subject; in other words, you need to learn how to think like a historian. Learning these conventions will enable you to be an active participant in historical conversations.

**Respect your subject.** When you write a history paper, you are forming a relationship of sorts with real people and events whose integrity must be respected. The people who lived in the past were not necessarily more ignorant or cruel (or, conversely, more innocent or moral) than we are. It is condescending, for example, to suggest that an intelligent or insightful person was “ahead of his or her time” (suggesting, of course, that he or she thought the same way we do).

**Do not generalize.** Remember that groups are formed of individuals. Do not assume that everyone who lived in the past believed the same things or behaved the same way. Avoid broad generalizations such as “the medieval period was an Age of Faith” or “pre-modern people were not emotionally attached to their children.” At best, such statements are clichés. More often than not, they are also wrong. (For more on the issue of appropriate language, see 4g-1.)

**Avoid anachronism.** An anachronistic statement is one in which an idea, event, person, or thing is represented in a way that is not consistent with its proper historical time or context. For example, “Despite the fact that bubonic plague can be controlled with antibiotics, medieval physicians treated their patients with ineffective folk remedies.” This sentence includes two anachronisms. First, although antibiotics are effective against bubonic plague, they had not yet been discovered in the fourteenth century; it is anachronistic to mention them in a discussion of the Middle Ages. Second, it is anachronistic to judge medieval medicine by modern standards. A more effective discussion of the medieval response to the bubonic plague would focus on fourteenth-century knowledge about health and disease, theories of contagion, and sanitation practices. In short, you should not import the values, beliefs, and practices of the present into the past. Try to understand the people and events of the past in their own contexts.

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A thesis is not a question. Although historians always ask questions as they read (see 3a for advice on active reading) and a thesis statement arises from the historian’s attempt to answer a question, a question is not, in itself, a thesis. “Why were Mohandas Gandhi’s methods successful in the movement to achieve Indian independence from Great Britain?” is a valid historical question, but it is not a thesis statement.

A thesis is not a statement of fact. While historians deal in factual information about the past, a fact, however interesting, is simply a piece of data. The statement “Mohandas Gandhi led the movement for Indian independence from Britain” is not a thesis.

A thesis is not a statement of opinion. Although a thesis statement must reflect what you have concluded, it cannot be a simple statement of belief or preference. The assertion “Mohandas Gandhi is my favorite political leader of the twentieth century” does not constitute a thesis.

In short, a thesis is not a description of your paper topic, a question, a statement of fact, or a statement of opinion, although it is sometimes confused with all of the above. Rather, a thesis is a statement that reflects what you have concluded about the topic of your paper, based on a critical analysis and interpretation of the source materials you have examined.

For the assignment given above, the following sentence is an acceptable thesis:

From the moment that Mohandas Gandhi decided to respond to force with acts of civil disobedience, British rule of India was doomed; his indictment of British colonial policy in the court of public opinion did far more damage to the British military than any weapon could.

You should note three things about this statement. First, while the thesis is not itself a question, it is an answer to a question—in this case, the question posed above: “Why were Mohandas Gandhi’s methods successful in the movement to achieve Indian independence from Great Britain?” A thesis usually arises from the questions you pose of the text or texts as you engage in active reading. Second, the thesis is specific. In attempting to answer the historical question raised above, the writer did not make a broad generalization like “Gandhi was successful because people thought he was a good person” or “Gandhi succeeded because the British were treating the Indians badly.” Rather, the thesis makes a specific claim: that the contrast between Gandhi’s use of civil disobedience and the use of force by the British had a significant impact on public opinion. Third, a thesis is always a debatable point, a conclusion with which a thoughtful reader might disagree. In other words, the thesis makes an assertion that sets up an argument. It is the writer’s job, in the body of a paper, to provide an argument based on evidence that will convince the reader that his or her thesis is a valid one. The thesis, then, is the heart of your paper. It presents what you have concluded about the topic under discussion and provides the focal point for the rest of the essay.

To ensure that your thesis really is a thesis, review the Tips for Writers box on page 46.

4d Constructing an argument

One reason you might find it difficult to develop a thesis statement is that you feel hesitant to come to independent conclusions about the meaning and significance of the materials you are working with; after all, what if your interpretation is wrong? It often seems safer just to reiterate the topic, or ask a question, or state a fact with which no one could argue. But, as noted in 4c, to write an effective history paper, you must be willing to reach a conclusion about your subject that could be challenged or debated by an intelligent reader. While this may seem intimidating, keep in mind that historical issues are seldom clear-cut and that professional historians, working from the same sources, often disagree with each other or form different interpretations. It is unlikely that there is only one correct point of view concerning the topic you have been assigned or only one correct interpretation of the sources you are examining. You do not need to convince your readers that your thesis or argument represents the only possible interpretation of the evidence. You do, however, need to convince them that your interpretation is valid. You will be able to do this only if you have provided concrete evidence from reliable sources in support of your argument and have responded honestly to opposing positions.
Tips for Writers
Testing Your Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If . . .</th>
<th>Then . . .</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your proposed thesis does no more than repeat the topic you are writing about</td>
<td>It is not a thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your proposed thesis poses a question without suggesting an answer</td>
<td>It is not a thesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your proposed thesis merely articulates a fact or series of facts</td>
<td>It is not a thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your proposed thesis simply reflects a personal belief or preference</td>
<td>It is not a thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your proposed thesis:</td>
<td>It is a thesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• suggests an answer to a question you have posed as a result of your reading, and</td>
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<td>• is specific, rather than general, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• is debatable (that is, it asserts a conclusion with which a reader might disagree), and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• can be supported by evidence from the sources</td>
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BUT

4d-1 Supporting your thesis

To support your argument, you must offer evidence from your sources. Imagine that you have been given the following assignment in a course on the history of science: “Analyze the role played by experiment and observation in William Harvey’s On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals.” A student writing an essay on this topic would have noticed that Harvey describes his experimental method and his observations in great detail. She would also have noticed, however, that Harvey drew inspiration from the analogy he saw between the sun as the center of the solar system and the heart as the center of the body, and that this analogy led him to consider whether the blood, like the planets, might move about the body in a circular motion. Her thesis will depend on the conclusion she has reached, after careful and active reading of the text, about which of these elements was more significant in his discovery of circulation. If she concludes that experimentation and observation were more important in Harvey’s thinking, her thesis statement might look like this:

Although Harvey sometimes used analogies and symbols in his discussion of the movement of the heart and the blood, it was his careful observations, his elegantly designed experiments, and his meticulous measurements that led him to discover circulation.

If, on the other hand, she concluded that Harvey’s philosophical commitments were more significant, she might write the following:

Harvey’s commitment to observation and experiment mark him as one of the fathers of the modern scientific method; however, a careful reading of On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals suggests that the idea of circulation did not arise simply from the scientific elements of his thinking, but was inspired by his immersion in neo-Platonic philosophy.

Note that the writer of this essay could come to either of these conclusions after a careful examination of the text. What is essential is that the student support her thesis by constructing an argument with evidence taken from the text itself. It is not enough simply to make an assertion and expect readers to agree. In the first instance, she would support her thesis by pointing to examples of experiments Harvey designed and carried out. She might also note Harvey’s emphasis on quantification and the care with which he described experiments that could be replicated. In the second instance, she might note the number of times Harvey compares the heart to the sun, thus providing an analogy for circulation. She might also note that Harvey was unable to observe circulation directly, since capillaries are too small to be seen with the microscopes available at the time, and that his belief in circulation therefore required an intuitive leap that could not have been drawn solely from observation or
experiment. In both cases, the student would cite specific instances from the text to support her thesis, integrating quotes from the source as appropriate. (For more on using quotations, see 7a-2.)

4d-2 Responding to counterevidence and anticipating opposing viewpoints

Acknowledging counterevidence—source data that does not support your argument—will not weaken your paper. On the contrary, if you address counterevidence effectively, you strengthen your argument by showing why it is legitimate despite information that seems to contradict it. If, for example, the student writing about Harvey wanted to argue for the primacy of experiment and observation in his work, she would need to show that these elements were more significant than his interest in philosophical speculation. If she wanted to argue that his philosophy was more important, she would have to demonstrate that it was his keen interest in the ways in which some philosophers interpreted the centrality of the sun in the universe as a metaphor that allowed him to interpret what he observed about the movement of the blood and the heart in creative new ways. In either case, her argument would need to be based on a consideration of the evidence and counterevidence contained in the relevant source or sources, not merely on her own gut feelings.

Similarly, if you are writing an essay in which you are examining secondary sources, you should demonstrate that you are aware of the work of historians whose interpretations differ from your own; never simply ignore an argument that doesn’t support your interpretation. It is perfectly legitimate to disagree with others’ interpretations; this is, after all, one of the purposes of writing a book review or a historiographic essay (see 3b-3 and 3b-6). In disagreeing, however, it is important to treat opposing viewpoints with respect; you should never resort to name-calling, oversimplifying, or otherwise distorting opposing points of view. Your essay will be stronger, not weaker, if you understand opposing arguments and respond to them fairly.

A good argument, then, does not ignore evidence or arguments that seem to contradict or weaken the thesis. If you discover information that does not support your thesis, do not suppress it. It is important to acknowledge all of your data. Try to explain to readers why your interpretation is valid, despite the existence of counterevidence or alternative arguments, but do not imply that your interpretation is stronger than it is by eliminating data or falsifying information. Rather, a successful paper would respond to counterevidence and differing interpretations by addressing them directly and explaining why, in your view, they do not negate your thesis.

Note: Of course, if the counterevidence is too strong, you will need to adjust, or even completely change, your thesis. Always be open to the possibility that your initial conclusions might need to be modified in response to the evidence you find. (For more on the process of gathering evidence and developing a thesis, see 5b.)

4e Organizing your paper

Even after analyzing an assignment, reading the sources carefully with a historian’s eyes, developing a thesis, and finding evidence in the sources that supports your thesis, you may still find it difficult to organize your ideas into an effective paper. History papers, like other academic writings, include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This section examines the specific elements that your history instructor will expect to find in each of these parts of your paper.

4e-1 Drafting an introduction

The introductory paragraph of your paper is in many ways the most important one and therefore the most difficult to write. In your introduction, you must (1) let your readers know what your paper is about and provide background information on the texts, people, or problems under discussion; (2) put the topic of your paper into context; and (3) state your thesis. You must also attract your readers’ attention and interest. The opening paragraph, then, has to frame the rest of the paper and make readers want to continue reading. There is no magic formula for writing an effective first paragraph. You should, however, keep the following conventions in mind.

Do not open with a global statement. Unsure of how to start, many students begin their papers with phrases like “Throughout history . . .” or “From the beginning of
time...” or “People have always wondered about...” You should avoid generalizations like these. First, you cannot prove that they are true: How do you know what people have always thought or done? Second, these statements are so broad that they are virtually meaningless; they offer no specific points or details to interest readers. Finally, such statements are so vague that they give readers no clue about the subject of your paper. It is much more effective to begin with material specific to your topic.

The following opening sentence comes from the first draft of a student paper on William Harvey’s *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*:

**INEFFECTIVE**

From ancient times, people have always been interested in the human body and how it works.

Although, grammatically, there is nothing wrong with this sentence, it is not a particularly effective opening. For one thing, it is such a general statement that readers will be inclined to ask, “So what?” In addition, it gives readers no indication of what the paper is about. Will the essay examine ancient Greek medical theory? Chinese acupuncture? Sex education in twentieth-century American schools?

In revising the sentence, the student eliminated the general statement altogether and began instead with a description of the intellectual context of Harvey’s work:

**EFFECTIVE**

For the scholars and physicians of seventeenth-century Europe, observation and experimentation began to replace authoritative texts as the most important source of information about human anatomy and physiology.

From this one sentence, readers learn four things about the subject of the paper: the time frame of the discussion (the seventeenth century), the place (Europe), the people involved (scholars and physicians), and the topic (the importance of experiment and observation in the biological sciences). Readers’ curiosity is also piqued by the questions the sentence implies: Why did experimentation begin to replace authoritative texts? Was this change a subject of controversy? Who was involved? How did this change in method affect the science of biology and the practice of medicine? In other words, this opening sentence makes readers want to continue reading; they want to know the author’s thesis.

**Include your thesis in the first paragraph.** If your opening sentence has been effective, it will make your readers want to know the main point of your paper, which you will state in the thesis. As you read works by professional historians, you may notice that the introduction to a journal article or book may be long, even several paragraphs, and the author’s thesis may appear anywhere within it. Until you become skilled in writing about history, however, it is best to keep your introduction short and to state your thesis in the first paragraph. The following is the first draft of the introductory paragraph for the paper on Harvey:

**INEFFECTIVE**

From ancient times, people have always been interested in the human body and how it works. Harvey was a seventeenth-century physician who performed many experiments and discovered the circulation of the blood.

This introduction begins with the ineffective opening sentence we looked at above. The “thesis statement” that follows isn’t really a thesis at all; it is simply a statement of fact. (For more on writing an effective thesis, see 4c.) Moreover, there is no clear connection established between the ideas contained in the opening sentence and Harvey. From this first paragraph, a reader would have no idea what the paper was about, what its central point might be, or what to expect in the pages that follow.

In the final version of this introductory paragraph, the student uses the revised opening sentence and incorporates a more effective thesis, which is underlined here:

**EFFECTIVE**

For the scholars and physicians of seventeenth-century Europe, observations and experimentation began to replace authoritative texts as the most important source of information about human anatomy and physiology. This trend is clearly illustrated in the work of William Harvey, who designed controlled experiments to measure blood flow. However, Harvey was not led to his revolutionary discovery of the circulation of the blood by experimentation alone, but was inspired by flashes of intuition and philosophical speculation.
In this introductory paragraph, the connection between Harvey and the rise of observation and experiment in the seventeenth century is clear. Moreover, the thesis statement reflects the author's conclusions and anticipates the argument that will follow; we can expect that in the course of the paper, the author will support her argument by discussing Harvey's experimental method, his philosophical speculations, his moments of intuition, and the role all three played in his theories about circulation.

Plan to rewrite your opening paragraph. Because the opening paragraph plays such a crucial role in the overall effectiveness of your paper, you should always plan on revising it several times. In addition, when the paper is complete, it is important to check each section against the introduction. Does each paragraph provide evidence for your thesis? Is it clear to your reader how each point relates to the topic you have established in your introduction? Knowing that you will have to rewrite your introduction can be reassuring if you are having trouble beginning your paper. Write a rough, temporary opening paragraph, and return to it when you finish your first draft of the entire paper. The act of writing your draft will help you clarify your ideas, your topic, and your thesis.

4e-2 Writing clear and connected paragraphs

In your introduction, you present your subject and state your thesis. In the body of your paper, you provide an argument for your thesis based on evidence from the sources you have been reading and answer any objections that could be raised. You should think of each paragraph as a building block in your argument that presents one specific point. If the point of each paragraph is not clear, the reader will not be able to follow your reasoning and your paper will be weak and unconvincing. (For more on constructing an argument, see 4d.) The following advice will help you write well-organized, cohesive, and persuasive paragraphs.

Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence. Each paragraph should have one driving idea that provides support for your paper's overall thesis. This idea is usually asserted in the topic sentence. If you have made an outline, your topic sentences will be drawn from your list of the main points you wish to cover in your paper. (For advice on making an outline, see 5e.)

Provide support for the paragraph's main point. The topic sentence should be followed by evidence in the form of examples, quotations from the text(s), or statistics that support the main point of the paragraph. Make sure that you do not wander off the point. If you include irrelevant information, you will lose momentum and your readers will lose the thread of your argument. Instead, make sure you choose examples that provide clear and sufficient support for your main point. If you are using a direct quote as evidence, make sure you explain to the reader why you are including this quote by integrating it grammatically into your text and framing it in a way that shows how it supports your point. (For more information on how and when to quote, see 7a.)

Make clear connections between ideas. To be convincing, your evidence must be clear and well organized. Transitional words and phrases tell your readers how the individual statements in your paragraph are connected. To choose transitions that are appropriate, you will need to think about how your ideas are related. The following are some transitional words or phrases that indicate particular kinds of relationships:

- **To compare:** also, similarly, likewise.
- **To contrast:** on the one hand/on the other hand, although, conversely, nevertheless, despite, on the contrary, still, yet, regardless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, whereas, however, in spite of.
- **To add or intensify:** also, in addition, moreover, further, too, besides, and.
- **To show sequence:** first (and any other ordinal number), last, next, finally, subsequently, later, ultimately.
- **To indicate an example:** for example, for instance, specifically.
- **To indicate cause-and-effect relationships:** consequently, as a result, because, accordingly, thus, since, therefore, so.

Writing paragraphs: an example. The following is a paragraph from the first draft of a paper on Chinese relationships with foreigners during the Ming period:
This paragraph has been improved in several ways. First, a topic sentence (which is underlined) has been added to the beginning. Readers no longer need to guess that this paragraph will address the apparent contrast between sixteenth-century Chinese suspicion of foreigners and the imperial court’s acceptance of Jesuit missionaries.

Second, the author has clarified the connections between ideas by including transitional words and phrases. These transitions (which are italicized) illustrate several different kinds of relationships—including contrast, cause and effect, and sequence—and allow readers to follow the writer’s argument.

Third, the paragraph has been reorganized so that the relationships between events are clearer. For example, the revised paragraph states explicitly that the Jesuits’ adaptation to Chinese customs was the key reason for the success of European missionaries during the Ming dynasty; this connection is obscured in the original paragraph by poor organization. Finally, the writer has removed references to foot binding and to European interest in China during the Enlightenment. Both are interesting but irrelevant in a paragraph that deals with Chinese attitudes toward Europeans.

4e-3 Writing an effective conclusion

Your paper should not come to an abrupt halt, yet you do not need to conclude by summarizing everything that you have said in the body of the text. An effective conclusion performs two vital functions. First, it brings the paper full circle by reminding the reader of the thesis and reiterating the most important points that were made in support of the thesis. Second, it answers the main question that your reader, having read the entire paper, will want to know: “Why is this important?” Thus, it is usually best to end your paper with a paragraph that states the most important conclusions you have reached about your subject and the reasons you think those conclusions are significant.

Note: A common pitfall for students is to end the paper with some new idea or fact. You should avoid introducing new ideas or information in the conclusion. If an idea or fact is important to your argument, you should introduce and discuss it earlier; if it is not, leave it out altogether.
The following is the first draft of the conclusion for the paper on Christian missionaries in China:

INEFFECTIVE

The Jesuit missionaries were sent to China in the Ming period. Some had good relationships with the emperor, but others didn’t. Some learned Mandarin and dressed in court robes. The pope wouldn’t let the Chinese worship their ancestors, but some Jesuits thought that Confucianism and Christianity were compatible. Another interesting aspect of Chinese culture at the time was the practice of footbinding.

This conclusion is ineffective for several reasons. First, there are no verbal clues to indicate that this is, in fact, the conclusion. In addition, it is too general and vague: Which missionaries had good relationships with the emperor, and which didn’t? Moreover, while it lists some of the key elements of the paper, it fails to indicate how these ideas are connected. Most important, perhaps, this conclusion does not suggest why the various ideas presented in the paper are important; it fails, in other words, to answer the questions “So what? Why is this important?” Finally, a new topic is introduced in the last sentence.

In the revised version of the conclusion, these problems have been addressed:

EFFECTIVE

Thus, if we look at the experience of the Jesuits in China, it seems that their success or failure depended largely on the degree to which they were able to adapt to Chinese culture. The most successful missionaries learned Mandarin, adopted Chinese court dress, and looked for parallels between Christianity and the teachings of Confucius. It was only when the Church became more conservative — forbidding Chinese Christians, for example, to venerate their ancestors — that the Christian missionary effort in China began to fail. Ultimately, willingness to accept traditional Chinese culture and practices may have been a better way to gain converts than preaching complicated sermons.

This conclusion has been improved in several ways: It includes key transitional words (thus, ultimately) that indicate that the writer is drawing conclusions. It reiterates the important elements of the paper’s argument but leaves out information that is either very general (“the Jesuit missionaries were sent to China in the Ming period”) or too vague (“some had good relationships with the emperor, but others didn’t”). Moreover, unlike the earlier version, it is explicit about how the key topics in the paper—the flexibility of the Jesuit missionaries in adapting to Chinese culture, the parallels the missionaries drew between Christianity and Confucianism, and the institution of more conservative policies—are related. It does not add any new topics, however interesting those topics might be. And, most important, this version, unlike the first draft, clearly outlines the significance of the conclusions that the writer has reached: The Jesuit experience in China tells us something about the relationship between culture and religious belief.

4f Revising for content and organization

One of the biggest mistakes you can make with any writing assignment is to leave yourself too little time to revise and edit your work. A paper written the night before it is due is never of the highest caliber and usually bears the hallmarks of careless writing: sloppy mistakes in reasoning, awkward constructions, poor word choice, and lack of clear organization. To write an effective history paper, you must allow yourself time to review your paper, preferably at least twice: once to revise it for content and organization, and once to edit it for sentence style and grammatical correctness. (For advice on editing for style and grammar, see 4g.)

The word revise comes from the Latin revisere, which means “to look at again.” When you revise a paper, you are, quite literally, looking at the paper again with critical eyes. To begin revising your paper, you need to read it critically, as if it were someone else’s work. (For advice on critical reading, see 3a.) You should read for logic and clarity, making sure that your evidence is sufficient and that it supports your thesis. Be ruthless: Eliminate all extraneous material from the final draft, however interesting it may be. For instance, if you are writing about the role that Chinese laborers played in the westward expansion of the American railroads, do not spend three paragraphs discussing the construction of the steam locomotive. If your paper concerns the American government’s treatment
Although historians have long been just as concerned with proper grammar as English professors are, it is beyond the scope of this manual to cover the basic grammatical rules such as comma placement, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun usage. Grammar- and spell-check programs will help you avoid some mistakes, but they are no substitute for learning the rules. Also, a spell checker will not pick up words spelled correctly but used incorrectly or in the wrong context (for example, Mink dynasty instead of Ming). For advice on the basic rules of English grammar, you should buy, and use, a general writing guide. (See Appendix A for a list of guides.)

While you must follow grammatical rules, you do have some flexibility when it comes to style, or the way in which you write (simple vs. complex sentences, highly descriptive vs. stark wording). The way in which you express yourself and the words you choose are a reflection of your own style. Nevertheless, historians tend to follow certain conventions governing language, tense, and voice that you will want to keep in mind when you write and revise your history papers.

### Tips for Writers

**Revising for Content and Organization**

- Does the first paragraph introduce the subject of the paper and provide information about the texts, people, or problems under discussion?
- Does the paper have a real thesis that is specific and debatable? Is the thesis clearly stated in the first paragraph?
- Does the paper provide sufficient evidence to support the thesis? Has counterevidence been carefully considered and addressed?
- Is the paper’s argument clear and logical? Has the evidence from sources been synthesized into a cohesive structure?
- Have historical subjects been treated with respect? Does the paper avoid generalizations, anachronisms, and bias in both its language and its assumptions?
- Does each paragraph address one specific point, stated clearly in a topic sentence, and does each point support the paper’s central argument?
- Is each paragraph clearly and logically organized? Do transitional words and phrases signal relationships within and between paragraphs?
- Has any irrelevant or extraneous material been eliminated?
- Does the conclusion tie the paper together?
- Is the paper properly documented? (See 6b and Chapter 7.)

of Japanese citizens during World War II, do not digress into a discussion of naval tactics in the Pacific theater. You must be willing to rearrange the order of material, do additional research to support weak points in your argument, and even change your entire thesis, if necessary. Obviously, you need to allow plenty of time for this part of the writing process, which may involve several drafts of the paper. The questions in the Tips for Writers box above will help you revise the content of your own paper or write an effective peer review for a classmate.

### 4g Editing for style and grammar

Once you have finished revising your paper for matters of content and organization (see 4f), you are ready for editing, the final stage of the writing process, in which you focus on sentence style and grammatical correctness.

Avoid value-laden words. Historians, as noted earlier in this chapter (see 4b), attempt to understand the people of the past in their own contexts rather than judge them by the norms of the present. If you use value-laden words such as backward, primitive, uncivilized, and superstitious, you are implying that your own period, culture, and perceptions are superior to those of the past. Passing judgment on the people of the past does not help us understand what they believed, why they believed it, or the social and cultural context in which they formed their beliefs.

Avoid biased language. Always take care to avoid words that are gender-biased or that have negative connotations for particular racial, ethnic, or religious groups. You