maintaining the integrity and richness of the original sources and maximizing the analytical power of the database.

Text-based or statistical information at first glance may be most suitable for conversion into a database. Take, for example, our comparison of illiteracy rates in the US between 1870-1880. This source appears ready made to be converted to "data." The information is already conveniently arranged into columns and rows with each column pertaining to one piece of information (name, age, occupation and so on), and each row corresponding to a single individual. This source should "fit" into the

database structure without a need for too much conversion; the nature of the information lends itself to database design.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=233#h5p-12

Example of a 'rectangular' historical source

Still, even here some additional work is necessary if the source is to be stored in a database. The tabular structure contains the majority of the information, but the page heading includes important details about the place, time, and identity of the census taker which may be useful. These elements do not conform to a neat rectangle. There is also an overabundance of information most of which is not useful for our research question. It would be helpful to create a new table that has just the information we are looking for.

CONCLUSION

Although designing a database is usually a time-consuming process, it can ultimately be rewarding in terms of the analytical power it offers. If you have more than a few dozen informational sources and you need aggregate data from these, it is worth spending time in the design and development of a robust database. Remember that no two databases are alike due to differences in

sources and needs. The real indicator of success is whether or not it serves your purposes.

Watch for the following as indicators that some design change may be needed.

- Information that you would like to analyze which appears repeatedly, but you have nowhere specific to put it (i.e. for which you will need to add new fields)
- If you find yourself repeating information from record to record, you will need to think about re-ordering your relationships to prevent this.
- Watch out for your datatypes, and change them where they are unhelpful.
- Look for data that could be standardized or classified.
- Look out for information that you had not anticipated when designing the database.

Once you have entered some data – it does not need to be all the sources – develop and try some queries. Working with a small amount of information allows you to know the "correct" answer outside of what the query returns. That permits you to test your query and data design. If you get answers that differ from what you expect, it is easier to trouble-shoot the issue while the database is relatively small in size and scope. The differences that you get may be due to database design or from some logical flaw in the query itself. It is important to isolate and solve these issues while the data is small enough to be manageable.

If you do make changes to the design of your database,

consider making copies of the database prior to these changes. Having a backup can be life-saving in case something does not work out as expected.

DATABASE NEXT STEPS

Below are links to additional information about building and using your database

- Creating a Database, and the different parts of one.
- Database Rules and Datatypes, tips for a good and somewhat bug-free database.
- Database Troubleshooting and Coding
- Working with Multiple Tables

CHAPTER 11.

GEOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

WHAT IS GEOGRAPHY?

The word geography is believed to have been coined by the ancient Greek scholar Eratosthenes (276 BCE–194 BCE), who combined the words "geo" – Earth – and "graphia" – description – to explain an important goal of many intellectuals of the classical world. This goal of describing the Earth by mapping the known world, explaining weather and climate, estimating the size and shape of the planet, and theorizing about the relationship between humans and their environment was pursued across the ancient world. Influences on geographical thought and practice can be attributed to Herodotus' (484 BCE-425 BCE) chronicle of events, regions and cultures, Euclid's (300 BCE-200 BCE) geometry, Strabo's (63 BCE-23 CE) poetic impressions of place, Ptolemy's (100-170) geographical coordinate system, and Al-Idrisi's (1100-1165) cartographical calligraphy of the known world's climatic zones.

Mapmaking advanced significantly during the 7th to 12th centuries as Arab and Persian cartographers sought to map the world using sophisticated mathematics and knowledge gained from Muslim travelers and traders. Further advancements in cartography emerged in the

16th century as European powers sought better maps for ocean navigation and descriptions of the Americas. The professionalization of the discipline of geography occurred in early nineteenth century Europe as geographical societies were formed and German geographers, especially Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter, proposed theories of nature and society. Most European geographers remained focused on theorizing throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while North American geographers, until the mid-twentieth century, preferred to pursue practical knowledge and description. Since the mid-twentieth century, the discipline of geography has both grown and splintered. Geographers today study a plethora of topics using a wide spectrum of methods and theories.[1]

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, HUMAN GEOGRAPHY, AND RESEARCH IN GEOGRAPHY

One of the artificial cleavages in the discipline of geography is between the sub-fields of physical geography and human geography. While physical geographers focus on the spatial processes associated with the natural environment, such as climate, water, plants, animals, and landforms, human geographers investigate the spatial relationships apparent in human activities and phenomena – politics, economics, culture, migration, and history. Fortunately, some geographers today have begun to reunite the field as it becomes

1. For more on the history of geography, see G. J. Martin. 2005. All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographical Ideas, 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

increasingly clear that topics such as climate change, disease pandemics, urbanization, and globalization require multidisciplinary and integrated perspectives from the sciences, humanities, arts, and social sciences. The move toward integrative and cross-disciplinary research is aided by the variety of research methods that have been developed by geographers since the early twentieth century.[2]

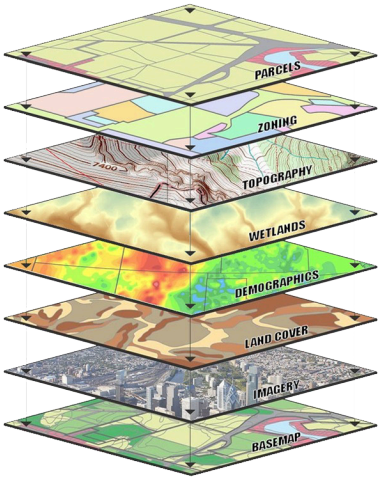
Geographical data can take the form of just about anything that can be paired with a location. Geographers collect data in the form of physical measurements (e.g., coordinates, distance, size, volume, temperature, elevation, velocity, morphology), observations through field study, surveys, interviews, archival documents, government agency reports, historical maps, and so on. The analysis of geographical data is accomplished through quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. The emergence of computers, and an interest in making geography more scientific, in the 1950s and 1960s led to a quantitative revolution in the discipline and the advent of spatial statistics designed for analyzing geographical data with mathematical precision and perfecting spatial models to explain geographic phenomena. Human geographers of the 1970s began to push back against the statistical obsessions and abstract models of the quantitative geographers and argued for qualitative methodologies (e.g., interviews, observations, and textual analysis) that captured human experiences

2. For more on research methods in geography, see D. R. Montello and P. C. Sutton. 2006. *An Introduction to Scientific Research Methods in Geography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; I. Hay. 2016. *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography, 4th Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

that were not easily measured or mapped with precision. In recent years, mixed-methods approaches have gained popularity as a response to the artificial division between quantities and qualities that have fractured social science research. This abundance of sources and methods is both a strength and a challenge for geographers, but a tool has emerged over the past fifty years that has significantly transformed the collection, organization, analysis, and display of geographic data. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has become dominant in geographical research and is an important tool in fields as diverse as physics, literature, public health, urban planning, and history.

WHAT IS GIS?

A geographical information system (GIS) is a software and/or online platform that can be used to gather, manage, visualize and analyze 'spatialized' data. Spatialized data (also known as geo-data) is any type of information that is geo-referenced. Data are geo-referenced when they are given a specific location. For instance, you could describe University Hall as the building where the UTA Department of History resides. You might add to



An example of GIS data layers.

your description of the building by creating a spreadsheet that includes the names of other departments in the building, a count of the number of rooms in the building, the number of floors, the number of faculty offices, the number of classrooms, the age of the building, the date of the last inspection of the elevators, and so on. But these data do not become geo-referenced until you add the geographic information that University Hall sits at the intersection of 32° 43′ 44.9″ north latitude and 97° 6′ 50.84″ west longitude. GIS integrates different types of geo-data (such as the site of an historic event, population figures of the area, its environmental factors, topography, climate, etc.) and then 'stacks' this information into geo-data layers to create map visualizations and 3D scenes (see Fig 1).

HOW CAN GIS BE USED FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH?

In *The Landscape of History* (2002), John Lewis Gaddis asks, "What if we were to think of history as a kind of mapping?"[3] He then connects the ancient practices of mapmaking with the archetypal three-part conception of time (past, present, and future). Gaddis observes that both mapmakers and historians try to identify patterns and manage infinitely complex subjects by imposing abstract grids on time (chronologies: centuries, decades, years, months, days, hours) and space (latitude and longitude, and map projections).[4] As a geo-data platform, GIS

3. J. L. Gaddis. 2002. The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 32.

4. Ibid.

spatially parses and itemizes attribute data (as a row of statistics, a string of text, an image, a movie) by linking latitude and longitude coordinates to representations of the locations of the data. Although GIS is viewed by many as a mapping tool, its software and online platforms are evolving into new forms of interactive online media practice called *Neogeography* (smartphone, web, Big-Data and social media mapping). A list of projects, programs and web-links can be found on the Association of American Geographer's *Historical GIS Clearinghouse and Forum* website.[5] GIS offers a variety of practical uses for the study of history. First, pieces of historical cartography can be digitized, geo-referenced and *rubbersheeted* (stretched and plotted to modern coordinates) to visualize perceptions and perspectives from the past involving discovery, migrations, settlements, military campaigns and battles, etc. Second, GIS can be used to geo-reference census, parish, archival records and time-series population, housing, agriculture, and economic data, which can then be visualized and analyzed in two and three dimensions through the application of spatialized aggregate statistics. Third, GIS can reconstruct past historical sites, in addition to dynamic events, by creating scenarios through the integration of *vector* (point, line and polygon) and *raster* (digital image) geo-data models. GIS skills are in high demand in many fields and are now being used in fields such as library and archival science, the digital humanities, journalism (broadcast, and

5. AAG Historical GIS Clearinghouse and Forum http://www.aag.org/cs/projects_and_programs/historical_gis_clearinghouse/hgis_projects_programs

streaming) and film and gaming.[6] A practical overview of GIS methods for historical studies is discussed in the E-Book *A Place in History* by Ian Gregory. In addition, the ArcGIS Online Lesson *Tell the Story of Irish Public History* provides an introductory level tutorial on how historical geo-databases can be used to create a variety of interactive, online mapping applications. Other examples of GIS methods for historical research can be found in Anne Kelly Knowles' *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for history* (2002), Ian Gregory and Paul Ell's, *Historical GIS: Techniques, methodologies and scholarship* (2003), and Charles Travis' *Writing time and space with GIS: The conquest and mapping of seventeenth-century Ireland* (2015). In addition, a volume edited by David Bodenhamer, John Corrigan and Trevor M. Harris *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the future of humanities scholarship* (2010) set out a vision for trans-disciplinary GIS applications by integrating methods from history, literary studies, philosophy, linguistics, religious studies and other humanities fields.

HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

Among the many emerging areas of interest in geography and GIS is the scholarly return to the relationship between history and geography. History is often misunderstood to be about memorizing dates. Geography is often misunderstood to be about memorizing locations. Both disciplines have suffered from these

6. Esri CityEngine, Film and Gaming https://www.esri.com/en-us/landing-page/lp/esri-cityengine/3d-gis/cityengine-film-gaming

perceptions. Those who study either discipline in depth quickly realize that, while dates and locations are important foundations, neither is a central purpose of the discipline. At the risk of oversimplification, it is helpful to think of the relationship between geography and history as follows. Historians are concerned with the whys of when, while geographers are concerned with the whys of where. The historian focuses not just on when something happened, but why that when matters. Similarly, geographers focus not just on where something is located or occurs, but why that where matters. Historians have constructed and named eras and periods as tools for understanding chronology (relationships in time), while geographers have constructed and named regions as tools for understanding chorology (relationships in space). Yet neither eras nor regions are agreed upon by all historians or geographers respectively. As W. Gordon East, in *The Geography Behind History* observes, "the familiar analogy between geography and history as the stage and the drama is in several respects misleading, for whereas a play can be acted on any stage regardless of its particular features, the course of history can never be entirely unaffected by the varieties and changes of its settings."[7] In fact, one of the animating features of both disciplines is the scholarly attempt to demonstrate that certain eras or regions have been misunderstood, require further study and definition, or should be thrown to the ash heap. Nevertheless, these primary concerns with time and space suggest that history and geography are complementary and interdependent fields of study. To emphasize the significance of this relationship, historian

7. W. Gordon East. 1965. The Geography Behind History. New York: Norton & Company, Inc., 2.

Phillip J. Ethington has advanced a provocative argument that situates geography as central to the study of history:

> The past cannot exist in time: only in space. Histories representing the past represent the places (*topoi*) of human action. History is not an account of "change over time," as the cliché goes, but rather, change through space. Knowledge of the past, therefore, is literally cartographic: a mapping of the places of history indexed to the coordinates of spacetime.[8]

While most geographers and historians have long recognized the need for the perspectives of the other discipline in their scholarly endeavors, some geographers and historians have sought to unite the fields more explicitly. While the current trend among historians is to refer to this work as environmental history, geographers tend to call the field historical geography. Regardless of the moniker, scholars who study the geographies of the past or the relationships between humans and their environments over time are pursuing work that brings the temporal dimension to geography as well as the spatial dimension to history. Among twentieth and twenty-first century geographers, this work has spanned a variety of themes such as the influence of the physical environment in shaping human societies, the ways in which cultures construct landscapes that represent their values, the diffusion of ideas and objects across spaces through human movement and communication, the ways in which humans develop attachments and identities centered on places and spaces, the experience of race, class, and gender in various cultural landscapes over time,

8. P. J. Ethington, "Placing the Past: 'Groundwork' for a Spatial Theory of History," Rethinking History 11 (2007): 465-493.

how spatial relationships and processes are related to power, and how discourse, ideologies, and identities over time have shaped human spatial thinking. Though the work is not always referred to as historical geography, much of the current research on climate change, urban growth, globalization and other important topics today make use of the lenses of knowledge best polished by the historical geographer.

Fun with Geography and GIS

Geography and GIS can be an important to a Historian's spatial understanding of a topic. Consider the map below of the first time soccer was played in Africa

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=32#h5p-14

What does it mean when many of the first places soccer was played were on the coast? What hypothesis can you make about the role of soccer or the nature of colonialism?

CHAPTER 12.

ORAL HISTORY AND THE HISTORICAL PROCESS

There is an African proverb which goes something like this: "When an old person dies a library burns to the ground." This proverb perhaps best reflects why the use of oral history has become so important to researchers around the world. Historical researchers over the past several decades have come to realize that everyone (let's say this again, EVERYONE!) has a story to tell and memories to preserve—memories, like library collections and archival holdings, that help us study and understand the past and will disappear, like materials in a burning library, when an individual dies if they are not saved. The preservation of these memories and people's life stories is called oral history.

This chapter discusses what oral history is, why we conduct oral history interviews, how oral history methods have evolved, what encompasses the oral history process, how one goes about interviewing people for historical information, and how to evaluate oral interviews and integrate them into your research. There will also be some exercises at the end of the chapter to make you a better oral historian and some useful oral history links and bibliographies for further exploration of the topic.

But first things first…

WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

Oral history can be defined in three different ways. First, the term oral history can refer to a ***body of information*** that each person has locked in his or her memory. One's memory essentially represents some of a person's life experiences (no one remembers everything) that he/she has lived through and can recall. This is the type of information that the African proverb is referring to and will disappear upon someone's death.

The second definition sees oral history as a ***body of literature*** based on first-person accounts created using an interview process. These oral accounts may be published in either popular and/or scholarly books and articles; be integrated into museum exhibits, TV scripts and programs, or other forms of media; or that exist as archival material in archives, libraries, and other cultural institutions.

The third definition, and the one this chapter will focus on, defines oral history as a ***method of collecting historical information*** from individuals who have firsthand knowledge of the subject one is researching. As a method, oral history uses the interview and the familiar Q&A format as a way to preserve historical content.

Oral historians like to say that the oral history method must include four different ingredients to be considered oral history. These are:

- *Interviewee.* The individual being interviewed for historical purposes is called the interviewee (The person can also be referred to as the subject, narrator, or memoirist.). The interviewee is carefully selected because he/she is an eye-witness

to, or a participant in, whatever subject the interviewer is studying.

- *Interviewer.* The person conducting the interview is called the interviewer. This is the person (probably you as a researcher) asking questions and guiding the interview. This is exciting work, but make sure you are prepared for each interview. Follow the interview guidelines later in the chapter to give yourself the best chance for success.
- *Recording Device*. To capture the audio of an interview, the interviewer records it using a digital recorder or even a phone with recording capabilities. Recording the interview gives the oral historian options for how best to preserve and later use the interview. For example, the interview can be transcribed, or donated to a library for preservation, or the audio can be indexed for immediate use with the option of transcribing the interview in total at a later date.
- *Q&A Interview*. We are all familiar with the Q&A format because we are used to seeing people interviewed on TV, in social media, and in other venues. Also, many of us have participated in interviews ourselves, especially when we have applied for jobs. But just because a source is oral doesn't make it oral history. It is important to emphasize that oral history isn't the recording of speeches and songs, or the recording of a monologue, or the secret recording of conversations between unsuspecting people. Rather, to be considered oral history, both people

are knowingly participating in the Q&A process and speaking for the historical record.

WHY DO WE DO ORAL HISTORY?

There are a number of compelling reasons to do oral history interviews to aid in your research, but they all boil down to two basic ones. First, oral interviews can be used to fill in the gaps in the documentary research you are conducting. Let's face it, books, articles, records, and documents don't always answer every question a researcher may have. So if you are conducting research on a contemporary topic (let's say an event, person, subject, etc., that happened in the last 50-75 years) and there are still people alive who were participants or eye-witnesses, then you may want to conduct interviews aimed at helping answer questions that written records are silent about or they don't give you the complete story. One of the strengths of oral history is that it is one of only a few sources where the researcher has a hand in creating it. This means you as a researcher can ask whatever questions you want to help fill the information gaps. In short, used this way, oral history can be targeted to supplement written records.

The "father" of modern oral history in the U.S., Dr. Allan Nevins, a historian at Columbia University in the mid-twentieth century, used oral history in just this way. He essentially "debriefed" interviewees that he had selected so that their testimonies could fill in the gaps in written records. He also used early tape-recorders to capture their voices, had their interviews transcribed, and he placed the transcripts and later the audio recordings in an archives where they could be used by other

researchers. As a result of his efforts, the first institutional oral history project in the U.S. was created at Columbia University in New York City in 1948. The project is still going strong today.

Another reason to use oral history–and maybe even a more exciting one–is to use oral history interviews when there are *no* written records. Archives, libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions are filled with records and sources that document the elites of the world, such as politicians, successful businessmen, celebrities, leaders, etc. But the majority of people are either undocumented or under-documented, and oral history can be an effective way to capture their stories so they can be added to the historical narrative.

This is the reason why one of the earliest oral history/interview projects in the U.S. in the 20th century focused on interviewing former Southern slaves during 1936-1938. This project was part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal designed to put people back to work during the Great Depression. Government-sponsored interviewers fanned out across some of the Southern states to interview former slaves before all of them had passed away (keep in mind this was some seventy years after the end of the Civil War). Called the Slave Narrative Project, more than 2,300 interviews were conducted and transcribed, making it the largest single body of primary sources about slavery where the slaves spoke for themselves about their experiences in bondage. All of the interviews have been preserved by the Library of Congress and are available to researchers in a digital archive.

Another good example of oral history being used to collect the experiences, memories, and observations of

mostly undocumented people is the USC Shoah Foundation's interviews with Holocaust survivors. Famous Hollywood director Steven Speilberg started the project in the 1990s and, over a five year period, volunteers and others collected video oral histories from more than 50,000 individuals from around the world. In addition to documenting the experiences of Jewish survivors, the foundation also interviewed homosexual survivors, Jehovah's Witness survivors, liberators and liberation witnesses, political prisoners, rescuers and aid providers, Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) survivors, survivors of Eugenics policies, and war crimes trials participants. USC has provided a way for individuals to gain free access to a "small" set of the interviews (more than 3,000) in the archives. The Shoah Project and the Slave Narrative Project represent oral history at its best.

THE ORAL HISTORY PROCESS

Before we cover interview techniques and guidelines in the next section, let's discuss the oral history process, or the steps to go through when you decide to conduct interviews. The steps are:

1. ***Select your research topic.*** This is a critical first step and the key to deciding if oral history can be a part of the research process. Keep in mind that oral history aims to interview eye-witnesses to, or participants in, whatever subject you are studying. So if your subject is more than 50-75 years old then there is little chance of using oral history because there will probably not be any potential interviewees still alive. If, however, your topic is recent and there are possible interviewees

available, then go to the next step.

2. ***Conduct preliminary research about your topic.*** Begin to learn more about your topic. Take a look at what has been written by conducting a literature review. Start compiling names and contact information for potential interviewees and record how these individuals relate to your research subject.

3. ***Contact potential interviewees.*** Prioritize the interviewee list you have compiled, contacting the most important individual or individuals on the list to request an interview. Be sure to explain what oral history is, why you want to interview them, what you plan to do with the information they will give you, and any other pertinent information about your research project. Schedule an interview for a time and place convenient for you and the interviewee. A quiet place is best—a location free from any distractions. [On a side note, consider yourself lucky because beginning in 2018, the federal government exempted oral historians and journalists from going through university Institutional Research Boards' (IRBs) approval process for conducting "human subject research." In the past, anyone wanting to use individuals in their research had to go through a fairly long, complicated vetting process seeking approval from a local IRB before they could begin. This vetting process was designed to protect human subjects, especially during medical and other scientific research. Historical research using human subjects is fundamentally different from

medical testing, so the federal government has now exempted oral history from IRB vetting.]

4. ***Conduct research on the interviewee and compile an interview outline.*** The key to a good oral history interview is background research. Before any interview, it is important to conduct as much research as possible so that you know something about the interviewee's life and how he/she relates to your subject. Once you have completed the research, then create an interview outline, placing the most important subjects that you want to ask about first and so on. Some students may prefer to write a list of questions, but, in any case, think about the order of the questions/subjects and how you would like the interview to unfold. It may not unfold the way you think it will, but it is important to think about the interview as a whole before you talk to the interviewee.

5. ***Practice with the recorder.*** Before meeting with the interviewee, make sure you know how to operate the recorder. In fact, by the time of the interview, the recorder's operation should be second nature to you. Getting into an interview and fumbling around trying to figure out how to start, pause, stop, reverse, set recording levels, etc., is a no-no!

6. ***Record an introduction before each interview.*** Each recorded interview should be preceded by an introduction giving some basic information about the interview and the participants. Something along this line will work: "This is (your name) interviewing (interviewee's name) for a research project focusing on (the subject of your research).

Today's date is (give date here) and I am at (location of the interview). I am here to talk with (name of the interviewee/Mr. or Ms. So-in-so) about his/her involvement with (your subject). Hello Mr./Ms, (last name). Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. Begin your first question."

7. ***Conduct the interview.*** See the next section "Interviewing Basics."

8. ***Get an interview agreement signed.*** Before any interview, prepare an interview agreement form for your interviewee to sign, The reason for an agreement form is that the interview is protected by U.S. copyright law as soon as it has been completed and is fixed in a "tangible form." This fixed form can be a digital audio file (recording), or a transcript, or both. This means the interviewee owns his/her words and should formally transfer the copyright of these words to you so that you can quote directly from the interview should you choose. This is especially important if you are planning to "publish" any of your research at a later date. Publishing in this context can be anything from quoting in social media to producing a scholarly product like a book, article, or exhibit text (the Oral History Association has a brief explanation of copyright law). SAADA has a sample interview release form to use.

9. ***Send a thank you.*** After the interview, be sure to send a thank you to the interviewee for participating in your research project.

Maintaining contact with the interviewee may also help you in the future should you run into problems interpreting or using the information in the interview. You might need help in clarifying a concept, or figuring out a name, or spelling a word you are unfamiliar with.

10. ***Transcribe the interview (optional).*** You may want to transcribe the interview to make it easier to use. If you do, then make sure you adhere to a set of common guidelines for the transcribing process. Baylor University's Center for Oral History has placed its guidelines online. They are some of the most comprehensive available and have evolved over the past fifty years. They are also easy to follow. If you are conducting oral history interviews for the Texas Disability History Collection housed in Special Collections of the UT Arlington Libraries, then use the guidelines that Dr. Sarah Rose Director of UT Arlington's Disabilities Studies Minor, has compiled (see Dr. Rose for these guidelines).
11. ***Evaluate and use the interview.*** See the section below titled "Evaluating Oral History Content."

INTERVIEWING BASICS

Before you sit down to conduct an interview, decide what kind of interview you are planning to do. Basically, there are two types of oral history interviews. The first is a biographical interview. These interviews focus on an interviewee's entire life, and usually take a great deal of

time to do properly. In biographical interviews, the interviewer covers all of the major parts of an interviewee's life, including his/her childhood, education, growing up, career, family life, etc. Not surprisingly, such interviews often take several sessions to complete.

The second type of interview is the topical interview. This interview focuses on how the interviewee's life intersects with your research topic. Most students who are using oral history for a research paper will be conducting topical interviews. While you do want to record some basic biographical information about each interviewee even in topical interviews, the main focus should be to ask questions that reveal how the interviewee has impacted your topic or witnessed something about your subject. In this way, you are creating another primary source to analyze and use when writing your research paper.

Regardless of the type of interview you plan to conduct, students should understand that interviews are a two-way process. Some call this a "transactional process," where the interviewee is giving information (by answering questions), but so is the interviewer. Not surprisingly, the interviewer's gender, race, language, clothing, age, appearance, and other factors telegraph certain pieces of information to the interviewee, and this information can shape what the interviewee remembers or is willing to discuss. For example, some interviewee's may be willing to tell a female interviewer something that they would never tell a male interviewer, and, of course, vice versa. While there is not much one can do about this, just be aware of the signals you may be sending to the interviewee and try to make your questions professional, neutral, and free from bias of any kind. Also, keep your

language appropriate to the educational level of your interviewee and as free of jargon as possible.

Oral historians have often wished that interviewing techniques could be distilled down to a few basic guidelines that would guarantee usable interviews, but, alas, no such magic guidelines exist. Interviews can vary wildly in terms of quality, even when interviewing the same interviewee over multiple sessions! After all, people are people—we have good days and bad days, and this can be reflected in what and how we remember.

What follows, however, are some interview guidelines that, if followed, will give you, as the interviewer, the best chance for success.

Research, research, research. As mentioned above, good background research is one of the keys to a good interview. Follow the paper and digital trail about your interviewee and the topic you will be asking about. Know where the gaps exist in the written records and try to fill these gaps at the very least. If there are no written records—or precious few—then follow the journalistic method by asking when, who, what, where, and how questions about your topic. Never—NEVER—go into an interview cold having done no research!

Establish a relaxed atmosphere. As stated above, pick a location for the interview that is quiet, free from distractions, and convenient. If possible, there should only be the two of you (interviewee and interviewer) participating in the interview.

Build and maintain rapport. Trust is an important part of the interview process. The interviewee will reveal more information if he/she trusts you as an interviewer. If the interviewee wants to avoid certain topics, then abide by their wishes. If they tell you something is "off the

record," then make sure it is kept "off the record." Always keep in mind that the interview is the interviewee's show—it is their memories and their point of view—you are trying to preserve.

Ask easy questions first. Give interviewees a chance to relax and get comfortable with the process, so ask easy questions first. These first questions should be biographical questions that are easy to answer, like when and where the interviewee was born. Where he/she went to school? The names of his/her parents? Etc. Save more difficult questions for later in the interview.

Follow your outline, BUT be flexible. Follow the interview outline (or the written questions) that you prepared, but always be flexible and adaptable. Interviewees may not answer questions the way you think they will. Be willing to follow them if they veer off topic, at least early on, to see if their wanderings lead to useful information. If they do, then continue to follow and ask follow-up questions about the new topic. If they don't after a few times, then try to guide the interview back to the topics on your outline.

Ask open-ended questions and only one at a time. An open-ended question is one that can't be answered with a yes or a no. Sometimes they may not even be questions. For example, you might get more information by saying "Tell me about your time as a captain of the Texas Rangers" as opposed to asking "Were you a captain in the Texas Ranger?" If you happen to ask a close-ended question, don't worry too much because you can follow it up with other questions if you have to. Also, ask only one question at a time and keep the language simple. This will allow the interviewee to easily understand the point of the question.

Ask questions that your interviewee can answer. One of the reasons background research is so important is that it will hopefully reveal your interviewee's relationship/connection to the event and/or topic you are researching. Knowing this information, you can tailor your questions to specifically probe the interviewee's memory about your topic and his/her involvement with it.

Listen actively. Active listening is hard work, but you have to do it when conducting an oral history interview. Keep in mind that as the interviewer, you are responsible for guiding the interview and asking the questions. This requires you to listen closely to what is being said, and, just as importantly, to determine what is *not* being said. Careful listening allows you to ask follow-up questions to clarify comments or pursue other lines of questioning. If during an interview your attention begins to wander from the interviewee's answers, then it is time to end the interview and continue it at a later date.

Don't argue. As the interviewer, you can challenge information from the interviewee, but don't argue with him or her. Instead, challenge deftly in a non-confrontational way. For example, if an interviewee's answer to a question goes against what your research shows or what other interviewees have said, then try asking for an explanation. You might say something like this, "Other sources have said this incident occurred this way, rather than the way you remembered, can you help me understand why your view is different?"

Watch for fatigue. Interviewing requires a lot of work and mental energy and can be tiring after a while. Watch for fatigue in the interviewee (especially if they are elderly) and yourself (as mentioned above, when your attention begins to wander). Keep most oral history

interviews to between an hour and an hour-and-a-half, shorter if either one of you is tiring.

Don't worry about silence. Try not to worry about periods of silence during the interview. Give the interviewee time to think about his/her answers before interrupting his/her thought process. Oftentimes you might be asking an interviewee to recall events/people from 50 or more years ago, so cut them some slack and give them time to remember.

THE NATURE OF ORAL HISTORY SOURCES

As you are learning in this course, historians analyze the quality and veracity of sources all the time (see earlier chapters for a review of this process)…and it is no different with oral sources. They too have to be evaluated for their dependability and accuracy. But, oral history sources also have a number of characteristics that make them different from many of the more traditional written sources that we are used to using in our research, like books, archival documents, newspapers, photographs, etc.

Some of the characteristics of oral sources are as follows:

Oral sources are personal and subjective. Oral sources are good at revealing the feelings and impressions about events, actions, and people from the interviewee's perspective. Since the interviewee is talking about the details of his/her life and the interpretation of the details, these interviews have a deeply personal meaning to the interviewee. Some historians argue that written records are good about telling *what* happened in the past, while

oral testimony is best at telling how people *felt* about what happened.

Oral sources are collaborative. Oral history interviews are collaborative in the sense that two people—an interviewee and interviewer—are working together to produce a single primary source. This is one of only a few sources where a researcher can shape the source based on the questions he/she is asking and based on the knowledge about what other sources on the subject already exist.

Oral sources are retrospective. Michael Frisch, Professor Emeritus at the University of Buffalo, argues that oral interviews are usually a dialogue between the past (the history being remembered and recalled) and the present (the act of remembering and interpreting the past based on one's life experiences up to the time of the interview). Frisch goes on to say that oral history can produce what he calls "more history," that is sources much like some written personal sources (e.g. memoirs, personal journals, autobiographies), but it can also be "anti-historical," by allowing interviewees to interpret their own history free from the analysis and conclusions of historians.

Oral sources are oral. DUH! This is obvious, but the point is that the audio interview reveals more details and information than a transcribed version of the interview. Indeed, listening to a person talk conveys more meaning through voice inflections, sarcasm, sadness and happiness in tone, changes in volume and timbre, etc. The irony of oral history is that most researchers, when given the option of listening to an interview or reading the transcript, will opt for the transcript because of time

constraints. Pity because they may be missing some important oral clues!

Oral sources depend on memory. In the mid-twentieth century, as historians experimented with oral history as a method of collecting historical information, some scholars criticized its reliability as a source because it was based on memory, and, as we all know, memory can be malleable, elastic, and can change over time. In short, memory can be fallible. Since those years, however, memory studies have shown that most memories are shaped just a few minutes after an action or event has taken place, which calls into questions all types of sources, not just retrospective oral sources. This is why historians insist that all sources (ALL!) must be analyzed and evaluated during the research process…and this includes oral sources too. Just because someone says he/she was there doesn't make it true, and just because someone was there doesn't mean his/her understanding of what happened is accurate. This is why it is best while conducting historical research to cast a wide net and look at as many different types of sources as possible.

EVALUATING ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Now that you are more familiar with the oral history process and may even be considering conducting interviews, or at least using some interviews that have already been archived, you might be asking yourself "how do I use these interviews in my research?" Don't fret because evaluating oral history interviews is not much different than evaluating other types of historical sources. When assessing oral accounts, ask the following questions:

What is the reliability of the interviewee? When looking at the interview as a whole, has the interviewee been consistent and reliable throughout the session/s or has his/her story been inconsistent and changing? Did the interviewee take the interview seriously, being careful to answer questions fully and with attention to details?

Can the recollections be verified? As with other sources, can the interviewee's account be verified and corroborated through the use of other sources, including other oral sources?

What is the interviewee's relationship to the subject? We usually give more credence to an account if the interviewee is a direct participant in the event or was an eye-witness, as opposed to hearing about the event from someone else.

Does the interviewee have a personal stake in a particular point of view? If the interviewee is predisposed to have a bias or his/her professional or personal reputation depends on a particular interpretation of an event, then check the veracity of the account carefully. Do the same if someone has an "axe to grind" about another individual.

What was the physical condition of the interviewee at the time of the interview? Can you tell if the interviewee was in good health during the interview? Were his/her memories sharp, clear, and easily remembered, or were they belabored, halting, and difficult to recall?

HELPFUL ORAL HISTORY LINKS

Below are some links to a few professional organizations for people interested in oral history and also some websites about oral history in general.

Canadian Oral History Association
Oral History, History Matters Website
Oral History, Wikipedia
Oral History Association (U.S.)
Oral History Society (Great Britain)
Texas Oral History Association
UNC Writing Center, Oral History

ORAL HISTORY BIBLIOGRAPHIES

What follows are a few links to bibliographies that include some of the more important published sources about oral history. There is now a huge body of literature about oral history, but these bibliographies are selective and include only the most impactful books.

An Oral History Bibliography, A Research Guide by the Columbia University Center for Oral History, 2009.

Selected Bibliography of Books on Oral History, UC Santa Cruz University Library, nd.

CONCLUSION

Paul Thompson, a British oral historian and author of one of the seminal books on the subject titled *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, first published in 1978 and in its fourth edition, talks about the power of oral history and its potential transformative impact, when he writes:

Oral history is not necessarily an instrument for change; it depends upon the spirit in which it is used. Nevertheless, oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and purpose of history. It can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers between teachers and students, between generations, between educational institutions and the world

outside; and in the writing of history...it can give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place. (1st edition, p. 2)

We couldn't have said it any better!

CHAPTER 13.

DIGITAL HISTORY

WHAT IS DIGITAL HISTORY?

Digital History is a sub-field within the academic discipline of history that is ever evolving. Although often lumped into the broader category of "Digital Humanities," digital history is a way of practicing and producing history that utilizes digital tools and technologies that have been made available to historians over the past few decades. According to the American Historical Association, while on the one hand, "digital history is an open arena of scholarly production and communication, encompassing the development of new course materials and scholarly data collection efforts," on the other hand, it's also a "methodological approach framed by the hypertextual power of these technologies to make, define, query, and annotate associations in the human record of the past." In other words, digital history is many things at once! Digital history not only involves the accumulation and dissemination of historical knowledge and facts using digital tools (think of databases, online syllabi, historical search engines, digitized archives, and the like), but it can also mean producing historical narratives that use or even rely on digital technology.

And so, there are many different ways that one can be a "digital historian." While in the earliest days of digital

history in the 1990s and early 2000s, being a digital historian might have meant something as simple as creating a history website or blog to disseminate a scholar's own academic research, historians today are using digital technology to redefine the field of history and to tell stories set in the past in new and dynamic ways. This can include utilizing software and digital tools such Geographic Information Systems (or GIS) in their research or applying quantitative modelling programs such as R and Python to visualize and construct new links between historical topics and debates. The field, however, continues to evolve. As digital technologies change and as training in digital literacy has become much more broadly adopted within the broader field of history, historians have widened the scope of what constitutes "digital history." Today, digitally minded historians deploy a range of digital tools and platforms in their research and teaching, from utilizing simple programs such as word clouds in the classroom to help visualize word usage in historical documents to applying much more advanced digital systems and mediums in their research, including through developing video games, Virtual Reality (VR) programs, or through using large-scale, open-source online mapping tools that are endlessly customizable.

These latter technologies – VR, video games, interactive mapping, and more – represent the future of digital history, but they also hint at some of the challenges that historians face in "being" or "becoming" digital historians in the twenty-first century. While today, many historians would agree that using digital technologies is becoming ever-more important and central to the historians' craft in a new digital age, historians are rarely

trained to use these digital tools in graduate school and beyond, particularly those that require a great deal of programming and computing knowledge. In addition, there is also the issue of scholarly "credit." While research outputs – i.e., the publication of peer-reviewed books, articles, and more – are typically the most important factors in how a university "judges" a junior or early career scholar hoping to make a career in the field, digital publications are rarely peer-reviewed and are often seen as "extra" to the regular work that a historian completes, despite the immense amount of work that underwrites the development of digital projects. This means that while digital history is becoming increasingly central to the work that a historian does on a day-to-day basis, historians are rarely rewarded professionally or monetarily for their efforts to incorporate digital technologies into their research and teaching, which remains a significant obstacle for historians wanting to engage with digital history.

Nonetheless, and despite these challenges, digital history, to borrow a an oft-used cliché, is the "new frontier" of history as an academic discipline. As we move further into the 2020s and beyond, digital history and the use of digital technologies will only become more central to the craft of the historian, impacting all levels of the field – whether in research, teaching, or service – as it becomes increasingly inseparable to the daily tasks of historians and students of history. And yet, the boundaries of digital history remain relatively unknown. At the same time that digital technologies continue to evolve and change (seemingly by the hour), so too will the ways in which historians incorporate and engage with digital tools in their own research. All of which means

that it's a very exciting time to be a digitally engaged historian!

https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2009/what-is-digital-history

RESOURCES:

The American Historical Association's Digital History Resources – https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/digital-history-resources

Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media – https://rrchnm.org/

Programming Historian – http://programminghistorian.org/

DIGITAL HISTORY PROJECT EXAMPLES:

Stanford University's Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis (various projects) – https://cesta.stanford.edu/research/projects

SlaveVoyages – https://www.slavevoyages.org/

The Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery – https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/

Histography – https://histography.io/

Virtual Angkor – https://www.virtualangkor.com/

The Great Exhibition Virtual Tour – https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/hyde-park/things-to-see-and-do/the-great-exhibition-virtual-tour

Mapping the Malayan Emergency – https://cotca.org/blog/the-malayan-emergency-digital-map/

PART III.

READING HISTORICALLY

Reading is fundamental for everyone, but especially for historians. We cannot create experiments or conduct interviews in the present, because the most essential characteristic of the information we evaluate is that it is in the past. Historians cannot re-shape, revisit, re-calculate or return to past events in any other way ("Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure" or *The Magic Treehouse* notwithstanding), so we have to approach reading the documents historical actors left us very carefully. Hence our decision to dedicate an entire section to this important skill.

The sections that follows explain several different types of reading (of both primary and secondary sources), including how to "read" sources that are not made of text. The first and most basic type of reading that students and professional historians alike depend upon though is the work of other scholars. The most important historical scholarship can be found in monographs—book-length studies on discrete subjects—so our first and lengthiest chapter is devoted to helping you learn how to read these

effectively. We then turn to journal articles which are not only shorter, but also particularly accessible (given the prevalence of J-STOR and other databases) sources of scholarly information.

The last part of this section focuses exclusively on primary sources. Developing the ability to read and interpret a range of different primary sources is central to writing history; students assigned an historical research paper will want to pay particular attention to this aspect of historical analysis. Indeed, you may even want to return to these chapters more than once as you embark on your own research. It's a dynamic process, however. Those best prepared to read primary sources already have developed a good basis in the context by reading historical scholarship in the subject. Wherever you enter a historical debate–with a well-written monograph or an enticing primary source–you'll want to read effectively, so read on.

CHAPTER 14.

HOW TO READ A HISTORICAL MONOGRAPH

TYPES AND LEVELS OF READING

In their 1940 masterpiece, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*, authors Mortimer J. Adler and Charles van Doren identify the following four (4) types or "levels" of reading:

1. **ELEMENTARY READING**

   The first type of reading is elementary reading, or what is generally known as basic literacy. Elementary readers are able to recognize words, comprehend sentences, and through them understand general, non-specialized texts. Elementary reading is the type (or level) of reading that most people undertake on a regular basis. When you open an email message, follow a cooking recipe, or read a story in a popular magazine or journal you are engaging in elementary reading.

   If you understand this sentence, you have mastered elementary reading.

2. **INSPECTIONAL READING**

   The second type or "level" of reading is inspectional

reading. The chief difference between this type of reading and elementary reading is that inspectional reading involves the element of time: the less time, the better. You may use inspectional reading to browse the contents of a catalog, glance through new emails in your "in-box," or search your class notes for that key term your professor introduced, etc.

In some instances, inspectional reading takes the form of "systematic skimming" in which a reader aims to gather information quickly to arrive at a general understating of a text. Inspectional reading of this sort can be very valuable in helping you to comprehend the scope and "breadth" of a text (i.e. to understand "the big picture") before you settle in for a closer, more focused reading that plumbs the depths of the material.

Inspectional reading (aka "systematic skimming" or "pre-reading") is something you must do when you are reading for the purpose of mastering content. Inspectional reading is a critical tool in helping you to reach the two highest levels or "types" of reading. We describe how to practice inspectional reading later in this chapter.

3. ANALYTICAL READING

The third level of reading is analytical reading. Unlike inspectional reading, analytical reading is undertaken without regard to time. It amounts to a thorough, complete reading of an article, book, or other material(s) with the goal of attaining

understanding of the subject matter at hand (as well as the person who wrote the text).

Mastering analytical reading is an important step in learning how to read historically. For a professional scholar, analytical reading is a foundational skill; it is comparable to a professional musician's ability to recognize notes; form chords; and play a wide variety of scales. A professional musician does these things automatically because she has internalized them. You goal is to *internalize* an ability to read analytically.

Odds are good that you are not good at reading analytically. No worries! In the next section of this chapter we provide a step-by-step guide that explains *how* to read a scholarly monograph analytically. Follow our advice (and practice, practice, practice) and you'll be reading analytically in no time.

But reading analytically is not the same as reading historically. Reading historically requires one additional level of reading mastery.

4. SYNTOPICAL READING

Syntopical reading is the most advanced form of reading. According to Adler and van Doren, the syntopical reader applies analytical reading to multiple books, articles, documents, etc. devoted to a common subject to arrive at a new, higher understanding of the subject not contained in any one of those sources. Syntopical reading is the level of reading mastery to which you should aspire as a budding historian.

When professional historians undertake scholarly research they exercise advanced skills in syntopical reading. They examine a large body of sources, develop a full understanding of the sources' content, analyze the sources' claims in relation to one another, and then apply their acquired knowledge to produce a unique interpretation of what it all means.

The capstone seminar (HIST 4395) that you must complete to earn your History degree at UTA will provide you with an opportunity to engage in syntopical reading and historical writing under the guidance of a professional scholar. However, before you are ready to do this successfully, you must fully master the "basics:" inspectional reading and analytical reading.

The remainder of this chapter will help you learn how to do this by describing the methods and practices that you should employ when reading a scholarly monograph. Although our discussion is genre specific, you will discover that the methods and practices used to read scholarly monographs can be easily applied to shorter texts (such as journal articles) as well.

THE SCHOLARLY MONOGRAPH

A monograph is a specialized book-length written work, typically produced by a single author, devoted to a discrete subject or aspect of a subject. The monograph is a particular genre; it is distinct from other book-length publications such as novels, collections of poems,

memoirs, etc. insofar as it aims to impart useful knowledge and a particular viewpoint (or, "thesis") related to the subject at hand. When reading a scholarly monograph, you goal is to gain a full and accurate understanding of the author's viewpoints regarding the subject of study.

Scholarly monographs are distinguished from non-scholarly monographs by three main features:

1. **THEY ARE WRITTEN BY INDIVIDUALS WITH ADVANCED TRAINING IN A GIVEN DISCIPLINE**

   In most cases, this means the author possesses a terminal (highest) degree in her field (i.e. a Ph.D. or doctoral degree). If the work in question is the author's first monograph it is most likely based on the author's doctoral dissertation.

2. **THEY ARE TYPICALLY PUBLISHED BY A UNIVERSITY PRESS**

   These are non-profit enterprises devoted to the production and dissemination of scholarly books, journals, etc. for the purposes of fostering greater knowledge and understanding. They are frequently subsidized in whole or in part by institutions of higher education.

   [For a comprehensive list of scholarly publishing houses, check out the website of the Association of University Presses:

3. THEY UNDERGO "PEER REVIEW" PRIOR TO PUBLICATION

This is a type of quality control in which the editor(s) of a press assign two or more specialists to evaluate anonymously an author's manuscript prior to accepting it for publication. Each reviewer reads and critiques the author's work separately in advance of producing a "readers report" describing the manuscript and its relationship to relevant literature in the field. The anonymized reports are then forwarded to the author by the editor along with the press's decision to accept, accept with revisions, or reject the manuscript.

When the reviewers are made aware of the author's identity, the process is known as a "blind review." When the author's identity is unknown to the reviewers, the process is known a "double-blind review." (Under normal circumstances, the reviewers' identities are not revealed to the author.)

Scholars from every field can (and do) write monographs, but most professional researchers in the sciences, social sciences, and vocational fields (engineering, business, etc.) communicate their findings in the form of journal articles. Although professional historians also write journal articles, the scholarly monograph is the principal genre for the field of History. This oftentimes poses a challenge for students who might otherwise be interested in studying the past.

The prospect of having to read one or more monographs in an upper-level History course can be as intimidating as receiving an onslaught of 90-mph

fastballs and off-speed pitches without protective gear. All those words! All those pages! This is going to hurt!

In actuality, it needn't be like that at all…

A well-conceived scholarly monograph serves two distinct, but related purposes. The first is to communicate information and ideas. The second is to serve as a combination toolbox and road map enabling interested readers to undertake additional, self-directed study into the topic(s) the monograph addresses.

The overarching structure and individual components of a monograph support these dual purposes. Knowing how and why scholarly monographs are constructed the way they are should give you the confidence you need to tackle the genre.

Is it a Monograph or No?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=24#h5p-8

THE PARTS OF A MONOGRAPH

1. PACKAGING/COVER

The old saying, "You can't judge a book by its cover" is not entirely true. While you cannot judge a book *as a whole* by its cover, you can (and should) judge aspects of the book by its cover. This is why books have covers. The cover is designed to provide the information necessary to judge whether or not the book is of use or interest to you.

a. Title and Cover Art

Title

The title of a monograph should provide an accurate indication of the book's subject matter and, perhaps, intimate its thesis. The title of most historical monographs is divided into two parts: the title proper and the "subtitle" a post-colonic phrase that, as often as not, specifically states what the book is actually about.

Here are five, chosen at random from the American Council of Learned Societies' Humanities E-Book Library:

"A Tender Age:" Cultural Anxieties over the Child in the Twelfth and Thirteen Centuries"

Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond

The Invisible Plague: The Rise of Mental Illness from 1750 to the Present

"The Infantry Cannot Do with a Gun Less:" The Place of the Artillery in the British Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918

Dictatorship of the Air: Aviation Culture and the Fate of Modern Russia

Note that in each of the above cases, it's the subtitle that provides specific information about the book's subject, content, and scope. This information alone should help you determine which (if any) of these monographs would be of interest to you and relevant to your needs.

Cover Art

In decades past, university presses typically published monographs with rudimentary covers that contained little more than the title of the work itself. Illustrated dust jackets (especially full-color ones) added significantly to production costs thereby driving up the monograph's already high sales price.

Thanks to the advent of the digital print revolution the cost of producing book covers has dropped dramatically. While not all scholarly books possess fancy dust jackets, full-color covers are increasingly the norm.

If the dust jacket contains one or more images, odds are very good that they were chosenor suggested by the author because she considered them illustrative of the monograph's central arguments. If you have obtained the book from a library, odds are very good that the dust jacket will have been removed. If you wish to peruse the original cover art, simply locate the book online via the publisher's website or Amazon.com.

b. Publisher's Mark

Another aspect of the monograph's cover you

should consider is the press responsible for publishing the work. The name and logo are typically located toward the bottom of the book's spine.

As is true of academic institutions writ large, there is a recognized hierarchy among university presses. Unsurprisingly, the publishing houses operated by "elite" universities such as Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, etc. are typically regarded as the "best" or, at least, the "most prestigious" publishers of scholarly monographs.

In some cases, however, less esteemed universities have well-deserved reputations for publishing excellent lists in select historical fields. At present, for example, the University Press of Kansas, University of Nebraska Press, and Oklahoma University Press are considered to be among the top academic publishers of military history (esp. US Civil War and Soviet military history in the case of UPK). Similarly, the University of North Carolina Press is currently known for its strong list in German History while the University of Virginia Press is well regarded for titles covering the History of the early American Republic.

Note the qualifying phrases "at present" and "currently" in the preceding sentences. Things change. It is not uncommon for a university press to alter the direction or emphasis of its publishing list as a result of shifting markets or personnel changes (ex: the appointment of a new press Director). In the early 1990s, for example, Princeton University Press was considered one of

the "top presses" for Russian history. This is no longer true. Currently, one of the top presses in Russian history is run by Northern Illinois University, a decidedly un-prestigious institution.

Two takeaways:

First, don't presume that a book is (or is not) worth reading based upon the reputation of the university that published it. Always remember: "The brand does not guarantee quality. Quality guarantees the brand."

Second, if you plan to undertake syntopical reading in a particular field of History, you should familiarize yourself with the presses that are currently (and historically) recognized as "leaders" in that field. Department of History faculty members can show you where to begin.

c. Summary and Author's Bio

The inside left- and right-hand portions of the dust jacket are where you are most likely to find a brief summary of the book and a short biographical statement (or, "blurb") identifying the author. If you are perusing books online via a university press website or Amazon.com, the language appearing under the labels "Publisher's Description" and "About the Author" are likely copied verbatim from the dust jacket. Both are all but certain to have been written by the author, not the press.

d. Endorsements (or Editorial Reviews)

The final element of a scholarly monograph's dust jacket consists of endorsements. These are typically

located on the back of the book. Online, they may appear under the heading "Editorial Reviews."

A monograph's endorsements come from multiple sources. If the book is "hot off the presses," the endorsements have been excerpted from the readers' reports written by the individuals who reviewed the manuscript for the press. Endorsements may also come from post-publication reviews that have appeared in scholarly journals, magazines, or newspapers. Finally, endorsements may come in the form of a statement alerting potential readers to awards/prizes bestowed upon the book by scholarly associations, learned societies, or other entities.

If you are familiar with the historical field of specialization, a monograph's endorsements can give you a good idea of where the book "fits in" with the existing scholarly literature and how, generally speaking, its findings have been received by experts and specialists. Be aware, however, that regardless of their provenance, endorsements are designed to do one thing: convince you to buy the book. They have been selectively chosen by the press to serve as sales pitches and, as such, must be taken with a grain of salt.

Parts of a Book

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=24#h5p-7

2. Front Matter

Once you have completed your inspection of the dust jacket and crack open a scholarly monograph, the first things you will encounter are a series of pages collectively known as "front matter." The front matter is likely to consist of a "Dedication" (a brief, personal statement honoring or expressing affection for one or more family members, mentors, and/or friends) and, possibly, an Epigraph (a quotation, perhaps cryptic, chosen by the author as suggestive of the work's overarching themes).

3. Table of Contents

The monograph's Table of Contents (ToC) typically follows the front matter. The ToC is your first direct opportunity to determine for yourself what the author aims to do in the monograph.

While examining the Table of Contents for the first time, consider the following:

How is the monograph structured?

Is it organized into parts, subheadings, or sub-units?

Are the chapters of relatively even length?

Are they longish? Or, broken up into small "bite sized" units?

Do the chapters have titles?

If so, what do the titles state individually?

What do they suggest as a whole when read sequentially?

Do any of the titles contain unusual words or phrases in single quotation marks?

What might these indicate?

Does the monograph contain a Conclusion and/or Epilogue?

What "end matter" does the monograph possess?

Bibliography? Endnotes? Appendices?

The ToC is the functional equivalent of a "roadmap." Peruse it in advance of delving into the monograph to give yourself an idea of where the author is going to lead you, how you will get there, and what you can expect to encounter along the way.

Once you have thoroughly reviewed the dust jacket information and ToC, you should have a good idea of what the book is about.

4. Additional Information

If the monograph includes illustrations or uses abbreviations, acronyms, or foreign words likely to be unfamiliar to non-specialist readers, descriptions of these will appear after the Table of Contents.

The final item you will encounter before the monograph's first chapter is the "Acknowledgements," a narrative statement in which the author thanks (sometimes profusely) individuals who have offered advice, served as editors, or lent other forms of assistance while the book was being researched and written. If the author received grants, fellowships, or other funding support to complete the book, these will be mentioned in the acknowledgments. (Most institutions and grant agencies require authors provide statements acknowledging their support as a condition of an award.)

The Acknowledgments are typically the most personal portion of a scholarly monograph. They may also be the most pretentious as some authors use them to curry favor with more established scholars, or to intimate they're far more "connected" than they really are. Then again, Acknowledgements may be highly entertaining. This is particularly true when the author has a sense of humor or is looking to settle scores with professional adversaries[1].

Whatever the case, Acknowledgements are more useful to lending insight into the person behind the book than the contents of the book itself. Unless academic politics and professional gamesmanship are your thing, odds are you can skip this section and emerge no less the wiser.

1. Glen Wright, "The Best Academic Acknowledgements Ever," *Times Higher Education Online*. 19 January 2016. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/best-academic-acknowledgements-ever Last accessed 5 July 2019.

5. Introduction (or, First Chapter)

While the Introduction of every book is necessarily unique, the introductions of scholarly monographs invariably consist of three basic elements which are almost always presented in the following order:

1) description of the specific subject and general field of research

The opening paragraphs of a monograph's Introduction "set the stage" for the reader by describing the subject the author has set out to investigate and interpret anew. Invariably, the author's goal in this section of the book is to identify for the reader the broader historical contexts and relationships he considers essential for understanding his subject and the value of his particular thesis to explicating the past.

Scholars tend to follow one of two rhetorical (or, organizational) patterns when composing the Introductions to their works. The "pyramid" pattern begins with a detailed passage describing a specific moment, individual, object, event, or series of events (Ex: the sudden onset of cat massacres at the hands of apprentice printers in late 1730s France) before "broadening" the discussion (like the expanding sides of a pyramid) to include a discussion of the specific moment's relevance to larger, historical contexts.

The counterpoint to the "pyramidal" rhetorical structure is the "inverted pyramid." Here, an author first begins with a "big picture" sketch of her general subject (Ex: the history of aviation) before "diving down" into the particular aspect of this

subject (e.g. the "point" of the pyramid) that the monograph investigates (Ex: the origin of airline stewardesses in mid-1930s America).

Regardless of the rhetorical pattern the author employs, the purpose of the opening pages of an Introduction is to identify for the reader the author's field of research writ large and to situate the author's work within that field.

2) historiographical review

The second element of a monograph's introduction is the historiographical review – an extended discussion of those secondary works (scholarly monographs, journal articles, etc.) which the author considers most relevant to the subject at hand. Here, the author identifies earlier publications by scholars working in the field; broadly describes their methodologies, theses and evidentiary bases; evaluates them against one another; forms a judgment as to the state of the field in general; and justifies his own monograph as an important contribution.

The historiographical review portion of the Introduction serves three basic functions: 1) to establish the author's credentials as a learned scholar who is familiar with the existing literature (i.e. what educated peers have already said) 2) to identify those shortcomings, mistakes, or oversights in the existing literature the author believes exists and 3) to assert the value of present work (i.e. the monograph you're reading) in advancing knowledge or changing perceptions/ understanding of the subject in question.

3) **Exposition of the author's specific treatment of the subject and statement of findings**

The final element of the Introduction is the one most important to the analytical reader. It is here that the author describes her thesis (or argument) and previews the means by which the thesis is developed and supported in the pages of the monograph proper. This portion of the Introduction is likely to include an extended passage describing how the author's discoveries negate, alter, or (in rare cases) support the conclusions of other scholars who have published monographs on related subjects.

NOTE: in most cases, the Introduction is the *last* chapter/narrative section of the monograph an author writes.

6. The Main Narrative (or, Chapters)

This is the principal text of the monograph. Enough said.

7. Conclusion (or, last Chapter)

The Conclusion is the "endpoint" of a scholarly monograph. Rather than introducing additional lines of analysis or new sources of information, a proper conclusion reviews, in broad terms, the major issues and approaches described in detail in the preceding pages of the text. Like a lawyer's closing statement at the end of a lengthy trial, the Conclusion is the author's last chance to "make the case" before the jury: the reader. An effective Conclusion will re-state the monograph's thesis; revisit the most important themes and evidentiary materials presented in the body of the work; and remind the reader how these all come together in

support of the author's interpretation. The Conclusion should provide you with the most accurate summation of the author's argument or thesis. For this reason, the Conclusion is the *most valuable* portion of a monograph. **This is the part of the monograph that you should read first.**

8. Footnotes and Endnotes

Reference notes are perhaps the most distinguishing features of a scholarly monograph. They come in two forms: **footnotes**, which appear at the bottom of a page below the main text, and **endnotes** which appear, collectively, as a separate section between the monograph's conclusion and bibliography (or list of references). The publisher determines whether a title will employ footnotes or endnotes based upon its house style.

Reference notes serve three main purposes:

1. they enable the reader to locate the original sources of quotations, ideas, and concepts appearing in the text.
2. they enable the reader to determine whether or not an author has accurately interpreted (or quoted) source materials.
3. they enable the reader to weigh the author's arguments and interpretations against those of other scholars who have written on similar or related subjects.

In short, reference notes provide the reader the

information needed to "fact check" the author should the reader wish to do so.

Reference notes support the monograph's toolbox and road map functions by providing readers essential information regarding the nature, location, and provenance of the evidentiary materials the author employs to support the monograph's thesis. In both cases, individual entries appear in a format that enables a reader to identify the source with ease.

The formats of entries are determined by the nature (or genre) of the particular source (i.e.: monograph, journal article, archival document, website, etc.) and the official "style guide" used by the publisher. In most instances, historical monographs employ the *Chicago Manual of Style*. (You may already be familiar the modified version of the Chicago Manual of Style known as "Turabian" which is used for research papers, theses, and dissertations).

The first time a source appears in a footnote it will be identified by a complete bibliographic citation followed by the location where the material in question may be found in the original source. In the case of a monograph, for example, the citation would provide the following information:

Author's Full Name

Complete Title of the Book

Location of Publisher

Identity of Publisher

Year Published

Page(s) in which the material being cited may be found

Subsequent citations of the same source will contain just enough information for the reader to identify accurately the relevant work in question. In the case of a monograph this will typically include:

Author's Last Name

Book Title (but not the subtitle)

Page(s) in which the material being cited may be found

If the same source is cited two or more times in succession, the reader will see "Ibid." This is a Latin abbreviation of the phrase "*ibīdem*" meaning "in the same place." If "Ibid." appears by itself, the material in question is located on the same page(s) as the immediately preceding note; if "Ibid." is followed by a page or range of page(s) the material in question may be found there in the same work cited in the immediately preceding note.

You are also likely to come across the following additional Latin abbreviations and phrases:

"Op cit." – an abbreviation of the phrase "*opus citatum*" meaning "the work cited." This is used to alert the reader of a work already cited in full by the author elsewhere in the monograph:

Example: Snodgrass, *op cit*., 325.

This phrase is often used the first time a book is cited in a chapter *subsequent to* the initial chapter in which the full citation appeared in the notes.

"Et al." – an abbreviation of the phrase "*el alii*" meaning "and others." This typically appears in citations involving documents or books written by multiple authors.

Ex: Smith, *et al.*, *Malaysian Hermeunetics of the Belle Epoque*, 234-9.

"Etc." – an abbreviation of the phrase "*et cetera*" meaning "and the rest."

NOTE: "Et al." is used for people. "Etc." is used for things.

Important information from the Title Page

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9. Bibliography (or, "List of References" aka "Works Cited")

The penultimate section of a scholarly monograph contains information relating to the sources compiled by the author while researching the work. Depending upon the publisher's house style, the information will take the form of a "Bibliography" or "List of References" (alt: "Works Cited"). The chief distinction between these two resources is that a **bibliography** provides a complete accounting of ***all*** of materials examined

by the author during the course of researching the work. By contrast, a **list of references** contains only those materials cited in the work's notes. As is true of reference notes, the individual entries appearing in a bibliography or list of references are formatted in accordance with the publisher's official "style guide."

[Note: In an effort to reduce costs, some scholarly publishers will substitute a short "bibliographic essay" in place of a proper bibliography. As the name suggests, a bibliographic essay is a narrative produced by the author that briefly discusses the most important resources relevant to the monograph or subject in question. In other cases, publishing houses may "off-load" a manuscript's bibliography to a website housed on servers belonging to the publisher or even the author.]

For the historical researcher, the bibliography is a very important portion of a monograph as it is akin to a "library" put together by the author during the years-long process of researching and writing the manuscript. Both bibliographies and lists of references provide a complete account of the documents and resources used to support the scholarly study. Thus, both give interested readers an excellent foundation for undertaking their own investigations into related subjects and/or for double-checking claims appearing in the monograph to ensure that sources have not been taken out of context, misquoted, or even been completely made up by the author. (Yes, this does happen.)

Bibliographies are frequently divided into sub-

headings specific to the genre or category of resources employed by the author. Sub-headings you may encounter include, but are not limited to:

Archives and Manuscripts

Periodicals (Newspapers and Journals)

Oral Interviews

Secondary Sources (e.g. monographs, scholarly journal articles, literary works, etc.)

Films (or other multimedia sources)

Websites

The items appearing in a bibliography may prove to be as valuable to a researcher as the monograph itself. This is particularly true in instances when an author has made use of archives or archival materials previously unexamined by other scholars. (Such was the case for the field of Russian history from the early 1990s through mid 2000s when Western researchers were suddenly given access to a wide range of archival repositories and documents previously ruled "off limits" by Russian and Soviet state agencies.)

Whatever the case, an experienced scholar can extract a great deal of information from a bibliography. Among other things, the bibliography reveals where (and possibly when) the author conducted archival research; it identifies the interpretive schools and scholarly networks with whom the author is intellectually engaged; and it provides ample evidence of the author's proficiency as a researcher.

Conversely, a bibliography may also be revealing for what it does *not* contain. The absence of one or more major works or canonical articles may

indicate an author has been less than conscientious in undertaking research. Likewise, the absence of relevant works from one or more different methodological schools may suggest the author is lazy or pre-disposed to ignoring perspectives and viewpoints with which she disagrees.

10. Index

The Index is the last component of a scholarly monograph. Similar to the notes and bibliography, the Index supports the monograph's "tool box" function by providing readers the means to locate information efficiently. Indexes are placed at the very end of a monograph to enable readers to access them easily while reading the text.

According to the American National Standards Institute, an index is "a systematic guide to items contained in or concepts derived from a collection…represented by entries arranged in a searchable order, such as alphabetical, chronological, or numerical…that is normally different from [the order of] the items in or concepts in the collection itself."

The content of an Index consists of four (4) elements. These are:

1) Main Headings

Main headings appear as the first (or, top) lines in the index. In the aggregate, main headings constitute a list of terms (usually nouns) denoting key subjects, individuals, events, etc. directly related to the concepts in the monograph. Main headings are the primary access points through which readers identify and locate the information they are seeking.

2) Reference Locators

Reference locators are the pages or range of pages indicating where the information related to the heading is found in the text. In a properly indexed monograph, the reference locators indicate the beginning and end of a discussion; continuous discussion of a term carrying over to two or more pages is indicated by a page range (ex: 25-28). Page numbers appearing in *italics* typically indicate the location of an illustration, photograph, or other visual item related to the search term.

As a general rule, main headings followed by five or more reference locators are further broken down into subheadings followed by reference locators.

3) Sub-headings

Subheadings appear as one or more lines of indented text immediately below main headings. Subheadings are intended to alert the reader to the location of specific aspects of the main heading located throughout the monograph.

Unlike main headings, which should be as direct and concise as possible, sub-headings often employ articles, prepositions, and conjunctions to assist readers in clarifying the nature of the relationship (hierarchical, conceptual, grammatical, or otherwise) between the sub-heading and main heading.

4) Cross-references

In contrast to main and sub-headings, which provide direct access to the location of information in the monograph, cross-references serve as internal navigation guides within the index itself.

They help tie together information and concepts for the reader and, thus, may be suggestive of the monograph's overarching arguments or its thesis.

Cross-references come in four types. Each is denoted by a word or phrase appearing in *italics* followed by a term directing the reader to a main heading or sub-heading entry:

See is used when the indexer anticipates a reader will look up a topic using a term that does not appear in the index. *See* re-directs the reader to the appropriate term used by the author in the text of the monograph.

See under is used when a *See* cross-reference re-directs the reader to a term that appears as a sub-heading in the index.

See also directs readers to additional information related to the term that appears under another main heading entry.

See also under directs readers to related, additional information appearing under another sub-heading entry.

Example:

smychka, 125-126, 127, 130, 141, 144, 157, 158
socialist realism, 220, 246
    positive heroes, 220-221, 230, 233, 236
Society of Friends of the Air Fleet. *See* ODVF
Sokol'nikov, Grigorii, 247
Soldiers
    as administrators of Soviet regime, 83, 130
    official images of, 128, 130-131
Soviet Russia/Soviet Union, 8, 74, 79

continuities with Imperial Russia, 75, 80, 82, 101, 107, 122-123, 170, 238, 256, 283
diplomatic relations, 109-110, 120, 172, 184, 187-189, 221, 263
and discontinuities with Imperial Russia, 80
industrialization, 170-171, 176, 184, 195-197, 275, 284. *See also* Five-Year Plan
militarization, 83, 109, 118-119, 256
modernization, approaches to, 121-123, 195-197
and technological dependency, 8, 107, 170, 182, 190, 202, 256, 275-280, 285
Spanish Civil War, 246-247, 248, 257
Special Commission for the Establishment of the Air Fleet, 18-20, 44-47, 95-97
fundraising efforts of, 44, 60
and press cooperation, 45-46
spetsy, 203
Sputnik, 279
St. Petersburg – Moscow Race (1911), *38*, 37-40, 41-42, 61
Stakhanov, Aleksei, 236

You should peruse the index of any monograph you read to identify key terms, concepts, and subjects that appear in the book.

Further Learning

Identify the parts of the title page

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THE MECHANICS OF READING

Now that you understand how a monograph is structured we can turn attention to how one should be read. But understanding *how* to read a monograph presupposes an understanding as to *why* people read monographs.

So, why do people (including History students) read monographs? They read monographs to gather information and gain understanding. Your goal as a historical reader is to gain a complete and accurate understanding of an author's approach to a given subject. For this reason, while a historical monograph is a form of narrative (i.e. a literary work that tells a story) it should not be read after the fashion of literary narratives such as novels, autobiographies, or plays all of which are designed to be read (or, performed) from start to finish.

The "order of battle," so to speak, for approaching a scholarly monograph looks something like this:

1. Examine the book's dust jacket paying particular attention to the summary and author's biography

2. Peruse the Table of Contents to see what additional information you might be able to glean about the book's structure, scope, and major themes from Chapter titles and sub-titles (if any). Note the presence of any dates or ranges of dates; these are clear indicators of the periodization scheme employed by the author.
3. Scan the Index to identify the most "substantive" main headings (i.e. the ones followed by the largest number of reference locators and sub-headings). Pay attention as well to any odd or idiosyncratic entries/phrases; these may point the way to concepts the author deems original or of special significance. While undertaking the aforementioned, be certain to makes a mental (or, better physical!) note of where these various headings appear in the book by using the reference locators as "guideposts." Those scattered more or less evenly throughout represent major elements/themes in the narrative.
4. Turn to the Bibliography. What types of sources appear here? Which archival repositories anchor the author's evidentiary bases? Within these repositories what specific collections or group of items are listed? Are the archival collections/documents significant in number? Or limited? What other primary sources appear in the Bibliography? Contemporary magazines, journals, or other periodicals? What types of secondary sources appear here? Other monographs? Scholarly articles?

Remember: in addition to giving you a good sense of the range and depth of the author's research, the Bibliography is a resource for identifying additional items you will want to examine yourself as you undertake your own original research in the field.

Once you have completed the four steps listed above, you should have an accurate understanding of the subject matter, scope, and general thrust of the monograph. If you are convinced, based on the information you have thus far gathered, that the book is of interest and value to you, you should now be fully prepared to tackled the job of reading the monograph well.

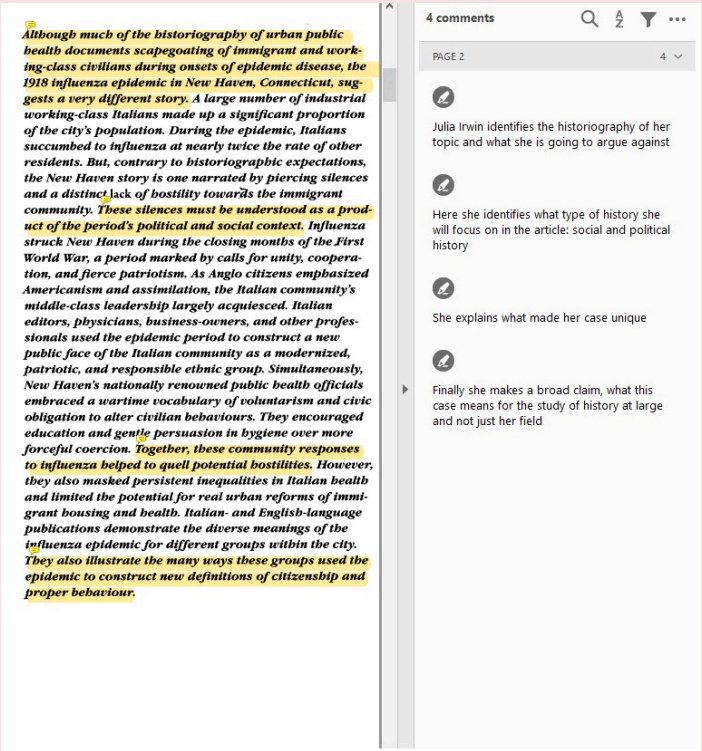
Now, do the following:

5. **Read the monograph's conclusion**. This will give you a reliable and "full" picture of what the author considers to be the most important aspects of the study. As you read the Conclusion, make mental (and physical!) notes of the main point(s) addressed in each of the paragraphs.
6. After reading the Conclusion, read the Introduction. While doing so, recall the main points, themes, and issues the author addressed in the "closing statement" you just read. Make mental (and physical) notes about the two ways in which the author presents her "last" and "first" case. Does each manner of exposition seem to "fit" with the other? Or, do you detect differences or discrepancies in language? Tone? Substance? If so, note these!
7. At this point, you are now fully prepared to tackle the main text beginning with Chapter 1. Do not

dive straight in to the chapter. Instead, exercise your "inspectional reading" skills by systematically skimming (aka "pre-reading") the chapter in advance. A quick and effective way of doing this is to **skim the chapter from start to finish by reading only the first sentence of each paragraph**. You might consider writing each sentence as you read it onto a piece of paper. By the time you have finished this "pre-reading" (and writing!) exercise you should find that the collection of sentences you have put together are an accurate synopsis of the chapter as a whole.

Once you have pre-read the chapter, you are ready to begin the process of reading it thoroughly for content and meaning. This is, necessarily, the most time-consuming portion of learning a monograph. If you have followed the steps outlined above, however, you should find that the task of identifying the author's lines of argumentation and end point to be relatively straight forward.

Identifying Parts of an Introductory Paragraph



Although much of the historiography of urban public health documents scapegoating of immigrant and working-class civilians during onsets of epidemic disease, the 1918 influenza epidemic in New Haven, Connecticut, suggests a very different story. A large number of industrial working-class Italians made up a significant proportion of the city's population. During the epidemic, Italians succumbed to influenza at nearly twice the rate of other residents. But, contrary to historiographic expectations, the New Haven story is one narrated by piercing silences and a distinct lack of hostility towards the immigrant community. These silences must be understood as a product of the period's political and social context. Influenza struck New Haven during the closing months of the First World War, a period marked by calls for unity, cooperation, and fierce patriotism. As Anglo citizens emphasized Americanism and assimilation, the Italian community's middle-class leadership largely acquiesced. Italian editors, physicians, business-owners, and other professionals used the epidemic period to construct a new public face of the Italian community as a modernized, patriotic, and responsible ethnic group. Simultaneously, New Haven's nationally renowned public health officials embraced a wartime vocabulary of voluntarism and civic obligation to alter civilian behaviours. They encouraged education and gentle persuasion in hygiene over more forceful coercion. Together, these community responses to influenza helped to quell potential hostilities. However, they also masked persistent inequalities in Italian health and limited the potential for real urban reforms of immigrant housing and health. Italian- and English-language publications demonstrate the diverse meanings of the influenza epidemic for different groups within the city. They also illustrate the many ways these groups used the epidemic to construct new definitions of citizenship and proper behaviour.

Julia F. Irwin, "An Epidemic without Enmity: Explaining the Missing Ethnic Tensions in New Haven's 1918 Influenza Epidemic," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* , Spring 2008 Printemps, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Spring 2008 Printemps), pp. 5-17

CHAPTER 15.

HOW TO READ OTHER SECONDARY SOURCES

MAGAZINES AND WIKIPEDIA ARE EASIER. WHY BOTHER WITH LONG ARTICLES?

The answer to this question involves understanding a key feature of academia: anything academics publish must adhere to shared **standards of scholarship** and we make sure that happens through a process known as **peer-review—**which is sort of like grading by other professors. You may have read history books written by popular writers, including journalists or others who love the past but have not received formal training. While many of those books have a merit, in this course we will concentrate on history written by academic historians. Before a scholar can publish a journal article or monograph with an academic press (or trade presses with similar standards), they submit a draft for review. In this process, the editor of the press or journal contacts other historians who specialize in the same field and asks them to read the essay to make sure that the analysis follows the **standards for scholarship** and if it makes a worthwhile contribution to the field**.** Academic presses are committed to these standards, and cannot publish material they know violates it, even if they thought the subject was interesting or profitable.

Rather than wondering simply "Will people buy this book?" academic presses ask a different set of questions: Is the argument clear and supported by verifiable facts in evidence? Are the sources appropriate and sufficient to support the author's analysis? Has the author avoided faults in logic and plagiarizing other scholars? Does the essay address (and effectively counter) any interpretations that conflict with the one presented? If the peer reviewers believe the essay does not meet these standards, it is returned to the author for revision. Sometimes even if peer reviewers recommend publication, they will ask for improvements. One important result of the peer review process is better written, better explained, better supported essays.

Better written does not necessarily mean more accepted of course, because historians will always find something to debate. But the common ground created by the peer review process means that those debates usually result in some come consensus about what we know. Though contemporary historians generally acknowledge that knowledge about the past is partial and that individual perspectives may bias interpretations, most do believe that we can approach the "truth." Above all, *scholarship is not opinion*. The peer-review process ensures that only the results of fact-based inquiry get published. Historians' respect for fact-based, logical arguments that do not leave out key pieces of evidence mean that they can trust the premise and argue about the interpretation itself—whether other sources might yield a different conclusion, or if a revised assessment of an individual's actions is as well-supported as the previous one. The ensuing debates—and historians do love to debate—are key to the development of what we agree

upon as historical facts and likely explanations for how and why events happened as they did.

As new research is presented in the form of conference presentations, essays, and books, historians inevitably argue about differing interpretations, leading to a fine-tuning of our understanding of the past. Over time a synthesis develops, as well-supported, convincing explanations emerge, and historians agree on about the causes and impact of a particular event (until the next, more convincing interpretations gets published!). These syntheses will become your textbooks. While your instructor might have a disagreement here or there about something in a text, they generally agree with most of the information and interpretation found therein.

SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

Scholarly articles follow the same rules as academic monographs. They appear in a number of places, including edited volumes, published conference proceedings, digital databases, and in academic journals. We will focus on reading scholarly articles from academic journals because they are the most prominent and will be necessary in your own research. However, the process is the same whether you are reading a chapter in an edited volume like *Divided Houses* or an essay in the *Journal of American History*.

Scholarly Articles

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WHAT ARE ACADEMIC JOURNALS?

Academic Journals are essential to the historical process and discipline. Published regularly by academic presses and usually sponsored by different historical societies such as the American Historical Association or the Society of Military History, these quarterly publications—can be governed by broad categories (all of modern human history for the *American Historical Review*) or quite specific ones (as in the *Journal of Civil War Medicine*). Journals normally focus on three different types of publications: single author articles, book reviews, and **historiographical essays**.

At the heart of any academic journal are scholarly articles, essays written by professional historians or graduate students of history, usually about 25 to 40 pages in length, and focused on a specific research question. They must undergo the peer review process (see above), and the time between writing an article and seeing it in print can take years.

Book reviews deliver perhaps the most important purpose of academic journals: keeping the historical population up to date on new scholarship. Written by a diverse array of historians from graduate students to tenured professors, book reviews are essential short summaries and critiques of historical monographs. With the sheer volume of books published each year it is impossible for each historian to be remain caught up in their field. Book reviews offer a glimpse of each book and can inform the reader if they will indeed need to obtain a copy and read it for themselves.

Finally, many journals solicit **historiographic essays** from historians. These overarching pieces attempt to look at a field or common research question—topics might be as broad as the American Way of War or the history of childhood in modern Europe, or as specific as the rise and fall of the AFL-CIO labor union in post-World War II America or causes of the Salem Witch Trials. The author locates as many publications on their subject as possible, including both books and scholarly articles; if the topic has been visited by an earlier historian, the new essayist will likely limit their review to only those works published since the last publication. With essays and books compiled, the author reads for common arguments, patterns in use of primary sources, the extent of agreement or controversy on issues of periodization, causation, or impact, and more. A good **historiographical essay** should attempt to do nothing less than assess the status of the scholarship for a historical subject. These essays ask questions such as: What are the most important publications? What does the field currently care about? What are the major

disagreements? Most importantly these articles look to where the field is headed by evaluating where it has been.

All in all, academic journals form a critical piece of the entire historical discipline and keep it moving forward, while presenting continuous opportunities to historians to present their work, hone their analytical writing skills, and engage with one another. For you, however, academic journals can provide some important shortcuts for your research process. You should use the footnotes of scholarly or **historiographical essays** (see footnote mining under locating sources) to find possible **primary** and **secondary** sources; skim **book reviews** to see what books are worth taking a closer look at or to develop your basic knowledge of a topic (along with encyclopedia articles). Above all, don't neglect using scholarly journals at you begin your research.

Finding journal articles on your topic

To find the right journal article, use your library. You can find out more about this under the chapter "Locating Sources" but here's a short overview:

Your library databases are the best place to start. The most common database is JSTOR, which is a search engine for academic journals found at most university libraries. On JSTOR there are over 300 history journals, ranging from "Air Power History" to "Victorian Studies," from "Aboriginal History" to the "Journal of the History of Medicine" – and every topic beyond and between. Quick Note: if you Google for this info, you're likely to hit a pay wall when trying to access JSTOR. If you start via the Library's catalog that won't happen.

Explore the advanced search and try several different key words. You may select a specific journal or limit

publication dates. For most of these journals, JSTOR has access to every publication from the first publication (sometimes dating back to the 1800s) up until 2016. (For the very recent past, you may need to go to a database like Academic Search Complete or the web site for individual journals.) Sometimes another source might give you a lead on an historian who specializes in your topic or subject headings that work well. Be persistent

Using JSTOR

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https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=395#oembed-1

JOURNAL ARTICLES CAN BE TOUGH TO READ. HOW DO I GO ABOUT IT?

It's true that journal articles are often written with a specialized audience in mind. But with a little effort, you can get the gist of the argument. Basically, you will need to adapt the recommendations on how to read a monograph (for a reminder, see the "How to Read a Historical Monograph" chapter) to this shorter form.

Follow these steps:

FIND OUT ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

- See what you can find out about the author. Put his/her name into Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, and Gale Virtual Public Library*; even see what shows up in Wikipedia or Google Scholar. Make a few notes about what the author's expertise seems to be.

[Note for UTA students: Remember to find ACS, JSTOR, and GVPL by going to library.uta.edu, clicking on Databases A-Z, then A for ACS, J for JSTOR and G for GVPL, the compendium of scholarly encyclopedia. You will need to login with UTA ID—but once you do, it's all free to you as a student.]

CONDUCT A QUICK READ-THROUGH:

- Read the abstract (if any). Then Read the intro and conclusion closely.
- Read the information under any images, figures, charts, or maps.
- For the first reading, skim. This means reading *the first sentence of each paragraph.*
- Before you dive into the serious reading, take stock of what you know about the author's intent. Based on what you've read in the abstract, notes, and skimming, compose a few sentences (no more than three) indicating what you think the author's main argument or thesis is. Do NOT simply copy the abstract, but rather put it into your own

words.

READ CLOSELY BUT AVOID DETAILED NOTE-TAKING:

- Now, you can read the article, starting again at the introduction. Stop occasionally to check your understanding of the article in steps 1-3. Was it correct? If it's not, return to summary and revise it accordingly.
- Never try to write down every fact or create a detailed outline of an article on a topic new to you. Instead, take notes on a few key questions:
    - What previous arguments about history are they responding to?
    - What's the time frame? Is the author making an argument about how we see different periods?
    - What sort of primary sources is the author referring to most often? (Look at the footnotes to see patterns if there isn't a paragraph explaining the primary sources in the article itself.
    - Is the author trying to make a case about an individual that earlier historians have improperly ignored? Or perhaps a different cause or impact of the event that we once thought we knew?

CHAPTER 16.

HOW TO READ PRIMARY SOURCES, PART I: THE BASICS

As you learned above, historians depend upon two types of sources, **primary** and **secondary**. While secondary sources are shaped by the requirements of their genre—a certain uniformity follows when everyone respects **scholarly standards—primary sources** emerge out of an almost infinite number of circumstances. Consider for a moment the differences between a priest writing a theological treatise in the fifteenth century and a rap musician producing a digital recording in the twenty-first century. Their vocabularies and tools of production, their understanding of who their audiences were, even the present-day physical properties of these sources and the means by which they are accessed are dramatically different. Both sources could reveal information about the culture, beliefs, and politics of their time, but figuring out those messages requires different interpretative skills. Accounting for the context in which your source was created, so that you can discern what it is saying, is where the fun begins.

In the information that follows, you'll find basic directions on what questions to ask of each **primary source**, as well as some suggestions about best practices, or recommended steps to follow as you evaluate primary sources. But in the end, as the researcher you have a good

deal of latitude in considering sources, and the variability between sources requires you to become a bit of an expert in the unique qualities (type of source, when, and for whom, your source was created) of your sources' context. With that latitude, however, comes responsibility. You must attempt to learn as much as you can about the circumstances of your source's creation, and guard against letting your assumptions influence your interpretation.

To make sure you live up to that responsibility, keep the following list of basic questions at hand when you read your source, and make notes to yourself (**NOT** on the source!) about your impressions. Follow up as well with outside sources (linked below) that explain differences in how to approach sources by type—these essays and interviews offer insights about what you can make of a diary, or how to "read" a photo or map, or the best methods for extrapolating from sources that are meaningful only in the aggregate. Last, consider consulting with your instructor and/or an archivist after you've taken a first or second pass toward interpreting your sources' meaning. You'll find that professional historians and archivists like this part of their job—thinking about the "stuff of history"—best and will willingly add their questions and insights to your impressions.

TYPES OF PRIMARY SOURCES

Creating this list is virtually impossible because the permutations are almost endless, but the following list suggests just how many different artifacts of the past exist. Click the hyperlinked examples for more

information on how to use or interpret the type of primary source.

- Private correspondence
- Diaries
- Scholarly writings
- Oral histories of famous people and ordinary people
- Works of art, including musical scores and recordings
- Photographs
- Architecture, furniture, tools
- Coins, inscriptions, cornerstones
- Government documents
- Laws (passed and considered)
- Diplomatic dispatches
- Court records, police reports
- Blogs, Magazines, Newspapers
- Advertisements
- Podcasts, videos, films, TV shows
- Screenplays, plays, novels, poems, short stories
- Membership lists, minutes, club records
- Sports scores
- Scientific accounts
- Business accounts
- Recipes and cookbooks

Primary or Secondary Source?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=412#h5p-9

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK ABOUT WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

PART I- THE BASICS

- Is this a primary source? Is it authentic (not a fraud)?
- What sort of primary source is it? (newspaper, letter, map, image, government report….)
- What in brief is the document saying?
- Who created the document? About when? Why (that is, for what audience and purpose)?

PART II – ARE YOU READING THE DOCUMENT FAIRLY AND/OR CORRECTLY?

- Remember, the past is a different country. Do you need to know something else (the meaning of

words, who someone was, the state of technology, etc.) to understand this document? If so, what?

- Any information you can infer or "read between the lines" or interpret based on something NOT said/portrayed? Silences are often important.

PART III – ASSESSING CREDIBILITY. KEEP IN MIND THAT YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS DEPEND ON WHAT INFORMATION YOU ARE CLAIMING FOR THE DOCUMENT.

- Was creator of the document in a good place to observe or record the event? If not, why not? (The answer to this question depends on what main claim you see the document making.)
- In what way might the creator have been biased? How might that shape the 'truth' of this document? Does the testimony/story seem probable?
- Who preserved the document and why? Can you infer anything from that about preservation? (Not always pertinent, but it's worth keeping in mind that some voices get privileged over others in the historical record, and we must make allowances for that in our interpretations.)
- Where might you find corroboration for any interpretive points you find compelling? (That is, you'll need to solidify support for your argument. What other sorts of primary sources might help do that?)

To develop your expertise in particular kinds of sources,

please consider reading these essays on making sense of evidence written by practicing historians at History Matters, a digital collection of information and skills necessary for US History.

This web site on Learning to do Historical Research, created by students of noted historian William Cronon, offers some important insights both about how to approach primary sources, and about how asking questions about your sources might help you narrow your research paper topic. Also see Choosing and Narrowing A Topic for additional tips on how to narrow down a topic.

You might also consider some helpful strategies for making sure you cover the bases in interpreting your primary sources. For example, here is an explanation of the "Four Reads" method from teachinghistory.org.

APPROACHING OTHER GENRES

While many primary sources can only be found in out-of-the-way archives, there is a wealth of sources that come pre-bound in collections of classics; which is to say literature. Despite being fictional, literature can reveal quite a lot about the author's time and situation if you know where and how to look. Below are some tips for how to read literary works as a primary source.

Literary Works

As narrative texts with clear beginnings, middles, and ends, literary works require a different approach to reading than that described in the previous sections of this chapter. Literary works *should* be read from "front to back." They should not, however, be read passively.

When reading novels, short stories, or plays ask

yourself the following series of questions. They will help you to understand how the author constructed the story, what she wanted to say, and how successful she was in the endeavor. As come up with an approximate answer for each question, you will develop a deeper and more complete understanding of the work.

- **Theme:**
    - What is this story about?
    - What is its point (say it in no more than 10 words)?
    - What is the central idea of the work? Its message?
    - How does this abstract, central idea become concrete through the characters and events?
- **Setting:**
    - Where does the action take place? Any particular reason that this is an appropriate choice?
    - When does the action take place? Why did the author choose to set the work in this time?
    - How does time and place of action, the environment of the story, interact with the characters?
- **Characterization:**
    - Who are the principal characters?
    - What kind of people are they? What

motivates them? What is their "psychology"?

Pay particular attention to the following:

- What does the narrator say about them?
- What do they say about each other?
- What do they say about themselves?
- What do their actions say about them?
- What do they look like (physical description)?
- Do they have a past?

- **Narrative Technique:**
  - Who is telling the story? (be careful not to confuse the narrator with the author)
  - Is the narrator omniscient? Of limited knowledge? Third person? First person?
  - How would you characterize the narrator? (educated/uneducated, cynical/satirical, naive/disingenuous, etc.)
  - Does the narrator have a particular point of view? Are there other points of view in the work?
  - What is the narrator's agenda? Why is s/he telling the reader this story?
  - Does the narrator manipulate the reader? How? Why?
  - How does the narrator "control" the story?

- **Structure:**

Structure is the conscious patterning, or configuration, of events and situations; plot is the basic element of structure.

  - Does the work follow the traditional five-part structure?: Exposition; rising action; climax; falling action; denouement
  - What liberties does the work take with traditional structure? What might this achieve?
  - Is structure concrete or abstract?
  - Is there a "frame" or other structural device? Why do you think the author uses it?

- **Style:**
  - What is interesting about the way the story is written?

What are the primary technical aspects of the author's language?

  - long or short sentences?
  - dialogue or narrative?
  - repetition?
  - lexical levels?
  - imagery? (natural, organic, animal, mechanical, visual, olfactory, tactile, abstract, etc.)

    - figurative language? (metaphors? similes? synecdoches?, etc.)
    - allegories? symbols?
    - What is it about this author's work that makes it specifically his and not someone else's?
    - Can you tell this writer apart from others by his/her personal style? What are the clues?
- **Extrinsic Factors:**
    - How does knowledge of social, political, or economic conditions help you understand the work?
    - What role does the historical period play in creating or enhancing the meaning of the work?
    - What of the author's life? Friends and colleagues? Interests, language, culture?
    - What is their role in contributing to the meaning of the work?

If you would like an example of how to examine a work of literature click the following link: Analyzing a Melville Story

CHAPTER 17.

HOW TO READ PRIMARY SOURCES, PART II: EVALUATING NON-WRITTEN PRIMARY SOURCES

INTRODUCTION TO NON-WRITTEN PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary sources come in all shapes and sizes, which means that the way you go about interpreting them cannot be uniform. Mostly, in non-written sources you need to be cognizant of visual and aural cues, of placement of subjects in a photograph, of silences in spoken or sung words. But you also have to know a bit about the technology that shapes the production of those sources. You might think that nineteenth-century Americans were a dour lot, never smiling, if you were not aware of the fact that camera technology in that era enforced rigid stillness, and thus a cultural etiquette developed that discouraged getting caught with a frozen smile. To understand what a map means, you need to know about the conventions of cartography from the society that created it. Artistic creations—paintings or films, for example—often concern historical events and people. But keep in mind, they speak to the values of the artist's moment, and do not necessarily offer accurate depictions of historical events.

To learn more about these exceptions, check out the

essays at History Matters for insights from scholars that use these sources.

Here are some basic questions to consider when evaluating a non-written source:

- Who (or what entity) created this source? When and where? What in the political and social milieu would have shaped the circumstances?
- Who was the intended audience?
- How was the source created? What were the technological circumstances? Has it been edited or altered since its original creation? If it is a reproduction, how faithful is it to the original?
- For artistic creations, is it possible to discern the artists' meaning? Is it possible to discern what critics thought of its meaning?
- Why does the source still exist? Who thought or thinks it important enough to save?

PAINTINGS AND ART

Given that the largest body of non-written primary sources come from the Art world, here are a few general guidelines to follow when "reading" a painting:

- **Subject:**
    - What is the title of the work?
    - What is the work about (on the surface?)
    - Does the work purport to depict an specific individual, a scene, or an event from the past? If so, who was the person (or what

transpired in the event/story?)

  - Why might the artist have selected that particular subject?

- **Background and Context:**
  - Who is the artist?
  - When and where did he or she paint the work in question?
  - With what style or school was the artist typically associated?
  - With what other works is it in conversation?
  - What cultural or historical matters may have influenced it?
  - What cultural or historical matters does it seem to be addressing?

- **Composition (formal elements):**
  - *Medium.* [Oil based, watercolors, collage, etc.] Why is the artist using this particular medium? What are its advantages? Its limitations?
  - *Lines.* Are the lines thick or thin? Largely vertical or horizontal? Straight or curved? What is achieved by this particular use of line?
  - *Color.* Is the color realistic or expressive? Warm or cool? Bright or muted? And to what effect?
  - *Light.* How is light used? How is shadow

used? Is there any play between the two? What is communicated to the viewer?

- *Perspective*. Where is the "center" of the art work? To what point on the canvas is your eye drawn when you gaze at the painting? Are the elements surrounding that point depicted in "naturalistic" fashion?
- *Space.* What is the sense of space in the work you've chosen? Is there great depth, or is the visual plane shallow? How are the elements of the work configured in that space? How does the sense of space affect the subject matter? Affect your response to the work?
- *Composition.* How do the various formal elements of the work interact? How does the composition convey the work's theme or idea? How does the eye move across the piece? How does the composition control that movement?
- *Style.* What elements of the composition work to constitute the artist's style? The style of the period in which the artist was/is working?

- **Thematics:**
  - Who was the artist's principal audience?
  - What message(s) do you believe the artist wanted to communicate to that audience?
  - To what degree do you believe the artist was successful?

Reading a Painting like a Text

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=356#h5p-17

"American Progress" by John Gast (1872)

For more information on analyzing visual sources consult Making Sense of Documentary Photography

POLITICAL CARTOONS

Similar to art and paintings, political cartoons are also visual texts that can be "read" like paintings. While you can ask many of the same questions of a political cartoon as you would a painting, there are some key differences. While no one is an objective observer, political cartoonists are especially subjective, often using their cartoons to make fun of political opponents. It is then important to ask what political perspective is the cartoonist coming from and so who was their intended audience. Another element of political cartoons to be aware of is that more so than paintings, cartoons speak to current events (of the time) and the cartoonist assumes their audience would be aware of the events they depict. As such, a political cartoon should not be your primary,

primary source but you should approach it after you have a decent grasp of the event, or time period the cartoon is referencing. Below is an example of a political cartoon and the different elements.

"Columbia and her Suitors"

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=356#h5p-23

PART IV.

WRITING HISTORICALLY

For many of us—not just students, instructors too—writing can be difficult. But if your thinking, reading, and researching does not culminate in coherent prose, it is lost. Reading and research are separate activities that must be translated into comprehensible writing if that effort is to build knowledge (or allow you to complete the course and graduate)! Even good digital productions use a script, as the next section on communicating findings argues. This section on "writing historically" seeks to help you meet that goal of translating your ideas into written form.

Good writing starts with good preparation. A quick review of the chapters of historical thinking and good habits of research will be helpful. For example, if you've asked good questions, thought carefully about what your sources can and cannot tell you, and narrowed your focus sufficiently, you will find the entire process of writing a paper based upon historical research less daunting. Look over those chapters and your notes as a means of

mapping out your ideas (or brainstorming) as the first chapter of this sections suggests.

If good preparation is important to good writing, so is making sure you do not stop prematurely. History's unique position as a subject than many non-academics like to read has led historians to place a great deal of value on clear, cogent writing–and that takes time. This chapter provides some guidelines on the standards of historical writing, and you should follow them closely. Take advantage of any opportunities you have for peer review or first drafts offered in your course. But there's no substitute for practice and persistence—writing and revising one's own writing is the really the only way to become a better, more confident writer (another transferable skill). At one point in your career as a student, you likely thought one complete draft was enough. At this point, however, you will find that drafting and revising are central elements of the writing process. The last chapters in this section concentrate on what to prioritize as you revise—does the introduction still work? Are grammatical errors fixed? Do your citations follow the proper form? Sometimes it will seem like a lot. But by taking one step at a time, you will reach your destination. Cliché, yes. But also true.

CHAPTER 18.

PREPARING TO WRITE: ORGANIZING AND OUTLINES

ORGANIZING

One of the most important—and perhaps the more difficult—parts of writing a good history research paper is deciding what to say and in what order to say it. A good outline can limit a student's anxiety about writing a big paper as it may help break the writing process down into manageable chunk. A good outline also helps ensure that you're approaching your argument in a logical way.

How you go about organizing your thoughts and creating an outline, however, depends a good deal on how your brain works best. Effective writers do not all use the same method. But here are few steps to follow to avoid the dreaded blank page (or monitor) and the essay that meanders and never really makes an argument (or repeats elements of the same argument unnecessarily).

Before you begin the outlining process, keep in mind that the basic form of analytical writing usually utilizes the "**Rule of Three.**" Simply, there should be at least three key points/pieces of evidence in a piece of writing introduced by a strong clear thesis. As you deliberate about possible thesis statements and debate what points are major elements of your argument and which ones are minor, or supporting, pieces of evidence, keep in mind

that your argument will convince your readers when it has at least three supporting points.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING AN OUTLINE:

Use the terms you found helpful for organizing notes to start your outline:

The words or tags you used to organize your notes can help in a couple of ways. First, for the "brain dump" process described next, these terms can be the first entries. Second, these terms could form the basis of main elements of your outline. Keywords that appear most frequently in your note-taking process could translate into major elements of your outline.

"Dump" the contents of your brain:

- Before attempting a formal outline, compile a list of all the interesting facts, ideas, concepts, individuals, and events that you've uncovered in your research. Keep an open mind, and don't limit this list to just what you assumed would be the focus of your paper when you wrote your proposal. For example, what were the arguments of the secondary sources you read? What ideas or phrases came up again and again? Who were the main historical actors and what surprises did you encounter in the primary sources they produced (or were produced about them)? Can you construct a rough timeline without looking at your notes? The unofficial term for this compilation is a

"brain dump," because you are recording all the ideas that have occurred to you without regard to whether they are Big and Important Ideas or smaller, secondary points. Write down as much as you can, without worrying where it fits in the paper or even knowing for sure that it *does* fit in the paper.

Making sense of the results of the "brain dump"

- The exact format you use for your brain dump exercise depends on the way you learn.
    - Visual learners often benefit from hand-writing the terms around a physical sheet of paper, and then using a spider-web concept map. In such a concept map, once you have all the terms on the page, you draw lines between related items. The terms that have multiple lines coming to or from them are the nodal points that should serve as main elements in your outline. The items that have just one or two connections are minor explanatory points in your formal outline.
    - Natural list-makers think hierarchically (from most to least important) as a matter of course. If you're a hierarchical thinker, you might think you already know your

outline without drawing lines. But before you jump straight to a formal outline, let yourself think creatively. Try creating multiple lists, with perhaps different items and different orders for the compiled "brain dump" terms and phrases. In this process, some items will appear in multiple lists. Once you have several, think through the pros and cons of each one. Choose the best one and convert it into a formal outline.

Here is a detailed description of how to create a concept map from the University of West Florida and here you can find three examples of different types of concept maps.

Mind Maps are another form of concept mapping that uses a visual hierachy with associated information branching out from that concept.

OUTLINE

Just as there's not one way to organize your thoughts, there's not a single form of an outline. Some writers do best with heavily detailed outlines, while others need only "bare bones." Likewise, the necessity of maintaining an accurate outline is also a matter of personal preference. Some writers continually revise their outline as their thinking about their topic evolves with their writing, while others use an outline only to launch their writing and to prevent the intimidation of a blank screen, then abandon it once they've begun writing. Still, it's extraordinarily helpful to make a plan before you begin.

Below what you'll see are some templates that work for a few common types of arguments. You may find one that works for you, perhaps with a bit of adapting.

OPTION 1: CHRONOLOGICAL

Many history essays have a natural chronological focus. Arguments that seek to explain what happened at a place and time, or demonstrate what led up to an event, as well as essays that focus on an individual's importance, can be organized chronologically.

- Intro
- Early phase or antecedents
- Middle years or main event
- Later years or impact
- Conclusion

OPTION 2: REVISION

If your main argument centers on suggesting a correction to a currently accepted explanation of the past—perhaps you want to establish a new periodization, or make a case for an additional influence or outcome to what historians have argued—then you might consider this sort of organization.

- Intro
- Current understanding (or the argument *against* your thesis)
    - Summaries of what several historians have written

- What understanding should be (or the arguments *for* your thesis)
    - Argument 1
        - with three examples/supporting points
    - Argument 2
        - with three examples/supporting points
    - Argument 3
        - with three examples/supporting points
- Conclusion

Option 3: Topical/thematic approach

When your argument does not fall into one of the above traditional formats, you'll need to uncover the patterns within evidence, and align them into to (at least) 2-3 explanatory aspects. Research that is not following political or military events often is organizes topically. There are several variations on this format, but at its most basic, consider this format.

- Intro
- Aspect 1
    - Example 1
    - Example 2
    - Example 3
- Aspect 2

    - Example 1
    - Example 2
    - Example 3
- Aspect 3
    - Example 1
    - Example 2
    - Example 3
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 19.

STANDARDS OF HISTORICAL WRITING

In this chapter, you will learn the basic expectations for writing an undergrad history research paper. At this point in your college career, you've likely had a great deal of instruction about writing and you may be wondering why this chapter is here. There are at least three reasons:

- For some of you, those lessons about writing came before you were ready to appreciate or implement them. If you know your writing skills are weak, you should not only pay close attention to this chapter, but also submit early drafts of your work to the History Tutoring Center (at UTA) or another writing coach. Only practice and multiple drafts will improve those skills.
- Those of you who were paying attention in composition courses know the basics, but may lack a good understanding of the format and approach of scholarly writing in history. Other disciplines permit more generalities and relaxed associations than history, which is oriented toward specific contexts and (often, but not always) linear narratives. Moreover, because historians work in a subject often read by non-academics, they place a greater emphasis on clearing up jargon and avoiding convoluted

sentence structure. In other words, the standards of historical writing are high and the guidelines that follow will help you reach them.

- Every writer, no matter how confident or experienced, faces writing blocks. Going back to the fundamental structures and explanations may help you get past the blank screen by supplying prompts to help you get started.

As you read the following guide, keep in mind that it represents only our perspective on the basic standards. In all writing, even history research papers, there is room for stylistic variation and elements of a personal style. But one of the standards of historical writing is that only those who fully understand the rules can break them successfully. If you regularly violate the rule against passive voice verb construction or the need for full subject-predicate sentences, you cannot claim the use of sentence fragments or passive voice verbs is "just your style." Those who normally observe those grammatical rules, in contrast, might on occasion violate them for effect. The best approach is first to demonstrate to your instructor that you can follow rules of grammar and essay structure before you experiment or stray too far from the advice below.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions are nearly impossible to get right the first time. Thus, one of the best strategies for writing an introduction to your history essay is to keep it "bare bones" in the first draft, initially working only toward a version that covers the basic requirements. After you've

written the full paper (and realized what you're really trying to say, which usually differs from your initial outline), you can come back to the intro and re-draft it accordingly. However, don't use the likelihood of re-writing your first draft to avoid writing one. Introductions provide templates not only for your readers, but also for you, the writer. A decent "bare bones" introduction can minimize writer's block as a well-written thesis statement provides a road map for each section of the paper.

So what are the basic requirements? In an introduction, you must:

- Pose a worthwhile question or problem that engages your reader
- Establish that your sources are appropriate for answering the question, and thus that you are a trustworthy guide without unfair biases
- Convince your reader that they will be able to follow your explanation by laying out a clear thesis statement.

ENGAGING READERS IN AN INTRODUCTION

When you initiated your research, you asked questions as a part of the process of narrowing your topic (see the "Choosing and Narrowing a Topic" chapter for more info). If all went according to plan, the information you found as you evaluated your primary sources allowed you to narrow your question further, as well as arrive at a plausible answer, or explanation for the problem you posed. (If it didn't, you'll need to repeat the process, and either vary your questions or expand your sources.

Consult your instructor, who can help identify what contribution your research into a set of primary sources can achieve.) The key task for your introduction is to frame your narrowed research question—or, in the words of some composition instructors, the previously assumed truth that your inquiries have destabilized—in a way that captures the attention of your readers. Common approaches to engaging readers include:

- Telling a short story (or vignette) from your research that illustrates the tension between what readers might have assumed before reading your paper and what you have found to be plausible instead.
- Stating directly what others believe to be true about your topic—perhaps using a quote from a scholar of the subject—and then pointing immediately to an aspect of your research that puts that earlier explanation into doubt.
- Revealing your most unexpected finding, before moving to explain the source that leads you to make the claim, then turning to the ways in which this finding expands our understanding of your topic.

What you do NOT want to do is begin with a far-reaching transhistorical claim about human nature or an open-ended rhetorical question about the nature of history. Grand and thus unprovable claims about "what history tells us" do not inspire confidence in readers. Moreover, such broadly focused beginnings require too much "drilling down" to get to your specific area of inquiry, words that risk losing readers' interest. Last,

beginning with generic ideas is not common to the discipline. Typical essay structures in history *do not* start broadly and steadily narrow over the course of the essay, like a giant inverted triangle. If thinking in terms of a geometric shape helps you to conceptualize what a good introduction does, think of your introduction as the top tip of a diamond instead. In analytical essays based on research, many history scholars begin with the specific circumstances that need explaining, then broaden out into the larger implications of their findings, before returning to the specifics in their conclusions—following the shape of a diamond.

CLEAR THESIS STATEMENTS

Under the standards of good scholarly writing in the United States—and thus those that should guide your paper—your introduction contains the main argument you will make in your essay. Elsewhere—most commonly in European texts—scholars sometimes build to their argument and reveal it fully only in the conclusion. Do not follow this custom in your essay. Include a well-written thesis statement somewhere in your introduction; it can be the first sentence of your essay, toward the end of the first paragraph, or even a page or so in, should you begin by setting the stage with a vignette. Wherever you place it, make sure your thesis statement meets the following standards:

A **good thesis statement**:

- **Could be debated by informed scholars**: Your claim should not be so obvious as to be logically impossible to argue against. Avoid the history equivalent of "the sky was blue."

- **Can be proven with the evidence at hand**: In the allotted number of pages, you will need to introduce and explain at least three ways in which you can support your claim, each built on its own pieces of evidence. Making an argument about the role of weather on the outcome of the Civil War might be intriguing, given that such a claim questions conventional explanations for the Union's victory. But a great deal of weather occurred in four years and Civil War scholars have established many other arguments you would need to counter, making such an argument impossible to establish in the length of even a long research paper. But narrowing the claim—to a specific battle or from a single viewpoint—could make such an argument tenable. Often in student history papers, the thesis incorporates the main primary source into the argument. For example, "As his journal and published correspondence between 1861 and 1864 reveal, Colonel Mustard believed that a few timely shifts in Tennessee's weather could have altered the outcome of the war."
- **Is specific without being insignificant**: Along with avoiding the obvious, stay away from the arcane. "Between 1861 and 1864, January proved to be the worst month for weather in Central Tennessee." Though this statement about the past is debatable and possible to support with evidence about horrible weather in January and milder-by-comparison weather in other months, it lacks import because it's not connected to knowledge

that concerns historians. Thesis statements should either explicitly or implicitly speak to current historical knowledge—which they can do by refining, reinforcing, nuancing, or expanding what (an)other scholar(s) wrote about a critical event or person.

- **Provides a "roadmap" to readers**: Rather than just state your main argument, considering outlining the key aspects of it, each of which will form a main section of the body of the paper. When you echo these points in transitions between sections, readers will realize they've completed one aspect of your argument and are beginning a new part of it. To demonstrate this practice by continuing the fictional Colonel Mustard example above: "As his journal and published correspondence between 1861 and 1864 reveals, Colonel Mustard believed that Tennessee's weather was critical to the outcome of the Civil War. He linked both winter storms and spring floods in Tennessee to the outcome of key battles and highlighted the weather's role in tardy supply transport in the critical year of 1863." Such a thesis cues the reader that evidence and explanations about 1) winter storms; 2) spring floods; and 3) weather-slowed supply transport that will form the main elements of the essay.

Thesis Statement Practice

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=562#h5p-21

More Thesis Statement Practice

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=562#h5p-22

THE BODY OF THE PAPER

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PARAGRAPH?

While an engaging introduction and solid conclusion are important, the key to drafting a good essay is to write good paragraphs. That probably seems obvious, but too

many students treat paragraphs as just a collection of a few sentences without considering the logic and rules that make a good paragraph. In essence, in a research paper such as the type required in a history course, for each paragraph you should follow the same rules as the paper itself. That is, a **good paragraph has a topic sentence, evidence that builds to make a point, and a conclusion that ties the point to the larger argument of the paper.** On one hand, given that it has so much work to do, paragraphs **are three sentences, at a minimum.** On the other hand, because paragraphs should be focused to making a single point, they are **seldom more than six to seven sentences**. Though rules about number of sentences are not hard and fast, keeping the guidelines in mind can help you construct tightly focused paragraphs in which your evidence is fully explained.

TOPIC SENTENCES

The first sentence of every paragraph in a research paper (or very occasionally the second) **should state a claim that you will defend in the paragraph**. Every sentence in the paragraph should contribute to that topic. If you read back over your paragraph and find that you have included several different ideas, the paragraph lacks focus. Go back, figure out the job that this paragraph needs to do—showing why an individual is important, establishing that many accept an argument that you plan on countering, explaining why a particular primary source can help answer your research question, etc. Then rework your topic sentence until it correctly frames the point you need to make. Next, cut out (and likely move) the sentences that don't contribute to that outcome. The

sentences you removed may well help you construct the next paragraph, as they could be important ideas, just not ones that fit with the topic of the current paragraph. Every sentence needs to be located in a paragraph with a topic sentence that alerts the reader about what's to come.

TRANSITIONS/BRIDGES/CONCLUSION SENTENCES IN PARAGRAPHS

All good writers help their readers by including transition sentences or phrases in their paragraphs, often either at the paragraph's end or as an initial phrase in the topic sentence. A transition sentence can either connect two sections of the paper or provide a bridge from one paragraph to the next. These sentences clarify how the evidence discussed in the paragraph ties into the thesis of the paper and help readers follow the argument. Such a sentence is characterized by a clause that summarizes the info above, and points toward the agenda of the next paragraph. For example, if the current section of your paper focused on the negative aspects of your subject's early career, but your thesis maintains he was a late-developing military genius, a transition between part one (on the negative early career) and part two (discussing your first piece of evidence revealing genius) might note that "These initial disastrous strategies were not a good predictor of General Smith's mature years, however, as his 1841 experience reveals." Such a sentence underscores for the reader what has just been argued (General Smith had a rough start) and sets up what's to come (1841 was a critical turning point).

EXPLAINING EVIDENCE

Just as transitional sentences re-state points already made for clarity's sake, "stitching" phrases or sentences that set-up and/or follow quotations from sources provide a certain amount of repetition. Re-stating significant points of analysis using different terms is one way you explain your evidence. Another way is by never allowing a quote from a source to stand on its own, as though its meaning was self-evident. It isn't and indeed, what you, the writer, believes to be obvious seldom is. *When in doubt, explain more.*

For more about when to use a quotation and how to set it up see "How to quote" in the next section on Notes and Quotation."

CONCLUSIONS

There exists one basic rule for conclusions: *Summarize the paper you have written.* Do not introduce new ideas, launch briefly into a second essay based on a different thesis, or claim a larger implication based on research not yet completed. This final paragraph is NOT a chance to comment on "what history tells us" or other lessons for humankind. Your conclusion should rest, more or less, on your thesis, albeit using different language from the introduction and evolved, or enriched, by examples discussed throughout the paper. Keep your conclusion relevant and short, and you'll be fine.

For a checklist of things you need before you write or a rubric to evaluate your writing click here

Writing Practice Quiz

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=562#h5p-19

CHAPTER 20.

WHEN TO USE CITATIONS AND QUOTATIONS

BASIC RULES FOR BOTH:

A good historical essay keeps the support for its argument transparent and its readers engaged. These two priorities—allowing readers to follow the evidence and judge it for themselves, while reminding them why they should care, as the story involves real people and their thoughts—can help students decide when they must use a citation and/or when they should use a quote from their sources, whether primary or secondary.

WHEN TO INCLUDE A FOOTNOTE (OR ENDNOTE):

In terms of citations (footnotes or endnotes, depending on your professor's instructions or your preference in the absence of instructions, as they are the same), the general rule is that you need to help your readers check your evidence to see if your evidence supports your thesis, should they choose to so. However, there are some specific occasions when you must use a footnote/endnote:

- **Direct quotes** from a primary or secondary source

- **Paraphrased information** from either a primary or secondary source. Even if you are changing the words, you are still responsible for showing where you got your information. Mature scholars name the source (or, more likely, sources) that laid the groundwork for their own analysis. Doing so doesn't make you seem unknowledgeable, but rather helps your readers understand how you are building knowledge.
- **Facts that are not well known**. You do not have to cite a source for noting when the US joined World War I, or for the route that Lewis and Clark took—as those are knowable facts from any number of sources. But if you cite specific conversations held between cabinet officials prior to the War, or detail the Native groups met at each bend in the river—material another scholar found by research primary sources—you must cite that scholar. Show your readers where you found new, or not widely known information.
- **Another scholar's controversial opinion**. If you refer to a claim about the past that isn't widely accepted—that is, not concerning when the Civil War began, but rather which politicians were to blame for its outbreak—you need to cite where you got that opinion. (Of course, you do not need to provide citations for your own analysis, controversial or otherwise.)
- **Statistics** – these are like lesser-known facts, given that statistics can vary depending upon who compiled them. For this reason, you need to cite where you found your numerical facts and figures.

TWO OTHER FOOTNOTE/ENDNOTE RULES:

- "Talking" or annotated notes: If it's helpful for readers to understand additional information that's not so critical that it belongs in the text, you may provide an explanatory foot/end note with information beyond the source citation. Beware though—some editors and instructors don't approve, as they believe that any information not critical to the argument is not critical to the essay.
- Condensing foot/end notes: Many journals and instructors allow you to provide a citation at the end of a paragraph with the multiple sources that helped you create that paragraph, rather than providing a citation at every sentence, or portion of sentence that rested on a secondary source.

WHEN TO QUOTE DIRECTLY:

In many ways, the same situations that call for a citation to the general source also make for a good situation in which to include a direct quotation (as opposed to paraphrasing your information). At the same time, you don't want to overquote—we're interested in your thoughts, not those of five other experts. You should also use your own words unless there's a compelling need to quote, such as bringing in a unique voice or capturing a controversial fact or opinion. A good essay offers variety in a number of ways—word choice, sentence structure, and which sources provide quotations. Here are some places where a direct quotation from the source are warranted:

- An authoritative source—the main book on a

topic—says something important or controversial.

- When any source uses language that is compelling, and thus should not just be paraphrased.
- In order to get the "flavor" or language of the wording from a primary source.
- Most quotes in your paper should come from primary sources, not secondary ones.

HOW TO QUOTE:

- Avoid "block quotes" unless the reader must see a large portion of the primary source to understand your analysis, and all of that explanation must be in the source's voice. That is, when quoting, include just enough of the quotation to make sense, without adding parts of the quote that don't pertain to your analysis or go into more detail than needed. But on the whole, phrases or a single sentence cover your bases.
- When you do need to use a block quote, indent it and use single spacing.
- Never let any quote—including a rare block quote—stand on its own. You must explain what the source means. The requirement that all sources must be analyzed in the text means that you should not begin or end a paragraph with a quotation, except perhaps in a very rare stylistic moment when doing so will not leave the reader confused.
- If you do not want to use all your source's words, you may use ellipses, which are three spaced dots

like this (make sure you put a space between each period, never put them directly beside each other): . . .

- If you would like to use a source's words, but need to change something to make it fit into your sentence (such as a verb tense or a pronoun) use square brackets for a word you changed. You may NOT change an entire word.
- However, if you need to change several words in a quotation, it's usually best to quote only a phrase, rather than burdening a quote with ellipses and brackets.
- Make sure that your quote supports the point you're trying to make and doesn't read like a random quote from the individual under examination.

Some examples from Mary Rowland's Captivity Narrative [1682]

Mary Rowlandson was a Puritan woman who was captured by Native Americans during King Phillip's War and held captive for eleven weeks. When she returned to her home, she wrote a narrative about her experiences. What follows are some examples of how you might use parts of one quotation from Rowlandson's book. From that primary source:

> "It is not my tongue, or pen, can express the sorrows of my heart, and bitterness of my spirit that I had at this departure: but God was with me in a wonderful manner, carrying me along, and bearing up my spirit, that it did not quite fail. One of the Indians carried my poor wounded babe

upon a horse; it went moaning all along, 'I shall die, I shall die.' I went on foot after it, with sorrow that cannot be expressed."

- **Double ["] versus single ['] quotation marks**.
    - Double quotation marks ["] signal the beginning and end of a quotation. If there are quotations within what you are quoting—in this case, the words of the child ["I shall die, I shall die"]—mark them with single quotation marks ['']. The use of double quotations are standard in American English (but not British English). Single quotes within double quotes indicate interior quotes the passage.
- **Indent long quotes by five spaces.**
    - See the indent in the example above, which counts as "long."

If I wanted to use the quote to discuss Rowlandson's state of mind:

Early in her captivity, Mary Rowlandson experienced enormous fear and loss. As she put it, her "pen [could not] express the sorrows of my heart, and bitterness of my spirit" upon leaving her community.

- Although you must be true to the meaning of a primary source, **you should keep your quotes from primary sources concise**.
    - In the state of mind quote above, the part of the quote that covers her faith isn't necessary to make this point and is omitted.

- Although you must be true to the meaning of a primary source, for the purpose of flow, you may **alter a quoted phrase to fit with the grammar of a sentence**. Any **changes from the original or explanatory inclusions are marked with square brackets.**
    - In the above example, the altered verb tense (*could not*, rather than *can*) flows better with the sentence but does not change Rowlandson's meaning.
    - Changing verb tenses and substituting or clarifying a pronoun that is not clear in the original mark the limits of altering a quote, for the most part.
- Any source quoted **must fit the point**.
    - Incorrect: The Indians who captured Rowlandson were particularly cruel. "It is not my tongue, or pen, can express the sorrows of my heart, and bitterness of my spirit that I had at this departure."
        - This passage is about her feelings, not what the Indians were doing.
        - It's also incorrect because there are no "stitching" words or a colon to link the primary source quote to the analytical statement of the author.
    - Correct: The Indians who captured Rowlandson were particularly cruel. As Rowlandson noted, while her child moaned, she "went on foot after it, with

sorrow that cannot be expressed."

- **Ellipses must be used when parts of the original source are not included,** unless at the beginning or end of the quote (unless the reader might assume that this quote represents the full statement on the matter).
    - For example, in a sentence about how Rowlandson used language that suggested a physical experience of faith: Rowlandson referred to physical, rather than emotional, manifestations of her faith frequently. For example, she spoke of "God . . . carrying me along, and bearing up my spirit."
    - Note that brackets were not necessary because all words are in original.

- **Quotations from primary sources enliven your prose** and acquaint readers with human thoughts and emotions.
    - For example: Rowlandson emphasized her status as a mother to awaken sympathy in her readers. As she put it, while an Indian carried her "poor wounded babe," she was forced to follow "on foot after [the child], with sorrow that cannot be expressed."
        - Note that the language of "poor wounded babe" is an expressive phrase that captures Rowlandson's voice.
        - Substituting [the child] for "it" makes the sentence clearer.

Quotation Practice Quiz

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
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CHAPTER 21.

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE: THE "FRENEMY" OF ALL HISTORY STUDENTS

Reliance on the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS, or "Chicago style") as a guide for citing sources and organizing bibliographies sets those who write history apart from most other disciplines. While the Chicago style note system requires patience to learn and continued access to the CMOS guide itself— even those who've been in the field for decades still have to look things up in the latest edition of the guide regularly—it's worth it for research papers. Historians prefer the Chicago notes style because it is flexible and thus allows for a complex evidence trail, and because its superscript numbers distract readers less than long parenthetical citations inside the text. By learning the principles of the Chicago style and keeping a copy of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by your desk, or a link to the Chicago Manual of Style's quick citation guide (or similar web site) open on your laptop, you should be able to master the basics of this citation system.

The central difference between the Chicago style you will use in history research papers and the other reference systems is that the CMOS guide mandates the use of notes (either footnotes or endnotes) to cite sources rather than permitting parenthetical references to sources

within the text itself. While the CMOS guide does offer an in-text citation style (called "author-date"), you are likely more familiar with the in-text citation systems of either the Modern Language Association's MLA style—oriented toward images, books, and literature common to the arts and humanities—or the American Psychological Association's APA style—which was developed to accommodate references to technical scholarship in the social sciences. In-text citation schemes such as Chicago's author-date, MLA and APA styles serve their purpose, but they do not accommodate the references common to history. Primary sources come in many different formats well beyond published texts, including government reports, images, maps, correspondence, physical artifacts, video recordings, and more. Moreover, the unpublished archival materials common to historical research often have several different layers of organization, including collection names, boxes, and folders. Recording this sometimes-complex information via notes—either at the bottom of the page or at the end of the document—makes it easier for readers to concentrate on the text, while still preserving a clear and complete evidence trail for peers and fellow scholars (or skeptics) who wish to replicate the author's sources.

So, your instructors have a reason for requiring Chicago style—how do you go about doing it correctly? Mostly, you'll want to consult your guide frequently. But what follows here is a brief explanation of the fundamental rules and basic procedures, followed by links and videos that allow you to see the system in action. If you can master these core principles, you will

find accessing the particulars of citing the sources for your paper easier.

FUNDAMENTALS TO THE BASIC FORM OF CHICAGO STYLE:

- Proper Chicago style uses **either footnotes or endnotes**, **but not both**. Notes at the bottom of each page are called *footnotes* and those at the end of the document are called *endnotes*. Both are acceptable, though your instructor may have a preference. Be sure to ask. Whether footnotes or endnotes, you mark a note by inserting a superscript Arabic numerals (e.g. [1]) inside the text. MS Word and other word processing systems have a "References" tab which guides you through this process.
- **Each note refers to the sources for that sentence, even if there is more than one source**. That is, if you used two newspaper articles or a newspaper article and a journal article to make a point, both are cited in a single note at the end of the sentence. Moreover, numbers of the notes are sequential, so there will be only one note 1, one note 2, etc. In Chicago style, sources are not attached to a number or a publication date as they can be in other citation styles.
- **Note form and bibliographic form are different**. Basic differences between Chicago style note and bibliographic form:
    - A footnote or endnote is a sentence, as a rule, and so uses more commas (not

periods) and parentheses as punctuation. A bibliographic entry is a series of sentences, and so is dominated by periods.

    - In a note, the author is First name Last name (followed by a comma); in a bibliographic entry it's Last name, First name (followed by a period)
    - Moreover, be aware that most databases which offer an option to prepare your citation in Chicago Manual of Style form will present it in bibliographic NOT note form. You will **need to translate from bibliographic to note form when you use citations pre-formatted** by JSTOR (and similar databases) before you plug them into an endnote or footnote.

- **Citations require information**. This statement seems obvious, but short-changing the information needed in a correct Chicago style note is one of the most common mistakes students make. You need to consult a guide, but at a minimum, you should familiarize yourself with the following requirements:
    - For publications such as books, you need full author name, full title, place of publication, full title of the press, and the year it was published. If it's an edited volume and you are only using one essay, you'll need all of the above PLUS the author (or authors) and essay title of your essay, as well as the pages the essay covers

in the book.

- For publications such as journals or periodicals, record the author, essay full title, journal title, volume number, year of publication, page numbers of the entire article AND the page number(s) of any specific information or direct quote you use.
- For publications such as newspapers or periodicals, what you record depends on what's available. Newspapers changed a good bit between the eighteenth century, when they became common, and the current digital world. Still, follow the rule of recording as much info as you can. At a minimum, you'll need to cite the full title of the newspaper, the city and state (if in the United States) where it was published, and the date of publication. Twentieth-century newspapers often have an article title and the reporter's byline, which you should include, along with a page number, especially if you are referring to a newspaper that has more than one section. For all newspapers and periodicals, citations should include either the name of the database and/or the URL and the date you accessed it.
- For unpublished primary sources, record as much information as possible. That means not just the title of a collection you used in an archive, but the folder number, the box

number, as well as information about the document itself. For example, if you are referring to correspondence between two individuals, record both the writer and the recipient as well as the date. Here too, record the name of the database, the URL, and the date you accessed it. See the section on archives in "Researching Historically."

- After the first full citation, you should **use a shortened form rather than repeat details** such as publication information and URLs. Consult your guide to see what the shortened form should be for each type of source.
- **Bibliographies contain every source listed in a note**, as well as other sources consulted even if you did not cite them directly. Sources you looked at but did not use for information do not need to be included in the bibliography. Bibliographies should be **divided into two parts, "Primary Sources" and "Secondary sources"** with each source of that type listed alphabetically therein. (Often instructors—and publishers—do not require a bibliography when the author includes full citations in the notes.

How to Insert a Footnote in Word

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https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=554#oembed-1

CHAPTER 22.

WRITING FOR OTHER THAN RESEARCH ANALYSIS

BOOK REVIEWS

Writing a book review, a comparative book review, or an historiographical essay (basically, a review of several secondary sources on a single topic) is a good way to practice one of the key features of historical analysis—assessing history scholarship (aka "secondary sources"). Historians must place their own research within the work of others who have approached their topic, and book reviews are helpful for two main reasons. On one hand, writing a book review for a book that covers a topic one is researching forces you to read related scholarship carefully. On the other hand, if you are trying to get a handle on several different scholarly works in a short period of time, reading reviews written by other professional historians of some of those works can be a beneficial shortcut. Moreover, the more well-written book reviews that you read will help you learn not only more about your topic, but also the qualities that make for a good review. In other words, reading and writing book reviews are an important part of developing the skills of historical analysis.

The steps for writing book review start by following the rules of reading historically. Above all, a competent

review must recap the main argument, assess how well it holds up and estimate its importance for those who care about its subject. To accomplish these three goals, it helps to know something about the author, to ready critically, and to follow the basic rules of good prose writing.

GOOD BOOK REVIEW WRITING HABITS:

- Start by knowing as much as you can about the author

  Use your library reference databases—Gale Virtual Reference library, Credo, JSTOR and Google Scholar, for example—to see what else your author has written. A quick Google search in this instance can also show where they teach and provide a link to a curriculum vitae (the scholar's version of a resume). Use these searches to find out what other books or articles the author has written, and how they identify in terms of sub-discipline expertise (that is, perhaps a specialist in political history or an expert in medieval literature).

- Read for the argument, not for details.

  Read the suggestions under "Reading Historically" or from a reputable writing center like that of the University of Iowa (https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/teaching-and-writing-center/guides/book-review) before you read your book, so that you approach the text critically. What these hints have in common are strategies for helping you think about what the argument is and how it is

supported. You don't have to have an answer to every question posed by a list like that provided by University of Iowa by any means. But it is essential to look for how the author chose to structure the book, what historical periods s/he sees, what their primary sources are and how they use them, in addition to the all-important question of what the argument is and whether or not it is convincing.

- Draft your review focusing on explaining and assessing the interpretation, not a blow-by-blow summary.

  In the introduction reveal the historical period, topic and genre of the book (a political biography of Samuel Adams during the era of the American Revolution OR a socio-economic analysis of the lives of free African American women in antebellum Charleston, South Carolina). In this first paragraph, also lay out the author's argument and signal your overall impression of the book, which is the thesis of your review. (Example of possible thesis statements for book reviews include that arguing that the book succeeds in revising previous views, or the author proves her thesis for the most part, or the fascinating topic leaves the reader wanting more…)

  Subsequent paragraphs focus on the main themes or critiques you've identified, not summaries of each chapter's findings. Conclude with a statement on which sort of audiences might find the book helpful—popular, college students, scholars only—and why.

- Always present your best self in writing, without grammatical or stylistic errors.

After you've written your review, being careful to not just outline and summarize what the author said, but instead shaped a review based on critical questioning, read it over. Look out for grammatical and spelling errors, make sure that any points you assert are supported by evidence from the text (with all quotes properly cited and page numbers in parentheses), and be certain that you have a clear introduction and conclusion. Once last time, read it out loud to see if you've left any words out and to be sure that it makes sense.

Check out an annotated book review with all its requisite parts: Book Review of Forging Freedom

PART V.

PERFORMING HISTORICALLY

This last section invites you to look beyond your own researching and learning process to how you might make all your hard work—and indeed your history major—relevant well beyond college. You'll remember in our opening chapter we discussed the ways in which history, more than any other discipline, exists in the public domain. Everything and everyone has a history, and the ability to shape a community's past brings with it a great deal of influence. For this reason, historians (and history students) must learn how present their findings in a way that is appealing without abandoning scholarly standards.

The chapters that follow begin with the moment after you've completed a research paper and have been asked to make a presentation. From there, we consider three different types of history-based careers—as a professional historian, as an archivist administering primary sources, or within an array of occupations that fall under the

umbrella of public history. If you've ever thought about a career in history—or even if you've never seriously entertained such a possibility—take time to read through these exceptionally helpful chapters. You might also take advantage of the links provided to the American Historical Association and other entities that offer more in-depth information, as there are possiblities beyond the ones focused on here.

The skills you've learned to research historical topics translate widely, so use them to discover what opportunities exist. Most importantly, don't forget that just as your ability to research will help you outside of college, the critical thinking skills you have developed as a history student are core competencies many employers are searching for. Make sure your resume (or c.v.) highlights your ability to think, read, write, and perform historically.

CHAPTER 23.

COMMUNICATING FINDINGS

PRESENTING PUBLICLY

The study of history is a communal project. That is, while research and writing history is usually a solitary venture, sharing the results of that scholarship in a way that includes all sorts of audiences is essential. A diversity of perspectives among those who tell about the past helps to assure a shared history that offers meaning and builds on common understanding.

In other words, because history belongs to all of us, learning to share what you've uncovered as an historian is part of the process. Thus, while many students dread oral presentations, instructors keep requiring them, because it is so important to begin sharing historical knowledge as well as learn how to speak publicly. In addition, as the internet grows in importance as an informational medium, discerning the best ways to present historical information digitally seems as essential—or perhaps more essential—that public speaking.

WHETHER ORAL OR DIGITAL, GOOD PRESENTATIONS SHARE A FEW QUALITIES. THEY ARE:

1. *Clear about what listeners and viewers will gain*. All good presentations start by telling us what

improvement the audience can expect for their time, such as a better understanding, a corrected impression, the ability to see something new.

2. *Well-planned*. Oral presentations in particular should follow a structure with a beginning, middle, and end, but digital presentations can also benefit from a "before you saw this" and "after you learned this" built into the design.
3. *Tightly edited*. Instructors usually offer time limits for oral presentations, but even when a judge is not counting minutes, presentations should offer only essential information without distracting details.
4. *Dramatic or story oriented*. History presentations should always contain quotations from primary sources, or otherwise offer audiences some personal echo of those living beings who were a part of the historic event or topic under study.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

A few years back, some students brainstormed on how to do the worst presentation possible, bringing together all the mistakes they'd witnessed watching class presentations over the years. Despite the perversity of it, this list makes a good way of thinking about "what to do."

Do Don't Design your presentation to inform your audience about what your argument was, and how you proved it Give a play-by-play of your research process Practice your presentation Like, umm, stammering Organize your thoughts ahead of time Wander off topic Time your presentation in a practice session Drone for 20 minutes longer than the time limit

assigned Speak with confidence and passion and project your voice Stare off camera, speak in monotone Treat your audience with consideration Shout and gesticulate in odd ways Use slides for key words and compelling images, not your script; the general rule: no more than ~11 words per slide Have slides that are packed with info and read them to your audience Plan images, a timeline, etc. to keep audience engaged Have one or two vaguely connected images that the audience stares at and wonders what it has to do with your presentation Check your technology twice—at least Spend your entire presentation time trying to make your PowerPoint work Visuals should augment, not distract your audience Use freaky, bouncy or unreadable texts with bizarre visuals

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING EFFECTIVE WEBSITES AND OTHER DIGITAL PRODUCTS:

- Use images, charts, widgets to reflect your argument about the past
- Words are important, but keep them limited and on point
- The content should make it clear what viewers can gain from your digitized presentation
- In website design: menu tabs need to take you somewhere new and the names on tabs need to be logical
- Avoid fonts, designs, or backgrounds that obscure your message
- Images should have explanations and citations
- ALWAYS list your sources – a dedicated page or a link to a bibliography available in the cloud

IDEAS FOR DIGITAL PRESENTATIONS:

- Sway (Microsoft 365 app for digital magazines)
- TimelineJS (free software app from Northwestern developers)
- Classic Story Maps from Esri Story Maps (or new ArcGIS StoryMaps)
- Create a gallery exhibit on Google Cultural Institute (may require you to create a website).
- Annotated video or image on Thinglink.com (tutorial here)
- Create a padlet (first three are free!)
- PowerPoint or Prezi slideshow recorded using Canvas Studio
- A podcast or videocast on YouTube
- Create a website (several free options, including Wix.com, Weebly, GoDaddy and others)
- Some combination of above or something you know about on your own (please share!)

CHAPTER 24.

BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL HISTORIAN

THE CV OR RESUME OF A PROFESSIONAL HISTORIAN (OR HISTORY MAJOR)

When applying for a job, the first thing to consider is what the employer is requesting. If they are requesting a curriculum vitae (aka – CV or vita), you should not – under any circumstances – send them a resume, or vice versa.

A CV is intended to be an exhaustive record of your academic work, service, and affiliations (i.e. – professional experience, published works, scholarly and public presentations, fellowships, service, academic memberships, and references). CVs are generally required in the academic world. It is useful to keep a "long form" CV for your records so that you have an accurate record of everything you have done.

Create a new CV for each new job application. Especially as you gather more experiences and accomplishments, you very well might want to excise items from your CV as you apply to specific postings if you deem certain of them to be irrelevant or distracting from the narrative you are trying to create about yourself. If you are seeking to apply to a professional conference, the organizers very well may ask for a 1-page CV along with your paper abstract. Again, you can

quickly pare down the long form CV to emphasize certain qualifications.

Another point worth mentioning is that most CVs follow a standard format at the top. Contact information at the top, followed by information about your education. After your education, you should consider what you would like to emphasize the most in your overall application. So, if you are applying to a history MA or PhD program you might want to list your ongoing research projects, and one of them should directly relate to the theme of your statement of purpose. While graduate programs also consider other things like your writing sample, GPA, GRE scores, and recommendations, the core of your application will be a CV and statement, and programs tend to favor students with a tight focus and an idea of what they would like to pursue. Such "focus" – rightly or wrongly – is important to receiving funding, especially at the MA level as fellowships are highly competitive. Since history programs are so focused on developing research, if you have done any archival work, written an undergraduate thesis, or won any grants/fellowships to do such work, those things should be prominent in the CV. If you go on to write an undergraduate thesis or major research paper in the history department, you should also be aware of the different awards you might be eligible for by your senior year.

If you are applying for positions outside of academia, you are most likely going to be asked for a resume. The first thing you should be aware of is that law schools and businesses are in desperate need of people to perform research, scrutinize evidence, and effectively analyze and present it; not to mention employees who will be

prepared and ready to learn new things quickly (the growth of AI makes this especially crucial). Over the few years, politicians from both sides of the aisle have routinely mocked the liberal arts, but if you are paying attention to what CEOs and organizations like the Andrew W. Mellon foundation are saying, you can see that the skills liberal arts majors possess are precisely what companies need; and they pay off, especially in the long-term for students. One other factor to consider is that internships are an excellent entrée into the business world, and you should spend your junior year interviewing people about their jobs and researching internship opportunities that will work with your situation – financial and otherwise.

When it comes to crafting your resume, it is customary to begin with a statement of your objective, then detail your education (list your GPA, any honors, and the title of your undergraduate thesis), your working/leadership experience, skills, personal qualities, and references. Again, similar to the CV, you will want to craft a new resume for each job you are applying for as you might want to change various elements depending on the job opening. For an undergraduate, your resume may not be longer than a page or two, and that is fine. Try to write in phrases using strong action verbs and keep things succinct. Do not use "I" as it is understood. In detailing your accomplishments in your cover letter, you will want to highlight the skills you have developed through your training and demonstrate how they are broadly applicable and transferable to a new environment. You are likely adept at learning languages, manipulating databases, performing research, and writing/editing

effectively. Let hiring managers know because – trust us – they truly need you.

For UTA students, the Lockheed Martin Career Development Center can help you put together a CV or resume that presents you in the best light. Other universities often provide these services through career centers as well.

Summary of the recent report released by the Mellon Foundation on liberal arts schools/degrees.

The first in a series of articles on the AHA's blog about entering the job market with a BA in history.

A couple of situations that could have been avoided by having someone with a history background on staff.

CHAPTER 25.

BECOMING AN ARCHIVIST

In the chapter Archives and Historical Research, we discussed why you might consult an archive, how the sources there differ from published sources, and offered some tips on where and how you would use archives in the DFW area. In this section, we dive more deeply into what exactly archives are. Our objective here is to provide a more specialized look, which will help with more serious research projects or as a way of learning about a possible career path for history majors.

DEFINITIONS

The term "archives" can have two distinct meanings, at least as far as working professional historians are concerned. First, the word can refer to an institution that collects archival records and makes them available for use. In this context, this would be institutions like the National Archives and Records Administration at the federal level, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission at the state level, and Special Collections at the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries at the local level. Each is an important archive with its own collecting focus.

The second definition of "archives" focuses on the records themselves. One of the best definitions in this

context is by archivist Laura A. Millar in her book Archives Principles and Practices (2010). Millar defines archives as:

> *"those records, created or received by a person, a family, an organization, a business, or a government in the course of their life and work, which merit preservation because they provide enduring value: because they provide evidence of or information about either the functions, responsibilities, actions or transactions of the creator or about the life and times in which the creator conducted his or her affairs and the society in which he or she lived and worked." (p. 3)*

To better understand Millar's definition, let's take a closer look at two of its key components. First, the word "records." In this context, records can refer to any piece of recorded information in any tangible format. This means a record can be on paper, in electronic form, a visual/photographic image, an oral interview, and all formats in between. Second, it doesn't matter who or what entity created the records; it only matters that the records are kept because they have "enduring value." This means the content of the records is important, not because of the records' age, but for what the content tells us about the past. In short, archival records are relevant to our lives today. To drive the point home, repeat after me, "Age doesn't make a record archival. Content does!" In other words, a record produced today can be considered archival as long as its informational content is important enough to have continuing value to our society.

WHY RECORDS ARE CREATED

Understanding archives begins with understanding how

and why records are created in the first place. As societies evolved from oral to literate, and literacy became more diffused and widespread, there were—and are—many reasons to create records and to document transactions. What follows is a discussion of some of the more important reasons that spurred individuals and societies to create records.

- Personal. People have many personal reasons to create records and document their own lives. In the past, people documented significant life-events by photographing them, keeping personal diaries, writing letters to friends and family, maintaining scrapbooks, and literally hundreds of other ways. In today's world, this has become even more prevalent now that cell phones, computers, and the Internet have made it possible for people to document and share all aspects of their lives using social media.

- Social: Social records document people gathering together to pursue mutual interests. For example, social organizations can be local groups like a car club or historical society or national groups like political parties and even religious organizations. All of these groups produce membership information, record activities, document their decisions, maintain financial records, etc.

- Economic: Economic records are the so-called "counting and accounting" records that many societies produce. Acquiring, managing, and spending money generate large quantities of recorded information. Such records are necessary

in order to account for one's own funds (not to mention funds generated or owed to businesses) as well as for money held in trust or owed others. In fact, some of the earliest records produced in the ancient world were accounting records documenting who owed who money.

- Legal: Records can reflect legal matters. Many governments have been systematic recorders and keepers of legal information. Some governments use these records to protect constitutionally expressed rights or laws, while others may use records, like secret FBI or KGB files, to monitor and persecute certain citizens. More broadly, ownership of property, contracts between people and businesses, and the fulfilling of one's obligations as a citizen (voting, paying taxes, serving on juries, etc.) all produce records.

- Instructional: Some records have utilitarian purposes in that they instruct people on how to do something. Architectural drawings and blueprints, for example, show how to construct a building, while maps and navigational records facilitate travel from place to place. "How-to" videos on YouTube certainly fall into this category too, showing viewers how to accomplish or do a certain task.

- Symbolic: Some records serve as symbols of a life experience or a notable accomplishment. Some examples of these include a marriage certificate, a diploma, family tree, a family Bible with genealogy information, certificates documenting

successful completion of some sort of training, personal awards, etc.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN RECORDS

The reasons why records are created and kept are key to thinking about both research and archives as a profession. At first, of course, records were rare, since they were produced on stone, or papyrus, or animal skins—all expensive and hard-to-get commodities. With the invention of paper, the development of writing instruments like pens and pencils, and increasing literacy, records became more widespread and usable by more people. Also, advancing technology in the late nineteenth century and afterwards made records creation easier and more ubiquitous. Today we are inundated with both paper and electronic records (more of the latter!), and that influences what is saved in archives and how it is saved. One significant characteristic of modern records then is volume: Archives generally don't receive a few items these days, instead they receive boxes of items or possibly even gigabytes or terabytes of electronic data or, if you are in a presidential library, both!

A second characteristic of modern records is their collective meaning. It is important to understand that when doing archival research, meaning is revealed after looking at many documents rather than just a few. Always keep in mind that context in archival records is a key to understanding their meaning. Archival documents reveal their meaning in the aggregate—oftentimes after looking at entire collections. Researchers work to uncover this information and determine how it pertains to a research topic.

A third important characteristic is that archival records have a shifting usefulness over time. Archival records were never produced to be kept and studied like books. Instead, they were originally produced in order to transact business or for any of the other reasons discussed above in the section "Why Records Are Created." They were preserved, however, because their content tells us something important about the past. In other words, the records were originally produced for one purpose, but they have been kept for another one.

One last characteristic of modern records is that they tend to be more democratic and decentralized than in earlier periods. Today in literate societies, everyone produces records. Literacy is no longer a privilege, and technology makes documenting one's life easy. Related to this is how modern records are produced in multiple formats, from paper, to electronic, to photographic, to analog, etc. etc!

HOW WE KEEP ARCHIVES

Archivists keep and process records and collections. Their main goal is to acquire and preserve records that archivists' (or someone else, such as a legislative body) has judged to have **archival value** and make them available for use as evidence and as information. To do these twin tasks, archivists over the past two centuries have developed three basic principles in processing collections. These principles are somewhat related. The first principle is called *provenance*, and emphasizes the importance of respecting the individual, family, or organization that either created or collected the records.

This emphasis on provenance means that archival collections are kept together based on who or what organization created or amassed them. For example, records of one creator would not be intermingled with the records of another, even if the records pertained to the same subject. These records would be kept separate from each other. The French developed the principle of provenance in the mid-nineteenth century.

The second principle is called *original order*, which is closely related to provenance. Original order refers to the filing system that the creator of the records used when the records were in active use and before they were considered to be archival. To respect the original order of a set of records, the archivist maintains the order in which the records were created, received, filed, or used, provided the order can be determined and that it is usable for researchers. When possible, archivists preserve original order because it cuts down on processing time (it is easier to maintain a filing system that works rather than creating an entirely new one!) and it allows users to see both the content of a collection and also the context of how the materials came to be and how the creator organized them. Prussian archivists devised the concept of original order in the late nineteenth century.

The third archival principle is called *respect des fonds*, and combines both provenance and original order into an overarching single principle. Developed by French archivists in the nineteenth century, respect des fonds reiterates that archives from different creators should not be intermingled and that the order in which the creators maintained records should be preserved. This element

of archival administration protects the integrity of the collection as well as the content, context, and structure of collections.

THE HISTORY BEHIND U.S. ARCHIVES

These principles are important because they, in part, formed the basis of the development of archival collections in the United States. From its earliest settlement, the U.S. developed two different traditions for the handling and preservation of records, documents, and archives. Historian Richard Berner, in his book *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States* (1983), labels them as the Historical Manuscripts Tradition (HMT) and the Public Archives Tradition (PAT). The former was based on librarianship and autograph collecting, while the latter was based on the archival principles developed in Europe defined above. The traditions were distinct until the mid-twentieth century, when they converged.

The HMT predates the development of professional history education in the U.S. by about one hundred years. Indeed, shortly after the American Revolution, the revolutionary generation, motivated by patriotic pride and the knowledge that the revolution marked a turning point in history, began collecting documents, manuscripts, newspapers, and other historical sources that reflected the early history of the colonies and the young nation. Not only did they collect, but they collected for a purpose—that purpose being to place these collections in repositories that would house, protect, and preserve the collections for future generations. In 1791, the Massachusetts Historical Society became the first

historical society in the U.S. Its purpose was to collect, preserve, and provide access to the historical sources of the state and region and to foster the study of the region's history. Less than a century later, more than 200 state, local, and regional societies sprouted up across the country, most in the Northeast, Midwest, and West, and all were dedicated to preserving and supporting historical studies.

Some of these societies also collected state and local governmental records, but most collected private papers of individuals, such as letters, diaries, and journals. They also collected published and printed works, such as newspapers, maps, and broadsides. Some even amassed collections of artifacts and scientific specimens. Not surprisingly, these institutions reinforced the social, cultural, racial, and political attitudes of the elites who founded them.

To better protect the content of their holdings and to make them accessible to a wider audience, many of these societies started publication programs for some of their more significant collections. The Massachusetts Historical Society in 1806 stated, "There is no sure way of preserving historical records and materials, but by multiplying the copies…." Throughout the nineteenth century, the societies continued to publish major historical series of primary sources, while they continued to collect and build their holdings.

Generally speaking, the historical societies were more successful in building their collections than the efforts being made by government archives to collect public

records in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The push to create public archives in the U.S. started, what Berner called, the PAT. The PAT was slow to achieve success, since the federal system in the U.S. divided governmental powers between states and the federal government, which itself was divided between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Movements to establish and fund public archives repositories had to be fought at the local, state, and federal levels, slowing progress.

Initially state archival programs achieved success before a national archives for federal records was established. States used a number of models when establishing statewide archives, including archives that were a part of state libraries (Western states in particular), archives that were a part of historical societies (Midwestern states in particular), and archives that became independent state agencies (Southern states in particular). By the first decade of the twentieth century, most states had functioning archives.

It wasn't until 1934 that the National Archives opened its doors in Washington, D.C., and began collecting federal records of enduring value. This became a monumental task, as the nation was wracked by the Great Depression at the time and later consumed by WWII in the first half of the 1940s. Nevertheless, the National Archives eventually grew to be the leading archival repository in the nation, developing policies and procedures that impacted archival policies across the country. The National Archives also helped to shape educational programs for the training of archivists and even precipitated the founding of the Society of American

Archivists in 1936, the first professional organization for archivists in the country.

When the National Archives adopted the archival principles of provenance, original order, and respect des fonds shortly after its founding, it didn't take local, state, and regional archives long to follow suit. Today, most archival repositories in the U.S. follow the lead of the National Archives when it comes to how collections are kept, processed, and made available to researchers.

ARCHIVES AS A PROFESSION

As a history student, you may want to look at archival administration as a possible career. The archives profession is part of a growing field labeled as public history. Simply defined, public history refers to history practiced outside of the classroom in venues like archives, museums, libraries, government offices, community centers, military bases, and video production companies, as examples.

While many archivists work at collections located in libraries, not all do, and their training is quite different. Librarians are the professional staff in libraries, and they receive their educations in university-based library schools. These schools offer masters programs (some also offer doctoral programs) that are accredited by the American Library Association (ALA), the largest professional organization for information workers in the country. Their courses focus mainly on handling published materials, with a major emphasis on the

creation, maintenance, distribution, and preservation of electronic information.

Archivists, on the other hand, are the professional staff working in archival institutions, and they can come from many different backgrounds and disciplines. Unlike librarians, there is not one path to becoming an archivist. There are numerous archival educational programs housed in history departments at universities (like the one here at UT Arlington), while some are part of library schools and museology departments.

Unlike what the ALA does to accredit library graduate programs, there is no accrediting body for archival educational programs. Instead, the Academy of Certified Archivists, a professional organization for archivists, certifies individual archivists after they have worked in the field as professionals, taken a series of graduate-level archives courses, and passed a national certification exam. While the archives profession grew from the history field in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, archivists now come from numerous fields, including art, religious studies, political science, librarianship, and, of course, history, just to mention a few. Archival education focuses on the selection, acquisition, arrangement and description, preservation, outreach, and providing access to archival records, both physical and electronic.

UTA's history department offers two options to students at the MA level who want to pursue public history. One option focuses on archival education for those wanting to work in archives after graduation, while the other focuses on public history more broadly defined, with only an introduction to archives.

If you want to find out more about the archives profession and what archivists do, then access the following websites:

- Academy of Certified Archivists
- Society of American Archivists
- Society of Southwest Archivists

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND HELPFUL LINKS

There is a rich historiography relating to archives, including literature about the field's history and evolution, its practical aspects (such as information about best practices for handling, arranging, describing, and accessing historical records), major issues that have impacted—and continue to impact— the profession, technological challenges, preservation issues, and a host of other topics.

- For an excellent select bibliography about archives and the archival profession, see the Academy of Certified Archivists, Handbook for Archival Certification (Albany, New York: Academy of Certified Archivists, 1998, revised ed. 2019), 39-44.
- The International Council on Archives (ICA), a professional organization with archivists from 200 countries, maintains several bibliographies of online resources on its web site.
- The Society of American Archivists has published a comprehensive bibliography of U.S. archival

history titled Bibliography of American Archival History (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, October 2016).

CHAPTER 26.

BECOMING A PUBLIC HISTORIAN

A public historian is someone who makes historical knowledge available to the general public. The historian may be a trained academic historian, a person with specialized training in the craft of public history, or an avocational historian who shares their knowledge. Each type has its own advantages and limitations.

Academically trained historians: These public historians can be confident that they are well-trained in how to make meaning out of historical evidence, often by applying theoretical frameworks primarily understood by others with similar advanced training. That sentence contains most of their strengths and weaknesses for doing public history. The public is happy to see pieces of historical evidence-objects, photographs, and documents. The public is less happy with theories, jargon or anything else that makes them feel unwelcome.

The academically trained public historian should change the way they communicate information about history. Use accessible language and appeal to a wide variety of interests and levels of dedication among learners.

The typical trained public historian receives their undergraduate and/or graduate degree in public history or museum studies. They should be well prepared to communicate history to the public. They may not have as much training in sophisticated thinking about history.

The public may not like theories but their learning experience can be richer if the message is crafted by someone with a deep understanding of historiography. A good researcher can quickly amass enough understanding of any particular historic event or issue to build a credible public history presentation. A lack of deep understanding could, however make that presentation a bit flat, or superficial. Also, the public will only forgive a mistake, or a demonstrated lack of detailed knowledge, if the historian is ready to learn alongside them.

The trained public historian needs to cultivate a passion for some particular areas of history and to pursue understanding of sophisticated historiography.

The amateur historian enjoys comfortable membership in the public that forms the audience of public history, and may have the easiest time reaching the audience. Such a historian generally studies a limited range of subjects in which they have a passionate interest. They do this in their leisure time while pursuing some other career that may not relate to history. They may have no formal history training beyond high school learning or undergraduate survey courses. If they are personable, their passion for their subject shines through to engage audiences. Their limitations are also born of that passion. They may focus on intense knowledge of objects and facts and assume the audience wants to learn absolutely every detail. They may also fail to give an overall framework into which the learner can place these discrete facts in order to understand them—that is, fail to give context. Passion can produce giant exhibits, long, exhausting writings, and two-hour lectures.

The amateur historian must harness their passion and give

the learner the opportunity to take in small or large servings of the historian's wealth of knowledge.

Every public historian needs to do ALL of the things in italics and is prone to all of the mistakes.

PUBLIC HISTORY'S AUDIENCE

The audience for public history is, ideally, everyone. We all know the popular arguments for the value of studying history: learn about the past so as to avoid repeating old mistakes; you must study the origin and progress of your family, city, nation, political group, ethnic or racial group, profession or philosophy, in order to understand yourself; study the history of groups to which you do not belong, so as to better understand the world. Good public history accomplishes such valuable goals.

Unlike the audience for academic history, the casual learner may not be drawn by intense interest and may have absolutely no basis of existing knowledge. Even worse, they may have inaccurate existing knowledge that they resist questioning.

The actually resistant learner is the hardest of all. Think of the person whose family dragged them to your museum when they had other plans. Think of students assigned to do your fun online history tutorial who do not think history can be fun. Meet each learner on their own terms and try to respond to their interest level. Take failure in stride and revel in even a tiny victory of sparked interest.

THE NUMBER ONE JOB OF THE PUBLIC HISTORIAN—INTERPRETATION

Public history is all, ultimately, interpretation. It is the

act of transforming the raw knowledge from primary sources and the complex conclusions produced by academic inquiry into accessible presentations. Difficult, but worth the struggle.

A formalized understanding of the craft of interpretation was made available in 1957. Working with the National Park Service, Freeman Tilden wrote *Interpreting Our Heritage* as a guide for those who led tours in national parks. His six principals of interpretation were designed for use on tours of the natural world and discussions of larger environmental issues. They work equally well for a historic artifact or document. The constant evolution of the practice of public history has never rendered his basic ideas obsolete. His short book is a quick read and highly recommended.

Here is a list of suggestions for good interpretation:

- Creating interpretation that is accessible does not mean "dumbing down" sophisticated ideas. It is much more difficult than that! It involves careful use of familiar language and skilled use of images and objects to form a message that people with an amateur interest in history can find helpful and intriguing.
- Public history meets learners where they are. A skilled presentation serves as an introduction for those who know nothing about the subject, and provides new information for those already invested in the subject.
- Learners may arrive expecting to be given facts. That would be poor interpretation. Better they leave without a single new fact in their head but

with an experience of questioning, of critical thinking, of wanting to know more. Tilden said, "The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation." What do you think a learner remembers longest-a date in history, or the controversy over the meaning of whatever happened on that date?

- Interpretation must be geared to all possible learners, of every age, education level, background or religion, and great efforts should be made to properly include groups previously excluded from discussions of history. Good interpretation is for everybody.
- It is impossible to create interpretation that works equally well for everybody. This dichotomy is for the public historian to resolve with creativity, flexibility and love. (It is rather similar to the problem caused by these two rules of exhibit design: Labels should be brief so they will be read. Labels should be full of information so they are informative and provocative. Good luck with that one!)
- Tilden also said interpretation is an art, and a process. Doing it well takes practice, mastering an art. The idea of process can inform the crafting of any individual interpretive effort, that is, its structure represents a process of introducing the topic and moving through stages of increasing information and active evaluation that includes the learner. One hopes that each interpretive act is but one part of a larger intellectual journey for the learner. Leave them wanting more.

- Interpretation must be true. That sounds obvious but gives rise to so many questions. Is an exhibit offering true interpretation if one of the artifacts is a reproduction? Maybe, maybe not. If you simplify a map of seventeenth-century Europe, de-emphasizing some of the less active countries, is that making the political geography of the time accessible or is it falsification? Probably both. If your audience is bored and drifting, should you spice up your presentation with an amusing anecdote of questionable veracity? That would be tempting, but not good public history, despite the advice in item 7.
- Learners are not looking for an intense boot camp of study followed by a grueling examination. The public historian does not give grades. The learner can leave in the middle if they wish. Like any purveyor of leisure, you must attract and hold their attention. Humor can help, even bad jokes. Horror can help. Few visitors can ignore a display of a Ku Klux Klan robe. They become like drivers entranced by a highway accident. Popular culture references work sometimes, if carefully targeted and explained. Interpretation is a conversation, a performance, a seduction.

HISTORY MUSEUMS

History museums may be the first place aspiring public historians consider working. They are also the first choice of potential learners. Authors Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen conducted a poll of 1,500 Americans, asking about their relationship to history, and published

the results in *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* in 1998. Museums were the most trusted source of information, far ahead of respondents' history teachers or even their own grandparents.

The earliest museums in the United States presented collections of interesting or exotic objects. They did not strictly adhere to divisions of subject matter, with separate museums for history or science. They lacked even the most rudimentary interpretation

An excellent example of the early museum was created by Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827) in Philadelphia. Peale was an artist who captured the likenesses of many leaders of the American Revolution. His townhouse included a large studio space, which became the first museum gallery, opening in 1786.

Peale became a collector, the avocation of many early museum builders. Studio visitors admired his displayed objects, thus inspiring the museum. He mostly collected natural history specimens. He displayed bones, including a Mastodon skeleton, and taxidermied specimens of animals, both strange and familiar. He also displayed his own portraits of inspirational American heroes and some Revolutionary War relics. As a compatriot of Benjamin Franklin, it is not surprising that he included examples of recent inventions. He created a large format "cabinet of curiosities," the term for a domestic display of objects by an amateur collector.

His self-portrait titled "The Artist in His Museum," depicts the tasteful arrangement of his collection when it was displayed at Independence Hall. We see him at age 81, in 1822, as he lifts the curtain to reveal the secrets of the world. Beyond the curtain we see animal specimens arranged according to the fairly new idea of taxonomy of living things, so that the birds are grouped together. Above are his American hero portraits. Clearly there was an order to the display, and that is a key first step toward

providing the viewer with helpful interpretation. But there was little to no signage (or live gallery guides to answer question) to explain the objects, their origin, arrangement and why they merited inclusion. The well-dressed visitors we see in the background were left to observe without direction, unless the collector himself happened along to chat.

Everything has changed since then. Museums small and large proliferated and refined their practices. The main change was away from objects valued mostly for the thrill of possessing that which was rare or exotic or nostalgic toward using them to gain larger historic knowledge. The early collectors, often referred to by the slightly pejorative term "antiquarians," did not always do that. Often their interest was limited to information about the object's origin story, including who made it and where, what materials were used, what style might its decoration represent; and its rarity. All of those are good starting points for teaching, but not whole story.

Museums evolved, increasingly presenting the object's role in larger historical trends. The artifacts themselves were arranged in thematic groupings, to add understanding of their connections. Dioramas and room settings were created to give a more tangible feel of historic environments and how collected objects fit into them. Historic house museums took this method further. Gallery rooms could also group artifacts and their accompanying information by time period, association with specific groups of people, or stages of technological production. Labels and signage explained what the visitor was viewing.

This is not to suggest that museums achieved perfection. Racism and ethnocentrism haunted curatorial

decisions, even in exhibits about foreign cultures and people of color. Great men dominated, with occasional cameo appearances by supporting women like Betsy Ross. Elitism was rampant. Displays of domestic objects and room presented the lives of the wealthy, not the everyday environments of other social groups.

The initial audiences for museums were expected to be limited to educated members of the upper social classes, like the people Peale painted visiting his museum. Other people might be dismissed as unable to profit from the knowledge made available in museums. By the Victorian era and into the twentieth century, this thinking changed. Those who were often termed the "common man" were seen as good candidates for visiting a museum. Once there, they would learn from carefully curated presentations of patriotic interpretation, designed to reinforce reverence for the existing social and political systems. Immigrant visitors could learn how to think like Americans. Poorer Americans could embrace middle-class values and norms. Children would be directed to an unwaveringly positive view of their heritage and nation.

This sort of practice reached new heights during World War II and the Cold War era. Museums helped remind soldiers going to Europe and post-war civilians of the reasons to support national initiatives. 1976 may have been the last big hurrah for those ideas in museums. The Bicentennial inspired the creation of endless small local history museums and special exhibits in established ones.

This curatorial tradition of telling visitors what they should think and what they should learn likely contributed to the later backlash against curatorial authority. So did the perceived curatorial focus on collecting as the major purpose of the museum, with

education given less respect. The high point of the backlash was the 2010 publication of *The Participatory Museum* by Nina Simon, which is available to read free online. This began a conversation within the museum community about the importance of making the museum's wealth of information available to all visitors in a spirit of discussion and equality. The ongoing experiment is producing strategies for balancing the value of collections and meaningful education with equal regard for both.

Advanced training in history is valuable, and often required, for any position in a history museum. The staff who most actively use the skills of the historian are in the education and curatorial departments. Keep in mind the vast range of museum sizes. Some have only one full-time employee who does almost everything. Some have hundreds of people.

Educators share the museum's information with everybody they possibly can. Their methods can include classes for adults or children, lectures and book discussions, tours of the museum, presentations in schools, designing activities for specialized children's areas within the museum, and offering educational crafts and games during special events. They plan and oversee field trips. This requires logistical expertise and customer service ability, as well as knowledge of curriculum and local education standards so that the field trip activities meet the needs of the schools. Educators take part in exhibit creation and all events and interpretive planning in the museum.

The curatorial department is responsible for assembling, maintaining and understanding the museum's collection of historic materials. They use the

collection to create exhibits for their museum, for travel to other museums, and online. They may produce other informative offerings, such as videos or publications. They will almost certainly be asked to provide tours of the museum collection, discuss interesting collection pieces online, and work with students. They also make the collection available for scholarly study.

In a small museum, one curator may be both the historian and the person who cares physically for the collection. Ideally a separate collections manager is responsible for all aspects of collection care. Physical care ranges from dusting to hiring professions to restore an artifact. The collections manager knows what and where everything is, as well as how it came to the collection, and if it is sturdy or on the verge of disintegration. They oversee the safe storage, handling and exhibit use of artifacts. In a very large staff there may be positions for archivists, specialized curators, conservators (trained in artifact repair), photographers and exhibit builders.

A public historian who does well may become the director of the museum. If you have this opportunity, do not let the financial spreadsheets and endless courting of donors make you forget that you are a historian.

OTHER CAREER OPTIONS IN PUBLIC HISTORY

Careers outside of the museum also involve various ways of communicating your understanding of history to those seeking to increase theirs. Where museum work offers the chance to work with historic objects and documents and to craft and carry out exhibits and instructive interactions with the public, some of these alternatives allow you to focus more on one of those areas.

PUBLISHING

The public historian's thoughtful, accessible interpretation of history can take effective form as writing. Of course, we are past the time "publishing" only referred to printed material like books and magazines, but they are not dead yet and so merit consideration.

Written public history is less burdened with the need to address reluctant learners. Except for student assignments, the disinterested will never be part in your audience! All the goals of interpretation apply to writing. It must be authentic, engaging, welcoming, overtly informative and sneakily more than the learner expected. Language is important and visuals are highly recommended.

Other roles including editing, developing new authors and fields, and promoting books allow the lucky job candidate to work with many historical subjects while enjoying regular employment and benefits. Authors are more likely to be self-employed, though opportunities exist within history organizations that do publication.

We now have so many options beyond books. Technology and creative ways to use it offer constant opportunities to interpret for the connected public. There is little point in discussing specific current technological products—as they will soon change. The wonders of new tools should never overshadow the rules of good interpretation. The field has left behind the days when digital methods of communication were suspect. All acts of interpretation are judged by the same standards.

Fiction is controversial. Novels and films featuring a dramatic or humorous fictional tale set into an (hopefully) accurate historic setting are a complicated issue. The

learner, who may think they are casually relaxing with a film or an historical romance, is also studying the past. What an opportunity for the public historian—you have their willing attention! Unfortunately, the most memorable parts tend to be the fights, love scenes and jokes, rather than the background of historical events like political differences and the failures of business. Consider the example of the 1997 movie, *Titanic.* Most viewers remember the nude drawing scene. Many learned a bit about the strict divisions of social class in 1912, since that idea appeared repeatedly and forcefully. Far fewer likely picked up on the hints that the ship's owners rushed it into use and ignored safety concerns.

Whatever the limitation of fictional history authorship, serving as an expert advisor on such productions is a legitimate role for a public historian. Such a consultant reviews proposed clothing, furnishings and backgrounds for a film, insuring that these visual elements are correct. The consultant may be able to address language mistakes, such as having a character say "O.K." before its period of common use. Like all consulting jobs, this requires prior experience to establish credentials.

CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The more recognized field of historic preservation, in which buildings and landscapes are saved and maintained, is actually a sub-field of cultural heritage preservation. The overall goal of that is to selectively and effectively identify aspects of human culture that should be kept alive and made available to the public for education, celebration and recreation.

Historic preservation in the United States is generally thought to have begun with activist women who formed the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1853 to save George Washington's iconic house. They saw the house as a living symbol of the ideals of the American Revolution, practically a shrine. The ladies learned lessons through hard experience that new preservationists still face. They had to find the means of acquiring ownership, establish an efficient governing organization, fundraise endlessly, and decide how best to maintain the building so that it authentically represents what is termed the "period of significance." For Mount Vernon that is the lifetime of the hero. Their efforts were overtly directed at inculcating patriotism. They even hoped the structure could turn hearts away from sectional division and prevent the impending Civil War. The house could not do that, but its emotional association with General Washington did keep it safe from Union soldiers who destroyed other houses in their path.

Modern preservation goes far beyond sanctifying the homes of great men-though there is value in those places. Preservation efforts are now directed at saving places representing all kinds of people, as well as cultural trends such as the history of musical genres or theater. Social history points to many sites worth saving, as can all areas of historical inquiry. Efforts have also moved beyond the protection of individual buildings to protecting neighborhoods, urban streetscapes, and rural and agricultural landscapes.

Where can the trained historian find work in this field? Every preservation effort is based on research into the location's past. The resulting body of knowledge is used in fundraising efforts, public policy decisions and

winning citizen support. All are needed to begin the process of preservation. This information guides the physical treatment of the property once preservation begins. For instance, it informs decisions about what parts of the building or landscape should stay because they authentically represent the location's past, and which should be removed because they do not. Such parts could be as small as a hinge or as big as an orchard or barn.

Private firms employ historians to do such research for clients, as do government entities at all levels. They navigate complex issues of legal limits and official policy, as well as economic interest and public sentiment.

At the federal level, historians work to guide policy and practice in the National Parks Service and in the offices of the Secretary of the Interior, which sets standards for appropriate preservation and maintains the National Register of Historic Places. At the municipal and county level, employees oversee the proper implementation of preservation work and the designation of significant places.

Each state has an affiliate historic preservation office to identify and protect important sites. They work for the state government to properly implement national standards and help local individuals and groups engage in responsible preservation.

In Texas, this office is part of the Texas Historical Commission. They also operate historic sites at houses, cemeteries and agricultural grounds for educating visitors. They authorize and create official historic markers that tell passers-by the significance of the place where they are standing. In their public work they cross over from the smaller area of historic preservation to larger aspects of cultural heritage preservation.

This large preservation field identifies, saves and disseminates information about all aspects of all relevant cultures. Those include not only buildings and smaller objects of all types, but intangible artifacts like folk songs and stories, religious rituals, family celebratory practices, or anything else that tells how a particular people experienced and explained the world. Some preservation organizations and government agencies employ historians to gather material and make it available, but much work in this area may be individual efforts involving little immediate financial gain. Such study can inform publications of all types as well as museum work.

CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENTAL HISTORY

Many corporations and governmental agencies employ historians and archivists to maintain the entity's history. Their primary goal in doing this is to insure smooth current operations by giving staff members easy access to information about organizational history. The historian is expected to have the most thorough knowledge of the organization possible, and know where to find the answer to every question. This type of position may therefore be focused on information classification, storage and retrieval.

There may still be some opportunities to engage in interpretation to the public. The corporate or departmental historian may be charged with overseeing content about the organization's history for their website, as well as other digital outreach efforts. They could be called upon for archival images or stories for use in advertising or public relations. They might even be able

to assemble a more detailed publication about the history of the organization.

One Dallas-Fort Worth example is cosmetic company Mary Kay. They have long maintained an internal historian and a collection of both archival material and objects. This collection is shown in a museum space in the company's world headquarters in Addison, Texas. The collection of past products and packaging can be referenced for current product development. The record of the company's history of working with a national, and now international, army of individual sellers is also valuable. They use it to recruit and retain these workers. They promote the history of the company and its founder, Mary Kay Ash, as offering women empowerment and self-sufficiency.

As this one example may suggest, an internally employed historian in such a place may be limited in their historic messaging. As an employee, they may be expected to toe the party line. Every organization likely has unflattering aspects in their past that a good historian would want to explore, but might not be allowed to pursue. Consider this before taking either a regular position or a consulting assignment. Also weigh the possibility of encouraging a more transparent and accurate historical interpretation. You might succeed!

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

Each of these institutions requires specialized training in their practices for collecting and organizing books and documents and other types of texts. Subject knowledge is a definite plus for recognizing the potential uses each resource holds for historical study. Skill in interpretation

supports the other mission function of such institutions: connecting information seekers with the right resources and helping them make full use of them. As the temporary research assistant for each visitor, the archivist or librarian can explore new knowledge on so many subjects while helping people learn how to research, to think critically, and to synthesize discrete facts into useful historical insights.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Start online with these two organizations. Both offer free information, student memberships, hold yearly conferences and publish journals. The first is slightly more oriented to the practice of public history across all fields. The second tends to focus more on museum issues.

- The National Council on Public History
    - https://ncph.org
- American Association for State and Local History
    - https://aaslh.org
- The OAH serve all practitioners of history.
    - Organization of American Historians
        - https://www.oah.org
- For insight into the practice of public history in Texas:
    - The Texas Association of Museums
        - https://www.texasmuseums.org
    - The Texas Historical Commission
        - https://www.thc.texas.gov

PART VI.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

HIST 3300 fulfills the requirement for UNIV 1101. The materials in this unit relate to skills needed for success in college and beyond. UTA students may have in-class assignments associated with these materials and should check their syllabus, Canvas course module, or with the instructor.

Those accessing this book who are not enrolled in HIST 3300 may find the materials pertaining to skills and good habits useful in their own academic career and beyond.

CHAPTER 27.

PURSUING SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

The most important element in your success in college is in developing the skills of a self-regulated learner. Self-regulated learners develop several key skills and habits that make them effective learners and practice them in an iterative process consisting of three phases:

- Setting goals and making strategic plans
- Monitoring performance and progress toward your goals
- Reflecting upon the above phases and then making decisions on how to change your behavior to improve your outcomes (and then repeat)0

READINGS

Skim read the following chapters in the OER textbooks assigned to first-year and transfer students at UTA (free and online, click on the links below)

- *No Limits: Foundations and Strategies for College Success*, Chapters 4-6
- *Blueprint for Success in College and Career*, Chapters 20, 26, 27, and 30

REFLECTION

1. What is(are) the best piece(s) of advice you found in the readings?
2. In what ways will this advice be useful to you?

Your instructor may have you participate in an in-class or Canvas-based discussion on this topic.

CHAPTER 28.

TEAMWORK

WHY DO I HAVE TO WORK WITH OTHERS?

Love it or hate it, teamwork will be part of your coursework at UTA. And for good reason, employers in Texas have identified *teamwork* as one of the most important skills they expect college graduates to have! UTA has developed a brief teamwork guide for students to help you get the most out of a group work experience.

READINGS

Skim through the first five chapters of *Teamwork: An Open Access Practical Guide.* Don't worry, it isn't long. Most of the materials are presented in infographics format.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

1. What have you disliked about your past Team or Group assignments (in college or in high school)?
2. Based upon your readings, what benefit do you see from being a good Team member?

Your instructor may have you participate in an in-class or Canvas-based discussion on this topic.

CHAPTER 29.

RESILIENCE

Students in UNIV courses often take the True Colors Personality Test and then discuss. So go for it: True Colors Personality Test

The History Department thinks that building your resilience is more important to your academic success than your personality color. Peruse this American Psychological Association website to learn more about the importance of building your resilience

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

1. Reflect on your "color." Do you think your color matches your personality? Is this meaningful to you?
2. What did you think of the advice on how to build resiliency? Was it more useful than your "color" comments?

Your instructor may have an in-class or Canvas-based activity associated with this material.

CHAPTER 30.

TIME MANAGEMENT

SUCCESSFUL ATTAINMENT OF GOALS STARTS WITH GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Time management and goal setting skills are vital to successfully complete college and useful in your future careers. This is especially true in History courses where you may be asked to research and write in the same semester; both are time consuming enterprises.

READING

Skim through Chapters 14-16 in *Blueprint for Success in College and Career*

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

A favorite time management technique of several faculty members in the UTA History Department is to modify the Pomodoro Technique to suit their needs. In a nutshell, this technique teaches you to better utilize the time you have available to be more effective. It includes chunking time available with giving breaks as a reward for finishing a chunk of time. It really does work, mostly because it keeps you on task and makes you feel as though you are really getting things done. Highly Recommended

RESOURCES

For more information on the Pomodoro Technique, peruse the official website (which also has a good video overview)

This Med School Insiders video gives very good advice on the use of this technique.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Which skill do you need the most help on, time management or goal setting? How will you go about improving this skill?

Your instructor may have an in-class or Canvas activity based upon this material.

CHAPTER 31.

LIFE SKILLS

THERE IS LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Another mandated topic for the UNIV courses is "Life Skills: Healthy Lifestyles and Money Management." Some of you are old hands at this topic, while others may be juggling being on your own for the first time while juggling school and a part time job. Once again, we turn to the two textbooks assigned by UTA for some good advice.

READINGS

- *No Limits, Foundations and Strategies for College Success*, Chapters 7 and 9
- *Blueprint for Success in College and Career*, Chapter 53

PART VII.

UTA CAMPUS RESOURCES

This section includes UNIV 1101 materials about the many resources available to students on the UTA campus.

CHAPTER 32.

GENERAL RESOURCES

GET INVOLVED, HAVE FUN, AND SET GOALS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Your college experience isabout more than just the classroom and pursuing your major. There are many ways to get involved and have fun. In addition, some activities may help you gain valuable skills for not only academic success but for your future career. As the good folks at the career center say, its never too early to start acquiring those skills and accomplishments for your resume (and it is never too early to stop by and see them either, don't wait until senior year!)

READINGS

- *No Limits: Foundations and Strategies for College Success*, Chapter 2 and Chapter 10
- *Blueprint for Success in College and Career* , Chapter 61

SOME QUICK LINKS TO CAMPUS RESOURCES – TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT IS AVAILABLE!

Lockheed Martin Career Development Center
  Student Affairs: Find Support
  Student Affairs: Get Involved

Be Well
What's Happening? Fun Starts Here

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY

Which campus resource do you want to check out? Why do you think it will be useful?

CHAPTER 33.

MAVERICK ADVANTAGE

WHAT IS THE MAV ADVANTAGE?

The Maverick Advantage program prepares students for their future careers through experiential learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom. Completing this program earns you a *"distinction"* at graduation. This is a good resume builder that you customize to your academic and career goals. HIST 3300 can be used to fulfill both Career Development and Undergraduate Research requirements toward the MavAdvantage. Many other HIST and GEOG courses have been designated MavAdvantage courses as well!

To earn the Maverick Advantage Distinction, you need three different experiences that contribute to distinct categories within leadership development, career development, undergraduate research, global engagement, and community engagement. To learn more about the program or to apply, peruse the Maverick Advantage website

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY

In what way do you see the Maverick Advantage Distinction fitting into your academic and career plans?

Your instructor may have an in-class or Canvas-based activity based on this material.

CHAPTER 34.

LEADERSHIP

YOU CAN GET A MINOR IN LEADERSHIP!

The Follett Student Leadership Center's goal is to create leaders who are relational in their approach and who educate themselves to be global citizens. If you are interested in developing your leadership goals or even in pursuing a leadership minor, visit the center's website. Be sure to click through all the menu links. There is quite a bit of information here.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY

What Leadership Center opportunities/activities interested you most? Why?

Your instructor may have an in-class or Canvas-based activity based on this material.

PART VIII.

DEGREE PLANNING AND BEYOND, ADVICE FROM THE UTA HISTORY DEPARTMENT

These materials pertain to planning your history degree and future career.

CHAPTER 35.

ADVICE FROM THE UNDERGRADUATE ADVISORS

ADVICE FROM DR. HUNNICUTT (ONE OF OUR UNDERGRADUATE ADVISORS)

ADVICE FOR UNDERGRADUATES:

- It is never too late to obtain your degree.
- Choose a varied selection of classes.
- Taking a course unfamiliar to you could potentially be quite rewarding.
- Consider attending an educational or scholarly conference for historians, or your chosen major.
- Pursue your degree, history or otherwise, based on your passions, rather than monetary reasons.
- Resources such as H-Net, https://networks.h-net.org/networks, are very useful for history students and professional historians.

ADVICE FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL:

- If applying, allow ample time for your professors to consider your request for a letter of recommendation.
- Be prepared for significantly more amount of

work in graduate level classes.

- Focus on writing, and the methods of a historian, rather than just facts and dates.
- Choose a school that fits your educational goals and preferred study topics.
- Consider attending different institutions to obtain your advanced degrees.

CHAPTER 36.

THE BA DEGREE

DR. HUNNICUTT DISCUSSES THE BA PROGRAM

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=767#oembed-1

CHAPTER 37.

INTERSHIP PROGRAM

DR. SANDY DISCUSSES THE UNDERGRADUATE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=771#oembed-1

CHAPTER 38.

CONSIDER GRAD SCHOOL

DR. COLE DISCUSSES WHY YOU MIGHT WANT TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL IN HISTORY, HOW TO APPLY, AND WHAT TO EXPECT.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=773#oembed-1

CHAPTER 39.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

YOUR EDUCATION AS A HISTORIAN DOES NOT END WITH THE DEGREE (WHETHER BA, MA, OR PHD)

If you become a teacher at any level, you will continue your education with professional development. If you are utilizing your degree as an archivist, preservationist, or in government or the private sector, you will want to keep abreast of key issues. The best place to start is with the American Historical Association

Lifted directly from their website (because we couldn't have said it better ourselves 😉 is the following descriptive information:

The American Historical Association is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1884 and incorporated by Congress in 1889 for the promotion of historical studies. The AHA provides leadership for the discipline by protecting academic freedom, developing professional standards, supporting scholarship and innovative teaching, and helping to sustain and enhance the work of historians. As the largest organization of professional historians in the world, the AHA represents more than 12,000 members and serves historians representing every historical period and geographical area in a wide variety of professions.

The AHA is a trusted voice for history education, the

professional work of historians, and the critical role of historical thinking in public life. Learn more about our work on behalf of the entire discipline and connect with the staff that is dedicated to advancing history and historical thinking for the benefit of all.

The American Historical Association is the largest professional organization serving historians in all fields and all professions. The AHA is a trusted voice advocating for history education, the professional work of historians, and the critical role of historical thinking in public life.

Peruse the website's section on jobs and professional development to see the scope of what is available

The AHA is just one of many sources for professional development. For teachers at all levels there are the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institutes and Digital Humanities Workshops:

These are just a few options. And don't forget about other skills (like online course design or pedagogy workshops or GIS) that may be useful to your job as a historian in the field or in academia.

CHAPTER 40.

MARKETABLE SKILLS AND THE CV/RESUME

I HAVE A DEGREE IN HISTORY, HOW DO I GET A JOB?

Well, there are so many jobs open to those with a History degree beyond teaching or archival work. Do you know that video game developers and auction houses employ history majors? Many lawyers and government officials also have degrees in History. And many large national and international companies like hiring History majors because they know how to think critically and write analytically.

RESOURCES

AHA, "Entering the Job Market with a BA in History"

AHA, "Why Study History"

Even though this information is for PhDs, it works for BAs in History as well: "The Career Diversity Five Skills"

Here is a good website on resume tips from another department of History: https://history.tcnj.edu/for-students/careers/resume-tips/

There are many ways to format a resume. If you are looking for a job in the private or public sector, you will create a resume. For those interested in academia, you will create a CV (curriculum vitae). The Career Center

can help you flesh out your resume and create one that is just perfect for your goals.

After looking through these materials, think about your marketable skills that you have learned as a History major or from other classes. Below is the list of marketable skills posted in the 3300 syllabus:

MARKETABLE SKILLS LEARNED IN THIS COURSE

During this course, students will learn the following skills that can be used in other courses or as marketable skills:

- ability to interpret and critically evaluate evidence
- ability to assess the credibility of sources and make judgments about their usefulness and limitations
- ability determine bias, audience, perspective, and context for various sources of information
- ability to utilize chronological and spatial reasoning
- ability to identify key pieces of evidence, interpret and contextualize evidence, and craft evidence-based arguments
- research and curation
- use of archives
- ability to create a digital narrative, create a public history artifact, create a video, and utilize appropriate educational and teamwork apps

PLANNING FOR THE JOB SEARCH

Here are two resources when you are planning on a job search

Blueprint for Success in College and Career, Chapter 38-42 https://press.rebus.community/blueprint2/

And even though we just discussed it above, don't forget campus resources such as the Lockheed Martin Career Development Center that can help with all sorts of jobs.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY

Every one should have a current resume or CV – you never know when you need one. For this reflective activity, think about whether you would create a CV or resume. Then reflect upon three marketable skills that you think fit with the "story of you" that you want potential employers to know about. They don't have to be from this course, but think about how you can leverage your undergraduate major (and perhaps minors) and other activities.

Your instructor may have an in-class or Canvas-based activity over this material.

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Text / short text

This is the default datatype for your fields which will be assigned by the database whenever you add a new field to a table

This datatype will allow the entry of textual and numerical values, although it will treat that latter differently from numerical values entered into a 'number' datatype field

Fields with this datatype will generally allow a maximum of 255 characters to be entered

Memo / long text

Fields with this datatype are used for lengthy texts and combinations of text and numbers

Up to 65,000 characters can be entered (the precise number may change depending on the database software being used)

Data in these types of field cannot be sorted

Data in these types of field are difficult, although not impossible, to query.

Number

This datatype allows the entry of numerical data that can be used in arithmetical calculations

There are several variations of this datatype, which control aspects of the numbers that can be entered, such as the size of the numbers, the number of decimal places and so on:

Byte: Stores numbers from 0 to 255 (no decimals)

Decimal: stores positive and negative numbers down to 28 decimal places

Integer: Stores numbers from –32,768 to 32,767 (no decimals)

Long integer: (default) stores numbers from –2,147,483,648 to 2,147,483,647 (no decimals)

Single: stores very large positive and negative numbers to 7 decimal places

Double: stores very large positive and negative numbers to 15 decimal places

Date/time

This datatype enables the entry of dates covering the period 100 through to 9999

This datatype can be customized in order to control the format of dates that are entered

Warning: in Microsoft Access, the Office autocorrect feature may well change some of your dates if it is active (e.g. "02/12/04" will autocorrect to "02/12/2004" unless you enter the year in full)

This datatype will allow the sorting of records chronologically, which the same values entered into a text datatype field would not (the latter would sort the records alphabetically – alphabetically "01/01/2010" would come before "31/12/1245")

Currency

This datatype allows the entry of numerical values data used in mathematical calculations involving data with one to four decimal places, with the inclusion of currency symbols

Autonumber

This datatype automatically generates a unique sequential or random value whenever a new record is added to a table.

AutoNumber fields cannot be updated, that is, you cannot enter data into them manually

Yes/no / Binary / Boolean

A field with this type of datatype will only contain one of two values (Yes/No, True/False, or On/Off)

Quite often database software will represent this type of field as a checkbox in the table

The underlying text value of a yes/no field will be -1 (for yes) or 0 (for no)

OLE

A field with this datatype is one in which another file is embedded, as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, a Microsoft Word document, an image, a sound or video file, an html link, or indeed any other type of file

Every field in every table will need to have one of these datatypes assigned, and the decision as to which type is chosen should be factored into the database design process. For most fields the datatype chosen will be either 'text' or 'number'. Keep in mind how these two datatypes treat numerical data differently, particularly in terms of how they cause data to be sorted:

- 1,10,11,2,20,21,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 is how data will be sorted if the datatype is 'text' (that is, alphabetically)
- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,20,21 is how data will be sorted if the datatype is 'number' (that is, numerically)

INTRODUCTION

Historian and database designer Mark Merry observes:

> Most databases consist of data held in more than one table, and this is especially true for databases where the data is derived from historical sources. Relationships are created between the tables to connect the data in one to the data in the other: more precisely, relationships are used to connect specific records in one table to specific records in another. In many ways relationships, and the whole relational data model, comprise the most difficult aspect of designing a database, and not necessarily because they are difficult to actually create. What is difficult about relationships is why we need them – the reasons for using related data can seem obscure and unnecessary at the start of a database project, especially if you have limited experience of using databases. They are, however, extremely important. In essence what relationships allow us to do is two-fold: firstly they allow us to simplify very significantly the process of data entry (and incidentally at the same time enable us to protect the quality of the

data we enter by limiting data entry errors); and secondly they serve to ensure that the results of our queries are accurate by making it clear precisely what it is that is being queried.

FUNCTIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS

These dual functions of relationships are best illustrated with an example.

Imagine a database which contained data about people and the cars that they owned, comprising personal information about name, gender, date of birth and so on, as well as information about car type and the color of the car. There are two ways that this database could be designed:

A single (flat file) table data model, where all of the information about people and cars was entered into the same table

A relational data model where two tables are created, one to contain information about people, and one to contain information about cars

The two scenarios are both feasible and will allow you to conduct a detailed analysis of people and their hats, but each brings with them some very significant consequences if chosen.

SCENARIO A: ALL INFORMATION IN ONE TABLE

In this scenario you have a table with various fields to capture all of the people- and car-related information available from your sources: *Database design principles say that you should not combine different entities into a single table (in this case 'people' and 'cars' being the entities), as this*

confuses the underlying 'meaning' of your data. Good practice would say: car owners are one entity, cars are another, so create different tables for them. However, it is possible to combine entities into single tables, and for our purposes here it is useful to see the consequences of doing so.

PersonID	FirstName	LastName	DoB	DoD	Race	Location	Gender

Entering a number of records into this table would result in data that resembled:

PersonID	FirstName	LastName	DoB	DoD	Race	Location	Ge
1	Anthony	Soprano	1/22/1958	11/15/2003	White	New Jersy	Ma
2	John	Snow	2/15/1998		White	Winterfell	Ma
3	Scarlett	O'Hara	5/16/1842	3/10/1931	White	Tara	Fen
4	Sherlock	Holmes	6/29/1859	4/4/1940	White	London	Ma
5	George	Jefferson	1/1/1956	12/20/2004	Black	New York	Ma
6	Louise	Jefferson	3/3/1960	10/8/2010	Black	New York	Fen
7	Laverne	Cox	7/5/1981		Black	New Jersey	
8	Lucille	Ricardo	9/19/1930	1/5/2004	White	New York	Fen
9	Ricky	Ricardo	10/1/1926	1/20/1989	Hispanic	Cuba	Ma
10	Fred	Mertz	11/1/1905	1/2/1975	White	NYC	Ma
11	Ethel	Mertz	11/5/1912	6/30/1990	White	New York City	Fen

With a table like this we would be able to perform some sophisticated analysis on types of people, types of car, make, model, materials used, the correlation between gender, age and car type, gender distribution of car colors and so on, which would obviously be of enormous benefit to historians interested in this kind of research.

As we continue to examine our sources, we find that some people own more than one car. Some cars are owned by more than one person. This is a one-to-many relationship: one person may have more than one car. So, in this database design scenario we might find records appearing in the table in the following manner:

PersonID	FirstName	LastName	DoB	DoD	Race	Location	Ge
1	Anthony	Soprano	1/22/1958	11/15/2003	White	New Jersy	Ma
2	John	Snow	2/15/1998		White	Winterfell	Ma
3	Scarlett	O'Hara	5/16/1842	3/10/1931	White	Tara	Fen
4	Sherlock	Holmes	6/29/1859	4/4/1940	White	London	Ma
5	George	Jefferson	1/1/1956	12/20/2004	Black	New York	Ma
6	Louise	Jefferson	3/3/1960	10/8/2010	Black	New York	Fen
7	Laverne	Cox	7/5/1981		Black	New Jersey	
8	Lucille	Ricardo	9/19/1930	1/5/2004	White	New York	Fen
9	Ricky	Ricardo	10/1/1926	1/20/1989	Hispanic	Cuba	Ma
10	Fred	Mertz	11/1/1905	1/2/1975	White	NYC	Ma
11	Ethel	Mertz	11/5/1912	6/30/1990	White	New York City	Fen
12	Laverne	Cox	7/5/1981		Black	New Jersey	

As you can see the table now has 12 records rather than 11, and we have entered Lavern Cox twice (which created a new problem since there are two separate PersonID's associated with her). The reason we have entered this twice is because Lavern Cox owns two cars, as you can see in the car-related fields. Some individuals own the same care. As a result, some of our fields have duplicated values in them, and this is both a problem, and a clue to the fact that this table might be better designed as

part of a relational data model. Duplicating information across records in this way should be avoided for a number of reasons. Firstly, data entry is time consuming enough without having to enter the same information on more than one occasion. Secondly, the more times you enter the same piece of information into the database the more scope there is for entering something incorrectly, as we have done here with Anthony Soprano's location value.

This particular error could have been avoided through the use of a variety of tools within the database that are designed to mitigate data entry errors.

But the most serious problem that this duplication of information raises is a third problem – which is that this will adversely affect some types of analysis by providing false results to queries. We could write a query to answer the question: 'how many individuals own a car?' The query count the number of records of people who owned cars this would be the answer to the question. The query would indicate that there were 10 people who owned cars. But in fact, there are only nine separate individuals who own a car. Laverne is counted twice for owning two cars when she should only have been counted once.

SCENARIO B: TWO RELATED TABLES

So, what happens if we model the person and car information in line with the good practice of having a separate table for each entity? We would end up with two tables:

Person table:

PersonID	FirstName	LastName	DoB	DoD	Race	Location	Ge
1	Anthony	Soprano	1/22/1958	11/15/2003	White	New Jersy	Ma
2	John	Snow	2/15/1998		White	Winterfell	Ma
3	Scarlett	O'Hara	5/16/1842	3/10/1931	White	Tara	Fen
4	Sherlock	Holmes	6/29/1859	4/4/1940	White	London	Ma
5	George	Jefferson	1/1/1956	12/20/2004	Black	New York	Ma
6	Louise	Jefferson	3/3/1960	10/8/2010	Black	New York	Fen
7	Laverne	Cox	7/5/1981		Black	New Jersey	
8	Lucille	Ricardo	9/19/1930	1/5/2004	White	New York	Fen
9	Ricky	Ricardo	10/1/1926	1/20/1989	Hispanic	Cuba	Ma
10	Fred	Mertz	11/1/1905	1/2/1975	White	NYC	Ma
11	Ethel	Mertz	11/5/1912	6/30/1990	White	New York City	Fen

Car table:

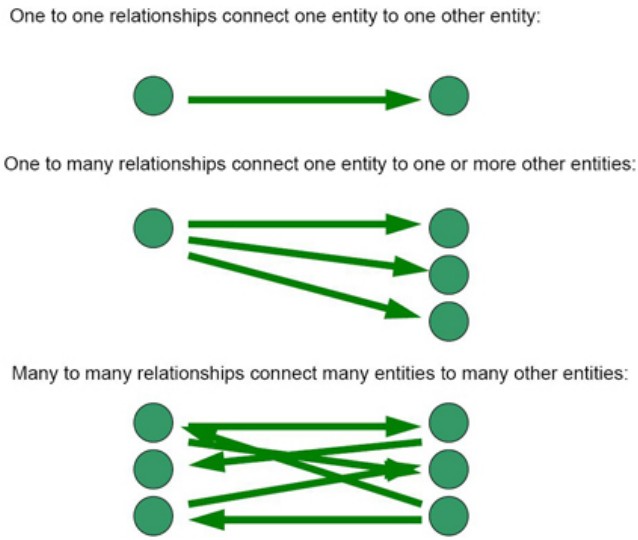
PersonID	CarID	CarType	CarMake	CarModel	CarColor
1	1	Sedan	Honda	Accord	Black
2	2	Coupe	Honda	Civic	Red
3	3	SUV	Nissan	Rogue	White
4	4	SUV	Cadillac	Esplanade	Silver
5	4	SUV	Cadillac	Esplanade	Silver
6	5	SUV	Ford	Escape	Blue
7	6	Convertible	Volkswagen	Golf	Gold
7	8	Sedan	Ford	Taurus	Green
8	7	Sedan	Pontiac	Bonneville	Aqua
9	7	Sedan	Pontiac	Bonneville	Aqua

Entering the two sets of information into the two separate tables allows us to avoid all of the problems mentioned above, and crucially, will allow us to run our queries safe in the knowledge that the correct number of records will be returned every time.

Tables are related by a relationship which connects one or more fields in one table with one or more field in the second table. In our People and Cars tables, the field used in the relationship is the PersonID field, where the ID number of the person is added to the record in the Cats table for those cars belonging to that person (so person number 7, Laverne Cox, has her ID number associated with the records of the two cars that she owns.

TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS

It is important to understand that there are different *kinds* of relationship that can exist between two tables. These differences are a function of the logical, semantic connection between the information between the two tables.



The three types of relationships

There are three types of relationship that can exist between two tables in a database, not all of which are useful or desirable.

One-to-one relationships:

This relationship exists where a record in Table A can only have one related record in Table B, and a record in Table B can only have a single matching record in Table A

For example, a state can have only one capital city, and a capital city is only in one state.

This type of relationship is unusual in a database. Usually either the information is combined in one table, or it is determined that some of that information is not necessary to record. The important thing to remember with one-to-one relationships is that the database software that you use to build your database will allow

you to create this kind of relationship, and that it will not create any problems when it comes to running queries.

One-to-many relationships:

This relationship exists where a record in Table A can have none, one, or more matching records in Table B, but a record in Table B can only have one matching records in Table A.

For example, a mother can have more than one child, but a child can have only one biological mother

This is the most common type of relationship in found in databases, and is usually the type that you want to build into your designs. As illustrated in the people and cars scenario this type of relationship is used to overcome the kinds of problems that arise within the database when the information drawn from the sources would require the duplication of data if entered into a single table.

Many-to-many relationships:

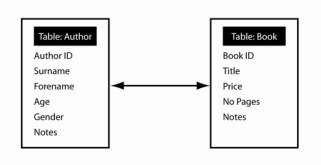
This relationship exists where a record in Table A can have none, one, or many matching records in Table B, and a record in Table B can have none, one, or more than one matching records in Table A

For example, an author can write more than one book and a book can be written by more than one author.

If you discover this kind of relationship within your database design, then you have a challenge which will need to be addressed before you can proceed to actually building the database. Many-to-many relationships are difficult to control and they can easily break a query and return gibberish or nothing at all. Considerable skill and effort are required to manage many-to-many relationships. These should be avoided when possible.

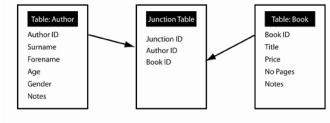
Unfortunately we frequently see many-to-many

relationships appear when modelling historical information. Dealing with a many-to-many relationship requires requires the creation of a table, sometimes called a Junction Table, to sit between the two related tables. This Junction Table will act in an abstract fashion – the data it will contain will not be information as such, but they will serve to separate the many-to-many relationship into two one-to-many relationships.



Many-to-many relationship between Author and Book tables

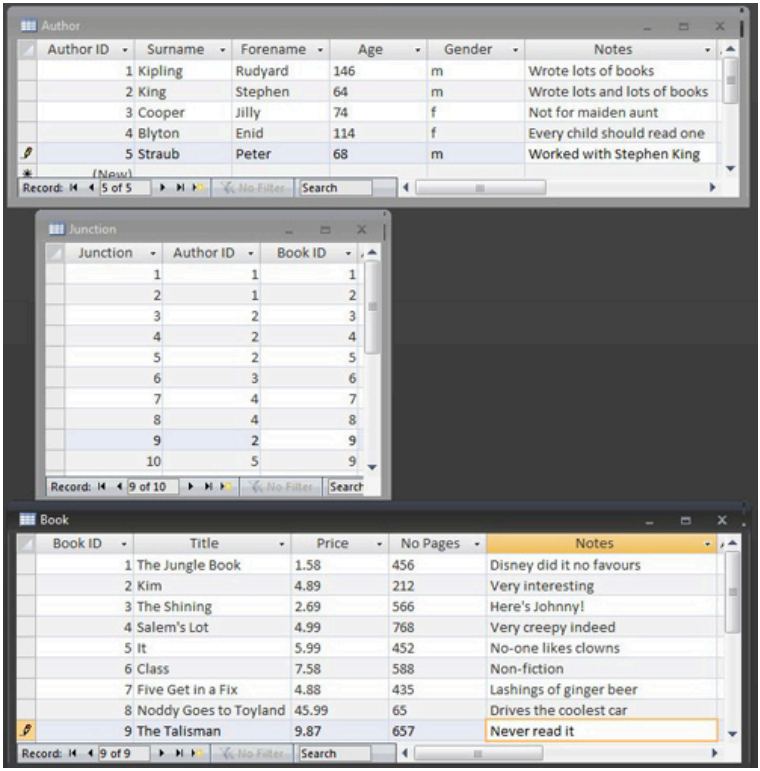
Take the database which contains a table about Authors and a table about Books, which might be designed according to the Entity Relationship Diagram shown above. This is a many-to-many relationship. An author can write multiple books. A book can have multiple authors. To overcome the many-to-many relationship, we would insert a Junction Table to spit the relationship into two one-to-many relationships, as indicated below.



Many-to-many relationship between Author and Book tables split with a Junction Table

Note that each record in the Junction Table contains three fields: a unique ID for each record (Junction ID), and then a field for each of the Author IDs and Book IDs. Each record therefore becomes a unique combination of

Author and Book IDs, which indicates which books were written by which authors:



Author

Author ID	Surname	Forename	Age	Gender	Notes
1	Kipling	Rudyard	146	m	Wrote lots of books
2	King	Stephen	64	m	Wrote lots and lots of books
3	Cooper	Jilly	74	f	Not for maiden aunt
4	Blyton	Enid	114	f	Every child should read one
5	Straub	Peter	68	m	Worked with Stephen King
(New)					

Record: 5 of 5 No Filter Search

Junction

Junction	Author ID	Book ID
1	1	1
2	1	2
3	2	3
4	2	4
5	2	5
6	3	6
7	4	7
8	4	8
9	2	9
10	5	9

Record: 9 of 10 No Filter Search

Book

Book ID	Title	Price	No Pages	Notes
1	The Jungle Book	1.58	456	Disney did it no favours
2	Kim	4.89	212	Very interesting
3	The Shining	2.69	566	Here's Johnny!
4	Salem's Lot	4.99	768	Very creepy indeed
5	It	5.99	452	No-one likes clowns
6	Class	7.58	588	Non-fiction
7	Five Get in a Fix	4.88	435	Lashings of ginger beer
8	Noddy Goes to Toyland	45.99	65	Drives the coolest car
9	The Talisman	9.87	657	Never read it

Record: 9 of 9 No Filter Search

Many-to-many relationship between Author and Book tables split with a Junction Table – showing data

The Junction Table here is effectively circumventing the many-to-many relationship between books and authors, and each record it contains acts as a statement linking one or more author with one or more books. The first two records in the Junction Table, for example indicate that Author ID 1 was the writer of Book IDs 1 and 2, whilst the last two records indicate that Book ID 9 was co-authored by Author IDs 2 and 5. The relationship between books and authors is managed by the Junction

Table, whilst the details about books and authors are kept in their respective tables.

This arrangement enables the database to run queries that draw on information in both the Book and Author tables when it would otherwise not be able to due to the many-to-many relationship. It is therefore a very valuable technique to bear in mind when identifying relationships between tables as part of the database design process.

ENTITY RELATIONSHIP MODELING

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the tasks involved in performing translating and converting information from sources into data. These processes are collectively known as Entity Relationship Modelling (ERM). ERM is a complex activity, and one that can be challenging at first. Fortunately, however, the stages of ERM draw closely upon the skills and experience that an historian uses as a matter of course during research. The difficulty of the ERM process is directly proportional to the complexity of the source(s) being used in the research, with some types of sources being (relatively) simpler to model than others. Highly structured sources like census returns, lists of inhabitants, poll books and so on will be easier to model than 'semi-structured' sources such as probate inventories, which in turn will present fewer problems than completely unstructured material such as narrative texts and interviews, and so on. However, all will have their own particular features and problems to complicate the modelling.

The ERM process produces several results. It causes you to decide what the database is to achieve in terms

of functions. It identifies the types of information that can be obtained from the sources. Along with solidifying the aim of the database, this helps you decide which information from the sources should be entered and which can be omitted. ERM causes you to consider in detail about the components of the database – tables, fields, relationships, datatypes, etc. Last, ERM promotes reflection on the layers of the database, such as what information needs to be in the source layer and should be in the standardization layer. The ERM process leaves you with a clear idea of what the database will look like as well as providing a working diagram of the database (an Entity Relationship Diagram [ERD]).

ENTITY RELATIONSHIP MODELING (ERM)

Stage 1: Determine the purpose of the database

This stage is always the starting point of the ERM process; it is particularly vital if you are using the Method-oriented approach to your design. At this point you should decide what information you want to keep and what you want to discard; you will need to be prepared to abide by the consequences of these choices throughout the lifecycle of your database project. Although it is always theoretically possible to retrofit the design of your database to include information that you had initially decided to discard, it is rarely a trivial matter to do so, particularly if you have to enter another phase of data entry to collect the new information.

Stage 2: List entities

When you know what you want your database to do, divide your anticipated information into discrete subjects: each subject, or entity, will evolve into a separate

table. Separate the entities into distinct tables for the purposes of efficiency, to avoid ambiguity, and because for maximum flexibility in querying.

This stage of the process sounds deceptively simple, but is in fact probably the most difficult step of the whole process. Do not be surprised if you have to do some of this more than once or make some significant revisions.

For example, consider a research project that was investigating political elections in eighteenth-century Bristol, and the sources consisted of a collection of poll books which recorded the votes cast by the local electorates in the communities where elections took place:

The Parish of St. James.

		Earl.	Elto.	Hart
25	AVent Michael, tyler — — —	1	1	
37	Atkins Edward, tyler — —			1
38	Arthur Robert, tobacco cutter — —			1
46	Alſop John, cordwinder — — —	1	1	
52	Auctia John, cooper — — —			1
53	Allen Thomas, freeholder — — —	1	1	
ibid.	Anderton James, draper — — —	1	1	
56	Avery George, pipemaker — — —			1
58	Addis Robert, ropemaker — — —	1	1	
77	Andrews Thomas, freeholder — —			1
105	Adams Samuel, freeholder — — —			1
118	Arthur Charles, tobacco-cutter — —			1
121	Arthur William, tobacconiſt — —	1	1	
ibid.	Albridge Thomas, maſon — — —	1	1	
132	Adams George, freeholder — — —	1	1	
147	Adean John, carpenter — — —			1
156	Andrews Charles, innholder — —	1	1	
158	Ady John, taylor — — — —			1
6	BAwn Nathaniel, tyler — — —	1		1
ib.	Brewer Richard, pipemaker — —			1
12	Baker William, taylor — — —			1
15	Bundy Joſeph, freeholder — — —	1	1	
16	Brown John, taylor — — — —	1	1	
18	Bateman Samuel, labourer — — —			1
21	Brown Richard, clothworker — —	1	1	
ib.	Barret Roger, clothworker — — —	1	1	
22	Baker William, ſhipwright — — —	1	1	
ib.	Briant Jeremy, cordwinder — — —	1	1	
32	Bateman Tobias, maſon — — —			1
33	Berry Thomas, freeholder — — —	1	1	
36	Bradford Richard, tobacco roller — —			1
38	Barren Roger, cordwinder — — —			1
39	Belcher Iſaac, carpenter — — —	1	1	
46	Barnet William, glazier — — —	1	1	
48	Bond Edmund, freeholder — — —			1
51	Belſire Jacob, carpenter — — —	1		1
52	Brown Auſtin, tyler — — — —	1		1
ib.	Bryant John, pipemaker — — —	1	1	

An Exact List of the Votes of the Freeholders and Freemen of

the City and County of Bristol taken at the Election of Members of Parliament (Bristol, 1722) p.19.

With sources such as these we might pursue a research question which was something like: 'Analyze the geographic and economic determinants of voting in early 18th century Bristol'. With a question like this we would be interested in geography, economic status and voting patterns in relation to a group of individuals. In terms of entities, we *might* conclude that there is only one: people, actually, more precisely, we would be considering *voters*, which would lead us to the position of deciding that we would need a table into which we would enter our information about voters.

However, if we were using probate materials for our research and wanted to create a database of information obtained from wills, we should consider the entities from this source. We *might* conceive of our entities – our discrete subjects or each table – as breaking down into 'document', with each will being treated as a different document; 'person', containing information about different types of people and their roles – testator, recipient, executor etc.; 'bequest' with a range of types of associated information; and 'object', being the object of a bequest. If our research was interested in the material culture of a period or place, this latter entity would be particularly important, whereas if the project was concerned only with networks of people and social interrelations, the 'object' entity might not be necessary.

It is perhaps worth considering the inclusion of three commonly chosen entities in the design of your database:

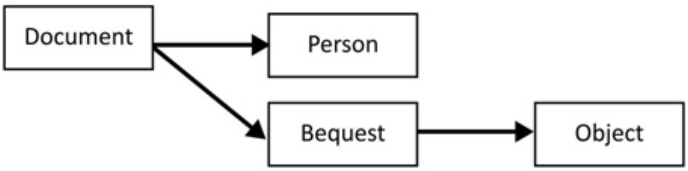
1. People – with a related entity of 'role' (being the reason why they are present in the source)

2. Document – where archival and bibliographical material can be entered (and thus enabling the tracking of every piece of data in the database to its source)
3. Event – a slightly more abstract entity, one which describes an instance of whatever it is your source records (a trial, a taxation assessment, an election etc.) and where information about dates can be recorded.

Stage 3: Identify the relationships between the entities

Here you identify how your entities are related and what type of relationship exists between them. This requires some abstract thinking and will take some practice. It is typical that this stage will result in revisiting stage 2 and redefining one or more of the entities you originally chose.

If we returned to the database of wills mentioned in stage 2 with the entities 'document', 'person', 'bequest' and 'object', we would need to unpick the nature of the relationships between these entities. We might logically decide that the relationships would look something like this (the arrowheads depict the 'many' sides of a one-to-many relationship:



Example of relationships identified between entities (wills)

A single document (will) can contain information about more than one person and also about more than one bequest, whilst a bequest can include information about more than one object, so all of these relationships are one-to-many.

Stage 4: Investigate and rectify problems

This stage is fairly self-explanatory. It is possible to spot problems with the incipient design even at this relatively early point in the ERM process, and if they exist it is better to do so here than after investing work in the later stages.

Look out in particular for:

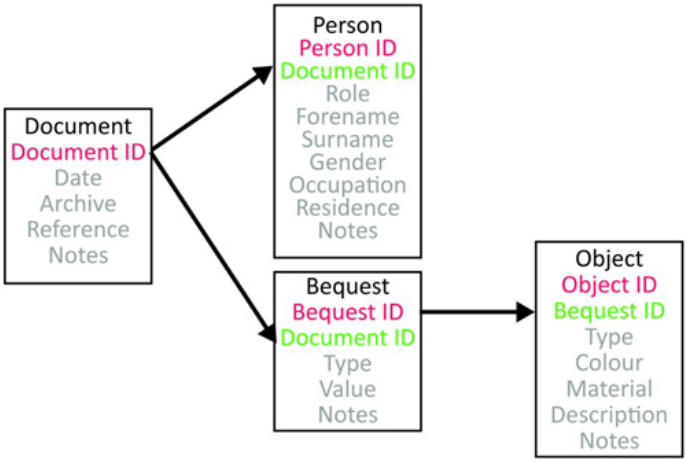
Relationships which do not appear to be one-to-many: remember you cannot have entities related by a many-to-many relationship, and while you *can* have them related through a one-to-one relationship, it may be worth rethinking the two entities involved.

Redundant relationships: if entities can be linked in more than one way, you should work out which link should be kept and which should be discarded – if Table A is related to Table B, and Table B is related to Table C, then Tables A and C are already by definition related, and do not need a 'direct' relationship to exist between the two

Stage 5: List all attributes associated with each entity, and identify keys

This stage involves listing the attributes of each entity that has been identified in the previous stages of the ERM process, by deciding on the fields that should occur in each table. Each field contains one piece of information about the subject of the entity. When you have identified the attributes for each entity, you then determine which

field(s) will act as the primary and foreign keys in each table.



Example of attributes and keys identified within entities (wills)

Terms in black are entity (table names), those in red are primary keys, those in green are foreign keys and those in grey are the remaining attributes/fields, some of which pertain to the database's Source layer, and some to its Standardization layer.

It is generally a good idea to include a generic 'Notes' field into most table, with the memo datatype. This is likely to prove life-saving at moments of crisis when entering data.

Stage 6: Construct the Entity Relationship Diagram (ERD)

Once you have completed stage 5, you are in a position to create the ERD for your database design, which will resemble the heavily simplified example above.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the issues you will face arise through the variability and ambiguity that inevitably accompanies the information found in historical sources. Historians are rarely able to confidently predict the nature of their information, even if they know their sources intimately; there will almost always be instances where the sources confound us. These can be in the form of extra information in the material which seems to be outside the scope of the source, or missing or illegible text, or through marginalia, deletions and so on.

Chronology, topography, geography, orthography, and a range of other historical contexts introduce an element of 'fuzziness' into the data; fuzziness is kryptonite the relational database model. The irregularity of historical information must be managed through the design of the database in order to achieve a balance between maintaining the detail and richness of the source to the degree the project needs, while simultaneously standardizing and reshaping the information enough to allow the database to operate with maximum efficiency and flexibility.

PROBLEMATIC INFORMATION

There are certain categories of historical information which are habitually problematic, and unfortunately these tend to be those subjects that often constitute

analytical units, namely geography, chronology and orthography.

Geographical information

The problem with geographical information that occurs in historical sources is that the boundaries of administrative units overlap and change over time, so that the same physical location can belong to different counties/parishes/wards/precincts and so on depending upon the date of the source being consulted. If your sources cover an extensive time range, you will need to be sensitive to the implications that boundary changes in that period may have for your data. This is especially true if you are recording data in a hierarchical fashion: for example, if you have a field in a table for 'Parish', and another for 'County', and every record will be given a value in each field. If the parish of *St Bilbo Baggins* is situated in the county of *Hobbitonshire* at the beginning of the 17th century, then records connected with this parish would have these two values entered into the respective fields in the table. If, however, administrative changes in the 18th century alter the county boundaries so that *St Bilbo Baggins* suddenly belongs to the county of *Breeshire*, then the records will have the values of *St Bilbo Baggins* in the parish field, and *Breeshire* in the county field. Whilst this is accurate, it suddenly causes a problem for the database, in that you will have a number of records with the same string in the 'Parish' field – and so will be recognized by the database as meaning exactly the same thing – but which historically speaking have different meanings at different points in time.

In this instance there are various ways of dealing with this issue. You simply stay aware of the problem, and when running queries on parishes you take the 'County'

field into account as well as the 'Parish' field. This will enable you to specify which version of the parish of *St Bilbo Baggins* you are analyzing. Secondly, you could modify the Parish value to specify which version it is, so instead of entering *St Bilbo Baggins*, you could enter *St Bilbo Baggins*: *Hobbitonshire* or *St Bilbo Baggins : Breeshire* into the Parish field. This would simplify the complication of running queries in this situation, but it would technically break the database rule about 'atomic.

This problem is even more significant when it is not just the geographical boundaries that change, but when the actual entities themselves change. For example, 17th century London had over 100 parishes in the early part of the century, many of them absolutely tiny in terms of area and population. After the Great Fire, these were reorganized, with the result that many were merged or united; In some cases, the newly created entity retained the name of one of the pre-Fire parishes, while each parish still maintained its own existence for some administrative purposes (eg. St Martin Ironmonger Lane and St Olave Jewry). Here the problem is not one of changing hierarchy (which parish belongs to which county), but one of meaning (what area/population is the source referring to at this date when referring to 'St Martin Ironmonger'?). Various approaches to solving this are used, including that for the preceding example. The most important thing is to be clear in the data at all times precisely what is meant by the geographical terms you enter into the database.

Chronological/dating information

All of the possible problems created by shifting geographical terminology apply to the identification of dates in historical data. This is clearly a more serious

issue the further back in history your sources were generated, when calendars and dating systems were more varied and plentiful, and record-keepers had more of a choice in what dating system they could choose. The important thing to remember here, as with geography (and indeed everything else entered into the database), is that the database does not recognize meaning. The database does not interpret *when* the 'Tuesday after the Feast of the Blessed Assumption in the third year of Richard II' was. That date, as a value, cannot be stored, sorted, or queried as date DataType. Regnal years, mayoral years, feast days, the days of fairs and markets etc. need to be converted into a value that uses an actual modern date format. In addition, there is the issue of the shift from Julian to Gregorian calendars. Depending on the span of time and the geo-political source of the records this fact may need to be considered. This does not *necessarily* literally mean 'convert': it would be entirely reasonable if your research required it to have two fields to enter date information, one that contained the date *verbatim* from the source, and the second into which the modern rendering could be entered. Querying and sorting could then take place using the latter field

Do not forget the datatype of the field into which dating information will be entered, bearing in mind that 'Text' datatype fields will sort dates alphabetically whereas 'Date/Time' datatype fields will sort them chronologically.

Orthography/variant forms

This is the really big area in which historical sources provide information that is problematic for the database: how do you deal with information that appears with many different spellings or in entirely different forms

when in reality it means the same thing (or at least you wish to treat it as the same thing)? How will you deal with contractions and abbreviations, particularly when they are not consistent in the source? How will you accommodate information that is incomplete, or is difficult to read or understand where you are uncertain about its meaning? All of these issues are practically certain to crop up at some point in the data entry process, and all of them will need to be addressed to some extent to prevent problems and inaccuracies arising during the analysis of your data.

STANDARDIZATION, CLASSIFICATION, AND CODING

The principal way forward for accommodating data containing these kinds of problems is to apply (often quite liberally) a Standardization layer into the design of the database through the use of Standardization, classification and coding. These three activities are a step removed from simply gathering and entering information derived from the sources: this is where we *add* (or possibly change) information in order to make retrieving information and performing analysis easier. We use these techniques to overcome the problem of information that means the same thing appearing differently in the database, which prevents the database from connecting like with like (the fundamental pre-requisite for analyzing data). For historians this is a more important step than for other kinds of database users, because the variety of forms and ambiguity of meaning of our sources does not sit well with the exactitude required by the database (as with the example of trying to find

all of our records about John Smith, so that more of a Standardization layer needs to be implemented.

Standardization, classification and coding are three distinct techniques which overlap, and most databases will use a combination of the three when adding a Standardization layer into the design:

Standardization

This is the process of deciding upon one way of representing a piece of information that appears in the source in a number of different ways (e.g. one way of spelling place/personal names; one way of recording dates and so on) and then entering that standardized version into the table. Consider using Standardization when dealing with values that appear slightly different, but mean the same thing – 'Ag Lab' and 'Agricultural Labour' as values would be treated very differently by the database, so if you wanted them to be considered as the same thing, you would signal this to the database by giving each record with a variant of this occupation the same standardized value.

Classification

This is the process of grouping together information ('strings') according to some theoretical, empirical or entirely arbitrary scheme, often using a hierarchical system in order to improve analytical potential. Classification is about identifying groups, and then assigning your data to those groups. These groups can be hierarchical, and the hierarchy will let you perform your analysis at a variety of levels. Classification is less about capturing the information in your sources and is much more about serving your research needs.

Classification is usually independent of the source information. It is something meaningful to you and your

research purposes and is arbitrarily applied to meet your needs and methods. Consistent application will lead to more efficient use and more accurate results.

If you are investigating sources that previous historians have used, there may already exists the arbitrary classification system devised by others. You may want to use the same classification system for the advantage of not having to reinvent that component as well as for ease of comparison to the work of others. But do not feel that you cannot devise your own classifications. These can be in addition to the previous classification or can be modification or extensions to those previous schemes.

An example of a classification system can be observed in an ongoing project that investigates the material aspects of early modern households; this project uses a database to record minutely detailed information about material objects. One of the ways it treats the information about objects is to classify objects by type, in order to be able to compare like objects despite the often substantial differences in the ways they are referred to in the sources. This works by adding a field in the table where item type data is recorded into which an ItemClass code value can be added:

TblItem

ItemId	ItemGroupI	ItemClass	ItemAssoc	ItemNoOrig	ItemNo	ItemDescr	ItemNotes
1	1	0601004	group	a	1	a table bowrd	@@@
2	1	0503002	multiple & group	fower	4	fower formes	@@@
3	1	0502004	group	one	1	one old cheyre	@@@
4	1	0302001	group	an	1	an almerie	@@@
5	1	0313001	group	one	1	one shelf	@@@
6	1	0501002	multiple & group	too	2	too small stooles	@@@
9	2	0904001	single	too	2	@@@	@@@

Data about material objects that have been classified and coded

The ItemClass field here is populated with codes, and these codes record precisely what type of item the record is about (you can see what the source calls the item in the

ItemDescr field).[2] The fact that the code is a numeric value, and the fact that the same numeric code is applied to the same type of object regardless of how it is described in the source, means that the ItemClass field acts as a standardized value. This is a foreign key into a supporting look-up or classification table.

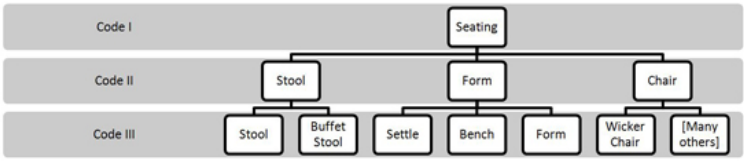
Additionally, however, the ItemClass field enables the use of a hierarchical classification system. The hierarchy operates by describing objects at three increasingly detailed levels:

Code I: the broadest level (for example, **Linen (household)**; **Storage**; **Tools**; **Clothing – Outer**; **Lighting** etc.)

Code II: the middle level, offering sub-groups of Code I (for example **Tools** > **Domestic implements**; **Clothing – Outer** > **Footwear**)

Code III: the most detailed level of description (for example **Clothing – Outer** > **Footwear** > **Boots**)

To illustrate this we can take the example of how the database classifies objects that are used for seating:



Classification system for objects in the category of 'Seating'

Each code level has a two or three digit numeric code, so Code I: Seating has the numeric code 05, that for Code II: Chair is 02, and that for Code III: Wicker Chair is 006. These individual codes become elided into a single numeric code (in the case of the wicker chair – 0502006) which is the value that gets entered into the relevant

single field (ItemClass) in the record for the wicker chair in the database.

This may sound complicated and slow to implement, but the benefit of doing so is considerable. The database can be designed so that these codes are automatically available as 'look-up' values. These can be selected at the time of data entry rather than having to be memorized. Secondly, once the data have been coded, they can be analyzed at three different semantic levels. You could analyze all instances of wicker chairs in the database by running queries on all records which had the ItemClass value "0502006". Or, if you were interested in analyzing the properties of all the chairs in the database, they could do so by running queries on all records with an ItemClass value that begins "0502***". Lastly, if the point of the research was to look at all objects used for seating, a query could be designed to retrieve all records with an ItemClass value that began "05*****". This is an immensely powerful analytical tool, which would be difficult to achieve without the use of a hierarchical classification system: to run a query to find all objects used for seating without a classification system would require looking for each qualifying object that the historian can anticipate or remember, by name and taking into account the variant spellings that might apply.[3]

Hierarchical classification systems are very flexible things as well. They can include as many levels as you require to analyze your data, and they do not need to employ numeric codes when simple standardized text would be easier to implement.

Coding

Coding is the process of substituting (not necessarily

literally) one value for another, for the purpose of recording a complex and variable piece of information through a short and consistent value. Coding is often closely associated with classification, and in addition to saving time in data entry (it is much quicker to type a short code word than it is to type five or six words) codes additionally act as Standardization (that is, the same form is entered for the same information no matter how the latter appears in the source). These are related one-to-many look-up tables. For example, think of typing TX or TN instead of Texas or Tex but the database can consistently display Texas in output by means of the related look-up table.

These techniques are implemented to make the data more readily useable by the database: the codes, classifications and standardized forms which are used are simple and often easier to incorporate in to a query design than the complicated and incomplete original text strings that appear in the source; but more importantly, they are *consistent*, making them much easier to find. However there are a number of things to bear in mind when using them, the most important of which is there are two ways of applying these techniques:

By **replacing** original values in the table with standardized/coded/classified forms

By **adding** standardized/coded/classified forms into the table alongside the original values

Each of these approaches are a compromise between maintaining integrity of the sources and improving efficiency of analysis. The first approach to standardizing, to replace the original version of source information in any chosen field(s) with standardized forms of data, enables the speeding up of data entry at the expense of

losing what the source says. It also serves as a type of quality control, as entering standardized data (especially if controlled with a 'look-up list') is less prone to data entry errors than the original forms that appear in the source.

The second approach, to enter standardized values in addition to the original forms, allows for the best of both worlds: you achieve the accuracy and efficiency benefits of Standardization without losing the information as it is presented in the source. Of course, this happens at the cost of extra data inputting time, as you enter material twice.

When considering both approaches, bear in mind that you will only need to standardize some of the fields in your tables, not every field in every table. The candidates for standardizing, classifying and coding are those fields that are likely to be heavily used in your record-linkage or querying, where being able to identify like with like values is important. Creators of databases built around the Source-oriented principle should exercise particular caution when employing these techniques.

FUNDAMENTALS OF DATABASE DESIGN

The first step in the formal process of database design is to identify the principal purpose(s) the database will serve. There are three functions that are likely to be of interest to a historian:

- Data management
- Record linkage
- Aggregate analysis and recognition of patterns.

While these functions are not mutually exclusive, each is effected by design considerations. Often you will not fully know what you want to do with the database at the beginning of the design process, which is ideally the best time to be making these important decisions. Flexibility is therefore another important concept to remember.

Each of these functions is a goal that can be achieved through shaping of the database in the design process, and each will require some elements of the database design to be conducted in specific ways, although they are by no means mutually exclusive. And this latter point is an important one, given that most historians will want to have access to the full range of functionality offered by the database, and will likely engage in research that will require all three of the listed types of activity. Or, to put it another way, you are unlikely to know precisely what it is you to do with your database at the very beginning of

the design process, which is when these decisions should be taken. This is why many historians design databases which maximize flexibility in what they can use them for later on in the project (a goal comes at the price of design simplicity).

Sometimes historians use the database as a bibliographic resource as well. It can be useful to connect notes from secondary sources to primary sources and trace these connections in either direction.

The power of a relational database, which is the power of record-linkage, is closely associated with and even dependent upon the database design. Efficiency and accuracy are dictated by the structure of the database and the data model. The more that you expect to perform counting, averaging, summing or other forms of aggregation of your data, the more thought and effort you should put into the design of your data model and the application of a standardization layer to your data.

CONCEPTUAL MODELS OF DATABASE DESIGN

The two conceptual models of database design are known as:

1. The **Source-oriented approach** (sometimes called the Object-oriented approach)
2. The **Method-oriented approach**.

These two approaches are diametric opposites. Every database design is a compromise between these two. There is no perfect, absolute method-oriented database, nor is there a perfect, absolute source-oriented database.

The Source-oriented model of database design requires that everything about the design of the database is geared

towards recording every last piece of information from the sources, omitting nothing, and in effect becoming a digital proxy for the original. The information contained within the sources, and the shape of that information, completely dictates how the database must be structured.

The lifecycle of an ideal source-oriented database can be represented thus:

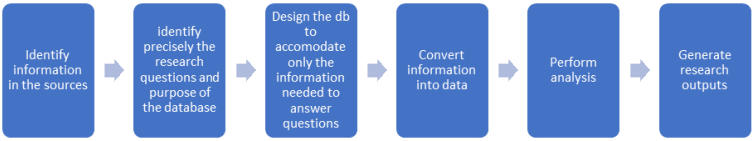
Lifecycle of the Source-oriented database

Historians gravitate toward this method because it places the sources at the center of the database project. Data entry into a database is a very time-consuming activity, however; this is exacerbated when you are painstakingly recording *all* of the information that exists in your sources. In practical terms, you must make choices about which information to exclude from the database, contrary to the principles of the Source-oriented model. This violates the database's role as a digital surrogate for your sources but at least allows you to perform your research within a reasonable period.

A rigorously applied Source-oriented approach can result in an unwieldy design when you try to accommodate every piece of information from your source – some of which may only occur once. True, it does permit greater latitude in later analytical approaches, so that queries are not limited to the initial research agenda. It allows you the luxury of not having to anticipate all of your research questions in advance, which the Method-oriented model does require. The

Source-oriented model conveys the source (with all its oddities and irregularities) in a reasonably reliable way into the database with minimal loss of information – 'everything' is recorded (*i.e.,* what *is* excluded is done so by your conscious choice), and if later something becomes interesting, you do not have to return to the source to enter information that you did not initially deem interesting. The Source-oriented model also enables you to record information from the source 'as is', and lets you take decisions about *meaning* later – so 'merc.' can be recorded as 'merc.', and not expanded to 'merchant' or 'mercer' at the point of entry into the database.[1]

By contrast, the lifecycle of the Method-oriented model database could be represented in a different way:



Lifecycle of the Method-oriented database

Here the focus is on function and output, rather than the nature of the information itself. Therefore, in choosing his model for your database, it is absolutely imperative that you know from the start exactly what you will want to do with the database – including what queries you will want to run. Do not underestimate the precision needed here; the database requires a high degree of granularity to perform analysis.

Method-oriented databases are quicker to design, build, and enter data into; however, it is difficult and time-consuming to deviate away from the designed function of the database, in order to explore newly discovered lines of investigation.

Ultimately, you will need to steer a middle course between the two models, probably with a tendency to lean towards the Source-oriented approach. When making decisions about what information you need from your sources to go into the database, remember that your needs may change over the course of a project which might take a number of years. If you want to be able to maintain maximum flexibility in your research agenda, then plan to accommodate more information in the database design than if you are very clear on what it is you need to do and are confident that it will never change. If you do not know whether your research needs will change, err on the side of accommodating more information – do not exclude information about servants or slaves unless you are absolutely sure that you will never want to treat 'households with servants' and 'households with slaves' as units of analysis; if you have not entered that information, then it will not be there to query later on.

However, if you are very clear about your goals and thoroughly familiar with the sources and do not expect a long-term use of this information, a Method-oriented model can be useful, efficient, and far faster to use. If you are answering a few well-defined, specific questions, the Method-oriented model makes more sense.

DATABASE LAYERS

Databases often involve several stages of work before they can be fully utilized for analysis. This is because well designed databases arrange data into several layers. The 'Three Layer' model of database design serves to illustrate how the organization of different types of data within

a database can dramatically improve the analytical potential of that database. The Standardization Layer in particular is one that historians should invest time and effort into developing.

You should always be able to identify whether a piece of data is from the source or whether it has been standardized in some way by you. In terms of database structure, every field will always belong to one layer only, although tables can contain fields from any combination of layers.

- **The Source layer**
    - This layer includes the tables and fields that contain information taken from the source and the forms of the data which have been entered verbatim from the original. No adaptation of the original information has taken place in this layer. This allows you to retrieve information that shows what the source actually said.
- **The Standardization layer**
    - This layer includes the tables and fields which contain data that you have adapted to make analysis easier, and includes data where spelling has been standardized, where abbreviations have been expanded, where a single dating system is used and so on. This layer may be created at the database design stage or later, after data entry is complete. If entering standardized data at data entry time, then you must be rigorously consistent in the way that you

enter your standardized forms (e.g. always spelling 'Thomas' in the same way), and you should document how you have standardized. If standardization is performed after data entry as post-processing, you can create your standardized values globally across the entire body of data; this can be time consuming when dealing with lots of information that needs to be standardized. If possible, the former approach is almost always the better option to take.

- **The Interpretation or Enrichment layer**
    - This layer is optional, while the other two are not. In this layer is data and material from elsewhere, not the primary sources. This can include classification, interpretation, or calculated variables. It can be the means of linking together several components or chunks of information to create a larger encyclopedic record. Many research databases do not include an Interpretation layer.

Usually these layers do not exit separately as discrete collections of data. In most cases data belonging to the layers will co-exist within tables, but within separate fields within the tables: for example you might create two fields for 'occupation' in the same table that records information about people, in one field belonging to the Source layer you can record how the occupation is presented in the source, in the second field belonging to

the Standardization layer you can record a standardized version of the occupation. The standardized version will be used for querying and analysis, because it will be easier to find.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=275#h5p-10

DATABASE DEFINITIONS: TABLES, FIELDS, RECORDS, VALUES, RULES, AND DATATYPES

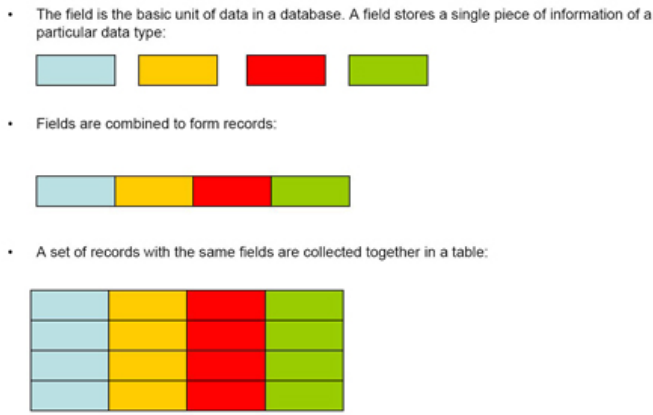
Harvey and Press provide a definition of a database:

"A database is a collection of inter-related data organized in a pre-determined manner according to a set of logical rules, and is structured to reflect the natural relationships of the data and the uses to which they will be put, rather than reflecting the demands of the hardware and software."

This is a useful way of describing both the content and environment of a database. Within the database itself, however, are a number of different 'things', called Objects, which serve a variety of functions (these include tables where the actual data is stored, queries, user interfaces and so on). For the moment we will concentrate on only the first of these objects, the tables, and we will look at some of the terms connected with them.

There are four main elements to any table in a database, and each of these have a number of names:

- **Table** (also known as Entities)
- **Field name** (also known as the Attribute name or Column name)
- **Field** (also variously known as Column, Variable, Attribute) This is the value in the field.
- **Record** (also known as Row) The collection of all the fields makes a record.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://uta.pressbooks.pub/historicalresearch/?p=275#h5p-11

In each database, data are stored in tables, and most

databases will have more than one table. These tables will have relationships between them which connect the information they contain and will thus be 'relational'. Tables are made up of fields (columns) and records (rows). Each field contains one type of information, and for each record the information in that field will be of the same kind.

PRIMARY AND FOREIGN KEYS

Primary and Foreign Keys serve as the anchors for the connections among related tables. The keys serve a particular purpose within a table: usually they are not used to capture information drawn for the sources, but instead they are used to keep track of the information needed for the database to know which records in one table are connected to records in a related table.

A rule of database design states that 'each complete record must be unique'. With historical sources, this can sometimes be a problem. Often the same information legitimately appears multiple times in the sources, for example, when an individual is named as a witness to a number of wills across a decade or the same person is arrested more than once. To ensure that the records adhere to the requirement for uniqueness, it is necessary to guarantee that each record will be distinct; if the nature of our historical information prevents us from being able to guarantee this, we are forced to cheat. Surprisingly, in doing so, we actually achieve a number of useful effects in the design of our tables.

The easiest way to guarantee that each record is unique is to add a field into which we enter (or let the database enter automatically) a unique identifier, a value which

will be different for every record added to the table. Typically, this is a sequential number, such as the values in the various ID fields in the People and Cars database. A sequential number value applied to each record will ensure by itself that every record as a whole will be unique – because the ID value is never be duplicated from one record to the next.

This unique field serves as the Primary Key field for a table, this being the field that acts as the connector for the 'one' side of a one-to-many relationship. The field that connects the other side of the relationship that exists in the table on the 'many' side of the relationship is known as the Foreign Key. A Foreign Key field does not contain a unique value for every record: because it is on the *many* side of the relationships, the same ID value is likely to occur in more than one record.

Consider the People and Cars database:

Person table:

PersonID	FirstName	LastName	DoB	DoD	Race	Location	Gender
1	Anthony	Soprano	1/22/1958	11/15/2003	White	New Jersey	Male
2	John	Snow	2/15/1998		White	Winterfell	Male
3	Scarlett	O'Hara	5/16/1842	3/10/1931	White	Tara	Female
4	Sherlock	Holmes	6/29/1859	4/4/1940	White	London	Male
5	George	Jefferson	1/1/1956	12/20/2004	Black	New York	Male
6	Louise	Jefferson	3/3/1960	10/8/2010	Black	New York	Female
7	Laverne	Cox	7/5/1981		Black	New Jersey	
8	Lucille	Ricardo	9/19/1930	1/5/2004	White	New York	Female
9	Ricky	Ricardo	10/1/1926	1/20/1989	Hispanic	Cuba	Male
10	Fred	Mertz	11/1/1905	1/2/1975	White	NYC	Male
11	Ethel	Mertz	11/5/1912	6/30/1990	White	New York City	Female

Car table:

PersonID	CarID	CarType	CarMake	CarModel	CarColor
1	1	Sedan	Honda	Accord	Black
2	2	Coupe	Honda	Civic	Red
3	3	SUV	Nissan	Rogue	White
4	4	SUV	Cadillac	Esplanade	Silver
5	4	SUV	Cadillac	Esplanade	Silver
6	5	SUV	Ford	Escape	Blue
7	6	Convertible	Volkswagen	Golf	Gold
7	8	Sedan	Ford	Taurus	Green
8	7	Sedan	Pontiac	Bonneville	Aqua
9	7	Sedan	Pontiac	Bonneville	Aqua

The relationship is one-to-many, a person can have many cars, and the relationship is connected by the PersonID field which is present in both tables. The PersonID field is the Primary Key of the Person table, being unique in that table. It is a Foreign Key in the Car table, appearing multiple times. The same PersonID will appear every time a record contains a car owned by that person (as is the case for person 7).

When designing the database, you need to think about what fields will appear in your tables, and you should remember to identify the Primary and Foreign Keys for your tables. Every table should have a Primary Key field – a field with the datatype 'autonumber' which will generate a unique value for every new record you add. Not every table will have a Foreign Key field, only those that are on the 'many' side of a one-to-many relationship. Remember that the Foreign Key field will contain the same information (that is, the ID numbers) drawn from the field that is the Primary Key for that relationship.

Without these Key fields, the database is unable to correctly manage the relationship, which makes retrieval and analysis of information virtually impossible.

Historical Analysis

	Emerging (Poor)	Developing (adequate)	Mastered (excellent)
Thesis Development	Does not have clear thesis, and/or thesis has an internal conflict (e.g. attempts to support two concepts that contradict one another.)	Has thesis that is clear, but not fully based on independent reading of sources. Thesis stated is not the argument actually developed in paper.	Clearly presents and justifies own argument, one that depends upon sources. Good arguments also acknowledge a different way of interpreting evidence and provide counter argument (if in order only to refute it), or they qualify/integrate others' views into their argument. Position (or argument) demonstrates sophisticated, integrative thought and is developed clearly throughout.
Primary Source Analysis	Has no primary sources to speak of.	Uses sources in non-integrative way. Seems to be pasting in quotes to support point.	Has read and thought about meaning of primary sources; evidence in argument that primary sources shaped argument

Historical Context (secondary source use)	Unaware of other scholarship on topic and/or attempts to explain past actors' actions or motivations grounded in present-day assumptions. Offers incorrect facts, or those from a different historical period, indicating a misunderstanding of what historical events, etc. shaped the events under question. Offers little awareness that past actors worked within a social, economic, or political context different from the present, or those before or after their own time.	Has read scholarship but misunderstood or misrepresented what it says. Understands that a different context prevailed, but sometimes errs in what pertinent historical conditions affected event. May get "facts" correct, but explanation has a flatness that indicates a lack of understanding of the contingencies involved in how the historical context influenced the outcome.	Understands how at least one or two other historians have discussed event/person and argument fits within the context as explained by that scholarship. Analyzes issue with a clear sense of what differences in historical context shaped explanation of past event, and how. Understands how one prevailing historical condition might have shaped other conditions or responses in different ways. That is, acknowledges complexity of historical contexts. Identifies influence of specific historical conditions/attitudes, perhaps posing a counter-factual argument that illustrates how influential those conditions or attitudes were.

Use of Evidence

	Emerging (poor)	Developing (adequate)	Mastered (excellent)
Primary Sources Support Argument	Lacks primary sources, or uses evidence that actually supports a competing explanation. No evidence that student has searched through or evaluated evidence, or that student considered more than one explanation.	Attempts use of evidence but sources don't sufficiently prove claim. Some evidence is over-used/repeated. Problems in evidence not addressed/nuanced adequately.	Uses sources (or the "facts" from the past as provided by primary sources) to support the argument. Evidence that author has sifted through sources to identify the best evidence to support argument. Considers problems with evidence and its completeness and/or relevance for particular explanations; crafts own explanation (nuances problems of support) accordingly.
Explanation of Evidence	Evidence counter to thesis offered without explanation. Source quotes repeatedly left as though their meaning is self-evident.	Evidence dumped all at once and/or part of the argument lacks evidence. Source quotes sometimes not explained.	Evidence revealed and explained at reasonable pace throughout paper. Quotes from sources fully explained.

Evidence Trail Provided	No foot/end notes used or used so inconsistently as to not provide a path to follow author's evidence. (Intentional stealing of another's words and ideas—plagiarism—will be reported to Office of Student Affairs.)	Most claims that should be cited are cited. CMS attempted and clear that author attempted to offer a path to follow evidence, but consistent errors in form.	Sources used are cited every time author makes claim found in primary or secondary source that isn't commonly known. Chicago Manual of style followed correctly. Reader can follow the path of evidence author used to support argument.

Writing

	Emerging (poor)	Developing (adequate)	Mastered (excellent)
Essay Structure	Essay difficult to follow; suffers from significant disorganization with little connection between ideas. Intro does not set up paper; no true conclusion offered.	Intro works to set reader up but relies on cliché statements ("history has always..") Basic organization is apparent; transitions may be mechanical. Conclusion sets up new topic.	Introduction engages reader in problem/research question. Offers signposting (reader can infer basic direction of analysis to come). Thesis clearly stated. Body of paper develops argument logically. Conclusion summarizes argument and evidence in manner that reminds reader of original problem and that it has been addressed.
Paragraph Structure	Most paragraphs don't have a topic sentence or start as assumption that reader sees the connection between two paragraphs. Many paragraphs seem to be random collection of points.	Choppy transitions from one paragraph to another. Paragraphs often lack topic sentences. Some paragraphs are 1 or 2 sentences and don't develop the topic OR some paragraphs cover several topics in one very long paragraph.	Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence (which doesn't have to be the first sentence but usually is). Topic sentences allow for transitions between elements of the argument (often by restating in different words what the paragraph above proved). Sentences in the paragraph speak to the topic sentence and develop/prove that claim.

Writing Style	In many places, language obscures meaning. Slang/ colloquialisms used extensively.	Language does not interfere with communication but is repetitive in vocabulary or sentence structure.	Uses clear, precise language; engages reader through examples, illustrations and anecdotes; avoids opaque jargon; varies vocabulary, sentence length, and sentence structure; writes with conviction, even passion.
Grammar	Grammar, syntax or other errors are distracting or repeated. Little evidence of proofreading.	Errors are not distracting or frequent, although there may be some problems with informal language or verb forms.	Avoids errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence fragments or run-ons; follows formal style (without contractions); uses proper verb tense (past tense for past actions); favors active voice over passive voice verb constructions.
Proper Quotations	No quotations offered or ones that are unrelated to the point author is arguing. Errors in use of quotes extensive.	Some errors made by failing to mark changes to original quotation and/ or "beginning and end" of quotations not properly marked. Quotes from sources serve the purpose but don't enrich the prose.	No errors in adaption of source wording to fit text in grammatically correct form. Quotations from primary sources offer subjects' voice and enliven the prose. Quotations used at critical moments but not over-used.

IMAGE CREDITS

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