

Guidelines for Writers for the Wentz Prize: A Draft for consideration of the LHS, MA Board

In general judges of Wentz Prize papers expect submitted essays to be well written, follow scholarly methods and be original in content. While the following is a more detailed explanation of these expectations, they are not to be viewed as necessary or sufficient requirements for these papers.

Writing.

1. Introduction. The paper should begin with commentary which both excites interest in the topic and provides a context for it. This context should include references to scholarly works informing the topic or, perchance, to the dearth of such works.
2. Organization. The commentary should cover the topic logically, so that it is fairly comprehensive and moves toward a conclusion. A reader should understand the development of the topic. Good paragraphs, topic sentences and so forth generally accomplish this goal.
3. Writing. The paper should follow proper grammar and syntax as these are generally understood.
4. Conclusion. The end of the paper should be discernible as a conclusion, perhaps by summarizing the paper or suggesting what the paper “proves” or citing questions remaining about the topic that might be considered by other scholarship.

Scholarship.

1. Sources. The paper should give evidence of examination of extant and current scholarly works (secondary books and articles), providing a context for the paper, and be based on primary sources (for some topics, what is ordinarily understood to be secondary work can be primary in nature.)
2. Research methods. The paper should reference sources sufficient for the reader to know what sources are the bases of the paper and should follow the reference form commonly used by historians (not the MLA or APA formats), as these are detailed in guides such as Kate Turabian’s, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th Edition, Mary Ann Rampolla’s *A Pocket guide to Writing History* or the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The references can be presented as footnotes or end notes.
3. The topic should be original in nature, though it may be an extension of a scholarly debate or an analysis of secondary works (which, in this case, would be understood to be primary sources).
4. The paper should include a bibliography citing primary and secondary sources.