

GUIDELINES FOR THE WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS

A work-in-progress report on your five-page research paper (5-7 minutes)

The first paragraph of your research paper prospectus (see Instructions for writing a research paper in History: Research Paper Prospectus), which you should continue to revise and edit as you pursue your research and begin to write, provides the basic information that you should present in your second presentation. This includes the topic or subject of your examination; the question(s) that you are asking (and the perspective from which you will be examining the subject); the argument (as it evolves from an initial hypothesis to a thesis) that you will make about your subject; and the sources, both primary and secondary, that you will examine to support your argument. As you pursue your research, analyze your evidence, and draft your essay, you may well adjust or change your subject, question, and hypothesis/thesis. Your presentation should reflect these revisions.

Since this is a work-in-progress report, the rest of your presentation should focus on the progress of your research (what you have uncovered), your methodology (how you are examining the sources), and your analysis (what you have determined) thus far. You could describe the findings that most surprised or interested you. You might discuss questions that your research and analysis have raised. You may wish to talk about stumbling blocks or difficulties you have encountered—e.g., difficulties in finding the kinds of sources that you hoped to find, in interpreting the sources you have found, or in revising your argument in light of the evidence from your sources (as historians, we have an assumed obligation to present evidence that contradicts and challenges our arguments as well as evidence that supports our thesis). You may pose a question (or questions) about your project to the class, or you may ask the class for their help, advice, and insight.

After you give your 5-7 minute presentation, your colleagues in the class will have an opportunity to discuss your research project with you. In combination, your presentation and the class discussion should take about 12 minutes. I expect the members of the class to listen attentively and to offer feedback to their fellow classmates. Needless to say, the presenters must provide enough information and analysis, and present it in an organized and compelling way, to encourage and inspire those responses.