

Oklahoma National History Day

What is a Historical Paper?

History papers present information and analyze an event, person, place, or idea from the past in writing. Although you might attach a map, chart, or photograph that you refer to in your paper, you will rely mainly on words. Writing a paper is a chance to tell what you know and what you think about a part of the past.

How is a Paper Different from Other Categories?

A paper is a highly personal and individual effort, and if you prefer to work alone, this may be the category for you. Papers depend almost entirely on words to tell the story, and you can usually include more information in a paper than in some of the other categories.

Getting Started

Conduct your research. Examine secondary and primary sources, taking careful notes and keeping track of which source each piece of information came from. From your research, you should come up with your thesis—the argument you want to make in your paper.

Make an outline. Using your notes, you can create a list of the main information you want to include in your paper, where each piece of information will go, and in what order. This will help when you sit down to write your paper.

Start writing. You might begin by writing your introduction in which you state your thesis.

- **Introduction:** your introduction should tell the reader where you intend to go with the rest of your paper.
- **Body:** the main body of your paper is where you can make the case for your conclusion. Present your evidence, the primary sources, and your analysis of how they support your thesis.
- **Conclusion:** your conclusion is like the summary of your paper. It should summarize your main points that prove your thesis.

Read and Revise. A polished product takes time, so it is important to re-read and revise your paper. Check for clarity, unity, and coherence. Is it clear how your topic relates to the NHD theme? Does your conclusion flow logically from your thesis?