

RESOURCES ON HISTORY WRITING

On the Practical Side

These books are good resources on the nitty-gritty of writing in history. Marius and Storey are specifically targeted at undergraduates and focus on the basics, while Fischer addresses the question of how to think like a historian. Although he's a bit more technical, *Historians' Fallacies* is one of the best introductions out there to really get at the question of what makes a valid historical argument, and it's full of amusing examples.

Fischer, David Hackett, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (Harper Perennial, 1970)

Marius, Richard A., *A Short Guide to Writing about History* (Longman, 2006)

"Writers' Checklists" at the end of each chapter help translate theory into practice, and extended excerpts from published works of history help make his points concrete.

Storey, William Kelleher, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (Oxford UP, 2003)

On the Theoretical Side

These books are not as directly applicable to the practicalities of the writing process, but if you want to think more deeply about what it means to write history, these are some good places to start. Bloch and Carr are classics. Evans and Gaddis are thought-provoking contributions to debates about what effect postmodernism has had on history. Green and Troup provide introductions to and examples of different schools of historical scholarship.

Bloch, Marc, *The Historian's Craft* (Knopf, 1953)

Carr, E. H., *What is History?* 40th anniversary edition. (Palgrave, 2001)

Full of good common sense on such topics as causality and objectivity, but ask yourself how areas of history developed since Carr wrote, like social history, cultural history, or gender history, fit in to his analysis.

Evans, Richard J., *In Defense of History* (W. W. Norton, 2000)

Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford UP, 2002)

Green, Ann and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in 20th-Century History and Theory* (NYU Press, 1999)

Mechanics

These books cover mechanics that aren't specific to writing history, but are nonetheless indispensable. Most historians use Chicago Style Guidelines for citations.

Chicago Manual of Style 15th ed. (Chicago UP, 2002) [Also available online, through hollis.]

Harvey, Gordon, *Writing With Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students* (1995)

Turabian, Kate L., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Chicago UP, 2007)

Online Resources

There are many, many available online guides and introductions to history writing. Although many are helpful, they are not all equally clear and the majority don't progress past the basics of academic essay writing to what is specific to constructing historical arguments. Here are the best.

Rael, Patrick, "Reading, Writing, and Research for History: A Guide for Students" (Bowdoin College, 2004)
Bowdoin.edu/writing-guides

By far the best and most thorough out there. The most useful sections, and those most specific to history-writing, are "History and Rhetoric" and "From Observation of Hypothesis."

Herzberg, David, "Writing your First History Paper" (Wesleyan University, 1993)
Wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/departments/history.html

This step-by-step explication of the writing process is excellent at picking apart specific examples of research questions, theses and introductory paragraphs that work or don't work.

At Harvard

Don't forget about the many resources available to you at Harvard, at the Writing Center and through the History Department. The *Handbook for Senior Thesis Writers in History* has much in it that is also applicable to longer research papers for seminars.

Writing Center Website:
fas.harvard.edu/~wrctr

History Department Undergraduate Program:
www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~history/UGindex.cgi

Finally, if you have a question at any stage you can always make an appointment for a one-on-one consultation with the Departmental Writing Fellow in History, Kristin Poling, by emailing her at kpoling@fas.harvard.edu or visiting her website, on the History Department's Undergraduate Page.