

Project milestones

What must one do to successfully complete an historical research project? At the beginning, good planning is necessary, because such projects consist of different phases. The more carefully you describe and plan these phases at the start of your project, the more likely it is that you will successfully complete it. In addition, when you are in the middle of your project, such a plan helps you keep perspective on your work.

The following phases of a project cannot be clearly separated from one another. Instead, they overlap again and again. The individual stages also don't take place sequentially but often simultaneously. Therefore, you have to keep your eye on many details ...

1. Planning

- Establishing the project goal: finding the subject and central question
- Forming a team (for group work)
- Finding advisers and tutors
- Deciding on work methods and locations
- Allocating tasks (in group work)
- Creating time frames and a material plan → designing a project plan
- Establishing addressees
- Starting to consider the product's form and its presentation

The following work plan will help you control these phases:

Work stage	Work area	Responsible	Beginning	Conclusion



2. Researching

- Visiting libraries, museums, archives
- Searching for experts
- Creating lists of possible eyewitnesses
- Preparing and conducting interviews
- Collecting, describing, editing, analysing literature and sources on the subject and comparing them with others
- Checking repeatedly that you and your group remain focused on your subject or question
- Checking frequently that all participants are still involved in the project
- Organising notes thematically
- Recording new ideas
- Consolidating project results – transferring them to the appropriate product form (e.g., essay or exhibition)

3. Presenting

- Choosing a presentation form appropriate to the addressees – lecture, video, collage, film, theatrical play, etc.
- Clarifying where and how (e.g., a press conference)
- Publicity work
- Clarifying technical requirements (e.g., overhead projector)
- Compiling a work report
- In conclusion: The product will be evaluated; the effect and also the process will be appraised (the group judges itself, and the addressees can also be questioned).

Too complicated? You think you'll never be able to do it? Don't panic. We will accompany you throughout the project. You'll see: It isn't nearly as difficult as it appears. For every phase, there are several work sheets with detailed information and tips.