Revision – History extension

# Constructing history – key questions

Students investigate the nature of history and changing approaches to its construction.

# Outcomes

A student:

* **HE12-1** analyses and evaluates different approaches to history and the complexity of factors that shape historical interpretations
* **HE12-3** communicates through detailed, well-structured texts to explain, argue, discuss, analyse and evaluate historical issues
* **HE12-4** constructs an historical position about an area of historical inquiry, and discusses and challenges other positions

# Content

To investigate ‘Constructing History’, students use the case study and relevant historiographical sources to:

* identify different historical and historiographical perspectives evident in sources
* analyse interpretations of a particular historical or historiographical issue
* explain why different historians have different perspectives
* compare and contrast different interpretations of a particular historical or historiographical issue
* use a variety of sources to develop a view about an historical or historiographical issue
* use a variety of sources to challenge views on an historical or historiographical issue
* communicate through detailed, well-structured texts to explain, argue, discuss, analyse and evaluate an historical or historiographical issue

Outcomes and syllabus content referred to in this document are from [History Extension Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie/history-extension-2017) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2017.

## Key question 1 – the historians

Who are the historians? – from ancient times to the present day

* the producers of history over time – from ancient times to the present day
* the identity of historians: biographical details, personal values and beliefs, philosophy of history, approaches to the construction of history, bias
* the context of historians: gender, class, ethnicity, time, place, social and economic structures/change, political constraints, official and unofficial status, academic background

### Task

1. Fill in the table below for as many producers of history as you can identify from your studies so far. Continue to update the table as you encounter more historians. Add more rows if needed.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Producer of history | Key identity details | Context | Contribution to historiography | Links to other key questions | |
| Example:  Herodotus | Ancient Greek  Wrote history as a narrative, entertaining, story telling.  Little analysis  Elements of moral lessons within the historical narrative – points to possible purpose  Incorporated fiction and fact in his works of history – opened up to criticism. | 5th century BC  Ancient Greek writer and geographer  Male  Wealthy merchant family  Travelled widely, recording oral histories. | The Histories – account of Greco-Persian wars.  ‘Father of history’ – title given by Cicero  Criticised by Thucydides for stretching the truth, but much of his work has been confirmed by modern historians.  Focused on famous battles, lives of kings but also deviated through cultural and geographical lenses. | How has history been constructed, recorded and presented over time?  Why have approaches to history changed over time? |
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1. Select 2 of the ‘producers of history’ from the table above. Create a [Venn diagram](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/599#.YN6IkIj8yB0.link) that shows the similarities and different between the two, considering identity, context and contributions to historiography.
2. Select 1 of the other ‘key questions’ from the syllabus and write a paragraph explaining how the role of the historian is significant in understanding the key aspects of the question.

## Key question 2 – purposes of history

What are the purposes of history?

* the aims and purposes of specific historical works and historians
* changing interpretations and perspectives of the aims and purposes of history
* changing interpretations and perspectives of the role of history
* the use and misuse of history

### Task

1. Create an annotated timeline that outlines the key schools of historiographical thought over time. Your annotations should include key thinkers, key ideas and major debates.
2. Make a list of the different ‘purposes’ of history that you have encountered in your study. Group the purposes under themed subheadings and find connections between them. Write a paragraph explain each of the themes and outlining why it is (or isn’t) an important purpose.
3. Explain what is meant by the ‘use and misuse of history’ using at least 2 contemporary examples.

## Key question 3 – construction, recording and presentation of history over time

How has history been constructed, recorded and presented over time? – from ancient times to the present day

* changing methods of historians
* how historians work
* forms of historical communication: written, oral, visual, audiovisual, multimedia, digital
* types of history, eg political, social, economic, environmental, military, academic, popular, national, local, surveys, macrohistories, microhistories, biographies, psychohistories, historical fiction

### Task

1. Complete the table below, using as much detail as possible. Add rows for other types of history that may be relevant from your studies this year.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of history | Common forms of communication used | Historical methodologies used | | Purpose and audience | | Examples | |
| Political |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Economic |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Social |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Environmental |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Military |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Academic |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Popular |  |  | |  | |  | |
| National |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Local |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Surveys |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Macrohistories |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Microhistories |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Biographies |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Psychohistories |  | |  | |  | |  |
| Historical fiction |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |

1. Create a timeline outlining how the methodology of historians has changed over time.
2. Annotate the timeline with reasons and historical examples for the key shifts in methodology.
3. Select 2 shifts in methodology. Write a paragraph explaining the impact of each shift on the study of history.

## Key question 4 – approaches to history over time

Why have approaches to history changed over time? – from ancient times to the present day

* the availability of historical evidence
* the contexts of historians
* changing perspectives about approaches to the construction of history
* changing philosophies of history
* changing technology
* changing audiences

### Task

1. Complete the following table. Use multiple examples where appropriate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Factor affecting approaches to history | Affect on approaches to history over time | Examples |
| The availability of historical evidence |  |  |
| The contexts of historians |  |  |
| Changing perspectives about approaches to the construction of history |  |  |
| Changing philosophies of history |  |  |
| Changing technology |  |  |
| Changing audiences |  |  |

1. Using the thinking from the table above, rank the 6 factors from the syllabus in order of significance. Write a paragraph justifying your choices.
2. Brainstorm as many other reasons for approaches to history changing over time as you can. Select one and write a paragraph arguing for its inclusion as a syllabus example for the next iteration of the History Extension syllabus.