

# Proposal for the Position Paper

Over the course of the semester, you'll be writing a 6- to 8-page position paper.

The first stage of this project is to write a [1-page proposal](#), which includes your topic and a preliminary thesis statement.

What you need to do:

## 1) *Get ready.*

**Watch the video.** The overview video explains what I want you to cover in the proposal and what I'm expecting to be included.

## 2) *Choose a problem or question you want to explore.*

Choose a controversy or debate pertaining to gender in the ancient world.

One starting point is to look over the 13 meeting topics. What would you like to dig more deeply into?

You can choose a question or problem that the people at the time might have debated—e.g., “How are the expectations for goddesses different from those of mortal women?”; or a question that might arise among modern historians—e.g., “Is Athens really more repressive of women than Sparta?”

Choose a topic you're interested in and have fun with it. Make it wacky, make it provocative—anything is fine as long as you make an argument regarding your chosen topic and support it with facts.

## 3) *Formulate a preliminary thesis statement.*

**Opposing sides.** The problem you're interested in addressing should involve something that could be argued with opposing positions. You should be able to delineate the problem by describing the opposing views people might take.

To make sure you have two clear opposing opinions, you might want to express them in the form “Some say... Others say....”

**Preliminary thesis.** Your thesis statement, both here and in the final paper, should be a statement of opinion that someone could disagree with. It can take the form of following up the description of the opposing opinions with your own: “I believe....”

**You can change it later.** Remember that your thesis is provisional. You can change anything about your approach and interpretation after the proposal; in fact, uncovering information as you do your research makes refining or changing your initial assessments very likely.

#### **4) *Write your one-page proposal.***

**What to include.** Your proposal is structured like the introduction to your position paper, and may serve as the basis for it. It should include

- your problem/question;
- the opposing sides; and
- your preliminary thesis.

A sample proposal can be found on the website.

**Feedback and guidance.** The proposal is not graded, but whether you submitted a proposal on time will be factored into the final grade for the position paper.

I will give you feedback on things like the feasibility of researching your topic, whether the scope is too big or too narrow for a paper like this, and some possible sources you might want to look at.

#### **5) *Finalize your proposal.***

**Submit your proposal.** Upload your proposal to BlackBoard.

Jane Student-Smith

3 October 2022

History of All Ancient Things

Prof. Wilson

### Proposal: Hannibal and the Elephants

Hannibal Barca, the great Carthaginian general, brought 37 war elephants with him over the Alps into Italy, and at the climactic Battle of Zama they had a front line that included 80 elephants. Did Hannibal's elephants really make a difference? Some say that Hannibal's elephants were crucial in establishing the morale of his troops against the legendary Roman legions and in intimidating other armies along the way into alliances; but others say that Hannibal's elephants did the Carthaginian side more harm than good in their fight with Rome. **I believe that Hannibal's use of elephants was a mistake, not because war elephants were a dumb idea in general, but because Roman adaptability meant that the Romans would inevitably find a way around them.**

} Problem

} Thesis

- Note that the thesis is
- (a) a statement of opinion you can back up with evidence, and
  - (b) specific as to the reasons why the thesis will be supported