

**Guide to Reading and Studying Scholarly Works:
The Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of Historical Works**

1. Author's Biographical Information:

Who is the author? What worldview/assumptions does the author carry? What training does the author have? Are they associated with a university? What else has this author studied and written about? Who publishes his/her works? What motivates the authors interpretations? Identify any social, economic, political and technological factors that influenced the historians.

2. Foundations of Study:

What is the book's main point? What is the topic of this book? Scope? Points of emphasis? Thesis and does it work? Arguments? What kinds of questions does the author ask? How is the narrative structured? Is the book written clearly? Is it organized? Are terms defined?

3. Methods of Study:

Is this research-based, a synthesis, thought-based, or a combination? What sources/evidence does the author use? How is evidence used? What type of evidence is used? What secondary sources does the author cite? What kind of potential sources are not included? What is the method or perspective used (e.g., Functionalist/Conflict/Symbolic interactionism)? Macro/Micro?

4. Biases of Study:

What are the problems with this book? What obvious questions were ignored? Does the book recognize that different cultures have different concepts (e.g., Native-Americans did not have a concept of private property)? Is the book presentist? Does the author analyze its topics/sources, etc? What else could be included; what else could scholars do with this topic?

5. Scope of Study:

What geographic areas and time periods are discussed? Does the book recognize that most events do not have an exact starting and stopping point? Does the book demonstrate change over time? Does the author look to parallel and comparative history? What about Eastern cultures? What else is happening at the time of events/peoples in the book? Where does it come in the spectrum of the "isms"?

Who is included in the cast of characters (e.g., women, men; children, older people; higher class, lower class; by religion; by education; ethnicity; by job or other status, etc)? Does the book recognize that people have various roles or masks? Does the book focus on silences/agency of individuals? What is included in the cast of social institutions (e.g., education, government, church)?

6. Relationships to broader field(s):

What is new in the current study? Does the book make an important contribution? How have the interpretations of the topic changed over place and time? Why? How does this book relate to similar and very different books in the field? How do they agree? Disagree? How does this relate to my interests? What academic fields does this book address? How does the book speak to other works in this field (similarities, differences)? What side-notes does the author take? How has the author and the study or interpretation of this particular topic been influenced by some of the developments in historical study that have taken place in the twentieth century?