

Writing Statement
 Department of History
 Wheaton College
 Spring 2009

Students learn to write several different kinds of assignments in History courses, and generally these assignments share an emphasis on several features: clear thesis, coherent argument, ability to recall and muster relevant facts in support of an argument. In the History major at Wheaton College, students build their writing and analytical skills in order to be able to write a successful seminar paper grounded in original research during their senior year.

Course level	Types of assignments	Writing skills
Introductory: 100s, 200s	Identification exam items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine relevance of facts/context to question • Write brief, most pertinent factual paragraph followed by brief paragraph explaining most significant point of larger historical context
	Essay exam questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a clear and effective thesis • Muster facts to support thesis in convincing argument
	History Engine episodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an engaging narrative based on a primary source and two secondary sources • Include a paragraph that places the narrative from the primary source in historical context
	Precis of primary or secondary source, might include film or still image as well as written text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize source • Identify author's thesis, sources
	Historiographical essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a clear and effective thesis about historians' interpretations of a

	Historiographical essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a clear and effective thesis about historians' interpretations of a topic • Muster evidence from monographs and journal articles in support of thesis • Texts might also include documentary films
Advanced: 300s	Annotated bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select appropriate historical topic • Find appropriate scholarly sources • Annotate according to standards of historical scholarship
	Historiographical essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a clear and effective thesis about historians' interpretations of a topic • Muster evidence from monographs and journal articles in support of thesis • Texts might also include documentary films
	Research proposal	Compose proposal for seminar research based on annotated bibliography and historiographical essay on topic of student's choice

Faculty members in the Wheaton College Department of History often assign writing guides for students in their courses.

Selected writing guides for historians:

Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 10th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007).

Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 6th ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007).

Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004),
<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 5th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007).

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford, 2004).