**Voices of Freedom 6th Edition, VOL.1, Eric Foner Chapter, 1 - 10 HISTORICAL RESEARCH PAPER**

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PROCEDURE        Writing a major historical research paper does not need to be intimidating, scary, or boring. It is hard work, but you can make it harder by not being organized. Following are simple procedures to stay organized and on-task. You can use these steps now, as well as in college.   1)    CHOOSE A TOPIC   Choose a topic that is interesting to you. Start with a broad idea, and then scale it down to a manageable focus topic. “The Industrial Revolution” or “Mills”, for instance, are much too broad. A paper focusing on the development of mills in Lowell or on the life and impact of the Lowell Girls would be much more appropriate. Remember: This is a paper, not a report. I am asking you to research information in order to draw conclusions or crate your own original thoughts. A report stops after compiling research-you need to do more! Because of that, you should choose a topic that interests you and around which you can form conclusions. A topic you enjoy will yield a more interesting (and better) paper in the end.   2)    FORM A THESIS   The thesis of a paper expresses the main point you are demonstrating in the paper. The thesis is supported by the facts from your research and your original thoughts and synthesis of those thoughts. A thesis does not simply express the topic of a paper. For example, “The Lowell Mills changed America” is not a good thesis. It is broad, and really does not involve critical thinking. Instead, you might say “Through changing the way America lived, worked, and valued labor and industry, the Lowell Mills changed the direction of American society and life.” This thesis statement draws conclusions and looks at legacies, rather than simply reporting about the mills.   3)    FORM AN OUTLINE   Use the textbook or a general source to get a sense of topics you will want to cover within your paper. You should also discuss these or get some ideas from me. Be specific as possible in your outline, but also be flexible. This outline will guide your research and your writing, and will also help to keep you on track. IT WILL SAVE YOU TIME IN THE LONG RUN.  Remember that this starts as an initial outline. It will change and be more detailed as you research, and even more so when you prepare to write.