

THOMAS Reading Method

Topic: The basic question: When? Where? What is the book about?

Historiography: What are the multiple scholarly conversations in which this work participates? What does it add to these conversations? What is missing?

Organization: What is the central organizing structure of this work? Chronological? Thematic? Geographic? Are there any narrative devices put to use? How does the organization advance the argument?

Method: What sources are used in the book? How is this evidence analyzed? Is there an overarching theoretical or conceptual approach? How does theory intersect with evidence?

Argument: What is this author's original thesis? What new thing does it explain?

So What? What is important or useful about this book, beyond the confines of the topic? Why would non-specialists in the field care about this book? What are the book's stakes?