

HIS105
Arizona History

General Instructions for Writing Essays

If you have never written an essay for a history class, you have no reason to panic. Think of it as an opportunity to express what you know and what you are learning about the topic. The following steps will help you in writing.

1. Read each question and assignment part carefully. Decide what the question or assignment part is asking you to do.
2. Outline what information will go into your answer, including quotations or examples you might want to use from any text or artifact you are analyzing. Place quotation marks around any directly borrowed terminology and then refer to step 7. Do **not** rely on outside sources in this course! Your instructor is primarily interested in reading your observations, opinions, and personal applications of the concepts covered in the texts and online lessons.
3. Organize your information so your answer will read clearly.
4. Write your answer. Check to make sure you have thoroughly answered all parts of the assignment with well-described illustrations. The use of specific examples to support major points or observations is mandatory.
5. Check to make sure diction choice, grammar usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling are correct. Points are deducted when it becomes difficult to read the paper or when the reader's flow is impeded due to grammatical errors, syntactical errors, and the like. (A good idea is to let someone else read your paper before you submit it so that you can see if what you have written makes sense to her/him. It may also help to read your work out loud.)
6. Type your essay in a non-bolded, readable font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial) in a 12-point size. The requirement is a double-spaced format. Microsoft Word or rtf (rich text format) is recommended.
7. Be certain to include proper citation (source and page numbers, Net URLs/addresses) for any supporting material you paraphrase, summarize, or quote from a text or the Internet. The citation should directly follow any material you use, and you should place the citation in parentheses if you do not refer to it in the body of your paper. For the purposes of this course, the following example is acceptable, proper citation when referring to the Thomas Sheridan course text: (Text 163-64). Cite the exact page number(s).

Use this list as a guide when writing your essays in order to guard against making errors. Each of your papers will be graded according to the criteria set forth here.

Most importantly, your work will be graded on the quality of the information presented and how well you demonstrate an understanding of the topic about which you are writing. May you enjoy writing about the things you are learning!