

- I. The most important sentence in your introduction is your thesis. (Typically, it is the last sentence of your introduction and should only be a sentence).
- II. Your thesis should be specific enough that it has stated your argument AND given examples (usually 3) of points you will argue in your body paragraphs.

➤ A Few Basics:

1. Write the examples in your thesis in the order in which you discuss the points.
2. Sample: “Sumer’s superiority among Mesopotamian civilizations, may be argued due to its Ziggurats, large market areas, and fine homes.”

III. When beginning your body paragraphs, always start with a topic sentence.

➤ What Is a Topic Sentence?

➤ The topic sentence contains the central idea around which a paragraph is developed. A good one has the following four characteristics:

1. It hooks the reader.
2. It uses thought-provoking words.
3. It is usually the first sentence.
4. It provides a transition from the previous paragraph.

Not all topic sentences will contain every single characteristic, but you should keep this in mind.

IV. Next come the supporting details of your body paragraphs.

- What are Supporting Details?
- Supporting details are just that – they provide **EVIDENCE (FACTS – NOT OPINIONS)** to support the TOPIC.
- If the topic sentence is the “foundation,” of the paragraph, the supporting details are its “building blocks.”

V. The next component of your body paragraphs is just as important as the evidence you provide; analysis.

➤ What is analysis in a history essay?

1. Explain to the reader in your own words what the evidence you provided means.
2. How does it support/prove your point?
3. Tell the reader why a particular piece of information is important.
4. Explain the connection between the example and your thesis/argument.

VI. A Counterclaim may not be something you are used to including in your essays, but it is a crucial part of good historical writing.

➤ What is a counterclaim

1. A counterclaim is providing an opposing point of view to your argument.
2. It shows that you did thorough research and considered perspectives other than your own.
3. A counterclaim usually comes before the conclusion, but after you have stated all your major points.
4. After stating the counter claim, it is important to then refute it, so that the reader is ultimately swayed back to your side.

VII. Conclusion

- The conclusion should not simply restate your thesis, but should also try to attach a larger significance to your main claim.

The “Dos” of history writing

1. Use consistent tenses (usually you’ll stay in the past tense)
2. Focus on 1-2 ideas per paragraph
3. Discuss all of your points equally

The “Don’ts” of history writing

1. Don’t use first person pronouns (“I”, “we”, “us”, “my”)
2. Do not use contractions
3. Don’t use slang
4. Don’t introduce any specific evidence in the introduction or conclusion