



Name: _____

Date: _____

Research and Writing Guide

Question:

Welcome to your research project. Sounds daunting, but really it can be a big project or small project. Research is simply finding information to make an argument that supports your answer.

For a written research project, you are going to have 5 main elements and they will move in phases, but they will also work together at the same time. Once you have gone through each element they will work back and forth to help develop your answer and make a strong argument.

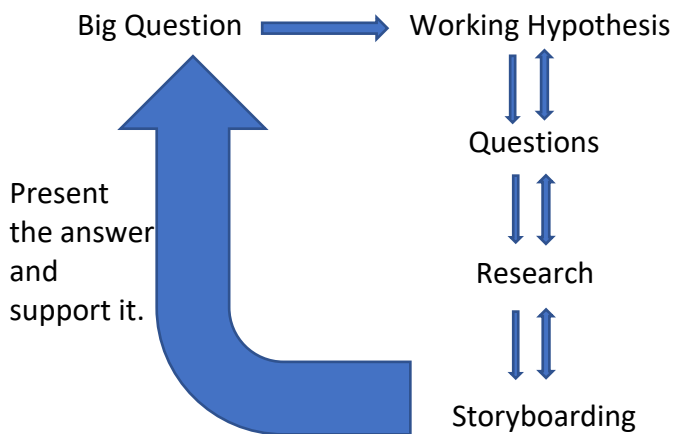
Answer and Argument
 An answer is the final claim you are making; it may be called a thesis.
 Argument is how you support your claim/answer/thesis.

5 Elements

- Big Question (Your instructor may provide this)
- Working Hypothesis
- Questions
- Research
- Storyboarding

Example:
 Question: $2 + 2 =$
 The answer/claim is $2+2 = 4$.
 Argument: The reason $2+2 = 4$ is because when there are two items and two more items are added, I have four items. II plus II equals a total of IIII.

5 Elements Flowchart

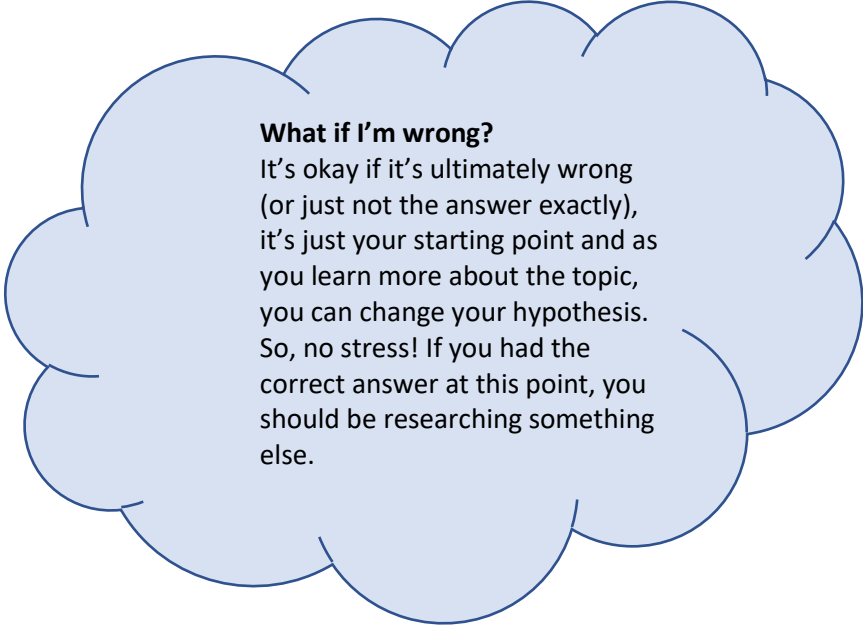


Element 2:

Working Hypothesis

A Hypothesis is your best guess to what the answer might be. It can be simple, it just helps guide your research.

Your Hypothesis:



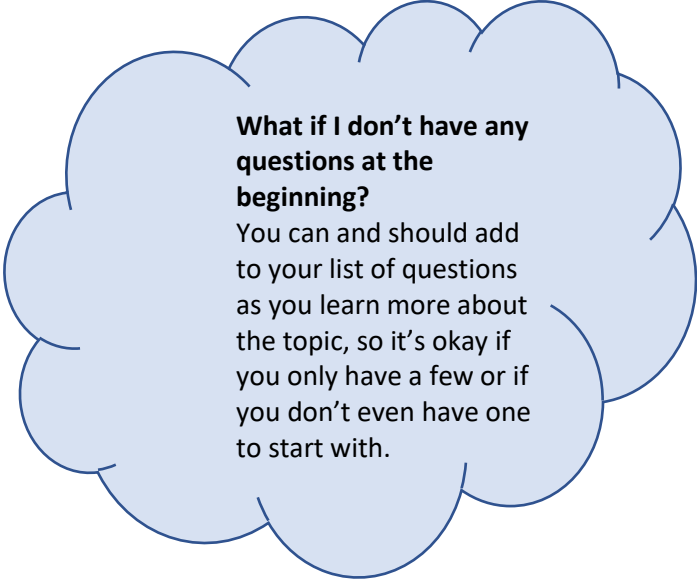
What if I'm wrong?

It's okay if it's ultimately wrong (or just not the answer exactly), it's just your starting point and as you learn more about the topic, you can change your hypothesis. So, no stress! If you had the correct answer at this point, you should be researching something else.

Element 3: Questions

List out questions. Using your inquiry question, prior knowledge, and hypothesis come up with some questions you have.

Questions:



What if I don't have any questions at the beginning?

You can and should add to your list of questions as you learn more about the topic, so it's okay if you only have a few or if you don't even have one to start with.

Element 4: Research

Research is finding data, primary source materials, and other evidence to answer your questions and ultimately support your argument to the Big Question.

What if I know nothing about this topic??!!

If historians are very unfamiliar with a topic, they will start with some very basic and general information. This can come from:

- an encyclopedia,
- a book that is a general overview,
- a highly regarded website,
- a visit to a historic site,
- meeting with someone who is knowledgeable on the topic
- watching a documentary.

Just make sure you are aware that this is just the beginning and make sure it's a good source (look for their source material and peer reviews).

I have a very general understanding of the topic, but I feel like I still don't know a whole lot.

You may have learned more than you realize. Try writing a few more questions – there are no wrong or stupid questions.

Two Types of Sources:

Secondary Source:

Secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles. A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may contain pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources. -

Harvard Library

(<https://guides.library.harvard.edu/HistSciInfo/secondary>)

Primary Source: Primary sources provide first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. They are created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Often these sources are created at the time when the events or conditions are occurring, but primary sources can also include autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories recorded later. – Harvard Library
(<https://guides.library.harvard.edu/HistSciInfo/primary>)

How do I find a source?

If you have started with a secondary source then the author(s) have listed either in the footnotes or bibliography their sources. If a secondary source mentioned something similar to that topic you are researching, then go back and find their sources.

Sometimes you can even Google your question or variations on your question. As always, be careful with the source of your answer - look for the author's sources and research the author or organization, see if other sources corroborate the information.

Ask a librarian – it's their job to help people do research.

Many primary source documents have been digitized, so you can find them for free online.

Useful Resources List for Primary Sources:

- Library of Congress
- National Archives
- Museums that focus on your topic, person, or location (they may have both secondary and primary sources on your topic)
- University library collections
- Archives (town and state)

Organize Your Research

As you do research create a reference list, this is a list of the resources used in your work. Ask your teacher what style they would like for your citations APA or Turabian are commonly used.

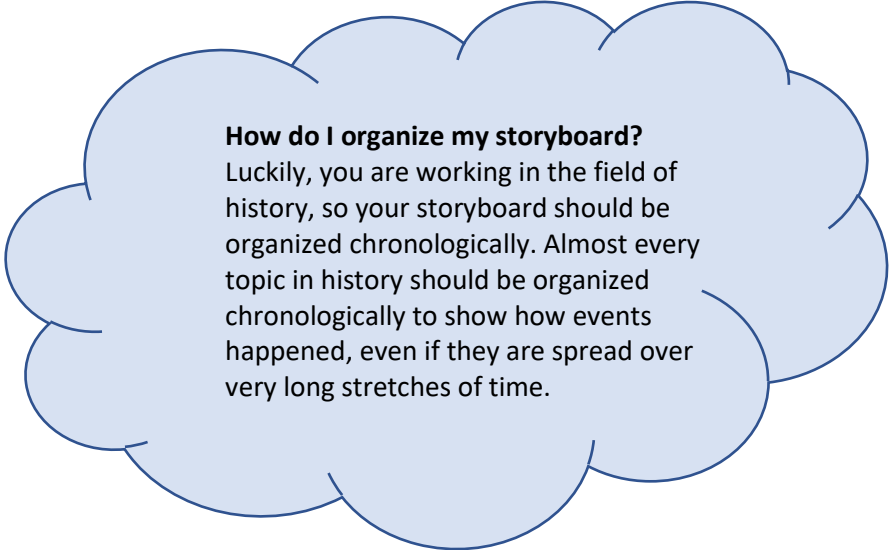
References:

Element 5: Storyboard

“A storyboard is like an outline spread over several pages, with lots of space for adding data and ideas as you go.” (Turabian 2018, 21)

Provided for you is a storyboard (separate page). Use this to simplify and organize your series of events.

For each box, you can create a page or multiple pages that you can use to write out notes and list sources. If this is a short or small project, you can do your entire storyboard right on the provided graphic organizer.



How do I organize my storyboard?

Luckily, you are working in the field of history, so your storyboard should be organized chronologically. Almost every topic in history should be organized chronologically to show how events happened, even if they are spread over very long stretches of time.

When you put something on your storyboard, identify the source, put the author’s name, date of publication and page number next to what you have written. The source info in detail will be in your bibliography. Now, when you write your full paper or give your presentation, you will have all of the arguments you want to make and your supporting source in your storyboard.

For more details on the research and writing process see:

Turabian, Kate L. 2018. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.