

Checklist for Writing a History Essay

1. The historical essay has an argument.
2. The good historical essay has a sharply focused and limited topic.
3. Good papers in history come from primary sources.
4. Write your history paper in the same spirit that you would tell a good story.
5. Get to the point quickly.
6. Write a good title for your paper.
7. Build your essay step by step on evidence.
8. Document your sources.
9. Historical essays are written dispassionately.
10. A historical essay should include original thoughts of the author; it should not be a rehash of the thoughts of others.
11. Always consider your audience.
12. An honest essay takes contrary evidence into account.
13. Essays use standard English and observe the common conventions of writing.
14. Let your first and last paragraphs mirror each other.

Information is from *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 2nd ed. by Richard Marius.