

History 220 Writing Assignment.

You are required to write an argumentative essay that answers one of the following questions

1. One of the great debates to emerge from the Civil War is whether Lee or Grant was the better general. Lee. Supporters of Lee point to his stunning victories at Chancellorsville and at 2nd Bull Run; those of Grant cite his Vicksburg campaign as proof of his brilliance. In your opinion, which was the better general?

Start Points: Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox*

_____. *Grant Moves South*

_____. *Grant Takes Command*

Clifford Dowdy, *Lee's Last Campaign*

J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship*

2. By 1872 Reconstruction had gone a long way toward providing equality for African-Americans in the South. By 1877, however, support for Reconstruction had collapsed, and by the 1890s Jim Crow laws were pervasive throughout the South and most blacks had been disenfranchised. What caused the collapse of Reconstruction between 1872 and 1877?

Start Points: Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*

Thomas Holt, *Black over White*

3. "Turning points" always present interesting questions when one studies war. One of this nation's most prominent historians once argued that the Civil War had thirteen turning points, an argument which seems more than a bit ridiculous. In your opinion, what was the Civil War's turning point?

Start Points: James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*

Herman Hattaway, *et. al.*, *Why the North Won*

4. A large minority of historians have argued that slavery had little or nothing to do in causing the Civil War. States' rights, economic issues, and cultural differences, they argue, were far more important causes of the war. Who, in your opinion, is correct?

Start Points: Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*

Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*

J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860*

5. Determine your own topic. If you decide to take this option, the topic must be submitted to me, in the form of a question, at the end of class next week, February 10.

Additional Instructions

LENGTH. The final paper should be between 1500 and 2000 words in length and must be typewritten.

SOURCES AND CITING THEM. At a minimum, the paper should employ three books as sources of information. These books must be secondary sources (i.e., written by historians), **not** primary sources (i.e., written by participants). Assigned books for this course do not count against the requirement. The various volumes of the *Time-Life History of the Civil War* **are not** appropriate for this assignment.

The paper should be properly documented. Either footnotes or endnotes may be used. MLA (parenthetical) format is not acceptable. Proper footnote/endnote format for a book is as follows:

For first citation:

¹Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 23-25.

For subsequent citations:

¹⁵Grimsley, *Hard Hand*, 72.

Please see me if you have questions about footnoting. At the bottom line, a footnote should tell the reader WHERE you found your information.

For other citation formats I urge you to refer to *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian (available at numerous bookstores or on-line). You might consider purchasing it as it will prove invaluable to during your college career.

PLAGIARISM. Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas in your writing without giving proper credit to the author. It is plagiarism to copy text from a book, a web site, a journal or newspaper article, or from a friend's paper (to name just a few examples) without giving proper credit. It is also plagiarism to submit a paper that you did not write as your own work.

Any submission that I determine contains plagiarized material will receive a "zero" and the case will be referred to the college for further action.

BOOKS. With each question I have provided the title of at least two books that are "start points." These are books to which you can turn to start your research. You are in no way obligated to look at or to use them. It is simply my attempt to give you a "push" in the right direction. Also, McPherson's *Ordeal By Fire* contains a substantial annotated bibliography. These books, too, can be a start point. Indeed, you need go no farther than to find the books listed in the text.

FORMAT. The paper should be double-spaced and, if you use a computer, the font size should be set at "12". These measures will allow me to make legible comments on the text of the paper. Please place on the paper a cover sheet with your name and the paper's title. Finally, insure that every page is numbered and has your name on it.

INTERMEDIATE REQUIREMENT. Two weeks from tonight (February 17) you are to submit the topic you have chosen as well as a list of books (bibliography) that you intend to use in your research. This bibliography should be typewritten. I will return the bibliography the following week. Though this requirement is ungraded, I will not accept a finished paper from you unless I have approved your bibliography. **I WILL ACCEPT NO BIBLIOGRAPHY AFTER MARCH 10.** Also, you **MUST** submit that approved bibliography, with my initials and comments, with your paper.

DUE DATE. The paper is due at the beginning of class on April 21. Papers submitted afterwards will receive a reduction of one letter grade. Papers submitted after the beginning of class on April 28 will receive a “zero”.