

# THE TERM PAPER

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## Length

The term paper should be typed, double spaced, 6 to 8 pages, plus bibliography and notes. Keep in mind, however, content is far more important than length. Simply filling page after page with meaningless verbiage does not make a good paper.

## Format

Your paper must conform to the standard history format (sometimes referred to as the Chicago Style) described in *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, by Mary Lynn Rampolla. There are no exceptions to this requirement and a paper that does not conform to the standard history format will automatically be lowered at least one letter grade. To further assist you, I have posted “Sample Term Paper” on this web site, to give you a clear example of the correct format. However, you will need more guidance than this sample, so it is a good idea to acquire a copy of the *Guide* listed above.

Regarding citation notes, you have a choice of using either footnotes or endnotes; either is correct. The “Sample Term Paper” uses endnotes; I personally prefer footnotes, but either is correct. However, no other style of citation (such as in-text citations enclosed in parenthesis) is acceptable for a history paper. Proper notes are easily achieved with word processors. If you don’t know how to use them, now is the time to learn.

The history writing format is also very strict regarding the proper requirements for citing sources. For example, book titles are always in italics, while article titles are always enclosed in quotation marks. Do not ever underline a book title. Underlining was formally used with typewriters because the typewriter did not have an italics font. You may have never even seen a typewriter and there is no need to imitate that old technology. You should carefully consult chapter 7 of the *Guide to Writing History* for quoting and documenting sources.

## Subject

The subject of the term paper is: “The Great Person Theory: Is It a Valid Interpretation of History?” This has been a point of controversy and historians have always adhered to divergent views. Perhaps the most illustrious and divergent views were those of the Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) and the British historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975). Carlyle’s support for the Great Person Theory was expressed in his most famous quote: “The history of the world is but the biography of great men.” Toynbee, on the other hand, believed that history should be an account of the birth, maturing, aging and death of societies, and he paid little attention to the role or influence of individual leaders in the historical process. He believed that economic, intellectual and religious movements determine the course of history.

## The Term Paper

Obviously, there is no right or wrong answer and you, as a serious student of history, are obliged to take a position on the issue. Your term paper assignment is to state and support your view in the context of Greek and Roman history. An adequate paper will include analysis of the lives of at least one individual from each of the three periods: Greece, Roman Republic and Roman Empire. To this end, you are assigned three Penguin Classics books, in addition to the textbook:

1. Plutarch, *The Rise and Fall of Athens*: biographies of Theseus, Solon, Themistocles, Aristides, Cimon, Pericles, Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lysander.
2. Plutarch, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*: biographies of Marius, Sulla, Crassus, Pompey, Caesar, and Cicero.
3. Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*: biographies of Julius Caesar and the first eleven Roman emperors, Augustus through Domitian.

These texts are available online, though in older translations (A quick search of the internet will turn up numerous other translations.):

Plutarch, translated by John Dryden: <http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/index-Plutarch.html>

Suetonius, translated by Alexander Thomson: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6400/6400-h/6400-h.htm>

These biographies plus the textbook are sufficient sources for your paper. You are not required to search out additional sources, though of course, that is not forbidden.

If you have any questions or problems, please come by my office for a consultation. My normal office hours are MYWR 1:00–1:45 PM. If these hours are not possible for you, I can make an appointment.

## PLAGIARISM

When working on your own outside the classroom there is, unfortunately, the question of plagiarism. Your term papers must be your own work and must be written in your own words, not simply copied from books, articles, or the internet. I bring to your attention the following quote from the *CSUN Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog*, regarding Academic dishonesty:

*Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise.*

*Comments:*

1. **Direct Quotation:** *Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks, or by appropriate indentation or by other means of identification, and must be promptly cited in a footnote. Proper footnote style for any academic department is outlined by the MLA Style Sheet or K. L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations. These and similar publications are available in the Matador Bookstore and at the Reference Desks at the Oviatt Library.*

## The Term Paper

2. **Paraphrase:** Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Lock's comment . . ." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material.

3. **Borrowed Facts and Information:** Information obtained in one's reading or research, which is not common knowledge among students in the course, must be acknowledged. Examples of common knowledge might include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc.

Materials that contribute only to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography and need not be immediately footnoted. One footnote is usually sufficient to acknowledge indebtedness when a number of connected sentences in the paper draw their special information from one source. When direct quotations are used, however, quotation marks must be inserted and proper acknowledgment is required.

