

Title Wave: An Enquiry into the Various Forms of Expression Available to Concisely Summarize and Head a Document of Historical Enquiry

The title is the first bit of writing your readers will see. As such, it will shape their expectations. An excellent title will make your audience want to read your paper. Your title should include keywords about your topic, such as the historical figure, phenomenon, or event you will be discussing, as well as a brief introduction to the major theme(s) of your paper. For this reason, you should wait until you've finished writing your paper to come up with a final title. There are many ways to title your paper, and they are not all created equally. Here are some examples of different types of titles.

Bad Titles: These tell us nothing about the paper to come.

History of France

Final Term Paper, Fall 2015

Essay Question #2

Billy's Paper

To Be or Not To Be

(no title)

Basic Title: This is an improvement because it clearly defines the paper's topic.

The Troubled Legacy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Post-Revolutionary France

Two-part Title: It is standard to start the title with a short phrase and include a subtitle.

Liberty, or Equality: The Troubled Legacy of Rousseau in Post-Revolutionary France

Historical Quotation: A pithy quotation can help drop your reader into the context in which you are writing.

"Everywhere He Is In Chains": Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Persecution Complex

A Question: Use the title to introduce the main question animating your research.

The First Republican Martyr?: Rousseau and French Revolutionary Thought

Play on a Historical Phrase: Augment a historical phrase to reveal an unexpected phenomenon.

Liberté, Egalité, Maternité: Rousseau's Influence on French Ideals of Motherhood

Savage Nobles: Murder and Murderers among the English Gentry, 1700-1800

Pop Culture Reference: Draw the reader in through a reference that captures your theme.

Straight Outta Compton: White Flight in Post-War California

Pun: Have fun with words to engage your audience.

Cruel and Unusual 'Pun'-ishment: The Evolving Rhetoric among Dads in the U.S.