

# **Research methods and didactic to carry out an essay about history of schooling**

We know that we reach the first year of the degree without any knowledge of the history of schooling, so we are going step by step to learn how we are going to pass a subject in which comments about history are essential. When this has not been carried out successfully, for the September call we have the option of creating a personal essay on the history of schooling, covering what happened in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.



*Recovered from: pexels.com*

In the first place, although we do not know the history of schooling, nor probably history, knowing that you had to undergo memory tests, master classes, selectivity and the anxiety it causes ... We probably still have notes, a textbook ... Now that we are a bit older, we can take a look and see if we understand a little bit of what happened in the Spanish state during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Yes, for any comment from any discipline, ignoring the historical context is like not considering that cars have wheels, or that we need oxygen to live, everything we live comes and goes towards a destination.

The situation in the Spanish State, as regards childhood, for example, in the 19th century, can probably be defined by different parameters. Obviously, class differences are fundamental. A rich child is not the same, nor before now, as a poor child. The schools of the rich are not the same as of the poor.

A huge percentage of children, in the 19th century, worked. A very high percentage of the Spanish population was illiterate. The social, economic, cultural inequalities ... were abysmal, as before the French bourgeois Revolution, nobility, monarchy and clergy divided the territory and its wealth for themselves, with a middle class still reduced in the Spanish State.



*Recovered from pixabay.com*

And we are still talking about history without focusing on the context. Relax! Over the centuries that we must analyze, in what refers to schooling, the situation of childhood, infant general context, etc., we will take into account the context at all times, so as not to speak in a vacuum.

If illiteracy is the rule, if child exploitation is common, are schooling laws relevant? A first basic teaching tip: whether or not the laws are relevant, they are a primary source. Like any law, now it is time to research its relevance. How can we do that? Will it be typing "19th century primary education" in Google, and cutting and pasting the first thing that comes out, even if I don't know anything? If that is done, 0 will be the mark, and you know it's true.

One of the characteristics of the flipped classroom is to provide materials prior to the development of the classes, as was done in this subject. Thanks to this material, we have different questions to investigate, based on our interest, not about what this professor is necessarily interested in ... who is interested in your learning so as not to be ignorant ... and to pass the course, of course.

So: we read what the teacher uploaded. Carefully. Yes, this would have to be done from the first moment ... What if it has not been done? Well, we will do it for the September call in case of fail, of course. We understand? We continue. Do we not understand? Let's see what we don't understand. But what is all this educational legislation, all this information about politics that doesn't interest me, what a bore !? Yesterday and today, we were under legislation and politics. Isn't it fun? Maybe going into detail is not ... But if we do not understand, first the laws, second those who make them, and third who would apply them (teachers, in our subject), we do not understand anything, and we will only be puppets of power. And power doesn't seem boring in making laws or politics.



*Recovered from pixabay.com. Who was Adam Smith and what is he doing here?*

Let's go to a specific case, and let's see the options. At the beginning of the subject of history of schooling, we find the first topic: Schooling in the Spanish State (1812-1833), it was really soon available to students. It was a Tuesday, September 24, 2019, at 10:21. Let's analyze the material.

We have 11 paragraphs. It doesn't seem like a huge read for a college subject. In addition, it is not in English, but in Spanish, so it's even easier for the students. The first paragraph is a general summary to locate ourselves about the real weight of schooling in the Spanish State in the 19th century. Something is mentioned from the Old Regime. Do we know what's that about? If we do, we can compare with what is coming, and decide whether a "new regime" is really coming, or if it's a fake new regime, ruled by the same masters, or even worse: having even more.

The second paragraph provides an alternative view of what some historians called the "War of Independence" (which you probably knew, at least minimally, in high school).

**PRONTUARIO**  
**DE LAS LEYES Y DECRETOS**  
**DEL REY NUESTRO SEÑOR**  
**DON JOSÉ NAPOLEON I**  
**DEL AÑO DE 1810.**

[Spain. Laws, statutes, etc. 1808-1813. (Joseph Bonaparte)]

**TOMO II.**

**DE ORDEN SUPERIOR.**  
**MADRID EN LA IMPRENTA REAL**  
**AÑO DE 1810.**

Recovered from: <https://archive.org/details/prontuariodelas00goog/page/n7/mode/2up>

Next, we see that the “secretaría de Despacho de la Gobernación” -in charge of schooling- constituted in March 1813 a Board of Public Instruction with the responsibility of preparing a report setting out a project on the general reform of schooling. Among its members was the poet Quintana.

The return of Fernando VII and a Decree in May 1814 annulled both the Constitution and various laws, among which is the Quintana Report. The Inquisition was back, if it was ever gone.

**Exposing Christianity**



Recovered from: <https://archive.org/details/ExposingChristianity/mode/2up>

The derogation of the Constitution supposed the suppression of the “secretaría de Despacho de la Gobernación”, returning the schooling matters to be part of the Council

of Castile and the Ministry of Grace and Justice businesses, that is to say, schooling was, once again, under control of the catholic rulers.

On February 1, 1815, Fernando VII will set a board to propose a new and uniform schooling plan. This board was made up of members of the councils (some of them belonging to the nobility) and had as advisers the bishop inquisitor general and the bishops of Zamora, Malaga and Osuna, for the fixation of the books of theology, sacred canons, ecclesiastical discipline and natural and people's law.

In 1820 the liberal triennium began, after the military coup by Colonel Rafael del Riego, a period also monarchical and Catholic that would last until 1823 (with the help of the French army, Spain would "return" to the Old Regime). By decree of the Cortes, the General Regulation of Public Instruction was set on June 29, 1821, which could be considered one of the first legal texts on schooling. This regulation follows the guidelines established by the previous " Quintana Report ": public education will be uniform, free (with no cost of money) and only one the method of teaching, as well as textbooks.



Recovered from <https://archive.org/details/loscienmilhijos00galdgoog/page/n10/mode/2up>

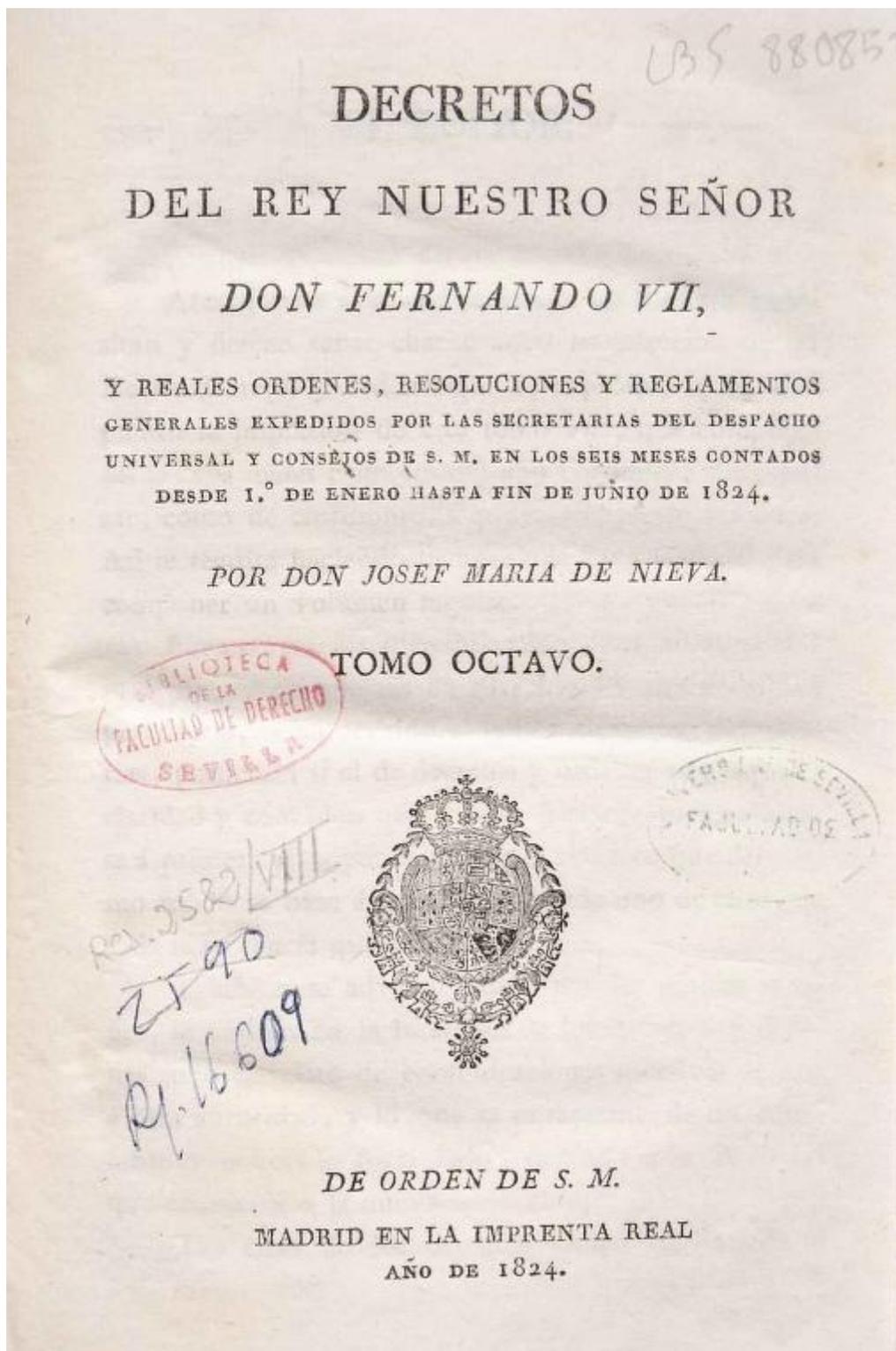
After a coup with international aid, the omnicious decade began (1823-1833): A good number of liberals were tortured and killed, among them, Rafael del Riego; some of those who were richer, fled away. The 1821 schooling law was repealed, obviously. A monarchical and Catholic censorship was established, and a reactionary university regulation was drawn up by the Minister of Grace and Justice Francisco Tadeo Calomarde, university had to be 100% under control. Known as Calomarde Plan, was set in 1824, with 342 articles (perhaps remembering one character of Sponge Bob TV show will make you not forget this supposed "human being", Duke of Santa Isabel - Dos Sicilias... ). We should not forget this "man", he was even the killer of Mariana Pineda<sup>1</sup>.

From this period we can mention, too: Plan y Reglamento de Escuelas de Primeras Letras del Reino (1825); Reglamento general de las Escuelas de Latinidad y Colegios de

---

<sup>1</sup> Recovered from [https://elpais.com/cultura/2020/03/01/babelia/1583068153\\_808551.html](https://elpais.com/cultura/2020/03/01/babelia/1583068153_808551.html)

Humanidades (1826); the absolutist regime addressed the purge of the administration, which led to the expulsion of thousands of officials, especially teachers<sup>2</sup>.



Recovered from <https://archive.org/details/BRes0025828/mode/2up>

<sup>2</sup> Recovered from <http://www.historiasiglo20.org/HE/9c-3.htm>

We have the articles on schooling from the 1812 constitution, and the 1821 law. We have everything I just wrote you. We have critical sense to analyze everything commented. How do we translate it to a text comment? Let's try different guidelines.

Imagine that you really are interested in history. Or imagine that you have read some “exciting” Instagram Stories from an “interesting” influencer. Or that something amazing has happened to you. You want to share some of these issues in person or in writing with someone. Do you really think how to do it? Maybe the words come out by themselves...



Recovered from <https://www.pexels.com/es-es/foto/gente-amigos-hombres-mujer-3184435/>

But we find something that, a priori, perhaps nobody would be interested in. So? One option, in my opinion of the best, is to find the relationship of the past with what's going on now. For this, obviously, one must know the past, and nowadays context. I have already given you the option of the past. You can expand the information, because otherwise you will be my puppets, and you will believe everything that this, or any other teacher tells you. Better to take a look at what I wrote, read a little of the laws, and a little of the historical context, so you form your own opinion. With that knowledge, we can read a little of the schooling laws that govern us, of what we live today, and see if there are changes, if not, the reasons why...

We might not compare if you don't enjoy it, but expand on what the teacher has provided. How? For example, we focus on what interested us. From 1812 to 1833, although not much happened in schooling, historically everything happened. And those

who governed, also governed schooling, like today. Do we find the relationship? And with today?

We have books and magazines in the library. We have hundreds of articles on the internet (and there are databases and search engines that are not Google). We have bookstores, also second hand, also on the internet. We have documentaries, presentations, etc. We do not cut and paste anything, as it is not necessary. When we read / see / reflect on something, that can already be our knowledge, and it is already expressed in our words. In addition, we have the option to quote everything we want, and paraphrase.

If we are able to express ourselves on the issues that interest us, we can make an essay, the history of schooling is not that difficult. If we find it difficult to express ourselves, we can read comments from other classmates, ask the teacher, read more, spend more time... There are no magic formulas, but we do be aware that plagiarism is failing. Those of you who are at the university have the ability to memorize. That was useful, now is the ability to read, understand, write, reflect, express ourselves and be critical. Whoever does not know history does not know what world they live in. Leave Instagram and connect to the real world.

Antonio Nadal Masegosa.

Departamento de Teoría e Historia de la Educación y Métodos de Investigación y Diagnóstico en Educación. Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación. Universidad de Málaga.