

Tips for Writing Papers in History and Political Science

[Keyed to Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, 3rd edition]

1. Thesis Statements [II,12; V,3]
2. Outline [II,12; V,3]
3. Use of “I think” or “I believe” – In a paper that is supposed to be a neutral objective assessment of an issue [V, 1; V,17]
4. Ideas that bounce around – cover a topic then move on to next idea – don’t then come back to an earlier idea [II,13; II,18]
5. Vague end of paragraph references [II,13]
6. Papers that lack a clear introduction and papers that lack any attempt at a conclusion [II,12; V,3]
7. Jargon, Slang and Colloquialisms [II,16;III; V,9;14;15;16;18;20;21]
8. However, [IV]
9. Passive Voice [II,14]
10. Use Past Tense [II,21]
11. Be Positive and Definite [II,15;V8]
12. Don’t Overstate [V,7]
13. No one sentence paragraphs [II,13]
14. Variety of Sentences and Subjects [II,12;V,3]
15. “As mentioned earlier. . . .” [V,1;5;6]
16. Rhetorical Questions [V,6;19]
17. Proofread [V,5]
18. Separate Classes + Separate Assignments = Separate Papers
19. Novels – All books are Novels
20. Misspell the Professor’s name
21. Use the correct appellation