

# ENG4546 Educating Americans

Fall 2023

Hilde Løvdal Stephens

## Requirements:

The draft should be four to five pages long. The final paper should be ten pages long (excluding notes and bibliography).

You are free to choose your topic as long as it deals with American education history. The paper should build on a combination of primary (news reports, op-eds, magazines, textbooks, etc.) and secondary (scholarly) sources (books, journal articles, and chapters from edited volumes). You find some suggested secondary sources in the [bibliography](#). See suggested topics and primary sources [here](#).

The papers should reflect key concepts in historical thinking, such as:

- Chronology (what happened when and why timing matters)
- Change over time (what was new?)
- Continuity (what remained the same?)
- Context (what political, cultural, or other events shaped what you study?)
- Consequences (good or bad? intentional or unintentional?)
- Causation (what led this to happen? what was more important?)
- Contingency (what factors were there at that place, in that time that made X possible?)

The papers do not need to fully engage with all these concepts, but they should engage with some of these.

For some useful advice on how to write, please see [Jill Lepore's essay](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

See also Harvard College's material:

[Presentation.pptx](#)

[A Brief Guide to Writing](#) the History Paper

[Reading Strategies - Interrogating Texts - Research Guides at Harvard Library](#)  
[Reading | Academic Resource Center](#)

## Format:

Footnotes and bibliography following the Chicago style. Please consult the manual here: [The Chicago Manual of Style](#)

1.5 line spacing

Font size 12

### **Assessment criteria**

#### **An excellent paper:**

- critically and effectively engages with relevant scholarship and primary sources
- is written in clear and advanced prose
- has a clear structure
- has a strong thesis or argument
- uses evidence effectively
- follows academic conventions expertly
- shows a high degree of independent thought

#### **A good paper:**

- critically and effectively engages with relevant scholarship and primary sources
- is written in clear prose
- has a clear structure
- has a good thesis or argument
- mostly uses evidence effectively
- follows academic conventions very competently
- shows independent thought

#### **An average paper:**

- engages with relevant scholarship and primary sources, though not always in an effective way
- is mostly written in clear prose, though it may contain some vague or ineffective passages
- has a mostly clear structure
- has a thesis or argument, though not very clear
- uses evidence competently
- follows academic conventions competently
- shows some independent thought

#### **A poor paper:**

- superficially engages with relevant scholarship
- has many grammatical errors and ineffective vocabulary that distort the meaning

- lacks a clear structure
- lacks a thesis or argument
- lacks effective use of evidence
- poorly follows academic conventions
- shows a low degree of independent thought

**Potential reasons for failing:**

- the paper does not answer the question
- the paper is based on inappropriate and/or irrelevant sources (such as Wikipedia)
- the paper is written in such poor English that the meaning is lost
- the paper lacks an appropriate structure
- the paper does not follow academic conventions (e.g. plagiarism)

Please note that not following good academic practice may have consequences. Examples of bad practice are plagiarism, failing to cite sources, or presenting other ideas as your own. See: [Cheating - University of Oslo \(uio.no\)](#)Links to an external site.