History for those new to teaching the subject

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## About this resource

This resource is designed for new teachers and teachers without a background in history to assist in the teaching of Years 7–10 History. This involves gaining an understanding of:

* the syllabus and its requirements
* what history is
* questions asked by historians
* skills required to study history
* designing assessment tasks
* professional organisations who can offer assistance and resources
* ideas and online resources to assist teachers in the teaching of history and historical skills.

The information in this document is not designed to cover all of the subject matter or skills, but to support teachers on the basics of history. This includes resources, variety of worksheets and a comprehensive list of online resources.

The information and graphics used in this resource will assist teachers to develop lessons in history. Content within this section has been developed with the [NSW Department of Education Curriculum Support Professional Learning materials](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/hsie/s4-5/history) and the [History K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012.

## The History K-10 Syllabus

**Aim of the syllabus**

The aim of the history syllabus is to stimulate students’ interest in and enjoyment of exploring the past, to develop a critical understanding of the past and its impact on the present, to develop the critical skills of historical inquiry and to enable students to participate as active, informed and responsible citizens.

### Rationale

History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that helps to explain how people, events and forces from the past have shaped our world. It allows students to locate and understand themselves and others in the continuum of human experience up to the present. History provides opportunities for students to explore human actions and achievements in a range of historical contexts. Students become aware that history is all around us and that historical information may be drawn from the physical remains of the past as well as written, visual and oral sources of evidence.

The study of history from Kindergarten to Year 10 investigates the actions, motives and lifestyles of people over time, from individuals and family members, to local communities, expanding to national and world history contexts. It introduces the idea that history contains many stories and that there is never only one uncontested version. There are many differing perspectives within a nation’s history, and historians may interpret events differently depending on their point of view and the sources they have used. The study of history strengthens an appreciation for and an understanding of civics and citizenship. It also provides broader insights into the historical experiences of different cultural groups within our society and how various groups have struggled for civil rights, for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants and women. History encourages students to develop an understanding of significant historical concepts such as cause and effect, change and continuity, significance, empathy and contestability.

History as a discipline has its own methods and procedures. It is much more than the simple presentation of facts and dates from the past. History provides the skills for students to answer the question ‘How do we know?’ An investigation of an historical issue through a range of sources can stimulate curiosity and develop problem-solving, research and critical thinking skills. It develops language specific to the discipline of history and provides opportunities to further develop literacy skills. Students learn to critically analyse and interpret sources of evidence in order to construct reasoned explanations and a rational and informed argument based on evidence, drawn from the remains of the past. Students engage in research involving traditional methods and information and communications technology (ICT), including evaluating web-based sources and using a range of technologies for historical research and communication.

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### Objectives

#### Knowledge, understanding and skills

**Early Stage 1 – Stage 3**

Students:

* develop knowledge and understanding about the nature of history and key changes and developments from the past
* develop knowledge and understanding about key historical concepts and develop the skills to undertake the process of historical inquiry.

**Stages 4 and 5**

Students:

* develop knowledge and understanding of the nature of history and significant changes and developments from the past, the modern world and Australia
* develop knowledge and understanding of ideas, movements, people and events that shaped past civilisations, the modern world and Australia
* develop skills to undertake the process of historical inquiry
* develop skills to communicate their understanding of history.

#### Values and attitudes K–10

Students will value and appreciate:

* history as a study of human experience
* the opportunity to develop a lifelong interest in and enthusiasm for history
* the nature of history as reflecting differing perspectives and viewpoints
* the opportunity to contribute to a democratic and socially just society through informed citizenship
* the contribution of past and present peoples to our shared heritage.

[History K–10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012.

## Learning across the curriculum

Learning across the curriculum content, including the cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities, assists students to achieve the broad learning outcomes defined in the NESA Statement of Equity Principles, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December 2008) and in the Australian Government’s Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (2013).

Cross-curriculum priorities enable students to develop understanding about and address the contemporary issues they face.

The cross-curriculum priorities are:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
* Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
* Sustainability.

General capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to assist students to live and work successfully in the 21st century.

The general capabilities are:

* Critical and creative thinking
* Ethical understanding
* Information and communication technology capability
* Intercultural understanding
* Literacy
* Numeracy
* Personal and social capability.

The NESA syllabuses include other areas identified as important learning for all students:

* Civics and citizenship
* Difference and diversity
* Work and enterprise

[History K–10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012.

## Becoming familiar with the History K-10 Syllabus

These questions are designed to help familiarize teachers with the course requirements.

| 1. How many hours of mandatory history at each stage? |
| --- |
| 1. What do the ‘learn to’ statements describe? |
| 1. From reading the rationale, how would you describe the purpose of ‘Thinking historically’? |
| 1. What are the key skills that the syllabus emphasizes should be taught? |
| 1. What is the purpose of a site study? What are the syllabus requirements for Stages 4 and 5 regarding site studies? |
| 1. What is a perspective? How can perspectives be taught in K–10 history? |
| 1. On which page of the history syllabus is the glossary? |

## Historical skills and concepts reflection

The NSW History 7–10 Syllabus requires students to develop skills in:

* Comprehension – chronology, terms and concepts
* Analysis and use of sources
* Perspectives and interpretations
* Empathetic understanding
* Research
* Explanation and communication

### An inquiry based approach to understanding history

A study of history examines the past to help explain how people, places and events have shaped our world today. Through a process of historical inquiry, students study the key historical concepts of:

* Cause and effect
* Change and continuity
* Significance
* Perspectives
* Empathy
* Contestability

Understanding the past requires us to seek out knowledge as well as apply historical skills to determine why events occurred and what motivated the people to take the action they took. This is an inquiry based approach which helps students to examine different historical interpretations of an event, group or person. An inquiry based approach helps students to engage with the problems and issues of history. Historical inquiry is not open-ended or unguided. Explicit teaching of base concepts and knowledge is a core element of strong historical inquiry and the teacher should be involved at each step to ensure the historical inquiry is effective and meaningful.

Through engaging with historical inquiry, students explore the different stories, perspectives and interpretations of the past using a range of sources. They also use this evidence to provide their own point of view using historical research and skills. These skills are outlined in the [continuum of learning](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10/continuum-of-learning) in History K–10 Syllabus which is available to download from the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) website.

#### Planning to teach skills

Skills in history must be taught in connection to content. Skills need to be practised and reinforced throughout a teaching and learning sequence.

When planning a skills based lesson consider the following:

* What skills and/or outcomes do I want students to develop?
* What knowledge and skills must the student already know and be able to do in order to apply this new skill?
* How can I connect the content being learnt to the desired skill?
* What scaffolds or steps are needed?
* How much time will the demonstration and practice of the skill require?
* How will I assess whether the skill has been learnt?
* How can I ensure that the skill is maintained and transferred to other units?

This resource includes helpful insights and resources regarding following skills:

* using historical sources
* chronology
* questioning
* gathering oral histories
* historical inquiry
* narrative, role play and drama.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Historical skills | Confident | Developing |
| **Comprehension: chronology, terms and concepts**  read and understand historical texts  sequence historical events to demonstrate the relationship between different periods, people and places  use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts |  |  |
| **Analysis and use of sources**  identify different types of sources  identify the origin, content, context and purpose of primary and secondary sources  process and synthesise information from a range of sources as evidence in an historical argument  evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources for a specific historical inquiry |  |  |
| **Perspectives and interpretations**  identify and analyse the reasons for different perspectives in a particular historical context  recognise that historians may interpret events and developments differently |  |  |
| **Empathetic understanding**  interpret history through the actions, values, attitudes and motives of people in the context of the past |  |  |
| **Research**  ask and evaluate different kinds of questions about the past to inform an historical inquiry  plan historical research to suit the purpose of an investigation  identify, locate, select and organise information from a variety of sources, using information and communications technology (ICT) and other methods |  |  |
| **Explanation and communication**  develop historical texts, particularly explanations and historical arguments that use evidence from a range of sources  select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written and digital) to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences and for different purposes |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Historical concepts | Confident | Developing |
| **Continuity and change**  reasons for change and continuity in a particular historical context, for example rights and freedoms of groups in Australian society |  |  |
| **Cause and effect**  intended and unintended causes and consequences of a particular historical event or development, for example the Industrial Revolution |  |  |
| **Perspectives**  the reasons for different perspectives in a particular historical context, for example Turkish and Australian views of the Gallipoli campaign |  |  |
| **Empathetic understanding**  the actions, values, attitudes and motives of people in the context of the past |  |  |
| **Significance**  the reasons why the importance of an event, development or individual may change over time, for example commemoration of Anzac Day |  |  |
| **Contestability**  historical sources, events or issues may be interpreted differently by historians depending on their perspectives and methods of inquiry |  |  |

[History K-10 concepts and skills](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10/historical-concepts-and-skills) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2019.

### Knowledge audit

Answer the following questions with reference to your current school’s teaching and learning programs and the stages you are teaching – this is for your reflection only.

| List the topics on which you have good background knowledge and need little support. |
| --- |
| List the topics about which you will need to do additional reading/research and require more support. |
| List the topics about which you will need to do a lot of reading/research and need significant support. |

## What is history?

At its most basic level, history is everything that has happened in the past; however, determining exactly what happened in the past can be highly contestable. History is also an inquiry or investigation into what happened in the past. An investigation into the past requires historians to ask questions and use evidence to discover what happened.

History also encompasses the finished product of historians’ inquiries, which can take the form of academic articles, academic and popular history books, textbooks, documentaries or even online projects. Such histories are historians’ interpretations of what happened in the past, based on their investigation and research. These histories are shaped by the kind of questions asked about the past and by the sources selected or available to the historian.

### Questions asked by historians

* How do we know what happened?
* What evidence is left?
* What’s fact and what’s opinion?
* Whose version of what happened is reliable? How do we determine this?
* Is there more than one perspective to examine?
* Why did particular events happen?
* Is there more than one explanation?
* What were the consequences?
* Were the consequences the same for everyone?
* What is the significance of the individual/event/artefact?
* How have past events and their consequences helped shape Australia and/or the world as it is today?

### Historical perspectives

Each historian writes about the past from a particular point of view. New research and varying perspectives ensure that history is a dynamic process that is never static. History is an ongoing intellectual debate between historians, and students need to be aware of a range of perspectives. Historians could be influenced by their gender, age, family and cultural background, education, religion, values, political beliefs, their life experiences and the time in which they live.

Until the 1970s, the focus of academic and school history in Australia was predominantly on political and military history revolving around powerful and influential males. The histories of Aboriginal people, women, migrants, convicts, workers, the local area and social history were often ignored. However, gradually historians began to include these perspectives in their investigations, allowing more voices to be heard. Histories written from a range of perspectives help to provide a more complete picture of Australia’s past.

A national history needs to include a balance of political, military and socio-cultural perspectives and to include the experiences of a range of people, not just the prominent and powerful. Our country’s history includes successes and failures. An understanding of all perspectives of our history can help us see how Australia came to be the nation it is today.

## Using historical sources

Historians get their information from two different kinds of sources: primary and secondary. Primary sources are first-hand sources. Secondary sources are second-hand sources, created after the event being studied. This is a very basic definition – as you become more confident with sources, you should explore the complexities further.

To understand this, picture the following scenario:

There has been a fire in a science lab at the school. The description of what happened that a student gives to the police is a primary source because it comes from someone who was there at the actual time of the accident. The story that other students tell their parents that afternoon is a secondary source because these students did not actually witness it. The students are presenting an interpretation or perspective of the incident.

### Sources and evidence

Historians base their research on sources that are relevant to their inquiry. They need to analyse these sources to discover if they hold any evidence that will be relevant to their particular historical inquiry. The evidence is the information contained within the source and historians can retrieve it by asking relevant questions. Thus, a source is not the same as evidence; a source becomes evidence if it is used to answer a question on the past. It may be evidence for one aspect of history but not for another. Some sources contain useful information but often not all of the evidence that is needed in the inquiry.

### Source analysis in a nutshell

What is it?

Can I trust it?

What does it tell me?

What questions does it raise? How can I go about finding answers to these questions?

When using sources in the classroom, it should be purposeful and meaningful. Historians do not let questions guide their use of sources; rather, the questions should come from the sources. To engage students in source work, be sure to select sources that are at an appropriate level for the stage and that have meaningful links to their particular study.

### Primary sources

Primary sources are interesting to read or interpret as they give us first hand ‘you are there’ insights into the past. Historians use primary sources as an important tool for developing an understanding and knowledge of an event Primary sources serve as the evidence a historian uses in developing an interpretation and in building an argument to support that interpretation. It is important to note that primary sources are not inherently superior to secondary sources – they are simply one way to gather information about the past.

#### Examples of primary sources that we may use are:

* personal sources such as letters, diaries, personal narratives, photographs (after 1850s), paintings, memoirs and oral history
* official sources such as newspapers, government publications and archives, speeches, birth and death certificates, shipping lists, court records, council records, maps, military records such as enlistment papers
* artefacts such as gravestones, buildings, war memorials, foundation plaques, war medals, tools, household implements.

**Vrroom: Using primary sources**

[Vrroom](http://vrroom.naa.gov.au/about/primary-sources.aspx) is the virtual reading room of the National Archives of Australia. This page is a guide for users beginning archival research on how to use primary sources.

#### Interpreting primary sources

Primary sources require interpretation. It is not always possible to understand what a primary source means, especially if it is from a time or culture significantly different to our own. It is therefore necessary to try to understand what the source can tell us about the past.

General questions to help interpret primary sources

**What is it?**

* the type of source and what it contains.
* Is it a letter, newspaper article, photograph, document?
* Is it a primary or a secondary source?

**What does it show?**

* Identify images, symbols, characters.
* What are the key words and what do they mean?
* What is it about?

**When was the source written, produced, made?**

* At the time of events described or later?
* How much later – 5 years or 100?

**Who wrote, produced or made it?**

* Is it an eyewitness, someone involved in events described or someone writing about what they have heard or researched?
* From whose perspective is the source written?

**Why was it written or produced?**

* Are there personal motives, for example letter to parents?
* Are there political reasons, for example censored newspaper article?
* Is it propaganda, for example recruitment poster?

**How is it written or produced?**

* Does it give a particular point of view?
* Does it give a detached, balanced account?
* Is it biased either for or against the issue?
* How useful is it for an historian researching a particular aspect of history?

**Context**

* What historical event/issue/personality is it describing?
* What else is happening at the time the source was created?

#### Examples of primary sources with guiding questions

**Photographs/images:**

* Who took the photograph/created the image?
* What does it show?
* Where was it taken?
* Where was it published?
* What is its date? Location?
* What is its caption?
* What is written about it?
* Why was it taken?
* Was it posed?
* What further questions do you need to ask?

If we know very little about a photograph/image, it will be difficult to determine reliability. We need to know its origin or provenance.

**Physical artefacts:**

* What is it?
* What is it made from?
* What size is it?
* Where did it come from?
* When was it made and by whom?
* What was its function?
* What is its significance?
* How has this source been interpreted by others?
* Is this type of artefact still in use today? If not, what is used in its place?
* What else was found with it?
* What does it tell about its society?

**Buildings and monuments:**

* What is its location/address?
* What type of building/monument is it?
* When was it built?
* What materials is it made from?
* What was its original purpose?
* How is it used today?
* How has it changed over time?
* How is it decorated or what symbols are on it? What do they mean?
* What condition is it in now?
* What is the future of the building?
* How important is it as a heritage building?
* How does it contribute to our understanding of the past?

**Cartoons**

Cartoons may be an important historical source, yet they are one of the most difficult for students to understand. By following several steps in deconstructing a cartoon, students learn to understand the broader historical meaning.

Cartoons have historically been used to poke fun at authority figures, criticise political actions, decisions and policies and to comment upon historical events. The message conveyed in cartoons is sometimes a conscious manipulation of the reader in the form of propaganda.

Students particularly need to understand the ‘stock’ characters and symbols used in different time periods, such as the small boy representing Australia at the time of Federation, the fierce portrayals of our ‘enemies’ such as the brutish German ‘Hun’ of World War I and the sinister depictions of Chinese migrants. The following process may guide students in their analysis of a cartoon.

1. Examine the cartoon for details: people, buildings, background, dress and clues for historical data. What is the date, title, caption and source? What is happening in the cartoon?
2. Symbols – what characters are represented or what symbols can be identified? Are they used for emotive purposes?
3. Background context – to what issue/event is the cartoon referring? What background knowledge can be added?
4. Bias – who drew the cartoon? What viewpoint is being expressed?
5. Interpret the meaning. What is the overall message of the cartoon? Explain in your own words what the cartoonist is saying.
6. Evaluate its effectiveness. How does the cartoon attempt to influence the reader? Is it successful? What would the responses to the cartoon have been from different groups at the time? How influential was it at the time?

If you encounter a primary source that you don’t understand it is useful to look up a secondary source to help you place that source in its historical context.

### Using secondary sources

Secondary sources are those sources produced after the period or event under investigation. They may include histories written over one hundred years after the event, later newspaper accounts, biographies, documentaries, political commentaries and encyclopedias.

Secondary sources may provide an overview of an event or issue, different opinions and/ or interpretations of events, access to statistics, photographs, maps and other sources that may provide the latest research and scholarship on a particular historical subject.

To help interpret secondary sources the following questions can help:

* Who wrote it?
* When was it written?
* What sources were used to write it?
* Are these sources reliable?
* What has been omitted?
* Why was it written?
* Who was the intended audience?
* Have any facts been omitted?
* Have emotive phrases or words been used?
* Has the writer got an agenda or underlying motive?

Students can ascertain the usefulness and reliability of secondary sources by considering the following elements:

* critical audience
* access to a range of sources
* able to be corroborated
* benefit of hindsight
* emotional detachment.

#### Three ways to use a secondary source

* **As a collection of facts**

Use a secondary source if you need to find a particular piece of information quickly. You might need to know, for example, where Gallipoli is located, what year Gough Whitlam was dismissed or the names of Aboriginal nations in your area.

* **As a source of background material**

If you are teaching one topic but you need to build your knowledge about what else was happening at that time, or what happened earlier, you could use a secondary source to find the background material that you need. For example, if you are teaching the Great Depression in Australia, you may use a secondary source to help you see which other countries were affected, or what the 1920s were like.

* **As an interpretation**

Since the facts do not speak for themselves, it is necessary for the historian to give them some shape and to put them in an order that people can understand. This is called an interpretation. Many secondary sources provide not only information but also a way of making sense of that information. You should use a secondary source if you want to understand how the writer makes sense of a particular person, trend or event.

### Teacher activity – design a source analysis worksheet

Choose a source for a topic that you are teaching and design a series of questions students can use to analyse the sources, using the scaffold provided.

| Syllabus topic: |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student will learn about: |  |
| Syllabus outcome: |  |
| Source(s) reference: |  |

Compose questions that ask about:

| What? |  |
| --- | --- |
| When? |  |
| Who? |  |
| Why? |  |
| How? |  |
| Context |  |

## Chronology and time

Recent research has commonly identified the need for children to deliberately develop an understanding of time. Developing a sense of time enables us to place ourselves in a range of contexts – family, community, nation, global and so on. It helps us to see our place in the span of human history, to understand the relationship of modern urban and industrial society to the sweep of humanity’s presence on the planet. Through a sense of time we are helped to interpret our own lives, to understand current issues, and to make sense of the man-made landscape.

The development of the concept of time is, however, fraught with difficulties. Firstly it is bound up with language issues. Children readily use language to place in time events in their own lives – the problem is posed by more distant periods of the past and the range of words that are used to describe them. Thus, we have vague phrases (‘long ago’, ‘in olden times’), words that describe time spans (‘generations’, ‘decade’), locations placed by events (‘when granny was a girl’), sizeable chunks of time (‘medieval’, ‘mesolithic’) and more precise terms (‘Victorian’, Renaissance’).

For really precise locations in time we shift from words to numbers and encounter the confusion of explaining that dates numbered in the 1800s, for example, are in fact in the nineteenth century. It is during late primary to early secondary schooling that children can begin to match dates and events in a consistently accurate way.

These abilities are dependent upon quality instruction without structured and meaningful support, specialized time language (such as ‘1701–1799 equals the 18th century’) may not be mastered. The ability to sequence is a fundamental feature of historical understanding; indeed it could be argued that the past is chaos – until sequenced. It is through sequencing that we develop an understanding of causation. We use sequencing when considering short and long term consequences of events and it forms the basis of judgements that we make about the most difficult of ideas.

Sequencing helps provide a sense of connections in the past and present and of patterns of time. It depends on:

1. being able to place appropriate terms in a correct time sequence
2. being able to describe the time distances between items
3. being able to relate items to their appropriate contexts, that is. providing a clear contextual justification.

Each of these aspects may vary in difficulty.

### Placing items in correct time sequence

The first stages in this process include:

1. Distinguishing between past and present – here ‘past’ is simply an undifferentiated mass.
2. Being able to distinguish between items from different historical contexts given a number of factors, namely:
   * that only a limited number of contexts are involved
   * that contexts are very distinctly different from one another
   * that distinctions are made through artefacts and visual items rather than written documents.

Therefore, most students at the beginning of Stage 4 can sequence items from various ‘times’, for example, prehistoric, Roman, medieval; however, narrower time spans present problems.

The next level is using dates to sequence the past. A few key dates are commonly regarded as worth learning as useful signposts to be used in negotiating the past. For example, knowing that 1044 marks the Battle of Hastings would allow students to negotiate knowledge of the middles ages more easily, thinking of the ‘before’ and ‘after’. Similarly, knowing the dates for the two world wars would allow students to consider the events before, between and after in context. Still, representing the past numerically is an abstract device that lifts the level of difficulty.

A sequence that describes the progress of level of difficulty may be:

1. distinguishing between the present and an undifferentiated past
2. placing in a time order distinctive items from a very limited number of very different and sizeable historical periods
3. sequencing items from a range of periods that are not easily discernible in character
4. placing items in periods with known descriptions for example Neolithic, Roman, Victorian and so on
5. placing items in quite precise periods and in relation to a limited number of dates
6. being able to cope with a complexity of dates, a range of descriptions of the same period (for example 18th century/classical age/Georgian times) and quite subtle differences.

### Durations of time

Sequencing activities such as placing items on a chronological timeline are bound up with both mathematical understanding and addressing the issue of duration of time. We may wish to develop a sense of how long the Roman occupation of Britain lasted or of the slow pace of change in one period, and its rapidity in another. Sometimes the ‘patch’ approach (curriculum that is based in depth studies that are not always explicitly connected chronologically) to history does not always address the importance of duration of time. The concept of time and its passage is one that is often overlooked in the history classroom yet quite important so that students don’t believe that all ‘ages’ were of the same duration.

#### Relating items to their context

It is important when sequencing time to make sure that students are aware that the following are misconceptions:

* colour pictures are more recent than black and white ones
* clean places are more recent than dirty ones
* well equipped and comfortable environments are more recent than those that are bleak and sparsely furnished.

#### The syllabus and time

The following is a summary of the requirements of the NSW History K–10 Syllabus in relation to time.

* Identify major periods of historical time.
* Sequence people, society and events within specific time periods.
* Define the terminology and concepts of historical time, including year, decade, generation, century, age, BC/AD, BCE/CE.
* Interpret and construct timelines.
* Sequence events to show an understanding of continuity, change and causation.

Note that numeracy skills are required when teaching concepts and skills relating to time. It can be challenging to explicitly teach numeracy skills but it is important to allow students opportunities to implement concepts and skills into a historical context. If students struggle particularly with the numeracy requirements associated with these aspects of the history syllabus, it can be worthwhile to consult with the mathematics faculty to develop a collaborative approach to supporting students.

### Student activity – pre-test about understanding of time

This should take Stage 4 students between 5 and 15 minutes to complete. The test addresses students’ understanding of dating systems, centuries and time related vocabulary. This will help you understand knowledge gaps and their grasp of basic time concepts.

Understanding time

1. Which century are we living in?
2. What do the letters BC stand for after a date?
3. What do the letters AD mean after a date?
4. What do the letters CE stand for after a date?
5. What do the letters BCE stand for after a date?
6. If federation occurred in 1901, in which century did federation take place?
7. What century were the following years in?
   1. 1537 AD
   2. 637 AD
   3. 87 AD
   4. 1900 AD
   5. 337 BC
   6. 87 BC
8. Name any year from these centuries:
   1. fourteenth century AD
   2. ninth century AD
   3. third century BC
   4. Julius Caesar first landed in Britain in 55 BC. He came back a year later. What year was it then?
   5. If someone offered to sell you a coin dated 55 BC would it be worth a lot of money? Give reasons for your answer.
9. Explain the meaning of the following:
   * chronology
   * decade
   * century
   * millennium
   * era
   * anachronism
10. Give an example of an anachronism.

When students have completed the test, analyse their responses to examine where there are gaps in their understanding of time. What activities might you devise in order to rectify any deficiencies in their understanding of time?

### Time terminology

| AD | Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord) |
| --- | --- |
| Age | A particular period of history with distinctive characteristics, for example. The Ice Age, The Bronze Age, The Middle Ages |
| Anachronism | When something is placed or occurs outside its proper historical time |
| BC | Before Christ |
| BCE | Before the Common Era (instead of BC) |
| CE | Common Era (instead of AD) |
| Century | A period of one hundred years |
| Chronology | Placing events and dates in historical order of time |
| Circa | Around the time of |
| Decade | 10 years |
| Era | A particular period of time distinguished by a particular personality or event, for example The Elizabethan Era; a point of time from which succeeding years are numbered, for example. The Common Era; a major division of geological time, for example The Precambrian Era |
| Generation | All the people living at the same time period of approximately the same age |
| Millenniums | 1000 years |
| Year | A time period of 365 days |

#### Dates and centuries

The first year of the Common Era calendar was year 1 – there is no year zero

When naming a century we have to remember to add a number.

* For example, 1810 was in the 19th century, 1910 was in the 20th century and 2010 was in the 21st century.

The last year of a century ends with a zero and the first year of the next century ends with the number 1.

The last year of a century ends with a zero – in this case we do not add a number to name the century, for example 1800 was in the 18th century, 1900 was in the 19th century, and 2000 was in the 20th century.

St Paul’s Cathedral London was built between 1675 and 1710 to replace the Cathedral destroyed by the Great Fire of London. There has been a Cathedral dedicated to St Paul since 604 AD. The first Cathedral dedicated to St Paul at this site was built in the 7th Century. The building of this Cathedral began in the 17th Century and was completed in the 18th Century.



By Sanil Photography licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/ae/St._Pauls_Cathedral.jpg/512px-St._Pauls_Cathedral.jpg)

Note that it is common for dates in the Common Era to have no letters after the number. For example 2010 means 2010 CE or 2010 AD.

#### Naming centuries

| 1st century | 1 to 100 |
| --- | --- |
| 2nd century | 101 to 200 |
| 3rd century | 201 to 300 |
| 4th century | 301 to 400 |
| 5th century | 401 to 500 |
| 6th century | 501 to 600 |
| 7th century | 601 to 700 |
| 8th century | 701 to 800 |
| 9th century | 801 to 900 |
| 10th century | 901 to 1000 |
| 11th century | 1001 to 1100 |
| 12th century | 1101 to 1200 |
| 13th century | 1201 to 1300 |
| 14th century | 1301 to 1400 |
| 15th century | 1401 to 1500 |
| 16th century | 1501 to 1600 |
| 17th century | 1601 to 1700 |
| 18th century | 1701 to 1800 |
| 19th century | 1801 to 1900 |
| 20th century | 1901 to 2000 |
| 21st century | 2001 to 2100 |

### Calculating time distances between different dates

#### When working with two dates in the Common Era (CE)

Time distance is: later date minus earlier date

For example, Ho Chi Minh fought the French from 1945 to 1954. For how long did Ho Chi Minh fight the French?

Answer: 1954 – 1945 = 9 years.

#### When working with one date BCE and one date CE

Time distance is: earlier date plus later date

For example, China occupied Vietnam from 111BCE to 939 CE. For how long did China occupy Vietnam?

Answer: 111 + 939 = 1050 years.

#### When working with two dates BCE

Time distance is: earlier date minus later date

For example, the Trieu dynasty ruled in Vietnam from 207 BCE to 111BCE. For how long did the Trieu dynasty rule?

Answer: 207 – 111 = 96 years.

### Teacher practice – working with time

Calculate the time distances in years.

| 1000 BCE to 2010 = | 3000 BCE to 2000 BCE= | 1200 to 1956 = |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 50 BCE to 1250 = | 44000 BCE to 1200 BCE= | 1974 to 2001 = |
| 350 BCE to 1069 = | 50000 BCE to 18 BCE= | 1965 to 2010 = |
| 111 BCE to 10 = | 26400 BCE to 1300 BCE= | 1998 to 2011 = |
| 2001 BC to 10 AD = | 40 BCE to 37 BCE = | 1914 to 1919 = |
| 660 BC to 105 AD = | 120 BCE to 99 BCE = | 1301 to 1580 = |
| 1 BCE to 370 CE = | 3980 BCE to 27 BCE = | 850 to 1280 = |
| 565 BCE to 1025 = | 2 BCE to 1 BCE = | 1010 to 1089 = |

What centuries are the following dates? For each date, identify a significant historical event.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Century | Significant event |
| 5 March 1953 |  |  |
| 14 July 1858 |  |  |
| 1690 |  |  |
| 1750 |  |  |
| 30 Sept 1929 |  |  |
| 22 April 1451 |  |  |
| 23 May 1100 |  |  |
| 1479 BCE |  |  |

### Teacher activity – ‘understanding time’

**Design a lesson or activity using the skill of ‘understanding time’.**

Which stage or year the lesson is aimed at

Outcomes you are targeting

The content you will be teaching

Resources you will be using

How this skill supports learning for this particular syllabus content and stage

## Questioning

Questioning is an important historical skill. It is estimated that 30% of a teacher’s time is spent asking questions – however the rate and nature of oral questioning vary from subject to subject. How questions are formulated and used can be a good indicator of what students are getting from your teaching. Questions range in difficulty from recall through to evaluation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question type | Example |
| Recall | Give details of events, people or places mentioned in the source |
| Comprehension | What does this evidence say? Do I understand it? Can I picture to myself the scene that it represents? |
| Interpretation | How does the evidence compare with my knowledge of the historical context? What was the writer’s purpose in writing? |
| Extrapolation | Does it contradict other evidence? What new light does it shed? |
| Invention | ‘If you had been there?’ questions. What if? questions |
| Evaluation | What is the value of this evidence? Is it trustworthy? What is your opinion about the course of action taken? |

Students need to be able to respond to a range of questions: comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation questions. Questioning skills can be developed through a variety of tasks including:

* classroom discussion
* socratic circles
* meaningful source work
* debates, both silent and traditional
* hypotheticals
* interviews
* mock trials

### Teacher activity

1. Using the hierarchy of questions, analyse some textbook activities and identify the types of questions that have been asked. What is the distribution of ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ order questions? If there are fewer ‘higher’ order questions, try to formulate some that might be added.
2. Design some questions for a lesson that you are planning or have taught. Think of the key questions that you wish to ask. Think about the sequencing and how you might include some ‘thinking’ questions. Finally, consider how the questions you have framed for the lesson could be simplified to create succinct learning intentions and success criteria.

### Teacher activity – ‘questioning’

**Design a lesson or activity using the skill of ‘questioning’.**

Which stage or year the lesson is aimed at

Outcomes you are targeting

The content you will be teaching

Resources you will be using

How this skill supports learning for this particular syllabus content and stage

## Oral histories – why?

Oral history is a legitimate method of gathering and recording historical material and provides active student engagement and learning through their historical environment.

Advantages of incorporating oral history into your teaching include:

* Oral history involves inquiry – learning by doing.
* Students gain experience in gathering evidence through interviewing and recording.
* It helps students to recognise that history involves ordinary people, not necessarily only the historically powerful, rich and famous.
* It develops students’ identification with their local area and empathy with people, through personal contact.
* It personalises history and brings with it a human face. This is an important exercise in challenging stereotypes and preconceptions of the past.
* It helps to demonstrate the subjectivity of historical interpretation in both oral and written accounts of the past.
* It develops in students an awareness of the process of historical construction.

### Sensitivities and words of caution

* Students need to be aware that evidence gathered through oral history must be subjected to the same evaluative process that is applied to other sources. Material may be subject to half-truths, inaccuracies, bias and faulty memory.
* It will take time for students to develop the appropriate skills.
* Start in a small way such as bringing a guest speaker into the classroom for discussion.
* Obviously, much will depend on the maturity and ability of your students.
* Practice questioning technique, use of equipment and role playing in class.
* Some subjects may have been approached many times before, so students may be reluctant to do so again. Students will need to respect the wishes of the subject.
* There may be a reticence to speak on some topics. Be aware of cultural barriers and if students wish to research on aspects of Aboriginal history, consult with the local Aboriginal community first. t may take time to build and gain confidence.
* Check the language of questions, keep them simple, avoid slang and jargon and practice open-ended questions.
* Some memories will not be shared, as they may be too sensitive and private.

### The process of gathering oral history – a guide for students

#### Before the interview

* Be specific about your topic, set clear aims and know the purpose of the exercise. What do you aim to achieve?
* How will you locate your subject? Why have they been chosen? What do you know of the subject?
* Consult with the local community.
* Construct your questionnaire and the types of questions to be asked. Develop open-ended questions that will provide more detailed responses.
* Establish contact with your subject by letter, phone or email.
* Arrange an initial meeting before the interview. Provide the subject with an overview of your research and the questions to be asked.
* Decide on an interview venue – quiet, but where the subject will feel relaxed. Locate photos, maps, and newspaper articles to jog memories.
* Does the subject consent to being recorded?
* Check all the necessary equipment. If you are using a smart phone or laptop computer to record the interview, be sure to bring along a charging cord.
* Before the interview, record a brief introduction with name of subject, interviewer, date, place, and topic.

#### The interview

* Group your questions under broad headings.
* Two hours is a useful rough guide for an in depth oral history interview.
* As the interviewer, you do not have to stick rigidly to the prepared questions. You may wish to follow up on other interesting material raised by the subject. Further probing and encouragement may be needed.
* Give the subject time to think and to respond.
* Try not to interrupt.
* Show interest and courtesy during the interview. Be aware of any possible negative body language, as this may affect the interviewee.
* Be sensitive to topics that the subject does not wish to discuss.
* Provide an opportunity for the subject to listen to the tape and change parts if necessary. Later, present the subject with a thank you letter and copy of the tape or transcript of the interview.
* Honour any agreement with your subject regarding publication or access to material.

#### Post-interview

* How will you present your findings?
* How and where will the information be stored?
* Label the tape/transcript with name, date, location, interviewer, and topic.

## Historical inquiry

Asking students to conduct their own historical research is an important aspect of teaching and learning history. Once students are able to interpret and evaluate a source then they can move onto selecting sources and resources to construct a set of inquiries. Student historical inquiries, if they are well organised, can offer plenty of challenge and scope for individual initiative. Students need to develop comprehensive research skills as a part of their study of history. As well as knowing the explicit phases in the [information process](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-across-the-curriculum/school-libraries/teaching-and-learning), they need to learn how to constantly evaluate the information they are receiving. The steps below can be used with any source material and work effectively when students are accessing information from the internet. These five historical inquiry steps teach students that they must manipulate and engage with information they encounter and not just cut and paste the data into a standard report. Talk to your teacher librarian about teaching and resource support for research, information and inquiry skills.

Historical inquiry involves specific steps:

1. Question
2. Research
3. Analyse
4. Evaluate
5. Communicate

### Useful definitions

**Analyse** – this step seems simple to teachers but is often a challenge for students. Source analysis in step 3 requires students to ask these questions of a source:

* What is the ‘core content’ that needs to be addressed to respond to the inquiry question/s?
* Does the source’s content relate substantially to the ‘core content’ of the question/s?
* Is this source **useful** to the historical inquiry?
* A source may be determined as useful because it:
  + provides an interesting perspective on the past
  + shows us the values and motivations of people in a particular era
  + contains historical detail such as dates
  + helps us to empathise with people’s experiences in the past **or**
  + due to the quantity of relevant, historical information.
* Does the source confirm historical arguments or opinions that you previously held? Does the source challenge you to reformulate your arguments or opinions?

It is at this step that students begin to use source material to develop an informed argument or opinion that addresses the historical inquiry question/s.

**Evaluate** – students determine the reliability of each of the sources to be used in answering the question/s. For each source students need to ask, “Is this source to be believed?”

Students must take into account the origin, values, purpose and context of the source in order to answer the question/s.

Primary sources and secondary sources can both be considered reliable sources of information. A primary source may be reliable because it is produced by a credible witness to an historical event. A secondary source may be reliable because it is produced by an expert historian, or a trustworthy organisation, who has used quality primary materials to produce the source.

However, sources used will often have issues of reliability, such as bias within accounts of a witness or author. Such sources can still be utilised as long as students include reflections on the sources’ bias, noting the way in which bias places limitations on the use of the sources as evidence.

Step 1 question: use the language of time to shape questions to plan and develop investigation
Step 2 research: acquiring primary and/or secondary sources which may be related to the area of inquiry
Step 3 analyse: do the sources contain information that can be considered useful for this inquiry? Process information to begin to develop an unformed argument or opinion.
Step 4 evaluate: the reliability if the sources, i.e. can the information processed in the previous step be believed? Are there limitations to the sources believability?
Step 5 communicate: synthesize information from sources, formulate a perspective and develop an historical text to describe what occurred.


## Historical inquiry continuum

Early Stage 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Task | Detail |
| 1 | Question | Students are provided with **or** pose direct question/s about the past. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, who, when, find, compare and contrast, describe and retell. |
| 2 | Research | Students identify primary and/or secondary source/s, either provided by the teacher or collected with guidance. |
| 3 | Analyse | Students discuss how collated primary and/or secondary source/s will be used to answer the inquiry question/s |
| 4 | Evaluate | Students, with teacher guidance, discuss the reliability of the source/s to the inquiry question/s. |
| 5 | Communicate | Students relate a story about the past, using the language associated with time and change and primary and/or secondary source/s. |

Stage 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Task | Detail |
| 1 | Question | Students are provided with **or** pose direct question/s to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, who, when, find, compare and contrast, describe and retell. |
| 2 | Research | Students identify primary and/or secondary source/s, either provided by the teacher or collected with guidance. |
| 3 | Analyse | Students, with teacher guidance, identify historical source/s that are relevant to the inquiry question/s. Students are guided to develop an historical opinion. |
| 4 | Evaluate | Students, with teacher guidance, discuss the reliability of the source/s to the inquiry question/s. |
| 5 | Communicate | Students present a historical narrative, using the language of time and primary and/or secondary source/s. |

Stage 2

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Task | Detail |
| 1 | Question | Students are provided with and pose a range of research question/s to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include; how, what, why, compare and contrast, describe, discuss, identify, and recount. |
| 2 | Research | Students identify and locate primary and/or secondary source/s, with teacher guidance. |
| 3 | Analyse | Students identify historical information, relating the source/s to the key content of the question/s. Teachers assist students to determine the usefulness of the source/s to the inquiry question/s. Students are assisted in determining which source/s to include or exclude, by the teacher, and begin to develop an historical opinion. |
| 4 | Evaluate | Students are guided to discuss the reliability of the source material, reflecting on ‘believability’. |
| 5 | Communicate | Students present a text, such as a narrative or description, using historical terms and concepts that incorporate relevant primary and secondary sources. |

Stage 3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Task | Detail |
| 1 | Question | Students are provided with research question/s **or** may identify and develop their own questions to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, compare and contrast, describe, discuss, identify, and recount. |
| 2 | Research | Students identify and locate a range of primary and secondary sources, using some sources recommended by the teacher. |
| 3 | Analyse | Students interpret historical information, relating sources to the key content of the question/s. Students determine the usefulness of the sources to the inquiry question/s, taking into account the sources’ origins, historical detail, purposes and points of view. Teachers provide guidance in how to determine which sources to include or exclude, beginning the development of an argument or opinion. |
| 4 | Evaluate | Students examine the reliability of the source material, reflecting on potential bias. |
| 5 | Communicate | Students present a text, particularly a narrative or description, incorporating relevant primary and secondary sources. Students use historical terms and concepts and identify and describe perspectives. |

Stage 4

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Task | Detail |
| 1 | Question | Students are provided with research question/s **or** may identify and develop their own questions to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, account for, compare, contrast, describe, discuss, explain, identify, outline and recount. |
| 2 | Research | Students identify and locate a range of primary and secondary sources, using teacher guidance as required. Teacher will provide some recommended source material. |
| 3 | Analyse | Students synthesise the collated historical information and align the sources to the key content in the question/s. Students identify meaning and context to determine the usefulness of the sources to the inquiry, taking into account the sources’ origins, motivations, perspectives and interpretations, values and historical detail. Teachers need to provide guidance in how to determine which sources to include or exclude, as students construct an informed argument or opinion. |
| 4 | Evaluate | Students examine the reliability of the source material, considering authorship, to answer the question/s. |
| 5 | Communicate | Students present a text, organising and presenting their findings about the past, identifying and describing different perspectives relevant to the historical inquiry. Students use historical terms and concepts, identify evidence from sources and acknowledge the sources used. |

Stage 5

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Task | Detail |
| 1 | Question | Students identify and develop their own questions **or** may be provided with research question/s to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, account for, compare, contrast, explain, discuss, analyse, evaluate and justify. |
| 2 | Research | Students identify and locate a range of primary and secondary sources, using teacher guidance as required. Teachers may provide some recommended source material. |
| 3 | Analyse | Students synthesise the collated historical information and align the sources to the key content in the question/s. Students analyse sources to identify the relevance of the historical content to the question/s. Students determine the usefulness of the sources to the inquiry, taking into account the sources’ origins, purposes, motivations, perspectives, values and historical detail. Teachers may need to provide guidance in how to determine which sources to include or exclude, as students construct an informed argument or opinion. |
| 4 | Evaluate | Students justify the reliability of the source material, considering authorship, to answer the question/s. |
| 5 | Communicate | Students present a text, organising and presenting findings about the past, incorporating their own justifications and interpretations relevant to the historical inquiry. Students use historical terms and concepts, identify evidence from sources and acknowledge the sources used. |

### Teacher activity – historical inquiry

**Design a lesson sequence using historical inquiry**

Which stage or year the lesson is aimed at

Outcomes you are targeting

The content you will be teaching

Resources you will be using

How this skill supports learning for this particular syllabus content and stage

## Narrative, role play and drama

### Using narrative

Everyone enjoys stories. The past is full of stories of real people. Historical fiction is widely used in schools and this can be capitalized upon in the history classroom. Narrative is an essential feature of explaining causation, the changing character of a period, and of consequences. If you wish to embrace historical narrative writing with students, it would be worthwhile collaborating with your English faculty to create a robust and rigorous sequence of learning that encompasses both deep historical knowledge and an understanding of literary devices. Possible approaches to this form of sequencing include:

* constructing a narrative from a provided collection of items
* constructing one’s family history
* constructing the story of another family
* writing a biography (less able students may use a limited number of items, to make it a manageable task; a one page scaffold with a few items entered already could be useful)
* drawing a diagram type representation for example the story of someone’s rise to power filled in on a series of steps or as a cartoon or story board
* recounting a story in written form
* recounting a story as an audio or audio/visual presentation for example using Audacity or Moviemaker/Adobe Premiere Elements
* reading and reporting on a work of historical fiction
* using pictures of someone at two or more important moments in their life, arranging them in order and explaining the differences
* basing the story on a series of pictures that may be drawn/cut out and stuck/labelled.

### Teacher activity – design a lesson or activity using narrative

Which stage or year the lesson is aimed at

Outcomes you are targeting

The content you will be teaching

Resources you will be using

How this skill supports learning for this particular syllabus content and stage

### Teaching history through drama

Drama can be an effective way of teaching history. This does not mean that we have to be drama teachers, merely that it is a tool through which to teach. The use of drama aids critical understanding. Drama contains psychological and social aspects that lend themselves to the teaching and learning of history. By putting themselves into the shoes of a character from history, for example, students have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what they are learning and will hopefully find this an engaging way to learn.

Extract from Chris Fleming in Teaching History, HTANSW, 2009.

Many teachers enjoy using drama as a vehicle for engaging students in history and for consolidating student learning. It is important to note that utilising elements of drama within the history classroom does not need to reduce the rigour of the learning – for students to meaningfully participate in any of the activities below, they would need a strong base of knowledge in the given topic or historical era to ensure that the activity was providing learning opportunities. These activities must be designed with rigorous thought and consideration of purpose and place within the curriculum sequence, with learning at the centre.

#### The interview

As the name implies, the interview sets out to interrogate a particular historical figure or a member of a distinct socio-historical group. The basis for success in this kind of improvisation depends on a true level of interaction between different characters and an informed viewpoint from which students can act and respond. Just as the actor sets out to research various historical figures to aid in a faithful representation, the student must undertake their task with similar rigour. Thus, the interview could work very well as a concluding activity to a personal research project or assessment task. A central element to the drama is that it possesses some kind of polemic or conflict. Therefore, interview lends itself particularly well to adversary scenarios (such as debates, police interrogations or courtroom dramas).

#### Re-enactment

The re-enactment is a far more structured activity than the interview, as it attempts to portray a particular event in history with some degree of fidelity. This is a particularly useful activity when an event needs to be looked at in some detail and the ‘staging’ requirements are not heavily impractical (Note: do not attempt a re-enactment of the Battle of Waterloo!).

#### Re-creation

The re-creation is similar in many respects to the re-enactment, but allows for a greater creative freedom, as it does not tie itself to any particular event in the history. This type of activity is very useful as a basis for exploration and the attainment of broad historical accuracy.

##### Important note for all drama based historical activities

These activities should only be done with thought and ethical considerations taken into account – there are a large number of historical events that would be entirely inappropriate to re-enact or re-create. Use discretion and discuss with your colleagues before creating a lesson sequence with re-enactments and re-creations.

### Teacher activity – design a lesson or activity using drama

Which stage or year the lesson is aimed at

Outcomes you are targeting

The content you will be teaching

Resources you will be using

How this skill supports learning for this particular syllabus content and stage

## Site studies – mandatory courses

A site study should be integrated within each of Stages 4 and 5 as a means through which students acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes from experience in the field or by a virtual historical site using information and communications technology (ICT). Site studies enable students to understand their historical environment and participate actively in historical inquiry. A site study can offer a means of interpreting the past and/or recognising how human occupation and use of the site has changed over time, and lead to an understanding of the context in which changes have occurred. They also provide an effective and authentic means to understand and actively engage in the past and help fashion a lifelong interest in history.

### What is a site study?

A site study is an inquiry based examination of a historically or culturally significant location. Site studies may include an investigation of the school and its surroundings or a visit to an archaeological site, a museum, an Aboriginal site (with permission), a specific building, a monument, a local area, an open-air museum or a virtual site available on CD or the internet.

Digital technologies have presented teachers with opportunities to explore virtual historical and heritage site studies with their students. Virtual sites are especially valuable in teaching students how to evaluate online spaces or digital sites for usefulness and reliability as an historical source. They also offer an opportunity to teach some of the skills of investigating an historical site while still remaining within the classroom.

Teachers must identify the outcomes and objectives relevant to the site study. The following suggestions of sites could be considered:

* heritage buildings
* railways and tramways
* factories or industrial sites
* public buildings
* memorials
* private homes of heritage value
* statues
* archaeological sites
* Aboriginal sites
* Parliament House museums
* Australian War Memorial
* national parks and historic sites
* streets and streetscapes
* monuments
* suburbs, towns and villages
* the school and its grounds
* natural environments
* cemeteries
* shops and business districts
* churches and places of worship
* farms and properties
* bridge

### Questions to consider when selecting a site study

Is there a site that can be linked to:

* A topic?
* A specific syllabus outcome?
* An inquiry question?

Before you organise the site study, decide its value by answering the following questions:

* What is the significance of the site at a local, national and/or international level?
* How does the site contribute to our understanding of history?
* What role has the site played to its community?
* Has its usage changed?
* Are there heritage issues to be considered?
* How do I arrange for my students to visit the site?
* Are there any restrictions on student access?
* What do I want my students to see and do at the site?
* How do I program the site study into my lessons?
* Which syllabus outcomes can the study help achieve?
* What preparations need to be made in the classroom before the visit?
* What follow up activities are necessary in the classroom after the visit?
* How will the results be recorded?
* What resources are available? (check with your teacher librarian)

As preparation for the site study, students should become aware of:

* How the site study complements classroom work.
* Syllabus inquiry questions that the study will contribute towards understanding.
* The significance of the site in local, national and/or international history.
* The need to treat all historical sites with respect.
* The outcomes they are working towards.
* What is required of them as an individual and as a group member.
* The way in which material will be recorded on the day.
* The equipment required to record information on the day.
* The follow-up activities required to be completed.
* Deadlines concerning submission of work.

### Sample site study – local cemetery

A cemetery site study is a good opportunity to look at change and continuity within the local area.

#### Stage and syllabus links

Most Stage 5 topics

#### Sample site study inquiry questions

Depth study 1: What was life like in Australia for different groups of people at the turn of the century?

Depth study 2: What were the experiences of non-Europeans in Australia prior to the 1900s?

Core study – depth study 3: What was the impact of the war (WW1 or WW2) on the Australian home front?

Core study – depth study 4: How have the rights and freedoms of minority groups changed within Australia over time?

##### Resources required

Pen and clipboard

##### Possible contacts

Local historical society

‘Friends of the Cemetery Association’

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

##### Preparation required

1. Teacher pre-visit to the cemetery to target particular graves for special notice. This could involve examining grave styles over time, different causes of death, tributes to soldiers from all wars, the graves of different cultures and their geographical placement within the cemetery site. It may also include the placement of the cemetery itself within the community.
2. Teacher to further investigate one of the gravesites, for example online or visit Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
3. Student lesson with excursion sheet (provided below) prior to the visit. This is to save time at the cemetery so students know what they are looking for. Also, this is a good opportunity to discuss appropriate behaviour and expectations at a cemetery especially, if it is still in use.

### Student worksheet – site study – local cemetery

Your task is to research some of our past in our local area by using evidence in the cemetery. Record your findings on this worksheet for analysis back in class.

There are three tasks to complete.

Task 1: Find the grave where someone who has made a contribution to the local community is buried.

| Name | Gender |
| --- | --- |
| Date of birth | Date of death |
| Contribution to the local community. | Do you think their gender was significant in determining the way they could contribute to the community? Explain your answer. |
| How was the person’s contribution to the community recognized? | Could that same contribution be made today? Explain? |

Sketch the tombstone here

Task 2: Find the tombstone of another person from the community.

| Name | Gender |
| --- | --- |
| Date of birth | Date of death |

| Other details |
| --- |
| Sketch the tombstone here |

Task 3: Select 5 tombstones from different decades. Record the following details:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of gender | Date and age of death | Occupation | Cause of death | Description of grave |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

### Possible follow up activities

**Task 1: significant local person**

Students have recorded the name and activities of someone regarded as significant in the local community. Follow-up activities should focus on the nature of community activity across time, and how that allows us to draw conclusions about a specific community or broader society. What evidence is needed to support any conclusions?

From task 1, students should be able to discuss what makes a good citizen in the local community.

**Task 2: The death of (random local person)**

Students have recorded the name and details of a person from a randomly selected tombstone. Follow-up activities to further the students’ historical skills may include working with a death certificate if available, or tombstone only, and building up a profile of the person and community from the available evidence. Students should reflect upon what is factual and what is conjecture.

From task 2, students should be able to focus on a particular gravesite to investigate aspects of change, and reinforce the use of primary sources.

**Task 3: tombstones across time**

Students have recorded the name and details of five tombstones. This exercise should lead to reflection upon the changing nature of any community across time, and the role a site like the local cemetery can play in preserving our communal memory of time and place. This could lead to specific classroom discussions around heritage issues.

From task 3, students should be able to observe the impact of changing society and culture over time as reflected in grave styles, causes of death and grave placement of various cultures.

### Preparing a site study

You can design your own site study using the grid below. Think of a site that will be accessible to you and your students. Once you have chosen the topic that you wish to focus upon, use the history syllabus for some suggested site studies.

| Site: | Classes involved: |
| --- | --- |
| Syllabus topic: | Resources required: |
| Syllabus inquiry question: | Possible contacts: |
| Targeted outcomes: | Preparation required: |
| Follow up: | Evaluation: |

## Analysing a website

The internet contains an enormous amount of useful information for the historian. It can provide access to libraries, museums and history experts throughout the world. The internet also contains a lot of irrelevant material that students often use indiscriminately. Students need to be aware that each site is constructed by an individual or an organisation for a purpose. There is little, if any, editing, quality control or censorship of websites. History students need to evaluate a website to know whether the information it contains is useful and reliable.

There are many models for evaluating websites. One is the CRAAP test – an acronym for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose.

The following five criteria are a useful beginning tool for evaluating websites. After applying the criteria, the material contained in the site can be more closely evaluated using the criteria for analysing historical sources.

**1. Decode the URL**

The first step in evaluating a site is to decode its uniform resource locator or URL. This indicates what type of site it is such as government, commercial or educational:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| URL | Type of site | Example | URL decoded |
| edu | education | hsc.csu.edu.au | HSC Online |
| gov | government agency | awm.gov.au | Australian War Memorial |
| net | network related | abc.net.au | Australian Broadcasting |
| com | commercial | smh.com.au | Sydney Morning Herald |
| org | non-profit and research organisations | greenpeace.org | Greenpeace |

**2. Identify the author or creator of the site**

* Does the site show the author or creator?
* Does the site show the author’s qualifications or experience?
* Does the site include an email address for contacting the author?
* Most legitimate and reliable sites include details of the author or creator.

**3. Links**

* Is the site linked to other sites related to the topic?
* Most quality sites link to other related sites.

**4. Purpose**

* Why does the site exist?
* Is it to provide information, to sell something, to persuade you to think a particular way, to promote a particular cause? Identifying the site’s purpose is an important step in evaluation.

**5. Currency**

* Are there dates on the page to indicate when the page was written or last updated?

### Site reliability checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Could be unreliable | Should be reliable |
| Site produced by a private individual but no information is given about them | Site produced by well qualified individuals, for example from universities or respected journalists |
| Site where no information is given about the author or agency | Public organisation which has a clear ethical charter, for example. Amnesty International |
| Site where no author or agency is shown | Government, educational sites or non-profit organisation and research sites |
| Site which uses racist, sexist or violent language to get its message across | Sites which present information objectively rather than emotionally |
| Site contains bias or features stereotypes, distortions and/or exaggerations | Sites which provide a statement of intent which will help you detect a point of view and bias |
| Site which takes extreme viewpoints without providing verifiable evidence | Sites which provide both sides of a discussion, supported by verifiable evidence |
| Site which is not dated | Sites which are dated and recently updated |

### Designing an assessment task

Before you begin working on designing any assessment tasks for history, you should always refer to the [assessment information provided by NESA](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/assessment) on their website as well as your school policy on assessment for each stage.

All formal assessment tasks should:

* be based on syllabus outcomes
* be a valid instrument for what they are designed to assess include criteria to clarify for students what aspects of learning are being assessed
* enable students to demonstrate their learning in a range of task types
* be reliable
* measure what the task intends to assess, and provide accurate information on each student's achievement
* be free from bias and provide evidence that accurately represents a student's knowledge, understanding and skills
* enable students and teachers to use feedback effectively and reflect on the learning process
* be inclusive of and accessible for all students
* be part of an ongoing process where progress is monitored over time.

When designing an assessment task, a backwards mapping approach needs to be established that refers to the ‘stage plan/assessment schedule’ for the subject. This approach must accurately identify which outcomes need to be assessed and what type of task is required for students to complete. The designing of the task must involve a holistic planning of all parts of the task. For examples, the outcomes of the task, the appropriate use of directives, the rubric and the marking criteria.

### Teacher preparation template

A ‘teacher preparation template’ can be helpful when planning and designing the task. The teacher preparation template is not what is handed to students – it is what is attached to the assessment schedule and filed. It must include which outcomes are being assessed and the marking criteria – however these are not necessarily included on the student version of the ‘assessment task sheet’.

**Syllabus name and focus area** – refer to the syllabus to complete this section.

**Outcomes** – outcomes should appear in full – they should not be truncated or rewritten. Their inclusion in the student version, however, can be confusing – for example. ‘selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively about the past’ for a written task. Be aware of this when designing the task and consider placement of outcomes on the page. The assessment task should exclude non-crucial information that crowds the page. This will result in a more student friendly document.

**Background information** – the background information section of the teacher preparation template can include material helpful for other teachers that may use the assessment task, for example ‘this task should be handed out at the end of the xyz unit of work’.

**The task** – the task should answer the question, what are the students actually doing in the assessment task? It should reflect the outcomes being assessed (backward map from the outcomes to the task). It should be explicit – sometimes students are given several pages of words and find it hard to actually identify what is expected of them.

**The rubric** – the rubric guides students as to what they should include in their response. It is especially helpful for less able students. The rubric reflects the task and the outcomes and the marking criteria that follow.

**Marking criteria**

* **Must** address each of the syllabus outcomes that you have included for this task. Extract the main words/phrases of the outcome to be used in the criteria and incorporate this along with language from the ‘task description’ – **do not** rewrite the whole outcome.
* Utilise standards descriptors (outstanding/high/sound/basic/limited) where applicable.
* Where an outcome references multiple aspects of the same concept (for example. ‘creates functional and aesthetic designs’), you may separate each aspect into its own criteria.
* If a task has multiple sections (part A, B, C and so on), a separate marking guideline is required for each section, to align with rubrics.

**Mark range** – it is best to have no more than a 5 level mark range for example 0–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–10. Otherwise things can get murky, for example with a 2 mark range in each level it is easier to give clear feedback to students than for 4 marks.

**Multiple mark criteria** – multiple marking criteria can be useful, for example you may have criteria and give marks for researching and using sources, and also have criteria and separate marks for analysis of those sources and answering the question.

### Sample teacher preparation template

| Syllabus name and topic: | Due date: |
| --- | --- |
| Task focus: | Assessment weight: |

| Outcomes: |
| --- |
| Background information: |
| Task: |
| Rubric: |
| Format: |
| Note:  This sample is for teacher preparation – you would then use the information within this document to structure the assessment task to hand out to students. |

## How to keep up to date

With syllabus changes and professional development.

**SchoolBiz**

[SchoolBiz](https://beta.dec.nsw.gov.au/schoolbiz) is the primary channel for communication to school staff within the department. SchoolBiz is published during the term and includes:

* critical reading
* important dates
* professional learning and development, events and resources
* school administration and management
* program updates
* curriculum and cocurricular
* expressions of interest
* anniversaries and celebrations.

To find out about what is happening in the department please access ‘critical reading’ for up to date information. To supplement accreditation and be informed of professional learning opportunities, access ‘professional learning and development, events and development, events and resources’. Network meetings, quality teaching rounds and professional learning opportunities can be located in SchoolBiz. Environmental Education Centres often post information on fieldwork professional learning activities for K-10.

**HSIE e-NEWS**

HSIE e-NEWS is produced and distributed each term by the HSIE 7-12 advisor through email and the HSIE statewide staffroom. Use the online form to [register](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=muagBYpBwUecJZOHJhv5kUy8uS0k38JMsGGA89ic_O9URUtRNFFOSEhSQzI4MzFZMFU1UFhWTE1JWS4u) for HSIE e-NEWS. Key learning areas of the [HSIE website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/hsie/s4-5/geography/resources) includes information on syllabus implementation and teaching resources.

**HSIE statewide staffroom**

The [HSIE statewide staffroom](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3ace47173b5fe14e16918eac8ca5e40913%40thread.skype/conversations?groupId=cc91cc45-b966-4333-b01f-31e78225fac4&tenantId=05a0e69a-418a-47c1-9c25-9387261bf991) is space for HSIE teachers to collaborate, share resources and seek advice from HSIE curriculum advisors. There are several history specific channels and regular meetings to engage with news and updates in HSIE teaching, as well as professional learning. The statewide staffroom is run through Microsoft Teams.

**NESA News**

[NESA News](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/about/news/newsletters/nesa-news) is a weekly publication distributed to subscribers via email each Monday. Follow the link to subscribe to the email list to ensure you are up to date on:

* HSC and Record of School Achievement (RoSA)
* HSC minimum standards
* syllabus changes, updates and consultations
* determining grades
* examination format updates and specifications
* subject selection
* accreditation
* NESA endorsed professional development

### Teaching and learning strategies

The Department has developed a suite of learning activities and learning tools to integrate information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching practice. This website is available as a resource hub that provides a variety of ICT tools for teachers so they can embed technology into the curriculum.

The [learning activities](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?cache_id=7f11a) selector is characterised by:

* collaboration
* discussion
* feedback and reflection
* guided
* explicit
* demonstration
* experiential
* independent.

The [learning tools](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Browser?cache_id=4ad7b) selector can filter for activities, geographic information or even free tools.

[The teacher toolkit](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/all-tools) has a variety of resources to help teachers establish an engaging and orderly classroom. These include but are not limited to:

* classroom management
* opening activities
* checking for understanding
* partner practice
* group practice
* independent practice
* reading strategies
* games
* closing activities.

[Future focused resources](https://pre.education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum0/learning-for-the-future/Future-focused-resources) has toolkits, information and links. The resources can be filtered based on areas of interest including of learning and teaching, learning spaces and technology.

### Organisations to contact for assistance

With resources, teacher professional learning and excursions.

#### Secondary Education, Learning and Teaching

The Secondary Education, Learning and Teaching Directorate of the NSW Department of Education provides a range of online resources, teacher professional learning courses, programs and assessment samples and advice, as well as links to other educational sites.

For example:

* [Teaching and learning](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning) links, including professional learning, differentiation, assessment, Aboriginal education and communities and curriculum.

(education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning)

* [Curriculum](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum) links

(education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum)

* [HSIE](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/hsie) links, access to teaching and learning resources, assessment advice specific to HSIE, historical inquiry frameworks and other support for teaching history.

(education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/hsie)

#### NESA

* [General NESA website](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/home)

(educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/home)

* [NESA HSIE syllabuses K-10](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie)

(educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie)

* [NESA HSIE syllabuses 11-12](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie)

(educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie)

* [NESA K-10 programming advice](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/programming)

(educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/programming)

* [NESA K-10 assessment advice](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/assessment)

(educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/assessment)

* [NESA K-10 sample units](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/resources/sample-units)

(educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/resources/sample-units)

#### Environmental Education Centres (EECs)

[Environmental and zoo education centres](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-across-the-curriculum/sustainability/environmental-zoo-centres) (EZEC) are NSW public schools staffed by trained teachers. They support schools by providing:

* Resources to help integrate environmental education across a variety of subject areas.
* Professional learning opportunities for teachers.
* Assistance in implementing more sustainable practices.
* Opportunities for student learning and environmental leadership.
* Excursion programs for visiting school groups, linked to NSW syllabuses that utilise the unique features of the centre's location.
* Incursion programs for schools, linked to syllabuses and classroom learning.
* Pre and post excursion support materials.

(education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-across-the-curriculum/sustainability/environmental-zoo-centres)

#### Professional associations

* [History Teachers Association of NSW](https://www.htansw.asn.au/) (htansw.asn.au)
* [History Teachers Association of Australia](http://www.historyteacher.org.au/).(historyteacher.org.au)

Other HSIE associations

#### Museums and libraries

* [State Library of NSW](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/) (sl.nsw.gov.au)
* [National Archives of Australia](https://www.naa.gov.au/learn) (naa.gov.au/learn)
* [National Museum of Australia](https://www.nma.gov.au/) (nma.gov.au)
* [National Library of Australia – Trove database](https://trove.nla.gov.au/) (trove.nla.gov.au)
* [Sydney Living Museums](https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/) (sydneylivingmuseums.com.au)
* Local and regional libraries

#### Useful websites

* [National Digital Learning Resources Network](https://www.ndlrn.edu.au/using_digital_resources/australian_curriculum_resources/resources_for_the_australian_curriculum.html) (ndlrn.edu.au/using\_digital\_resources/australian\_curriculum\_resources/resources\_for\_the\_australian\_curriculum.html)
* [Australian Dictionary of Biography](http://adb.anu.edu.au/) (adb.anu.edu.au)
* [National Film and Sound Archive of Australia – Australia’s Heritage: National Treasures](https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/australia-heritage-national-treasures) (nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/australia-heritage-national-treasures)
* [National Film and Sound Archive of Australia – Digital Learning](https://www.nfsa.gov.au/learning/digital-learning) (nfsa.gov.au/learning/digital-learning)
* [BBC History](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/genres/factual/history) (bbc.co.uk/programmes/genres/factual/history)
* [BBC History Trails](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/) – quizzes, activities and so on (bbc.co.uk/history/trail)
* [BBC Historic Figures](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/) (bbc.co.uk/history/historic\_figures)
* [BBC History for Kids](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/forkids/) (bbc.co.uk/history/forkids)
* [BBC Ancient History](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/) (bbc.co.uk/history/ancient)
* [National Museum of Australia – Classroom resources](https://www.nma.gov.au/learn/classroom-resources?from=0) (nma.gov.au/learn/classroom-resources?from=0)
* [Scootle](https://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home) (scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home)
* [Making History: A Guide for the Teaching and Learning of History in Australian Schools (PDF 192 pages)](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Guide-for-the-Teaching-and-Learning-of-History-in-Taylor-Young/e7128ebd477a96e22e7bc2cb6501b75c01f2eb50) document (http://gslps.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Teaching-and-Learning-in-History.pdf)
* [The Conversation – Articles on History Education](https://theconversation.com/au/topics/history-education-2505) (theconversation.com/au/topics/history-education-2505)