

Thirteen rules for writing a good paper in History 254....
Prof. Isserman

1. Does the paper begin with a strong lead paragraph that hooks the reader? For guidance, see “Get off to a good start,” p. 2 in *Writing a Good History Paper* (hereafter WAGHP).
2. Does the paper offer a clear thesis statement early on? See “State a clear thesis,” p. 2 in WAGHP.
3. Do all paragraphs have a clear topic sentence? See “Paragraph goes nowhere/has no point or unity,” p. 12 in WAGHP.
4. Do the sentences in each paragraph follow in logical order?
5. Is each paragraph restricted to a single idea or major point?
6. Have you avoided clutter? See “Be precise,” p. 4, “Wordy/verbose/repetitive,” p. 11, “Explain/what’s your point?/unclear, huh?,” p. 12 and “Jargon/pretentious theory,” p. 15 in WAGHP.
7. Have you avoided misuse of the passive voice? See “Abuse of the verb to be,” p. 12 and “Misuse of the passive voice,” p. 11 in WAGHP.
8. Have you kept tenses consistent? See “Tense inconsistency,” p. 13 in WAGHP.
9. Have you avoided the use of free-floating quotes? See “Free-floating quotation,” p. 14 in WAGHP.
10. Have you avoided indefinite antecedents for pronouns? See “Unclear antecedent,” p. 17 in WAGHP.
11. Have you been specific, making good use of concrete examples, avoiding vague generalizations?
12. Have you avoided common punctuation errors, like comma splices and mistaken use (or non-use) of apostrophes?
13. Have you employed the correct format for footnote citations? (Historians prefer the Chicago Manual of Style footnote and bibliographic format. Be sure you understand the distinction between the two: for a quick guide to these formats, go to <http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html#docnote>.)