Researching to Write

Reading to Research a Historical Topic
1) Read a secondary source on the general time period.
2) Read a secondary source on the specific topic.
3) Read primary sources on the specific topic.

Note-taking Rule Guide
1) Scan a source and determine its **value**.
   For books, look at the jacket, index, table of contents, and bibliography.
   For articles, look at topic headings, key words, and bibliography.

2) Determine whether the source is **credible** or **reliable**.
   Find out information on the author or read on-line reviews if available.

3) Write a **bibliographical entry** in the correct format.

4) Scan over the source and **familiarize** yourself with how it is set up.

5) **Read** the source and put question (?) marks next to unknown words/topics, etc.
   The guiding question in this step is "Do I understand what I am reading?" Then go find
   answers to those questions.

6) **Reread** the source and **take notes** (highlighting and underlining is a
   possibility if you own the source). The guiding question in this step is "Is this idea and
   information important to understanding the topic?" The best way to go about this is to read a
   source by section or chapter and then go back over it taking notes.

7) **Tips** on the **notes** themselves.
   Should contain few, if any, complete sentences unless quotes
   Use phrases, graphic symbols, shorthand
   Lots of space
   Topic headings
   In order to prevent unintentional plagarism, read the text a few sentences or small sections at
   a time and without looking back at the text, write down the important information. Also,
   make an intentional effort to rephrase information and use synonyms if possible. Remember
   note-taking is NOT paraphrasing.
   Put page # next to the information.

8) Within a couple of days, reread notes to **check comprehension**. They should make sense
   without the need to refer to the original source for clarification.

9) Any gaps in the source's information and questions raised in your mind after taking notes
   should guide you in what sources you look for next. Also, scan the source's bibliography for
   new sources to consult.

Note-Taking Rubric

Category	Explanation	Points Value
Content	Notes are thorough and important details have been included.	4
Further Questions to Research	What questions does this source raise?	1
Readability	Information is not only detailed and written as notes, but it is written in such a way that it can be understood without consulting the source itself.	2
Format	Notes consist of phrases (few if any complete sentences), shorthand, symbols, and page numbers.	2
Bibliography	Complete and written in correct format	1