

# CHECKLIST

## General Rules:

1. Do not use a **TITLE PAGE** or **TITLE** (or waste space with lengthy heading). In the introduction, provide author's full name and book/film/article's title and date.
2. Double **SPACE** and use one-inch **MARGINS**. Adjust computers automatically set for 1 ¼" margins.
3. **PROOFREAD** – or be penalized.
4. Submit all **REQUIRED MATERIALS** – in required form and with required attachment title – or be penalized.
5. Do not ignore this **CHECKLIST** or repeat **EASY-TO-CORRECT ERRORS** noted on graded papers -- or be penalized.
6. Take advantage of the **WRITING CENTER**; acknowledge you did so within your honor pledge.
7. Ask a classmate or friend to read your paper and to provide general **FEEDBACK**; acknowledge his/her contribution within your honor pledge. (See restrictions on the course syllabus.)
8. Keep a computer **COPY** of your work.
9. Provide **PAGE NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES** for quotations only. Use instructions on course website.
10. **SUBMIT** first paper in class (2 copies); submit rewrite on Slack. (See instructions.)

## Some Rules for Clear Writing:

11. Use **VERB TENSE** logically and consistently.

**Past** tense is the most widely used and logical tense for historians, but **present** tense is standard in some situations (e.g., "*in his book, historian John Doe argues that*"). Be especially careful when using different tenses for different aspects of your paper (e.g., "*Doe asserts that the Puritans were*").

12. Use **PASSIVE VOICE** carefully (e.g., "the decision *was made*." By whom??).

Passive voice is NOT past tense, and it is not by its nature wrong; however, passive constructions are usually vague, lifeless, and uninformative.

13. Always provide **FULL NAME & IDENTIFICATION** when referring to a person for the first time.
14. Always **IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR OF A QUOTATION AND PROVIDE A BRIEF IDENTIFICATION** (e.g., "*as presidential candidate Mary Smith explained*").
15. Write in **THIRD PERSON**. Avoid "I," "our," "we," "us," "you," etc. in most history papers.
16. Avoid **"THIS"** without a reference word. ("*This was a problem.*" *What* was?) Do not assume that what is clear to you is clear to your "ignorant" reader.

17. **Avoid:**

- **SLANG, COLLOQUIALISMS, and CUTE EXPRESSIONS.**
- **JARGON AND TECHNICAL LANGUAGE** that does not fit a general reader.
- **STUFFY, WORDY, LECTURING PHRASES**, e.g., “it is important to note that.”
- “**A LOT**” or “**LOTS**” in formal writing.
- **CONTRACTIONS or ABBREVIATIONS** in formal writing.

## **Some Rules on Mechanics and Punctuation:**

18. **Do not confuse HYPHENS with DASHES.**

Both are created through use of the hyphen key, and neither has spacing around it.

The **DASH** (two strokes of the hyphen key) is used to add words/phrases to a sentence, much as parentheses are used.

The **HYPHEN** (one stroke) is used to break words, etc.

19. **PERIODS and COMMAS: go inside quotation marks.**

**COLONS and SEMICOLONS: go outside.**

20. **Do not confuse the following:**

**it's** = it is; **its** = possessive

NOTE: There is no such thing as **its'**.

**affect** = verb; **effect** = noun (except when used to mean caused)

**accept** = verb; **except** = preposition

**lead** = present tense; **led** = past tense

**number** of people vs. **amount** of fuel or money

22. **Do not use COMMA SPLICES, RUN-ON SENTENCES, or SENTENCE FRAGMENTS.**

The pitcher threw the ball. **The** batter hit it. (two sentences)

The pitcher threw the ball, **and** the batter hit it. (one sentence)

The pitcher threw the ball; the batter hit it. (one sentence)

**The pitcher threw the ball, the batter hit it.** (**comma splice**)

**The pitcher threw the ball the batter hit it.** (**run-on sentence**)

**When the pitcher threw the ball.** (**fragment**)