



Important Stuff for Parents and Teachers

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

You will need the following resources in order to complete this program. You can print the program or utilize it on a tablet or computer.

Paper, Pencils, and other obvious school supplies

There are occasionally places that ask students to be more creative and create collages or draw something. However, the vast majority of assignments involve writing and reading.

A computer with internet access

Students are asked to do research, look up terms, and access various web-based videos, primarily on YouTube.

A history textbook or other history resource

There is more about this in the section on history. Students will need a reference book. You can use any reputable world history textbook or encyclopedia. We believe a basic, high school world history textbook is the best option. Because of how textbooks are priced, we strongly recommend buying a used textbook. We suggest the following titles, but you can choose any textbook or reference.

World History: Connections to Today by Prentice Hall

World History: Patterns of Interaction by Holt McDougal Littel

World History: The Human Experience by Glencoe

World History: From the Dawn of Civilization to the Present Day by Adam Hart-Davis

World History: From the Ancient World to the Information Age by Philip Parker

The following books:

World Masterpieces by Prentice Hall Literature

This book is used throughout GPS years 1 and 2. It is a used textbook that is available through used booksellers, including Amazon sellers, Better World Books, and Abebooks. You can use any edition from the 1990's or early 2000's. The following ISBN numbers are all valid for this textbook, but they may not be the only ones:

ISBN-13: 978-0134146249

ISBN-10: 9780134146249

ISBN-13: 978-0136916925
ISBN-10: 0136916929
ISBN 10: 0134146247
ISBN 13: 9780134146249
ISBN 10: 0137226381
ISBN 13: 9780137226382

AFRICA

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
The Dark Child by Camara Laye
Born a Crime by Trevor Noah
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
Africa; A Biography of the Continent by John Reader
Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi

MIDDLE EAST

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi
Arab of the Future, vol 1 by Riad Sattouf
Lissa by Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye
Islam: A Short History by Karen Armstrong

INDIA

Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie
The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic by N.K Narayan
Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse
The Ocean of Churn by Sanjeev Sanyal

EAST ASIA

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie
Kitchen by Banana Yoshimoto
Foundations of Chinese Civilization (Understanding China Through Comics) by Jing Liu
Division to Unification in Imperial China (Understanding China Through Comics) by Jing Liu
Barbarians and the Birth of Chinese Identity (Understanding China Through Comics) by Jing Liu
The Making of Modern China (Understanding China Through Comics) by Jing Liu
Modern China: A Very Short Introduction by Rana Mitter

OUR PHILOSOPHY ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

Students using GPS should be teens in high school. We have striven to choose materials that are appropriate for students. However, we strongly believe that high school students should learn about controversial topics. This means that books we have chosen do not shy away from dealing with war, oppression, and violence. We also believe that teens are ready to read books with some explicit language and mentions of sex or sexuality.

Though sex is sometimes mentioned, none of the books or films we recommend have explicit sex. There are specific warnings about various books placed in the notes to the parent that start each unit. There are also trigger warnings for the student integrated into the “Big Ideas” and “Scheduling Notes” sections that begin each week.

It is up to parents to screen materials that you may feel uncomfortable with. There are alternatives listed

in the notes to the teacher that begin each unit.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

GPS is structured into four units of eight weeks each. While students and families can rearrange the schedule however they want, it is scheduled for four days a week. As a program that covers two full high school credits for the year, we expect average students to take an approximately two hours to complete the amount of work set down for each day with a few weeks having some extra work for larger projects.

These are averages, of course. Every student is unique. We know that families will tweak and substitute some books, skip one or two, add others on, especially for honors students. Some students work quickly, others work more slowly. It's up to individual families to help students manage the workload.

WHAT IS THE PARENT'S ROLE?

GPS is written to the student. High school students should have some independence with their work. We've strived to give plenty of guidance for students in their learning.

However, students need support. There are checklists that begin each week of GPS. You should check in with your student and help them stay accountable and get work done. If your student has a planner or if you use other tools such as checklist apps or online reminders, help them prioritize getting core schoolwork, including GPS, finished.

Your student will get the most out of this program if you discuss with them what they're reading. Even if you don't read along for every book, you can ask them what they think and what they learned. Make sure what they say makes sense! We suggest watching films or reading along with your student for at least some books.

Your student also needs feedback for writing. There is more about providing feedback in the section about writing. Students cannot easily learn to improve their writing without feedback. That means that you or someone else should read the short answer questions and longer essay assignments for GPS and provide feedback.

If you read the full introduction, including the writing guide, and the notes to the parent that begin each unit, then you'll be in better shape to support your student.

TRANSCRIPTS AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

If you are homeschooling, then you are the ultimate decider of how to put GPS on your student's transcript for college. Depending on what other courses your student took and how you plan to present your student to colleges, you may make different decisions about what to emphasize in your description. Below are two suggestions that you can use as templates. For an honors student, you can add any additional titles the student read. You can fill in the title of any history textbook you used as reference as well.

Unless you only did part of GPS, this program is worth two full credits.

African/Asian History 1.0 or World History: Africa and Asia 1.0

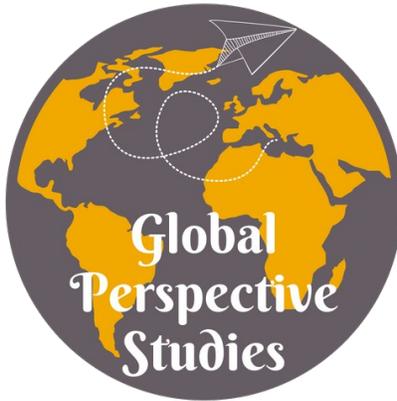
This is a world history course focusing on four different regions: Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and China and Japan. Students study history through readings, biographies, documentaries, and primary sources. In addition to textbook readings, books include but are not limited to *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* by John Reader, *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye, *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Islam: A Short History* by Karen Armstrong, *The Ocean of Churn* by Sanjeev Sanyal, and *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* by Rana Mitter. Assignments include learning to answer detailed short essay questions and writing document based question essays and a culminating research paper. This course was in conjunction with a course focused on African and Asian literature.

World Literature 1.0 or World Literature: Africa and Asia 1.0

This English course focuses on literature primarily from Africa and Asia. Students complete a wide variety of writing assignments, including literary analysis essays, persuasive essays, personal narrative essays, and creative writing. Writing tips are explored through readings, examples, and short writing exercises. Literary criticism is also explored with a theme for the year: heroes and the hero's journey. Works include but are not limited to: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *The Ramayana* by N.K. Narayan, *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto, and *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. Excerpts were taken from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Book of Ruth*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Rig-Veda*, *The Mahabharata*, and *Journey to the West*, among others. The textbook *World Masterpieces* from Prentice Hall was also used. This course was in conjunction with a course focused on African and Asian history.

Global Perspective Studies 1 (integrated history and English) 2.0

Global Perspective Studies 1 is an integrated English and history course focused on Africa and Asia. Students study history through readings, historical fiction, documentaries, and primary sources. Literature readings complement historical readings and include poetry, excerpts from classical texts, classic novels, and recent works such as graphic novels. Students complete a wide variety of writing assignments, including literary analysis essays, persuasive essays, primary source based essays, personal narrative essays, and creative writing. Writing tips are explored through readings, examples, and short writing exercises. Literary criticism is also explored with a theme for the year: heroes and the hero's journey. Works include but are not limited to: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* by John Reader, *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Islam: A Short History* by Karen Armstrong, *The Ramayana* by N.K. Narayan, *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, *The Ocean of Churn* by Sanjeev Sanyal, and *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. Excerpts were taken from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Book of Ruth*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Rig-Veda*, *The Mahabharata*, and *Journey to the West*, among others. The textbook *World Masterpieces* from Prentice Hall was also used.



Our Philosophy and Approach

OUR HISTORY PHILOSOPHY

We believe that history is an important part of a student's education. We can't understand the world around us, the literature we read, the motives of other people, without studying history. History has multiple connections to events today. We try to forge those connections where especially relevant. We encourage every family and classroom to discuss them even more than the curriculum specifically suggests.

We believe that history should not focus solely on the Western world, as it often does in the United States. As part of that, we believe that beginning a study of history with the European Renaissance or Enlightenment, as is common in high schools now, is misleading to students because it only focuses on the period during which the West was ascendant, and ignores the flourishing earlier civilizations in the rest of the world.

Studying history is a balance between learning specifics and learning broad patterns and generalizations. Many programs now don't ask students to know any specific names, dates, or events. We think students should be familiar with some of these. While we have vast information at our fingertips now, students need enough background knowledge in order to successfully read about a topic. We don't push a heavy program of memorization. However, we encourage students to learn the basic terms that begin each week and to learn key skills like note taking and keeping a visual map.

When students study history, they inevitably meet issues of controversy. We believe it's important not to shy away from these, but to use them to engage with history. High school students are old enough to read about difficult topics, such as genocide or war. It is imperative that students understand these topics. While we have tried to give warnings when content may be difficult for sensitive students, and while students may need to skip specific films or books, they should not entirely shy away from these difficult topics.

HISTORY ASSIGNMENTS

We believe that there's nothing wrong with textbooks and that having access to a basic reference is essential. Trade books like those that are core to our program often do not cover everything.

Students are expected to look up, read about, and synthesize information on their own in order to answer the history questions. Often, these are covered by the assigned history readings and videos. However, not always.

In order to complete GPS, students must have access to history reference books. You can choose any world history textbook, including older books. This book will be used in GPS Core Two as well. We recommend:

World History: Connections to Today by Prentice Hall
World History: Patterns of Interaction by Holt McDougal Littel
World History: The Human Experience by Glencoe

Some of those texts are still in print and have new editions. Please do not buy a new edition. There are many editions for less than \$10 used online. You are not limited to those titles. Any basic world history textbook for high school or even college or AP World History for an advanced student will work fine.

You can also choose a history encyclopedia for this purpose. Two good ones are:

World History: From the Dawn of Civilization to the Present Day by Adam Hart-Davis
World History: From the Ancient World to the Information Age by Philip Parker

Finally, we realistically know that students will likely turn to Wikipedia when they don't immediately find what they're looking for. In several studies, Wikipedia has been shown to be as accurate about most topics as encyclopedias (and, since textbooks always have errors, likely as accurate as those too). Wikipedia is not considered a reliable resource for an academic citation. Students should always read it with caution. However, the information you're likely to find there is likely to be "good enough." Still, we strongly encourage old fashioned books instead. Wikipedia is often too detailed for students just beginning to learn about new places and time periods! Textbooks do a better job of helping students find the most important facts, dates, and names.

OUR LITERATURE PHILOSOPHY

We believe that literature is a way to gain an understanding of other perspectives about the world. That means reading literature by a diverse group of writers from all over the world, including in our own backyards. We have striven to provide a curriculum that has literature by male and female writers of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds, writing about their lives across different time periods and at different stages of life. Letting authors tell their own stories from their own cultures is an important value to us that we hope is expressed in our literature lists.

We believe that there isn't one, singular literature list that students must read to be "well-read." The book lists that comprise the four years of our program are just one list. However, we think that reading great authors from throughout time is important. High school is a time to get to know classic authors. That means reading a wide variety of literature from across history, from ancient times all the way up to the last fifty years. Without getting a sense of the greats who defined their times, places, and genres, students can't ever fully appreciate newer literature or understand allusions.

The second purpose of high school literature is to continue increasing reading skills, including through learning literary analysis. For this purpose, sometimes choosing contemporary books is more useful. Graphic novels and young adult literature can be the perfect way to learn how to dissect a text, use quotes, and identify symbolism. It's also important that students find books they identify with or that

really speak to them. Whether those are young adult novels or classics that have long been popular with younger readers, we've tried to keep that in mind as well.

Too many of the literature programs we've seen swing too far in one direction. Either they focus only on the oldest classics without any eye toward student enjoyment or the modern world, or they focus too heavily on recent popular fiction at the expense of helping a student get a grounding in the classics. We're also mindful that students need to read widely and that means reading more than before for many students. On the other hand, it's important to balance and not simply read book after book.

Our goal is for students to emerge from high school with a strong foundation in the sort of literature that is widely recognized as great from every corner of the world. We hope to produce students who want to build on that foundation by reading even more widely because they love literature.

OUR WRITING PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy about writing is that students should develop their own voices by writing widely in different formats. We expose students to tools and models for their writing that can help them fit their words into different formats. We guide them in doing organization and pre-writing. However, we don't break down the writing process into extremely incremental steps. We believe that less is more with writing, so we don't require students to write an essay a week and only ask that students polish a relatively small number of pieces of writing during the school year.

We think many other writing programs focus too heavily on academic writing, especially with a thesis. This writing is extremely important and we do cover it repeatedly, but students will likely need to write in other ways in their lives. We also believe that many programs make writing too formulaic. Formulas in writing can be good ways to get started, but they can also quickly become too binding. It's important to both learn some of the rules and learn how to bend and break them.

Feedback is the most essential element to helping students grow. We support independence for high school students, which is why GPS is written to the student. The following pages contain checklists and organizers to help writers be independent. The assignments in GPS always give specific instructions. However, students must get feedback from a more experienced writer in order to fully grow.

This feedback should be gentle and supportive. While you should help correct issues, do not focus on spelling, punctuation, and grammar when giving feedback on a piece of writing. If students are significantly behind on those topics, we suggest adding in regular practice through a separate program from ours. Always start by emphasizing the positive in a piece of writing. Then pick one or two things to really help the student work on. If a student's writing has multiple issues, then bombarding them with advice about how to fix them all in one assignment won't pay off long term.

You can only work on a few things at a time with writing. We suggest different focuses based on the writing tools that we introduce to students. However, if your student struggles with something else, begin there.

Alongside the checklists and rubrics for students on the following pages, there are also checklists for the teacher or parent to use when reading writing. Are you unsure of how to help students? We'll try to walk you through it.

No one writing assignment will make or break a student. Students always have time to grow as writers. Always keep that in mind.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Our approach to writing in Global Perspective Studies has four parts.

First, we ask students to use freewriting in their studies. Freewriting with GPS means that students set a time for 20-30 minutes and write on the topic. This topic might be a personal response to a novel or topic. It might be gathering thoughts about something they've learned about. It might be writing down observations of art or photographs relevant to their studies. During a freewrite, students should try to stay on topic, but they shouldn't worry if they explore tangents. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation don't matter at all. A freewrite can be typed or handwritten. The most important thing is to keep writing throughout the time. We use freewriting as a way for students to process their thoughts, prewrite for longer assignments, and just practice their ability to get words on a page.

Second, we ask students to do exercises designed to introduce them to good writing practices and tools. For Core One, we use the book *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark. This is a book aimed at adults who like to write, but it's filled with great advice about improving writing. We adapt and create our own exercises geared toward students for the tools in Clark's book. The purpose of these exercises is to try out better ways to write. Sometimes we ask students to try applying a tool to a piece of writing they're polishing. Sometimes, the only purpose is to introduce a new way of approaching writing. These are practices that students won't incorporate right away.

Third, we have students do short answer questions. There's more about modeling short answer questions below. For most questions, a full, quality answer will be several sentences long. It will incorporate information from readings, research, or videos. These questions are a way for students to practice elaborating on their reading, making connections, and analyzing what they learn. Students may struggle with them at first. Some students have trouble answering in full sentences or being specific. Other students have trouble condensing an answer into just a few sentences. We have much more guidance about how to approach them below.

Finally, we assign a wide variety of writing forms for students to try out. These are primarily different forms of essays. We especially want students to practice a variety of different essay forms and not get stuck in one format. That means that students try their hands at creative writing and personal narratives of the kind they need to write for college essays in addition to thesis papers of various kinds. In each unit, we ask that students polish at least one longer work. That means revising and editing the paper and that means getting feedback from a teacher, parent, or tutor about the work. Feedback is how students grow as writers.

USING THE INTERNET, RESEARCHING, AND OTHER PERILS

Internet access and use is core to many parts of our program. We ask students to use videos that we have vetted and chosen from YouTube, as well as to do their own explorations online. We believe that teens should have this type of access to the internet. It is always a good idea for teens to leave "safe search" features enabled when they're online. It's also best practice for computers to be used in a visible area near adults. Parents should obviously decide for themselves what other internet monitoring measures you'd like to take, such as checking internet histories and using special control software. It is our belief that it is important that students learn to sort through information online. They need guidance for this.

When there are topics of particular controversy, such as apartheid or the Crusades, we give warnings

that information online may be biased or inaccurate. Students should always be alert to the possibility of “fake news” when they search online. It is imperative that parents or teachers keep conversations about learning open with students. We highly recommend Crash Course's Navigating Digital Information Course, found on YouTube. This has great support for families and students.

Students should recognize that the less they know about a topic, the harder it is to spot bias and the more important it is to stick to sources they trust. Some biased sources are easy to find, but many are not unless you know enough about the topic to question how they've presented it.

When students do research online for an academic paper, they need to realize that not all sources are created equal. While a casual internet video might be great to help them learn about a topic, You cannot use it as a source for a research paper. While open source resources like Wikipedia have been shown to be surprisingly accurate overall, they also cannot be used as academic sources. There's much more about this in the final unit, when students write a thesis-based research paper with sources.

At this point in your student's academic education, finding exactly the right sources isn't the most important thing. It's more important that they focus on honing their writing. It's also more important that they understand why citing sources is essentially and what plagiarism is.

Avoiding plagiarism is important even for taking notes and informal writing like freewrites. Because students often take notes online now, they cut and paste information directly. That can lead to some big mistakes down the road if they cut and paste a second time into an assignment, even an informal one. Students need to understand why this is deeply wrong. It's also useful if students can understand why hand writing out notes and summarizing notes can be more useful than cutting and pasting. There are lots of studies about this that show why summarizing is good for our brains and why doing it by hand often works better.

Overall, while there are some warnings and some specific lessons about these issues throughout GPS, we trust parents to check in on their students' internet use as well as that they're following good research methods and avoiding plagiarism.

ADAPTING GPS TO STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

We assume that all families will adapt and tweak this program as needed. We encourage you to do so. You know your student best.

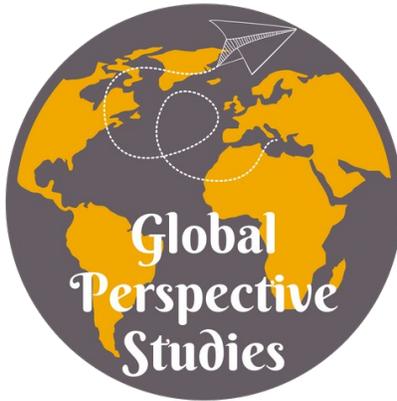
For honors and gifted students, adding in additional reading is a good option. There are additional book suggestions in the notes to parents that start each unit. However, we don't believe that all gifted student simply need more work to make a course right for them. You may choose to swap some titles out instead of adding more. You may also choose to add more writing assignments, lengthen some writing assignments, or hold students to a higher standard for writing. Adding in more in depth discussions may be another way to make GPS fit a gifted learner.

For students who have specific challenges, we encourage you to use whatever accommodations typically work for your student. Using dictation software or scribing for students with issues such as dysgraphia is obviously a good idea. There are audiobooks available for nearly all the titles in GPS that are not graphic novels. There are film versions available of many of the books. The additional book resources that begin each unit typically list at least one or two options that are easier, remedial, or graphic novels.

Students who will take longer should be given extra time or less work. If you have a struggling learner, it

is fine to have your student do 240 hours of work (the typical definition of a high school credit is 120 hours of instruction) to get the two credits for GPS, even if they do not finish everything.

Whether it's through added discussion, help with time management, or adapting materials, all profiles of students will benefit from teaching that is involved and hands on at least some of the time.



Writing Guide and Tips

This guide is to help students complete the assignments in GPS. Every assignment contains instructions. Longer assignments have a checklist rubric. However, if a student needs more support, that support is found here. This guide is also for parents or anyone giving feedback to a student on their writing or trying to support their writing. Look here for examples and tips. You can refer back to this section throughout the year.

WRITING A THESIS PAPER

We assume that students entering high school have been introduced to thesis papers before but may need multiple reminders about how to approach them. A thesis paper follows a format. This format can be bent in all kinds of directions, but it usually can't be completely broken. Some students find it comforting that there are rules to follow and a format to fit into. Other students hate that they can't write a thesis paper however they want. When the thesis paper format is working, it helps the reader and feels natural to the writer. The writer uses the format, the format doesn't pen in the writer.

The format for a thesis paper is this. Each Roman numeral in the outline represents a new paragraph.

I. Introduction

- *The introduction starts with a hook, which is a general statement designed to interest the reader.*
- *The introduction is sure to define the question and any important terms the reader might need to know to understand it.*
- *The introduction includes a thesis statement. The thesis should be a bold statement that everything in the paper relates back to.*

II. Body Paragraphs

- *There should be at least two body paragraphs.*
- *Body paragraphs should start with a topic sentences that let the reader know what the paragraph will be about.*
- *There should be at least 2-3 supporting facts in a body paragraph.*

III. Conclusion

- *The conclusion should restate the thesis to remind the reader what the paper was all about.*
- *The conclusion should ideally also contain a final big thought, connecting the thesis to a greater topic.*

This outline is turned into a paper. The more details and specifics in each body paragraph, the better.

RULES FOR WRITING A THESIS PAPER:

1. It needs a thesis in an introduction.
You can't skip this part.

2. The thesis must be a statement.
No questions, even if they sound thoughtful or clever. They might make a good hook, but it's not a thesis.

3. No using contractions.
Formal writing has formal rules. One of them is no contractions.

4. Body paragraphs need topic sentences.
Great writers learn to sneak these in so you don't feel like you're reading a headline at the start of each paragraph. However, readers need to be reminded what you're talking about.

5. All the points have to relate back to the thesis.
Don't go off on tangents.

6. Citing your sources is important.
It's academically dishonest not to say where your information came from. Sometimes, a paper is based solely on a novel, set of documents, or textbook selection and you get to skip this step because it's assumed. You also don't have to cite things that are common knowledge, such as the name of the president or that the sky is blue. However, don't let that make you lazy when you do need to cite a specific fact.

TIPS FOR WRITING A THESIS PAPER:

1. Pretend your reader is a blank slate.
Lots of students are immersed in the topic they're writing about. They're writing for a teacher who knows all about the topic. So sometimes, they forget to put in important stuff. I've seen papers that simply say things like, "This happened because of Rule 47," or "Jane obviously solved the problem." You may know that Rule 47 is some important law you've just learned about and that Jane is the main character's wealthy sister. However, when you don't define things, your imaginary reader is lost.

2. Connect all the dots.
This is tied to your reader being a blank slate. Not only do you need to define all the terms, characters, and events for this imaginary reader, you also need to show them why they're important. It's not enough to say that Jane was rich. You have to say, therefore she spent her money. It's not enough to say therefore she spent her money. You have to say she spent it on the pony that would allow the protagonist to escape. Connect the dots. Spell out all the steps.

3. Less is more.

You have to define everything and connect the dots, but don't get carried away. Keep your argument tight. Don't add in extra facts that aren't related. I see students do this a lot when they're excited about a fact or some new information. If it doesn't support your argument, don't include it. The paper's purpose isn't to show off everything you learned. It's to argue a specific thesis statement.

4. Don't skip the planning stage.

Lots of students try to skip the planning stage. We recommend using "messy outlines" to plan papers. However, it's not the only way to do it. Whatever works for you is allowed as long as you do it. Lots of students skip the planning stage only to regret it when they have to rewrite later.

5. Don't worry about grammar and spelling until the very end.

Fix all the grammar problems in one go at the end. If using a program like Grammarly helps you, then you should, but try to learn from it. You will have to write timed essays without the help of a program for many tests later on.

6 "RULES" FOR THESIS PAPERS THAT AREN'T TRUE!

1. The thesis must be one sentence.

Actually, the thesis can be two or even three sentences. One is usually best, but it's not a rule.

2. The thesis has to be at the beginning of or the end of the introduction.

Putting the thesis at the end of the introduction is often a good idea. But it's not a rule! You can put the thesis anywhere in the introduction you'd like. In really lengthy essays (we won't be writing any this long in GPS), it might even be at the end of a multi-paragraph introductory section.

3. The thesis must follow this formula: "Statement because reason one, reason two, and reason three."

That's a good format for a thesis statement because it previews your main reasons for your reader. However, it's not the only format. There are lots of ways to preview your points without putting it in the thesis.

4. Your thesis paper must have three body paragraphs.

Nope. Three is a really good number. Writers and storytellers follow what's called the "rule of three" all the time. However, while you want to approach most short thesis papers expecting to write about three body paragraphs, it's not a rule. Some thesis papers have two body paragraphs to compare and contrast. Some research papers have dozens of body paragraphs, usually organized into sections. If you have four excellent supporting points, make four paragraphs.

5. Your conclusion must contain your thesis stated exactly the same way.

Actually, that's just lazy writing. If you're writing a timed essay, it might end up happening, but don't do that on a planned essay. Find a new way to say it if possible.

6. No first person allowed.

This is a tricky one. Most student thesis papers shouldn't use the first person. That means no "I think..." or "In my opinion..." However, this is not a hard and fast rule. Great writers break this rule all the time. That doesn't mean you necessarily should. You likely don't have any personal experience to add and inserting yourself into most of your papers that are about history and literature will distract the reader from the thesis. Remember, it's not about you; it's about the thesis! As you really master the thesis paper, don't let this so-called rule hold you back from bending the form if you belong in the paper.

WHAT DOES A GOOD FREEWRITE LOOK LIKE?

Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary don't matter in a freewrite. Organization doesn't matter either. The only way to write a bad freewrite is to go way off topic or not use the time writing.

A good freewrite about women in the Muslim world might look a little like this:

I don't really know what i think about muslim women because I am just learning about it. I have a friend at co-op who is muslim and she wears a head scarf. Some of her scarves are really gorgeous and have these tassels on the ends but I was worried about asking her about it because I'm not sure if that's okay. But I know she didn't wear it when she was little, like a few years ago she still just had her hair. In Persepolis, the main character starts out really religious but then she isn't so much by the end. So its kind of like in that movie that I forget the name of where the girl wanted to have a bike. They wanted to make her cover her hair except sometimes she did and sometimes she didn't. Marji gets angry about some of the rules about wearing her headcovering. I think if I was Muslim, I wouldn't want to do that and I don't really see the point because...

It continues on like that. Here's what's good!

- The student stayed on topic. Head covering is a relevant topic to women in Islam. It's not the only one, but it's definitely a relevant topic.
- The student brought in questions. If the whole freewrite is just the student saying they don't know what they think and writing out questions they have about the topic, that's fine!
- The student mentioned specific things they read and saw for GPS. That's great!
- The student wrote a sizeable paragraph. That means they used the time to actually write!

Here are some things that you don't need to worry about!

- The student used run-on sentences. It doesn't matter.
- The student's organization jumps around. That's okay.
- The student didn't find the specific name of the film they referenced. That's not a big deal.
- The student made lots of capitalization errors. So what?

For some assignments, students can use what they wrote about in a freewrite to build on for a bigger writing assignment. When that happens, they need to think about organization and specific details, like getting the right names and words for things. They have to clean up any grammar issues when they polish the paper. But the majority of freewrites are just asking students to process what they read, saw, or learned about. Processing helps information sink in.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SHORT ANSWER QUESTION?

Short answer questions aren't always all that short. Sometimes they can be answered in 1-2 sentences. However, they often require a paragraph. The most important thing for a short answer question are the following:

- 1. The information must be correct.**
- 2. It must make sense.**
- 3. It must answer every part of the question, not just one part.**
- 4. It should be specific and not veer off into overgeneralizations.**

Here are some examples. This question comes from the GPS unit on India:

What rivals did the British East India Company have in the Indian Ocean for influence? What products did the British want? What settlements did they establish?

Example 1:

The British really wanted to dominate the world. They took over colonies everywhere they could. This is like in Africa where they were abusive to the people living there. They did the same thing to India. And this eventually led to leaders like Gandhi throwing them out.

Evaluation:

This is not a good enough answer to pass. It's over-general. It veers off into information about other places and time periods. It doesn't answer the question. This type of answer is sadly common for new high school students. Don't despair! They can improve! However, they need the feedback that this isn't good enough. Even if you don't know the full answer yourself, you can see that this answer is insufficient and doesn't fully answer the question.

Example 2:

The first European traders to arrive in India were the Dutch East India Company. Back in the early days of colonization, the Dutch were surprisingly powerful. Their company took over lands in Indonesia and Malaysia. They set up cities in India and were already established when the British arrived in India. In fact, the first British ships were basically pirates who robbed other European ships.

Evaluation:

Lots of great information, including lots of specifics about the Dutch. Also, the information is correct. The Dutch were Britain's biggest rivals for influence in India at first. However, the student totally forgot about answering the other two parts of the question. If this problem recurs on many questions, the student should go back and finish them.

Example 3:

The Portuguese and the Dutch were the biggest rivals for Britain in India. The British set up trading cities for themselves in Madras in 1639 and Bombay in 1668. They wanted to trade for cotton, tea, and spices.

Evaluation:

This question doesn't have the same details and flourish as the previous question, but it does answer all the parts of the question. It also includes dates and specific place names, which is always good. This is the only one of the three that passes.

Note that the passing question didn't include some good information that the previous answer had. Not every good answer will have every piece of information. It's okay for students to leave out some points, as long as they have other points. The third example doesn't include every settle, every trading product, or every rival the British faced.