

Literacy Design Collaborative Argumentation Module

Information Sheet

Module Title: Ideologies of the 19th Century

Module Description (overview):

As students engage in this module, they apply what they learned in a unit on “Ideologies of the 19th Century.” The module reinforces students’ abilities to develop a historical essay through the research and writing processes.

Template Task (include number, type, level)	Teaching Task
<p>Task 2 Template (Argumentation/Analysis LI): [Insert question] After reading _____ (literature or informational texts), write a/an _____ (essay or substitute) that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the text(s).</p>	<p>Of the political ideologies we’ve studied in this unit which do you think was the most influential ideology in Europe during the years of 1814-1871? After reading in your textbook and primary source reader, write a 3 page thesis-driven essay that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the texts.</p>

Grade(s)/Level: 9th grade

Discipline: History

Course: 9th grade History

Author(s): Laura Jordan, private school, Washington DC

Contact information: LDC Team

Section 1: What Task?

What task sets clear, measurable goals for learning?

A. Template task (include number, type, level): Insert the LDC template task you selected exactly as it is worded.

Task 2 Template (Argumentation/Analysis LI): [Insert question] After reading _____ (literature or informational texts), write a/an _____ (essay or substitute) that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the text(s).

B. Standards: The Literacy Design Collaborative has already identified the CCSS “built in” to all Argumentation Tasks. Please select which (if any) “When Appropriate” Common Core State Standards are included in the Argumentation task/module you developed

Common Core State Standards

GRADES 9-10 READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES FOR ARGUMENTATION	
“Built-in” Reading Standards	“When Appropriate” Reading Standards
1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.	3. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.	5. Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.	6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
10. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	7. Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
	8. Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.
	9. Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

GRADES 9-10 WRITING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES FOR ARGUMENTATION	
“Built-in” Writing Standards	“When Appropriate” Writing Standards
1. Write arguments focused on <i>discipline-specific content</i> .	2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	3. NA (Narrative writing- not applicable as a separate requirement)
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.	6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

State or District Content Standards: Insert appropriate content standards as defined by your state/district. You can also include appropriate grade-level CCSS.

Number	Content Standard(s)
	N/A

Content Standards Source:

C. Teaching Task: Design your teaching task. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate items.

Background to share with your students:

You will apply what you learned in this essay during our unit on 19th century ideologies (conservatism, socialism, nationalism, liberalism) that influenced the political landscape during the 19th century. Your research will revisit the texts we studied earlier to gather evidence for your thesis and composition.

Prompt:

Of the political ideologies we've studied in this unit which do you think was the most influential ideology in Europe during the years of 1814-1871? After reading in your textbook and primary source reader, write a 3 page thesis-driven essay that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the texts.

Reading texts:

Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization (Alternate Volume: Since 1300)*, 7th edition

Marvin Perry et al, ed., *Sources of the Western Tradition: Volume II: From the Renaissance to the Present*, 7th edition

Extension (optional):

Teaching Task Rubric (Argumentation)

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced	
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.		Addresses prompt appropriately and establishes a position, but focus is uneven.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Provides a generally convincing position.		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately with a consistently strong focus and convincing position.	
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose. (L2) Makes no mention of counter claims.		Establishes a claim. (L2) Makes note of counter claims.		Establishes a credible claim. (L2) Develops claim and counter claims fairly.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal. (L2) Develops claims and counter claims fairly and thoroughly.	
Reading/ Research	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim.		Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim.	
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt. (L3) Makes no connections or a connection that is irrelevant to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations. (L3) Makes a connection with a weak or unclear relationship to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. (L3) Makes a relevant connection to clarify argument or claim.		Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. (L3) Makes a clarifying connection(s) that illuminates argument and adds depth to reasoning.	
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.	
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.	
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in argument, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.	

Section 2: What Skills?

What skills do students need to succeed on the teaching task?

Each module is required to identify the specific student skills, define them, and cluster them. The example below is one list. Module builders can use this version, change it, or identify different skills, different definitions, and different clusters using the chart.

SKILLS LIST FOR CRITICAL ESSAY	
Pre-Module	Students learn two formal essay structures in the fall in which students utilize historical information from selected sources. A resource is “Elements of Good Historical Writing.” Reading of texts were done two weeks before assigning the module. During the module students re-read previous texts during research phase.
SKILLS CLUSTER 1: CLASSROOM PRE-INSTRUCTION	
1. Bridging Conversation	Ability to understand the task and the content and skills necessary to complete the task.
2. Project planning	Ability to plan the task so that it is accomplished on time.
SKILLS CLUSTER 2: READING & PLANNING PROCESS	
1. Controlling idea (argumentation)	Ability to establish a claim based on task. (R, W)
2. Active Reading & Annotation/ Note-taking	Ability to use active reading skills to conduct research; to read purposefully and select relevant information; to summarize and paraphrase. (R,W)
3. Essential vocabulary	Ability to apply strategies for developing an understanding of a text by locating words and phrases that identify key concepts and facts, or information. (R)
4. Outlining	Ability to rethink or refine claim and logic; ability to decide what to include and what not to include in preparation for writing. (R, W)
SKILLS CLUSTER 3: DRAFTING PROCESS	
1. Initial Draft	Ability to write an initial draft complete with an opening, development, and closing; ability to insert and cite textual evidence. (W)
2. Revision of Multiple Drafts	Ability to apply revision strategies to refine development of claim, structure, including line of thought, language usage, and tone as appropriate to audience and purpose; to ensure relevant citation. (W, R)
3. Editing & Proofreading	Ability to proofread and apply editing strategies and/or presentation applications. (W,R)

Section 3: Instruction for Argumentation Composition

How will teachers teach students to succeed on the teaching task?

All LDC instructional ladders have mini-tasks (prompt, product and mini-task scoring), instructional strategies and pacing. The following is an example instructional ladder. Module developers can adopt, adapt or delete the approaches for each section in order to build their own mini-tasks, instructional strategies and pacing to teach to skills identified in Section 2.

LDC Skills		Mini Tasks			
What skills do students need to succeed on the teaching task?		What incremental tasks will teachers give students so they can learn each skill?			
	Pre-Module	Initial reading of text taught before assigning this module.			
Pacing	Ladder Skill Steps	Prompt	Scoring Guide	Instructional Strategies	Product
Skills Cluster 1: Classroom Pre-Instruction					
Period 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bridging Conversation Project planning 	Create a plan for accomplishing this task. Include a schedule with annotations specifying activities. What is your goal?	No scoring	Deconstruct prompt for cues Deconstruct rubric Read HO Strategies & Structures	Annotated plan & response to question
Skills Cluster 2: Reading & Planning Process					
Period 1- 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Controlling Idea (Argumentation) 	Write a draft claim in one-three sentences. (This claim can be modified as you develop your ideas.)	Writes a credible claim based on task and unit.	Review claims. Conferencing (optional)	Short response w claim
Period 2-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Active Reading & Annotation/Note-taking 	Select two primary sources as well as references in your textbook. Note passages that support your claim.	Identifies credible sources.	Annotation methods Note-taking strategies	Notes
On-going	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Essential Vocabulary 	Create ID cards for terms.	Maintains ID cards.	Discussion and analysis of key features of terms	*ID cards
Period 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Outlining 	Create an outline in which you state your claim, sequence your points/reasons and note your supporting evidence.	Creates an outline/organizer with all parts.	Outlining/organizer method Conferencing on outline	Outline/organizer

Skills Cluster 3: Drafting Process					
Period 6-7	1. Initial Draft	Write an initial draft complete with an opening, development, and closing; insert and cite textual evidence.	Complete draft with all parts; on task.	Small and class group reviews Peer and teacher conferencing Review HO – Strategies and Structures	Initial draft with citations
Period 7-10	2. Revision of Multiple Drafts	Continue to refine your argument and historical references.	Drafts show evidence of refining and revision.	Drafts - optional	Drafts 2 or more
Period 11	3. Editing & Proofreading	Demonstrate to class how you revised or edited a section of your paper and explain why.	Presentation demonstrating effective editing to improve some aspect of the essay.	Conferencing as requested Proofreading methods Editing methods: sentence combining, eliminating redundancies, citation methods	2 min presentation (Can be taped.)
Period 12	4. Final Composition	Turn in your final draft in a portfolio to include revision drafts, planning schedule. Did you meet your goal?			Short response and portfolio

Materials, references and supports: List the materials you will need and students will use. Provide citations.

For Teachers	For Students
<p>Same as for students</p> <p>“Ideologies of the 19th Century” Essay – Teaching Plan - appendix</p>	<p>Jackson J. Spielvogel, Western Civilization (Alternate Volume: Since 1300), 7th edition</p> <p>Marvin Perry et al, ed., Sources of the Western Tradition: Volume II: From the Renaissance to the Present, 7th edition</p> <p>Elements of Good Historical Writing – appendix</p> <p>LDC Essay Task: Vital Questions for Argumentative Writing – appendix</p> <p>Essay Assignment: Structure and Strategies - appendix</p>

Section 4: What Results?

How good is good enough?

- A. **Student work samples:** Include two student work samples that received scores at each level on the rubric.
- B. **Classroom assessment task (Optional):** Design a classroom assessment task using the same template task as the one you will be teaching.

Background to share with students:

Prompt:

LDC Argumentation Classroom Assessment Rubric MEETS EXPECTATIONS	
Focus	Addresses the prompt and stays on task; provides a generally convincing response.
Reading/Research	Demonstrates generally effective use of reading material to develop an argument.
Controlling Idea	Establishes a credible claim and supports an argument that is logical and generally convincing. (L2) Acknowledges competing arguments while defending the claim.
Development	Develops reasoning to support claim; provides evidence from text(s) in the form of examples or explanations relevant to the argument (L3) Makes a relevant connection(s) that supports argument.
Organization	Applies an appropriate text structure to address specific requirements of the prompt.
Conventions	Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion; employs language and tone appropriate to audience and purpose.
NOT YET	
Focus	Attempts to address prompt but lacks focus or is off-task.
Reading/Research	Demonstrates weak use of reading material to develop argument.
Controlling Idea	Establishes a claim and attempts to support an argument but is not convincing; (L2) Attempts to acknowledge competing arguments.
Development	Reasoning is not clear; examples or explanations are weak or irrelevant. (L3) Connection is weak or not relevant.
Organization	Provides an ineffective structure; composition does not address requirements of the prompt.
Conventions	Demonstrates a weak command of standard English conventions; lacks cohesion; language and tone are not appropriate to audience and purpose.

Teacher Work Section

What now, what next?

- A. **Teacher thoughts.** Provide thoughts and ideas after teaching the module to different students in different classes.

Because students had completed essays during the semester, I did not require them to submit drafts but told them they could seek me out for conferencing as they saw fit. Several students submitted their drafts for my review or conferencing. Students are strong readers, so they worked independently on reading texts. Teaching focused on selecting appropriate information.

During the freshman year, I emphasize historical thinking and structure and require quotes to be cited by author and pages. I particularly have students work hard on the outlining phase in order to ensure they have the right structure and logic before writing their first draft. If they have a good outline, they are better prepared to order their thoughts and argument in the prose form of the essay.

- B. **Possible variations.** Add ideas for spin-offs or extensions to the module.

I use this process for all my formal essays.

Appendix

The attached materials support teaching this module.

Good Historical Writing PowerPoint Presentation

Note: The following seven text boxes are copies of PowerPoint slides.

Elements of Good Historical Writing

- In a good History paper, you will be making an *argument*.
- It doesn't necessarily matter what your argument is, only that you are able to support it *convincingly*, with *evidence*.
- You must *provide support* for any claim that you make – unsupported claims are not convincing in any way.
- Provide support by using historical background knowledge (from the textbook and from class) and primary source documents.
- In your writing, you should make sure that you make claims specific enough to be supported by the evidence.
- You also need to make sure that you explain the significance of your claims as they relate to your overall argument (your thesis).

L. Jordan

➤ The basis of good Historical writing is structure – this means that you can't just dump ideas and evidence all over the place and hope to create a convincing argument.

➤ The best way to create structure – before you ever write the paper itself – is to outline your ideas.

★ I would recommend you outline for every piece of formal writing you do for this class!

➤ An outline can be formal (with the standard “I,” “A,” “i,” and “a” format) or it can be less formal (with line breaks and indents), but it should follow an organizational plan and move logically from point to point.

➤ In your outline, you should always indicate your thesis and the main points of your argument (i.e. the central ideas of each body paragraph).

L. Jordan

BASIC STRUCTURE

I. Introduction (Thesis)

II. Body Paragraph 1

III. Body Paragraph 2

IV. Body Paragraph 3

V. Conclusion

L. Jordan

MORE COMPLEX STRUCTURE

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce the topic (background information)
- B. Thesis – ideally, your thesis should reference those main ideas that the body paragraphs are centered around

II. (Main Idea 1 – the idea this paragraph will center around)

- A. (transition) Topic sentence that references thesis
- B. Background information
- C. Evidence – from the primary source, perhaps?
- D. More evidence – an example from historical background?
- E. Concluding sentence that links back to the thesis

III. (Main Idea 2 – the idea this paragraph will center around)

(repeat from above – note: B, C and D can vary)

IV. (Main Idea 3 – the idea this paragraph will center around)

(repeat from above – note: B, C and D can vary)

V. Conclusion

- A. Restate ideas in new and interesting ways
- B. Offer response to the “so what?” question

➤ In historical writing, we need to write analytically: this means that in your body paragraphs you need to make arguments, support them with evidence, and then explain the significance of those arguments as they relate to your overall thesis.

THESIS: 14th-century European political systems were fundamentally unstable, due most of all to the emergence of the Black Plague, the Hundred Years' War, and the conflict between competing groups for political authority.

P#1 MAIN IDEA: The Black Death radically upended the political stability of European states, due to the immediate social chaos the plague created as well as the demographic and economic turmoil that followed.

EVIDENCE: Because laborers were now scarce, governments were forced to regulate employment and wages to maintain stability; in the case of the English Statute of Laborers (1351), the English king proclaimed that “every [healthy] man and woman of our kingdom” would “be bound to serve him who so requires him” and would “receive only the wages, liveries, hire, or salary” he had received before the plague hit (Statute, 373).

➤ Remember, quotes from the primary sources don't speak for themselves – you need to be sure to introduce your quotations when you are writing and explain how they are demonstrating your idea.

Because laborers were now scarce, governments were forced to regulate employment and wages to maintain stability, as in the case of the English Statute of Laborers (1351). “That every man and woman of our kingdom of England...shall be bound to serve him who so requires him...And he shall received only the wages, liveries, hire, or salary, which were accustomed to be given” (Statute, 373).

This writing sample is not effective as an argument because the quote is not integrated into the writing, and because it doesn't explain what the quote is saying or how the quote is supporting the overall argument.

L. Jordan

Because laborers were now scarce, governments were forced to regulate employment and wages to maintain stability; in the case of the English Statute of Laborers (1351), the English king proclaimed that “every [healthy] man and woman of our kingdom” would “be bound to serve him who so requires him” and would “receive only the wages, liveries, hire, or salary” he had received before the plague hit (Statute, 373). It is clear from examples such as the Statute of Laborers that political authorities were struggling in the wake of the plague to keep order, both politically and economically.

This writing sample is effective as an argument because it nicely integrates the quote into the argument and then, in the final sentence, explains why the quote helps prove the argument being made. It is essential that you explain what you think a quote means and how it is helping to support your argument.

L. Jordan

LDC Essay Task

Of the political ideologies we've studied in this unit which do you think was the most influential ideology in Europe during the years of 1814-1871?

After reading in your textbook and primary source reader, write a 3 page thesis-driven essay that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the texts.

In your essay, you need to substantially utilize at least two primary sources from Perry or Spielvogel. The emphasis on grading will be placed on how well you develop a clearly-argued and original idea (your *thesis*) and support that idea with evidence from the primary sources and historical examples (from Spielvogel and class). Your ability to argue your thesis clearly and succinctly, in a well-structured essay, written in correct English, is essential.

In your essay, I want to see clear structure: this means paragraphs centered on a main idea, topic sentences (with transitions) laying out your points, solid and fully explained evidence, and concluding sentences that link back to your overall argument in your thesis. Your points should be backed up by convincing – and specific! – evidence and all your points should follow logically from your thesis. Regarding your evidence, I want to see a mixture of historical example and citations from the primary sources: essays that only have one or the other will not be as successful as essays that utilize both.

Please remember not to use primary source quotations out of context; for example, if you wanted to use “Young Italy,” which was written in the 1830s, to support an argument about Italian Unification, which took place in the 1860s, you need to make it totally clear that you're using the source to talk about pre-Unification nationalist sentiment in Italy, not Unification itself.

Feel free to quote passages where you feel they strengthen your argument (although be careful about quoting excessively). All quotes from the primary sources need to be integrated into the essay and enclosed in quotation marks unless they are more than four lines long. In that case, the quotations should be indented 1” on both sides and single-spaced. Absolutely all quotations must be cited properly. Cite your sources using parenthetical notation with the author and page number i.e. (de Tocqueville, 168) or (Mill, 643). Please avoid quoting from the textbook. You should use background information from Spielvogel to provide context for your argument, but you are not required to do any additional research for this paper.

For formatting purposes, please provide a cover sheet with an interesting and thoughtful title in the center and below it, your name, the class name, your class period, and the date. Your text should be word-processed, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Your paper should have 1” margins. Please number your pages.

I would urge you to review the handout from last semester (“Essay Assignment: Structures and Strategies”), as well as the sample body paragraph handout and the PowerPoint titled “Elements of Good Historical Writing,” in order to re-familiarize yourself with some of the successful ways to go about writing a history essay. All are available on the class webpage.

All essays will be due **Thursday, March 3rd**, at the beginning of class.

Below, I have included a list of questions you should ask yourself as you write (and after you complete) your paper as well as a more detailed grading rubric on written essays. Be sure to read them, as I will consult both when I read your essays.

Vital Questions for Argumentative Papers

- Does your paper have an argument (a *thesis*)? What is it?
- Is your argument stated clearly and suggestively somewhere in the first paragraph?
- Does the introduction provide a clear map of the argument to come without “stealing the fire” of the paper itself? (The introduction should invite your reader to explore your argument in a provocative and useful way.)
- Is your argument developed carefully throughout the paper? Does each paragraph build and strengthen the argument?
- Does your paper have a clear outline? If so, does the outline develop its ideas in a logical progression? If there is no clear outline, write a brief one based on what you have written and see if the organization of the paper is logical.
- Is each paragraph unified around one main topic? Are the sentences in each paragraph organized coherently?
- Are there smooth transitions and topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph?
- Do your paragraphs have clear transitional statements? Do the ideas of your paper flow smoothly from paragraph to paragraph? (If not, work on strong paragraph closure and opening transitions.)
- Are the ideas in each paragraph developed carefully and substantiated persuasively?
- Do you support your claims with appropriate quotations?
- Do the quotations flow smoothly within the body of your paper or are they left hanging? Remember, quotations do not speak for themselves! Paper and paragraphs should end in your own words – not quotations.
- Does the conclusion simply repeat your already developed argument, or does it push your argument farther for its larger significance to the meaning of the text? (Strive for the second option: the “So what?”)
- Does your paper have a relevant title?

Essay Assignment: Structure and Strategies

Your paper should be 2 ½ to 3 pages, word-processed, double-spaced, in 12-point font (in Times New Roman or a font of equivalent size), and have 1” margins. You should have a cover sheet with a paper title, and below it, your name, the class name, the class period, and the date. Your name should be on the cover sheet only. Be sure to number your pages. Be forewarned: I will deduct from the overall grade if these formatting requirements are not met.

Structuring a History Paper

You should have an introduction paragraph. This paragraph will introduce the topic of your essay (by giving the reader the basic background information that they need to understand your thesis) and provide a thesis (the argument that you will be making in your essay). Remember that the first sentence of your essay serves as the topic sentence for your entire essay, so it should (1) make a statement, (2) be broad enough to serve as the lead-in to the ideas of your essay, and (3) be specific enough to make it clear what your essay is about. Your introduction should provide enough historical background on your topic to give substantial context for your thesis. It should also provide a roadmap for your paper, in that it introduces the ideas of each paragraph. At the end of your introduction, you should provide a thesis (i.e. your overall argument) that offers some of the *why* of the statement that you’re defending in your paper.

The majority of your essay will be comprised of body paragraphs. These body paragraphs contain the substance of your argument and will provide historical evidence to support your thesis. Ideally, your essay should have three body paragraphs, although you may add more if you feel they are substantive and add significantly to your overall argument. Each body paragraph should have three elements: a topic sentence, body sentences, and a concluding sentence. Your topic sentence should introduce the topic of the paragraph *as it relates to your thesis*, the body sentences should relate to the topic sentence and provide evidence to support your argument, and the concluding sentence should explain the significance of the topic of the paragraph *as it relates to your thesis*.

Finally, you should have a conclusion paragraph. Your conclusion should, ultimately, explain the significance of your argument. The topic sentence of your conclusion should reframe your thesis in light of the arguments you have made throughout your body paragraphs. Your conclusion offers a roadmap of the significance of the arguments of each paragraph and should finish by explaining the significance of your argument as a whole within the context of the period you are writing about. (This final sentence does not need to explain the significance of your argument to the present day and does not need to explain the significance of why it is important to study the topic.)

Strategies for Writing

In historical writing, we need to write analytically: this means that we need to make points, support them with evidence, and then explain the significance of the points as they relate to your overall thesis.

In your essay, you need to provide support (i.e. historical evidence) for any point you're making. You should be using both of the following elements to provide support: background information from the textbook and well-integrated quotes from the primary source documents. Be very careful about not making points too general or vague to be supported by the evidence.

Try to write your essay as if you're writing to someone who knows nothing about the period or the topic. Explain as much as possible and break down your ideas. Be sure to give a short amount of background information for any people, events, etc. that you reference.

Your textbook and the primary sources included with the essay prompt should serve as your main sources of information. You do not need to do any additional research for this essay. Cite your sources using parenthetical notation (as shown on the prompt handout). You do not need to include a Works Cited page at the end of your essay.

In this essay, I will be looking very carefully to see that you have a clear thesis and that your thesis is carefully argued throughout the paper. It is very important that your essay have a clear outline or structure and that each paragraph strengthens your argument.

Learning to write good essays is part of the process of thinking historically and you will improve at writing them over time. I am not looking for "perfect" essays, but I am looking for essays that display a high level of thought and engagement with the sources.

Some good points to remember when you're writing history papers:

- Avoid conversational language, especially expressions
- "This" should be only used as an adjective, not a noun
- "Shows" is not a powerful word – use more active verbs!
- Don't use the first person ("I") or second person ("you")
- Don't use hedging words like "generally" or "probably"
- History took place in the past, so write in the PAST TENSE, not the present tense

“Ideologies of the 19th Century” Essay – Teaching Plan

Much of the instruction in analytic thinking and writing came from earlier in the year (during the fall semester), as students were just being introduced to the new ways of writing persuasive argumentative essays at the high school level:

- As they were working on their first essay in the fall, students received the attached handout titled “Essay Assignment: Structures and Strategies.” This handout provides details on how a history essay should be structured, the function of each of the parts of an essay (introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion), and also gives information on composing analysis and other strategies for historical writing. We spent about 1/3 of a class period (~15 minutes) going over this handout.
- As we moved closer to the deadline for the first essay (in the time period that students would begin transition from the reading to the writing process), I spent about 1/3 of a class period (~15 minutes) going over a Power Point presentation titled “Elements of Good Historical Writing” (see attached). In this presentation, I covered a number of topics, including the creation of solid structure in writing, and gave examples of good analytic writing.
- Students wrote two formal five-paragraph essays in the fall, one in October and the other in December. Both asked students to utilize not only the historical information found in their textbook to support their arguments, but also to support those arguments using evidence from attached primary sources. In this way, students became familiar and comfortable with using primary sources in the service of their own historical argument (just as professional historians do). Both essays were returned with feedback on how to better improve their writing, and commented both on the structure of the essays and the solidness of their argument with regard to their evidence and their analysis of that evidence in the service of supporting their thesis.

With this practice in analytical writing, students were prepared for the essay that followed in March.

For this particular assignment (“Ideologies of the 19th century”), students received the prompt (see attached, titled “Essay Assignment”) two weeks ahead of the due date.

In the prompt, students were told that they were to utilize at least two primary sources of their choice (from either their textbook, which includes primary source excerpts, or their primary source reader) as well as historical information from their textbook and from class to support their argument.

We spent more than two weeks in class going over the historical events in question, so that they would feel familiar enough with the events, people, and ideas mentioned in the reading to use them to support their argument. We began going over the material two days before I distributed the prompt and the essay was due two days following our completion of that unit. Also, because the prompt centered on four political ideologies

(conservatism, liberalism, nationalism, and socialism), students were also asked to create ID cards¹ for each of these terms, so that they would understand them better and feel comfortable making an argument about them. We also went over these ideologies in class and clearly identified their characteristics and features.

I also gave students the option of submitting draft materials (introductions, outlines, partial drafts, full drafts) five days before the deadline so that they could get feedback on any work they had done. This was not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. Almost two-thirds of my students submitted work for this draft deadline.

ID cards are a daily at-home assignment where students are given one to three terms (people, ideas, events, places, etc.) from the reading and asked to complete a 3"x5" card with three portions: "who/where/when" at the top; "what happened?" in the middle; and "historical significance" at the bottom.

¹ ID cards are a daily at-home assignment where students are given one to three terms (people, ideas, events, places, etc.) from the reading and asked to complete a 3"x5" card with three portions: "who/where/when" at the top; "what happened?" in the middle; and "historical significance" at the bottom.