

## H2W: HOW TO WRITE A HISTORICAL ESSAY

### Introduction:

1. Recap the event or issue (include who, what, when and where).  
*Example: On April 19, 1775, Minutemen gathered on the common of Lexington, Massachusetts, encountered a regiment of British soldiers marching toward the town from the Boston road.*
2. Write a sentence (or sentences) that explains the historical question.  
*Example: As the British approached, a shot rang out. Ever since that early morning encounter, historians have disagreed about which side fired first.*
3. Explain why people disagree about the dilemma or event.  
*Example: Although participants on both sides accused the other soldiers of firing this first shot; . . .*
4. Write an answer to the historical question, briefly describing why you take the position you do.  
*Example: . . . the most persuasive and reliable evidence indicates that \_\_\_\_\_ was responsible.*

### Contextualizing paragraph:

1. Explain the historical context of your historical question—what is happening that makes your question important?
2. Provide a brief narrative of the event or issue in question.

### Supporting paragraph:

1. Introduce the strongest reason that supports your argument.
2. Select a quotation or other evidence that will convince a skeptic of your argument (AND state where this evidence comes from).
3. Explain HOW your quotation or evidence supports your argument.
4. Explain your judgment of (a) the author's reliability; (b) the influence of context; and/or (c) the quality of the author's facts and examples.

### Other supporting paragraphs:

1. Chose other reasons (at least two more) that support your argument.
2. Repeat steps 2 to 4 above. Convince someone of that your answer is correct!

### Rebuttal paragraph:

1. Choose the strongest reason that goes against your argument.
2. Select a quotation or other evidence that explains the other perspective.
3. Rebut, or reject, the opposing evidence by explaining your judgment of (a) the author's reliability; (b) the influence of context; and/or (c) the quality of the author's facts and examples.

### Conclusion:

1. Recap the issue or event.
2. Explain why your reader should choose your perspective over another perspective.
3. Connect your answer to what was happening in the historical context.