

History Level 10

Chapter 7 — Skills: historical questions, chronology and sources

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Asking, refining and using historical questions in investigations

For the teacher

*This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–7) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable sources (parts 3 and 5), six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task (parts 8–9), per the §3 volume calibration. Chapters 7–8 carry the most doing and the least prose: every part ends in a figure the tasks reuse, and the prose stays short. Register is direct-address at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2) in the table below and in the body. There are no terms from *CONTESTED_TERMS.md* taught here; the one moral-verdict question (Figure 1, Question 2) is handled by rewriting it as a question about what people in 1914 believed, and task 9 is marked on reasoning and evidence, not on the conclusion reached (Rule 5). All dates, quotations and statistics carry source lines in the table below (D4). *VC2HH10S01* is not named in §2A and carries no First Nations elements; none may be authored here, including as context or a caption. Skills sections draw their content examples from Chapters 1–6, per §3.*

Curriculum alignment (VCAA export *VC2_AS-CD-E1ab_29-07-2026.csv*) — codes only:

VC2HH10S01 — Historical Concepts and Skills · Historical questions

Draws on (linkage only, D7): *VC2HH10S01.E01 · VC2HH10S01.E02 · VC2HH10S01.E03 · VC2HH10S01.E04 · VC2HH10S01.E05.*

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section develops and refines the inquiry question “Why did World War I begin?” (this book’s example of the kind *.E02* names), modifying it as factors are added by the research and reshaping it with the concepts cause, consequence, continuity and change (*.E03*; the content those concepts act on is taught in 3A, and the concept work steps up in 8B and 8C). *.E01* and *.E04* are taught through Worked inquiry 2, where the surviving evidence forces the question to move; *.E05* through the breadth test. The section’s source-based inquiry re-reads the ultimatum of 23 July 1914 — the same document 3A reads for content — this time for the questions it can and cannot carry. Cross-links: 3A (causes and July Crisis), 3B (consequences), 7B and 8A (continuity and change), 7D (what is absent from the record), 7E (perspective), 8B (cause webs), 8C (significance criteria), 1E (women’s voting rights in Australia, the model topic in Figure 10).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
inquiry question	the question an investigation is built to answer; also called a historical question
factor	one of several things that contributes to a result
concept	an organising idea, such as cause, consequence, continuity, change or perspective
lens	the concept a question looks through; the direction it gives the search
militarism, alliance, imperialism, nationalism	the four long-term forces behind World War I, as defined and taught in Section 3A
primary source	a record made at the time being studied
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
provenance	who made a source, where, when and why; the source’s own origin line
suitability	whether the available sources can actually carry the question asked
scope	the stretch of time, place and people a question covers; its breadth
verdict	a final judgement of right or wrong

Word	Gloss used in this section
ultimatum	a final set of demands, backed by a threat of what will follow if they are refused
mobilisation	calling up and organising an army ready for war
censorship	the official checking and cutting of letters and news before they can be sent or printed
shell shock	the name given in 1914–1918 to the breakdown seen in soldiers under shellfire

Sources (SOURCE_USE — real referents carry a source line; original artifacts only, D4; collections consulted 2026-08-25 where noted):

Referent	Source line
VC2HH10S01 and elaborations .E01–.E05, cited by code	VCAA, Victorian Curriculum 2.0 export VC2_AS-CD-Elab_29-07-2026.csv
Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, 23 July 1914 (48-hour deadline); Serbian reply, 25 July 1914; Austria-Hungary declares war, 28 July 1914	Diplomatic documents held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna (as in Section 3A)
The July Crisis sequence: assassination 28 June 1914; Russian mobilisation 30 July; Germany declares war on Russia 1 August and on France 3 August; Belgium invaded and Britain declares war 4 August	As set out in Section 3A, from the diplomatic documents of the signatory governments
Charles Myers’s study of three cases of shell shock, published 13 February 1915	Charles S. Myers, “A Contribution to the Study of Shell Shock”, <i>The Lancet</i> , 13 February 1915
Censorship of soldiers’ letters home from 1914	Defence of the Realm Act 1914 (UK) and the army’s censorship instructions issued under it; British army censorship reports, 1914–1918
Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902, giving most Australian women the vote in federal elections and the right to stand	Act as passed by the Commonwealth Parliament; the campaigns behind it are studied in Section 1E
Australian newspapers reporting the start of the war in August 1914	National Library of Australia, Trove newspaper archive (retrieved 2026-08-25)

1. A question does the work

Every historical investigation is only as good as the question it starts from. A weak question drifts: it collects everything and answers nothing. A strong question does three jobs — it tells you **what to look for**, **what to read first**, and **how your answer will be organised**. This section teaches one skill, in three moves: **formulate** a question (put it into a form history can answer), **refine** it (change it as research grows or as the evidence demands), and **use** it (let it plan the investigation).

Before any research begins, a draft question faces two tests: is it about the past, and could sources from the past answer it? Figure 1 runs five questions through those tests.

Is this a question history can answer?

Five questions, tested before any research begins

Question 1 Why did World War I begin? It is about the past, and letters, speeches, treaties and government records from the time still exist to answer it.	Yes - researchable
Question 2 Was it wrong for Germany to invade Belgium in 1914? It asks for a moral verdict. History can study what people in 1914 believed was right or wrong, but it cannot settle right and wrong itself. Rewriting it as a question about those beliefs makes it researchable.	Not as written
Question 3 Will there be another world war? It is about the future. There are no sources for events that have not happened.	No
Question 4 Why did Archduke Franz Ferdinand visit Sarajevo on 28 June 1914? It is researchable if records of the planners' reasons exist - and the historian must say what the sources do and do not show.	Yes, with care
Question 5 How did Australian newspapers report the start of the war in August 1914? The newspapers themselves are primary sources, and many are held in libraries and online.	Yes - researchable

The test before you start: is it about the past, and could sources from the past answer it?

Five cards, each with a question, a verdict chip and a reason: “Why did World War I begin?” — yes, researchable, because letters, speeches, treaties and government records from the time survive; “Was it wrong for Germany to invade Belgium in 1914?” — not as written, because it asks for a moral verdict and must be rewritten as a question about what people in 1914 believed; “Will there be another world war?” — no, because it is about the future and no sources exist for it; “Why did Archduke Franz Ferdinand visit Sarajevo on 28 June 1914?” — yes with care, if records of the planners’ reasons exist; “How did Australian newspapers report the start of the war in August 1914?” — yes, because the newspapers themselves are primary sources

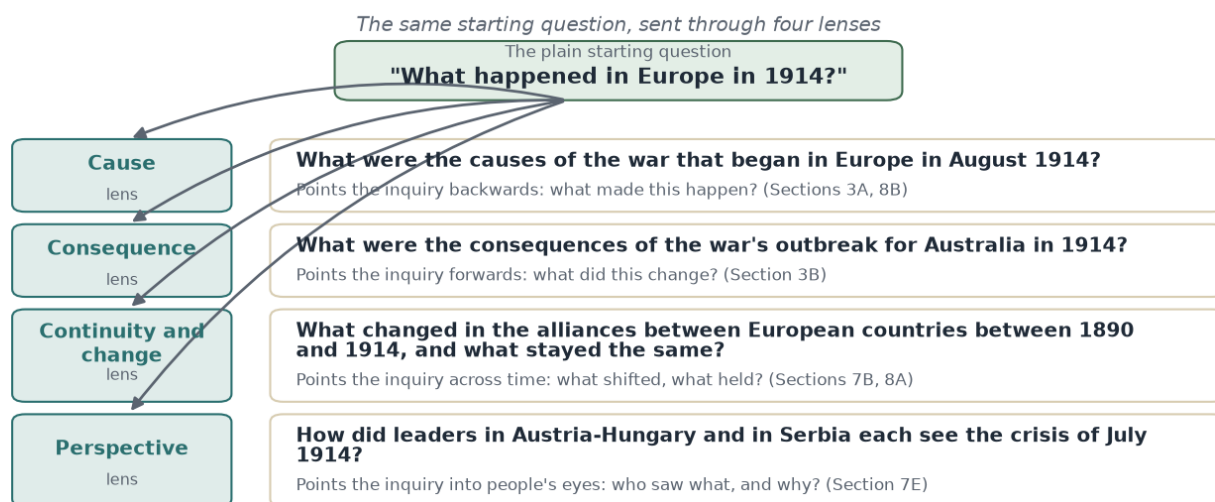
Figure 1. The two tests before you start: is it about the past, and could sources from the past answer it?

Notice Question 2. History cannot settle right and wrong — that is a **verdict**, and no source contains it. But history *can* study what people in 1914 believed was right or wrong, and the evidence for those beliefs is rich. Rewriting the question about the beliefs keeps the interest and makes it answerable. That rewrite is refinement, and it is the move this section practises.

2. Concept lenses reshape a question (.E03)

.E03 asks you to modify questions with historical concepts like **cause**, **consequence**, **continuity and change**. Think of a concept as a lens: the same event, seen through a different lens, becomes a different question and a different search. Figure 2 sends one plain question through four lenses.

Concept lenses reshape a question



A lens decides what the inquiry looks for: adding one word - causes, consequences, changed - changes the whole search.

A green starting card, "What happened in Europe in 1914?", with arrows to four lens cards — Cause, Consequence, Continuity and change, Perspective — each paired with the question it produces: causes of the war that began in Europe in August 1914; consequences of the war's outbreak for Australia in 1914; what changed and what stayed the same in the alliances between European countries between 1890 and 1914; how leaders in Austria-Hungary and in Serbia each saw the crisis of July 1914

Figure 2. One plain question through four lenses. Adding one word — causes, consequences, changed — changes the whole search.

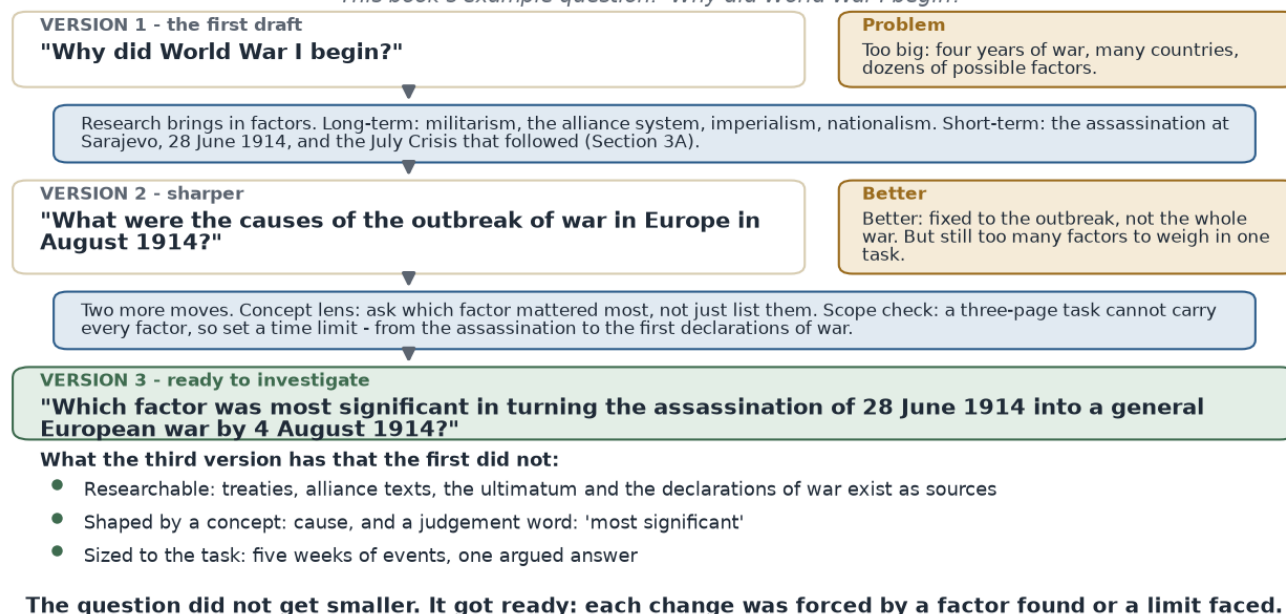
Each lens points the inquiry a different way: cause points backwards, consequence forwards, continuity and change across time, perspective into people's eyes. A question with no lens has nothing to argue; it can only be listed. (The content these lenses act on is taught in the content sections: cause in 3A and 8B, consequence in 3B, continuity and change in 7B and 8A, perspective in 7E.)

3. Worked inquiry 1 — refining a question as research grows (.E02, .E03, .E05)

.E02 is the elaboration behind this book's example question: "Why did World War I begin?" Watch that question get refined as the research brings in new **factors** — the long-term causes you met in 3A (militarism, the alliance system, imperialism, nationalism), the assassination at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, and the July Crisis that followed.

Worked inquiry 1 - refining a question as research grows

This book's example question: 'Why did World War I begin?'



Three version cards joined by arrows with two blue bands between them: Version 1, "Why did World War I begin?", labelled too big; a band listing the factors research brings in; Version 2, "What were the causes of the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914?", labelled better but still too many factors; a band naming two moves, a concept lens and a scope check; Version 3, "Which factor was most significant in turning the assassination of 28 June 1914 into a general European war by 4 August 1914?", with three checks: researchable, shaped by a concept, sized to the task

Figure 3. Worked inquiry 1. The question did not get smaller; it got ready — each change was forced by a factor found or a limit faced.

Read the three versions as three decisions. Version 1 to Version 2: research adds factors, so the question fixes itself to the **outbreak** of war, not the whole four-year war. Version 2 to Version 3: two moves at once — a concept lens ("most significant" forces an argument about cause, not a list) and a **scope** check (five weeks, from the assassination to the first declarations of war, instead of everything). Version 3 is ready to investigate: you can picture the sources (the ultimatum, the alliance texts, the declarations of war), and the answer will take arguing.

4. Four suitability tests (.E01, .E04)

.E01 and .E04 are about the **suitability** of the sources: a question may be about the past and still fail, because the evidence that survives will not carry it. Before you plan an investigation, run the four tests in Figure 4.

Four suitability tests: does the evidence fit the question?

Run them before you plan the investigation, not after

1. Does evidence exist?

Are there any records from the time that touch this question at all?

Example: questions about private talks between leaders in July 1914 meet a wall if no diary, letter or minutes of those talks were written down - or survive.

2. Can I reach it?

Is the evidence somewhere I can actually read or see it?

Example: a record held only in an archive overseas, or written in a language with no translation, may be real but unusable for this task.

3. Is it relevant?

Does the evidence really bear on the question, or only on the same topic?

Example: a 1916 letter about army food supplies tells you about soldiers' lives, but it will not answer a question about the causes of the war in 1914.

4. Does it cover who the question asks about?

Do the sources speak for the people in your question, or only for officials and leaders?

Example: government records can speak about soldiers, women workers or migrants, but not always in those people's own words. The gap is a finding, not a dead end (Section 7D).

If a test fails, do not force the evidence. Refine the question - that is the skill this section teaches.

Four white cards, each with a numbered test and an example: 1, does evidence exist — private talks in July 1914 meet a wall if no diary, letter or minutes survive; 2, can I reach it — a record held only overseas, or in a language with no translation, may be real but unusable; 3, is it relevant — a 1916 letter about army food will not answer a question about the causes of the war in 1914; 4, does it cover who the question asks about — government records can speak about soldiers, women workers or migrants, but not always in those people's own words

Figure 4. The four suitability tests. If a test fails, do not force the evidence — refine the question.

Test 4 is the one students miss most often. Sources exist in plenty about some people and in scraps about others. When the sources speak *about* a group but rarely *for* it, the gap is a finding in its own right — and Section 7D teaches you how to weigh what is absent from the record.

5. Worked inquiry 2 — refining a question around the evidence (.E01, .E04)

Now watch suitability force a change. The topic is **shell shock** on the Western Front, 1915–1917. The first question is the one a student naturally writes; the evidence check is what actually survives.

Worked inquiry 2 - refining a question around the evidence

Shell shock on the Western Front, 1915-1917

THE FIRST QUESTION

"How did soldiers on the Western Front experience shell shock?"

THE EVIDENCE CHECK - what actually survives?

- Plenty:** medical papers and hospital case notes written by army doctors - for example, Charles Myers's study of three cases, published in *The Lancet* on 13 February 1915.
- Some:** hospital records of admissions and treatments.
- Very little:** soldiers' own open words. Armies censored letters home from 1914, so few uncensored accounts of suffering were written or kept.

Test 4 fails

The evidence speaks mostly from the doctors' side. The soldiers the question asks about are largely heard through other people's notes.

THE REFINED QUESTION - now the evidence fits

"How did army doctors on the Western Front understand and treat shell shock, 1915-1917?"

Two honest notes:

- The refined question is not a smaller interest - it is the same interest pointed where evidence exists.
- The missing voices are recorded as a gap, not ignored. Section 7D teaches how to weigh what is absent from the record.

Suitability can force the change: when the sources will not carry a question, the question moves - the topic does not have to.

Four bands joined by arrows: the first question, "How did soldiers on the Western Front experience shell shock?"; an evidence check in three rows — plenty: medical papers and hospital case notes by army doctors, such as Charles Myers's study of three cases published in *The Lancet* on 13 February 1915; some: hospital records of admissions and treatments; very little: soldiers' own open words, because armies censored letters home from 1914; a verdict band, "Test 4 fails", because the evidence speaks mostly from the doctors' side; and the refined question, "How did army doctors on the Western Front understand and treat shell shock, 1915-1917?"

Figure 5. Worked inquiry 2. Suitability can force the change: when the sources will not carry a question, the question moves — the topic does not have to.

Two honest notes. First, the refined question is not a smaller interest; it is the same interest pointed where evidence exists. Second, the missing voices are recorded as a gap, not ignored: an answer built on the doctors' papers should say, in its own scope paragraph, that the soldiers' side is heard mostly through other people's notes, and why (censorship from 1914). Naming the gap is part of the answer, not a confession of failure.

6. The breadth test (.E05)

.E05 asks whether a question is too broad or too narrow **for what the investigation requires** — breadth is not a property of the question alone, but of the question and the task set. Figure 6 judges three questions against a three-page task in three weeks.

The breadth test: too broad, sized right, too narrow

Judged against the requirements of the investigation - here, a three-page task in three weeks

Too broad

Sized right

Too narrow

"Why do wars happen?"

Every war, every century, every cause.
No achievable answer in three pages -
or three hundred.

Fix: name one war, one place, one
stretch of time.

"What were the causes of the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914?"

One event, one month, a known set of
sources. The answer can be argued,
not just listed.

No fix needed - this is the target.

"At what time of day did Austria-Hungary declare war on Serbia on 28 July 1914?"

One fact, found once, and the inquiry
stops. Nothing to weigh, nothing to
argue.

Fix: widen outward - ask what the
declaration set in motion, and why.

Three signs the breadth is wrong

- Too broad: you cannot say which sources would settle it - everything is relevant, so nothing is.
- Too narrow: you can answer it in one sentence from one source, and there is nothing left to ask.
- Sized right: you can picture the sources you need, and the answer will take arguing, not just finding.

Breadth is judged against the task set: what one student can do, with reachable sources, in the time given.

A scale from "Too broad" to "Sized right" to "Too narrow" above three cards: "Why do wars happen?" — every war, every century, no achievable answer, fix by naming one war, one place, one stretch of time; "What were the causes of the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914?" — one event, one month, a known set of sources, no fix needed; "At what time of day did Austria-Hungary declare war on Serbia on 28 July 1914?" — one fact, found once, nothing to argue, fix by widening outward to what the declaration set in motion and why; below, three signs the breadth is wrong

Figure 6. The breadth test. Too broad: everything is relevant, so nothing is. Too narrow: one source ends the inquiry. Sized right: you can picture the sources, and the answer takes arguing.

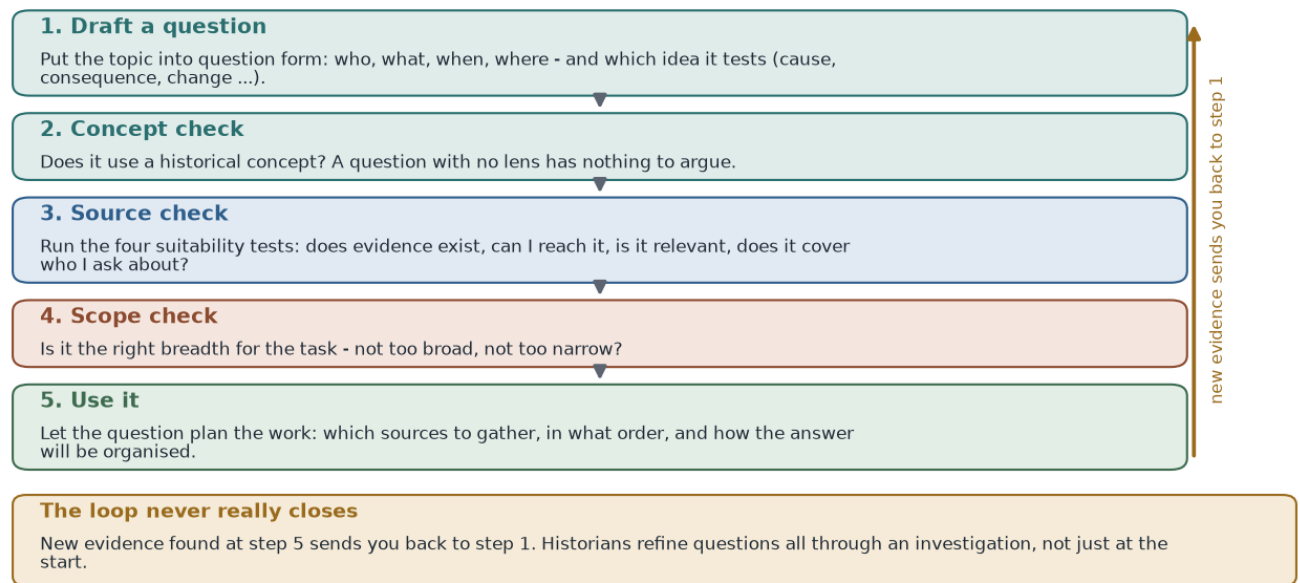
The too-narrow case hides a second fault worth naming: it carries an assumption that the detail matters, without saying why. Widening it ("what did the declaration of 28 July set in motion, and why?") restores the argument. Breadth and lens work together: a lens gives the question a direction; the right breadth gives it an end point.

7. Using the question — the refinement loop

The three moves of this section — formulate, refine, use — are not steps done once at the start. They are a loop you stay in for the whole investigation (Figure 7).

The refinement loop

A question is not set once at the start - it is kept in shape as the investigation runs



Using the question is the point: it decides what you look for, what you read first, and how your answer is built.

Five station cards in a column with arrows down and a return arrow up the right edge: 1, draft a question; 2, concept check — does it use a historical concept?; 3, source check — run the four suitability tests; 4, scope check — the right breadth for the task?; 5, use it — let the question plan which sources to gather, in what order, and how the answer will be organised; the return arrow is labelled “new evidence sends you back to step 1”

Figure 7. The refinement loop. Using the question is the point: it decides what you look for, what you read first, and how your answer is built.

Step 5 is where the question earns its keep. A refined question is a research plan in one sentence: it names the sources to gather (treaties, an ultimatum, declarations of war; or medical papers, hospital records), the order to read them in, and the shape of the answer — because “which factor was most significant” will be organised by factor, while “what changed and what stayed the same” will be organised before/after. And the loop never really closes: historians refine their questions all the way through an investigation, not just at the start.

8. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

- Run the two tests.** Sort these five questions as Figure 1 does (yes / not as written / no), with one reason each: (a) “What did Australian soldiers write home about the trenches in 1916?” (b) “Was it right for Britain to declare war in 1914?” (c) “What will the next world war be about?” (d) “Why did the Commonwealth Parliament pass the Franchise Act of 1902?” (e) “How many words long is the Treaty of Versailles?” For (b) and (e), rewrite each as a question history can answer.
- Fit the lens.** Here are four plain topics: the alliances of 1890 and 1914; the outbreak of war and Australia in 1914; the July Crisis; the leaders of Austria-Hungary and Serbia in July 1914. Match each to the lens in Figure 2 that best fits it, then write the full lens question for two of them.
- Read the ladder.** In Figure 3, name exactly what forced each change: Version 1 to Version 2, and Version 2 to Version 3. Which of the two changes is a concept move, and which is a scope move?

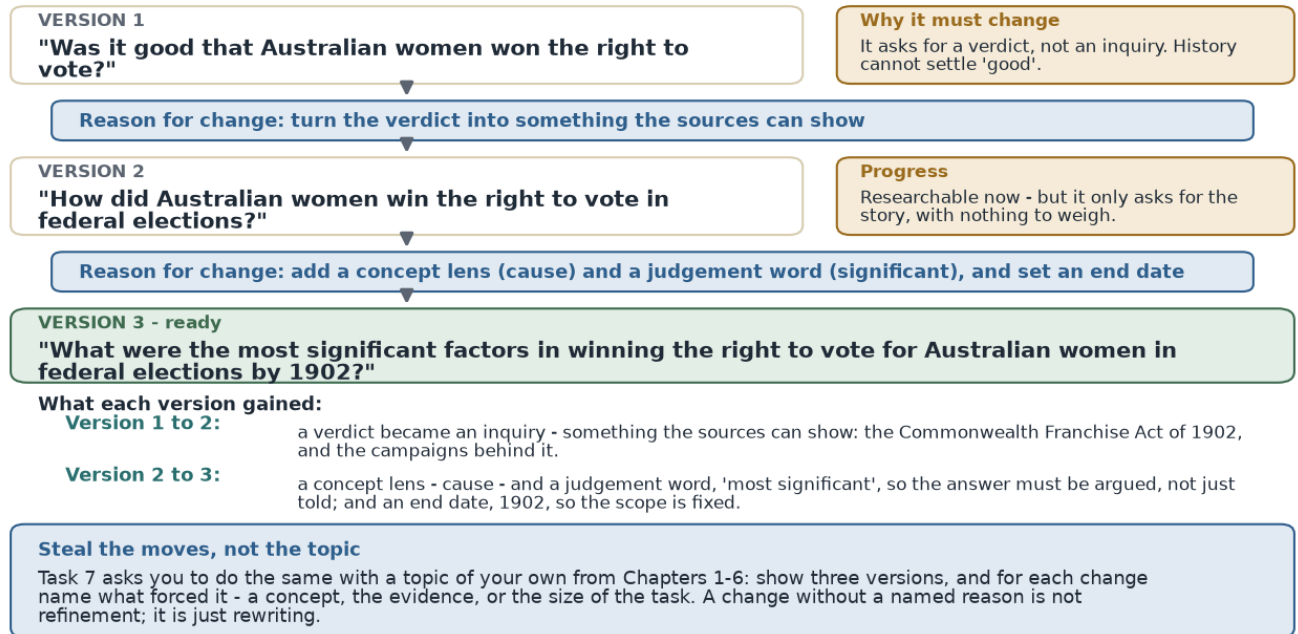
4. **Run the suitability tests.** A student drafts: “How did ordinary Serbians react to the ultimatum on the night of 23 July 1914?” Using Figure 4, find the test that fails first and say why, then rewrite the question so the surviving evidence can carry it.
5. **Fix the breadth.** Classify each as too broad, sized right, or too narrow for a three-page task, using the three signs in Figure 6: (a) “What is war like?” (b) “Who signed the Serbian reply of 25 July 1914?” (c) “What were the consequences of the war’s outbreak for Australia in 1914?” Fix (a) and (b).
6. **Repair the loop.** These five steps from Figure 7 are out of order: use it; source check; draft a question; scope check; concept check. Put them in order, then answer: at step 5 you find a source you did not expect — a diary of an Austrian official from July 1914. Which step does it send you back to, and what might change?

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. **Three versions.** Choose one topic you have already studied in Chapters 1–6. Write three versions of an inquiry question about it, as in Figure 10, and beside each change name what forced it — a concept, the evidence, or the size of the task. A change without a named reason is not refinement; it is just rewriting.
8. **Fit the question to the evidence.** You want to ask how soldiers felt about the war. Your sources are: one officer’s memoir published in 1930, the unit’s war diary, and no letters. Rewrite your question so it fits what survives, and name which suitability test forced the move.
9. **Judge the breadth.** Your task is 500 words. Two questions are offered: “Why did World War I begin?” and “Which factor was most significant in turning the assassination of 28 June 1914 into a general European war by 4 August 1914?” Choose one and defend your choice in three to four sentences, then name one more narrowing or widening move you could make if the task were 2,000 words instead. You may argue either question is the better fit; your reasons carry the marks.
10. **Plan with the question.** Write one refined inquiry question of your own (from any topic in Chapters 1–6), name its lens, and list three sources you would look for — for each, say what kind of source it is (primary or secondary) and which part of the question it would answer.

Model for task 7 - three versions, every change explained

Topic: women's voting rights in Australia (Section 1E)



A model, not a template: your versions must be forced by your own topic's evidence and limits.

Three version cards with reason bands between them: Version 1, "Was it good that Australian women won the right to vote?", which asks for a verdict, not an inquiry; reason band — turn the verdict into something the sources can show; Version 2, "How did Australian women win the right to vote in federal elections?", researchable but only a story with nothing to weigh; reason band — add a concept lens (cause) and a judgement word (significant), and set an end date; Version 3, "What were the most significant factors in winning the right to vote for Australian women in federal elections by 1902?", ready; below, what each version gained, and a band: steal the moves, not the topic

Figure 8. A model for task 7, built on a topic from Section 1E: the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 and the campaigns behind it. Steal the moves, not the topic.

9. Source-based inquiry — the ultimatum of 23 July 1914

This section's source is the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia. Section 3A read it for what it reveals about the causes of the war. This time the task is different: read it for what **questions** it can carry (Figure 9), then put questions to it (Figure 10).

Source for inquiry: the ultimatum of 23 July 1914

Read it this time not for what it says about 1914, but for what questions it can carry

PROVENANCE

The Austro-Hungarian government to the Royal Serbian government, Belgrade, 23 July 1914; a final set of demands with a 48-hour time limit. Wording shortened and modernised here; the full text is held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna.

The main demands, in brief:

- 1. Suppress all publications that stir up hatred against Austria-Hungary.
- 2. Dissolve the nationalist societies that work against Austria-Hungary.
- 3. Remove from office the officials whom Austria-Hungary names.
- 4. Accept Austro-Hungarian representatives taking part, inside Serbia, in the investigation of the assassination of 28 June 1914.

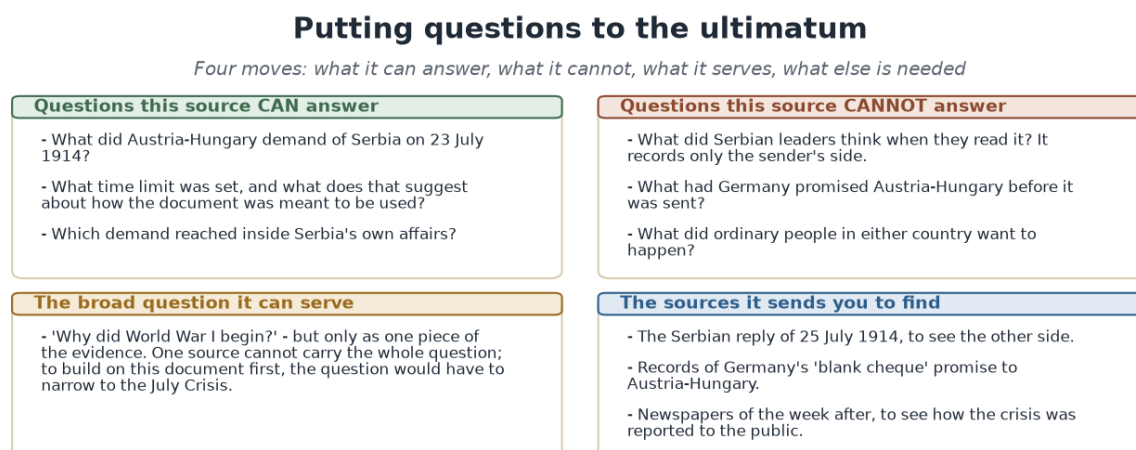
The deadline: Serbia had 48 hours to answer. Serbia replied on 25 July, accepting most demands but placing conditions on the last one. Austria-Hungary broke off relations and declared war on 28 July 1914.

How to read it in this section

Section 3A used this document to ask what it reveals about the causes of the war. Here the task is different: decide which historical questions this one source could help answer, which it could never answer, and how a broad question would have to change to use it.

A document card with a blue provenance band — the Austro-Hungarian government to the Royal Serbian government, Belgrade, 23 July 1914, a final set of demands with a 48-hour time limit, wording shortened and modernised, full text held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna — four demands in brief, including the demand that Austro-Hungarian representatives take part inside Serbia in the investigation of the assassination of 28 June 1914; a deadline band — Serbia replied on 25 July accepting most demands but placing conditions on the last one; Austria-Hungary broke off relations and declared war on 28 July 1914; and a band explaining how to read the document in this section

Figure 9. The source, in short extract and modern words.



Every source has a carrying capacity: the list of questions it can support. Formulating means knowing that list before you quote.

Four panels: questions this source can answer — what Austria-Hungary demanded on 23 July 1914, what the time limit suggests about how the document was meant to be used, which demand reached inside Serbia's own affairs; questions this source cannot answer — what Serbian leaders thought when they read it, what Germany had promised Austria-Hungary before it was sent, what ordinary people in either country wanted; the broad question it can serve — "Why did World War I begin?" — but only as one piece of evidence, narrowed to the July Crisis; the sources it sends you to find — the Serbian reply of 25 July 1914, records of Germany's blank cheque promise, newspapers of the week after

Figure 10. The frame: what the source can answer, what it cannot, what it serves, what else is needed.

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions this source could help you answer. Each must be answerable from the document itself.
2. **Limits:** write two questions this source could *never* answer, and say which side of the crisis is missing from it.
3. **Refine:** take the broad question "Why did World War I begin?" and refine it so that this document can serve as one piece of evidence in the answer. Write your refined version and name the move you made (concept, scope, or both).
4. **Send yourself to the archive:** name two further sources your refined question now sends you to find, and say which part of the question each would answer.
5. **Carrying capacity:** in two or three sentences, state what this one source can and cannot carry, using the words *suitability* and *scope*.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script.

- **The two pre-tests (part 1, figure 1):** students sort by the two tests — about the past, and answerable from surviving sources — and rewrite verdict questions as questions about beliefs, and future or fact-only questions as inquiries or reject them with a reason.
- **Concept lenses (part 2, .E03):** students match each plain topic to a lens and produce questions that genuinely use it (cause backwards, consequence forwards, continuity and change across time, perspective into people's eyes); a matched lens with no change to the question form is not yet understood.

- **Worked inquiry 1 (part 3, .E02, .E03, .E05):** students name the factor move (V1→V2: fixing to the outbreak of August 1914 as the long-term causes and the July Crisis enter) and the two V2→V3 moves (concept lens — “most significant”; scope — 28 June to 4 August 1914). The July Crisis dates stay consistent with 3A: assassination 28 June; ultimatum 23 July; Serbian reply 25 July; Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia 28 July; Russia mobilises 30 July; Germany declares war on Russia 1 August and on France 3 August; Belgium invaded and Britain declares war 4 August.
- **Suitability (parts 4–5, .E01, .E04):** students run all four tests in order and state which fails first in a given scenario; in Worked inquiry 2 they identify Test 4 (coverage of who the question asks about) as the failing test, cite the censorship of letters from 1914 and the Myers paper in *The Lancet* of 13 February 1915 as the evidence picture, and record the gap as a finding.
- **Breadth (part 6, .E05):** students judge breadth against the task set, not in the abstract; they fix too-broad questions by naming one war/place/time and too-narrow ones by widening to consequence or cause; in task 9 either choice is markable, on reasoning.
- **The loop (part 7):** students order the five stations and place unexpected evidence on the return arrow — a new source reopens drafting, concept or scope, not just “use”.
- **Practice and unscaffolded work (part 8):** task 7 shows three versions with every change attributed to a concept, the evidence, or the size of the task (Figure 8 is the model, built on 1E’s Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 — students steal the moves, not the topic); task 10 pairs each named source with the part of the question it answers.
- **Source inquiry (part 9):** formulated questions are answerable from the document itself; the never-answerable set names the missing side (Serbia’s leaders, Germany’s prior promise, ordinary people); the refined broad question narrows to the July Crisis by a named move; the carrying-capacity sentence uses *suitability* and *scope* precisely.

Cross-links: the causes and the July Crisis content (3A), consequences (3B), continuity and change (7B, 8A), weighing what is absent (7D), perspective (7E), debates marked on reasoning (7F), cause webs (8B), significance criteria (8C), the model topic (1E).

Sequencing the past: timelines, continuity, change, causes and consequences

For the teacher

Structure of this section. Part 1 opens with the big question. Part 2 defines the subject words. Parts 3 and 4 teach the method: the five choices every timeline builder makes, and the four-step sequencing method. Part 5 is Worked inquiry 1: a collaborative timeline of global developments and movements for change, 1945 to the present (elaboration .E01), built with dated cards and a roles protocol. Part 6 reads that timeline for continuity and change, and tests cause claims against sequence (elaboration .E02). Part 7 is Worked inquiry 2: ordering eight undated primary and secondary sources on Federation to support an argument about change (elaboration .E03). Part 8 is practice; Part 9 is the source-based inquiry task. Figures 1-10 are original to this book.

Curriculum alignment (VC2 Historical Concepts and Skills, Levels 9-10 band) — codes only:

VC2HH10S02 — Historical Concepts and Skills · Chronology. Elaborations taught (cited by code): .E01, .E02, .E03.

Elaboration linkage (D7 — linkage only, not a teaching order; cited by code):

- **.E01** — timeline collaboration across a long span — taught in Worked inquiry 1 (Part 5), read in Part 6.
- **.E02** — timeline building across a period, with causation and change — taught in Parts 5-6.
- **.E03** — ordering primary sources to support an argument about continuities or changes — taught in Worked inquiry 2 (Part 7).

Draws on (linkage only, D7): Chapter 7 partner sections 7A and 7C-7F; Section 1C (global change since 1945); Section 6C (the environment movement); Section 2B (Federation sources); Section 3A (the interwar years); Section 1E (women's movement).

Teaching choices.

- One method, three applications: build a timeline (Part 5), read a timeline (Part 6), order sources to argue (Part 7). The four-step method of Figure 3 is reused in every task so it becomes habit.
- The collaborative timeline uses referents already taught in Sections 1C, 1E and 6C, so the work here is sequencing and analysis, not new content.
- Worked inquiry 2 reuses the Federation artifacts sourced in Section 2B so students order sources they can already read confidently.
- Sequence first, argue second: every claim task insists the order of the evidence is established before the claim is stated (Figure 3 note).
- No First Nations content appears in this section; none is required by the CD or the elaborations taught here (D3/§2A).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Meaning in this section
Chronology	the order in which events happened; the study of that order
Timeline	a diagram that places events in order along a line
Sequence (verb)	to put events, people or sources in time order
Periodisation	dividing the past into named blocks of time
Turning point	a moment after which things are clearly different
Continuity	what stays the same across a period
Change	what becomes different across a period
Cause	what helped make something happen
Consequence	what followed from something
Primary source	evidence made at the time being studied

Word	Meaning in this section
Secondary source	an account made after the time being studied
Preamble	the opening words of a law, saying what it is for
Referendum	a vote in which the people decide a question directly
Delegate	a person chosen to speak and vote for others at a meeting
Constitution	a written rule-book setting up a nation's government and law
Convention	a formal meeting of delegates chosen to plan a constitution
Franchise	the right to vote in elections
Proxy war	a conflict fought through third parties, not directly
Depression	a long, deep economic slump with widespread job loss

Sources (all artifacts original to this book or sourced in earlier sections; retrieved 2026-08-25):

Source	Kind	Where
Timeline cards, Worked inquiry 1	original teaching cards, this section; every entry dated and checkable against Section 1C, 1E or 6C	Part 5, Figure 4
Federation source cards A-H	original cards describing the artifacts in Section 2B's source table (Tenterfield oration report; colonial conference and convention records; SA Adult Suffrage Act 1894; referendum returns; Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900; Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902)	Part 7, Figures 8-9
Treaty extracts, Part 9	original descriptions written for this task; each treaty real and dated (Versailles 1919; UN Charter 1945; NATO 1949; SEATO 1954; Baghdad Pact 1955; Warsaw Pact 1955)	Part 9

Part 1: The big question

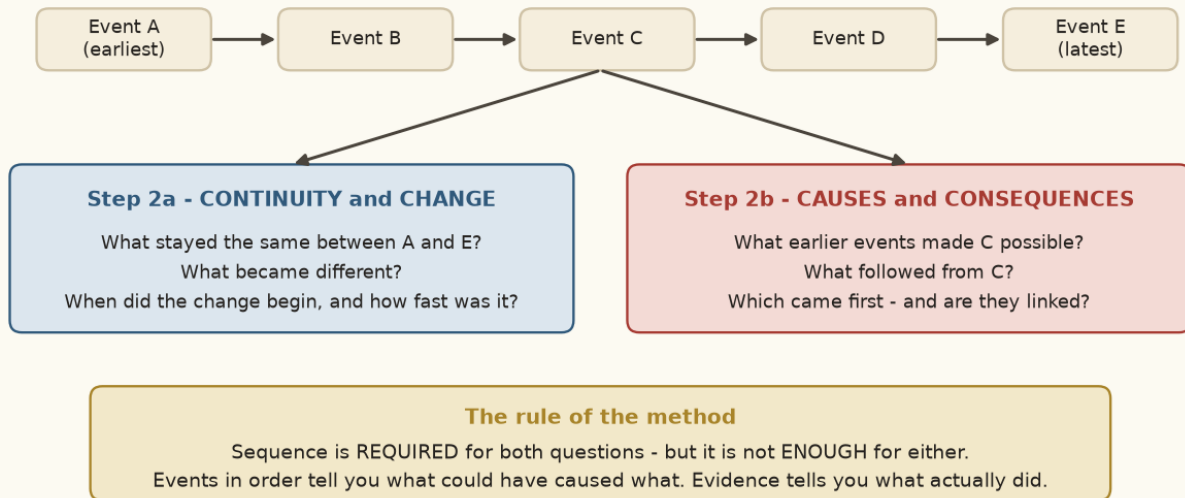
The past does not arrive in order. News reports, laws, speeches, photographs and letters reach us as a jumble. Historians put the jumble in order first, because the order is what lets them ask their two big questions: what continued and what changed? And what caused what, with what consequences?

This section teaches you to sequence - to put events, people, ideas and developments in time order - so that you can analyse continuity and change, and causes and consequences, with evidence rather than guesswork.

Why put the past in order?

Sequence is the skeleton of historical reasoning

Step 1 - put events in order from earliest to latest:



Original figure for this book. The two questions are the ones this whole section practises.

Diagram titled *Why put the past in order?* It shows five events labelled A to E placed earliest to latest along a line, with arrows leading to two question boxes: one for continuity and change and one for causes and consequences, plus a rule stating that sequence is required for both questions but not enough for either.

Part 2: The language of chronology

Before the method, the words. Your teacher will define each of these at first use; keep this table handy.

- **Chronology** is the order in which events happened. A **timeline** is a diagram of that order. To **sequence** is to put things in time order.
- **Periodisation** is dividing the past into named blocks - “the interwar years”, 1919 to 1939 between the two world wars, is periodisation. A **turning point** is a moment after which things are clearly different.
- **Continuity** is what stays the same across a period; **change** is what becomes different.
- A **cause** is what helped make something happen; a **consequence** is what followed.
- A **primary source** was made at the time being studied; a **secondary source** was made afterwards.

Part 3: Five choices every timeline builder makes

A timeline is not just a list of dates. Before you draw one, you make five choices. Naming them is what makes your timeline honest - a reader can see what you chose, and why.

Five choices every timeline builder makes

A timeline is a set of decisions, not just a list of dates - the model answers here build Figure 4

Choice	The question to decide	The model answer used in this section
1. Span	From when to when does the line run?	1945 to the present - the span of Sections 1C and 6C
2. Threads	Which categories run side by side along the line?	Four: politics and conflict; institutions and new nations; technology; movements for change
3. Selection	Which entries make the cut?	Only developments that reached many people, changed daily life, and lasted - not every event that happened
4. Scale	How much space does each decade get?	One even scale for the whole span; one row per thread
5. Labels	What does each entry say?	Year, name, and one short phrase saying what changed

Different choices make different timelines: two groups with the same topic can build two different lines, and both be right - so every timeline should state its choices, and every reader should ask what they were.

Original figure for this book.

Diagram titled *Five choices every timeline builder makes*. A table lists five choices - span, threads, selection, scale and labels - each with the question to decide and the model answer used in this section.

Check your understanding.

1. Name two of the five choices in your own words.
2. Why is “selection” a choice? What would a timeline with no selection look like?

Part 4: The four-step method

Use these four steps for every sequencing task in this section - and for any other task you meet.

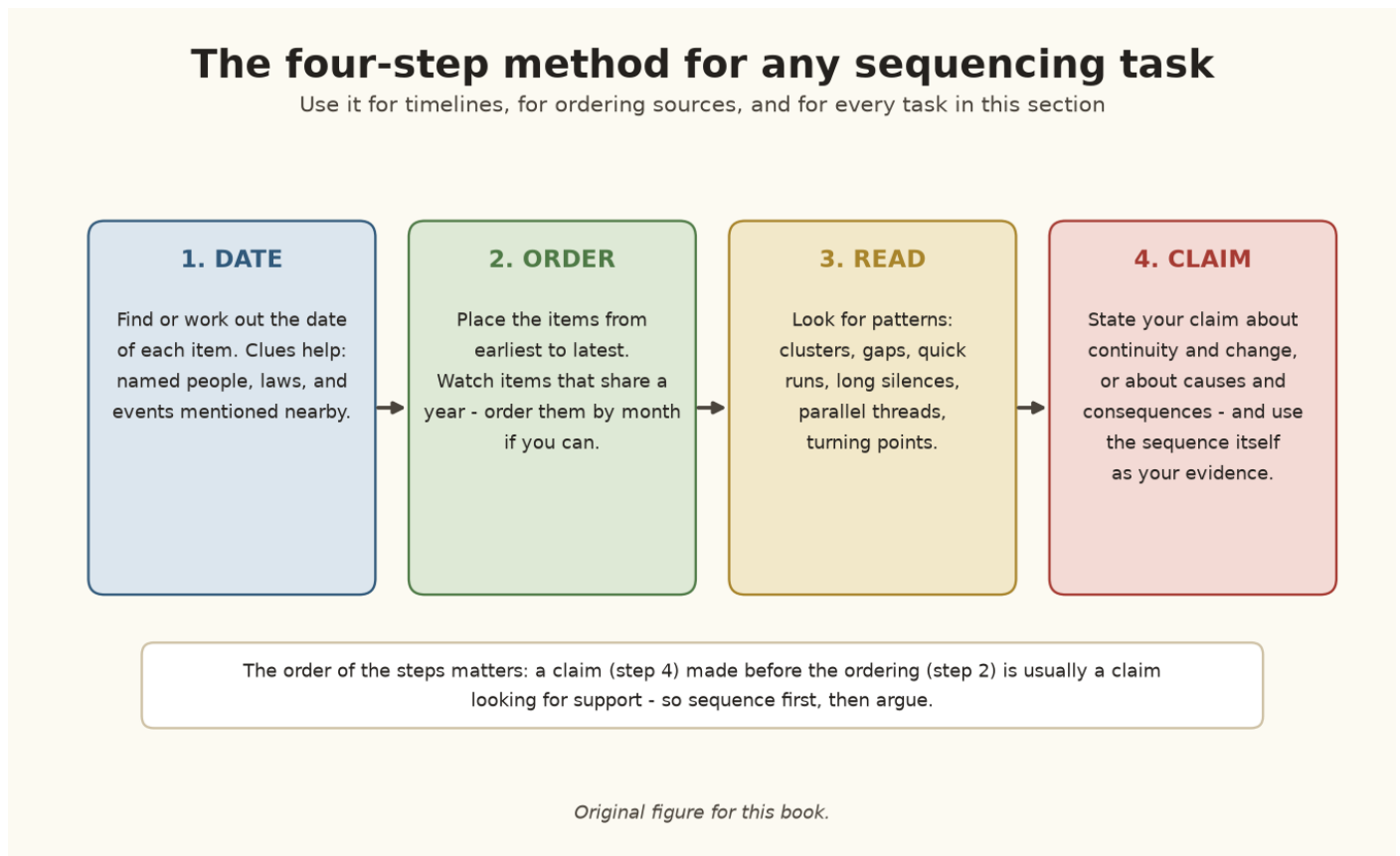


Diagram titled *The four-step method for any sequencing task*. Four coloured panels in a row read: 1 DATE - find or work out the date of each item; 2 ORDER - place the items from earliest to latest; 3 READ - look for patterns such as clusters, gaps, quick runs, long silences, parallel threads and turning points; 4 CLAIM - state your claim about continuity and change, or causes and consequences, using the sequence itself as evidence.

The note under the diagram matters as much as the steps: decide the order first, then argue. A claim made before the ordering usually ends up choosing only the evidence that suits it.

Part 5: Worked inquiry 1 - a collaborative timeline, 1945 to the present

Your task, in groups of four: build a timeline of significant global developments and movements for change from 1945 to the present, in four threads. Everything you need is on dated cards your teacher will hand out. Every card is real and dated, and every card refers to something you have already met in Sections 1C, 1E or 6C.

The roles protocol. Each group member takes one role; rotate roles next time you build a line.

- **Reader** - reads each card aloud, one at a time.
- **Sequencer** - proposes where the card sits on the line, and says which clue fixes its date.
- **Checker** - agrees or challenges, using the card's clues and what the group knows from Sections 1C, 1E and 6C.
- **Recorder** - sticks the card down, writes the label, and keeps the five choices (Figure 2) visible to the group.

Steps.

1. Agree your five choices using Figure 2. The model answers in the figure are this section's choices: span 1945 to the present; four threads; selection limited to developments that reached many people, changed daily life, and lasted; one even scale; short labels that say what changed.
2. Lay out the four thread lines - Politics and conflict; Institutions and new nations; Technology; Movements for change - on one shared span, so the threads can be compared.

- Place the cards one by one using the roles protocol. If the group cannot fix a date, set the card aside and come back to it - do not guess.
- Stand back and read the line the way Figure 4 does. Look for clusters (1945-1950, 1989-1991), a quick run (the technology thread), a long silence, and parallel threads (the environment thread running beside the institutions thread from 1962 on).

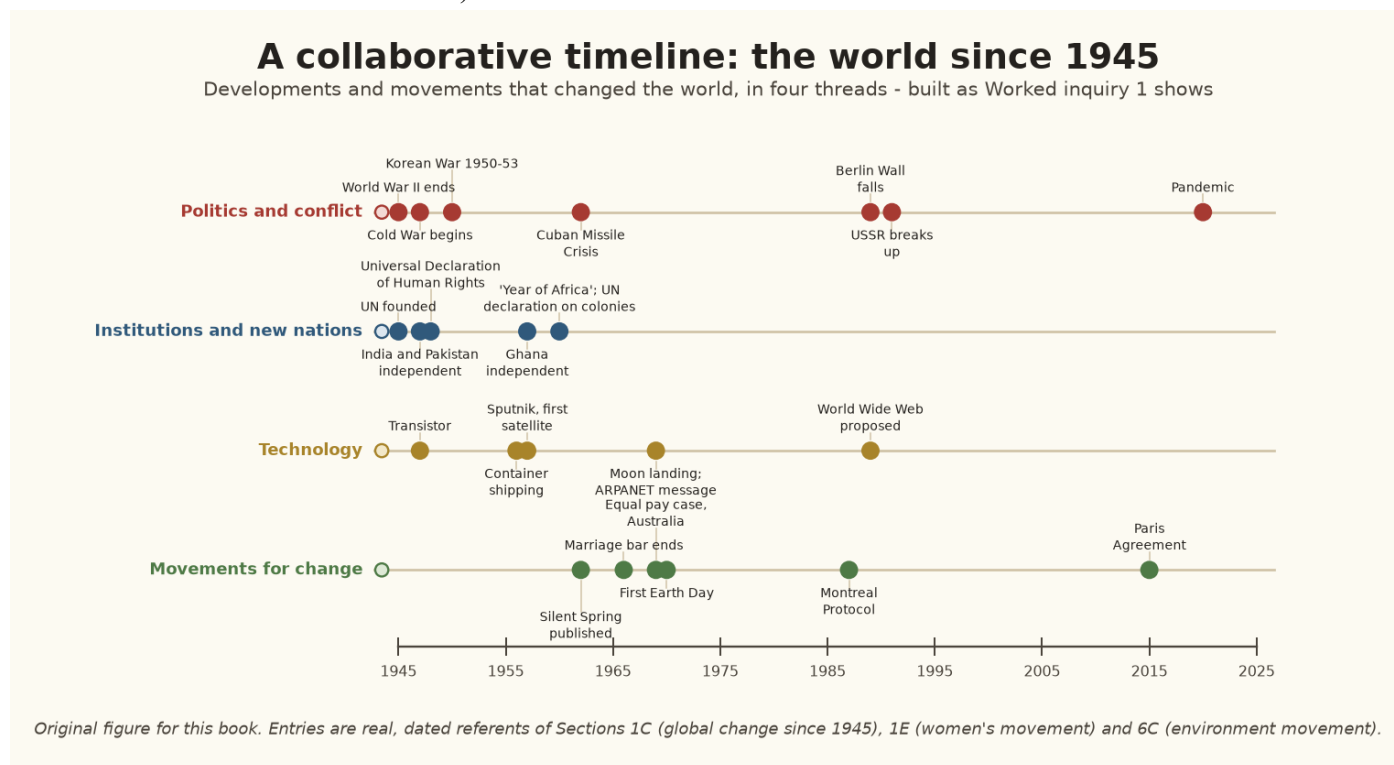


Diagram titled *A collaborative timeline: the world since 1945*. Four parallel thread lines - politics and conflict, institutions and new nations, technology, and movements for change - carry dated entries from World War II ending and the founding of the United Nations in 1945 through the Korean War, Sputnik, the Berlin Wall falling and the breakup of the USSR, to the Paris Agreement and the pandemic, above a decade axis from 1945 to 2025.

Why the protocol is part of the method. The Checker's job is the fairness habit this chapter builds: someone in the group must be allowed to say "prove it" before a card is stuck down. A timeline built without a Checker is a timeline built by the loudest voice.

Part 6: Reading your timeline - continuity, change, causes, consequences

A timeline is evidence laid out in order. Now read it.

Continuity and change. Use Figure 5 as a model: name the pattern, then give the dated evidence from your line. A continuity or change claim with no dates is a claim with no evidence.

Reading the timeline: continuity and change

The same line, two readings - each row names the pattern, then the dated evidence from Figure 4

Pattern	What the timeline shows	Dated evidence
CONTINUED	An international organisation built to keep the peace	The United Nations was founded in 1945 and still works today; its membership grew from 51 to 193 as new nations joined
CONTINUED	Rivalry and conflict between powerful states	The Cold War ran from 1947 to 1991 and was fought through proxy wars; conflict did not end when it did
CHANGED	Who rules: empires gave way to new nations	India and Pakistan became independent in 1947; in 1960 alone, seventeen African colonies became states (the 'Year of Africa')
CHANGED	The pace of technology	From one small switch - the transistor of 1947 - to the World Wide Web proposed in 1989, inside a single lifetime
CHANGED	The environment became a matter of politics	From one warning book (Silent Spring, 1962) to an agreement signed by nearly all countries (Paris Agreement, 2015)

Continuity asks what lasted; change asks what became different. Both answers must name dates - a continuity or change claim with no dates is a claim with no evidence.

Original figure for this book.

Diagram titled Reading the timeline: continuity and change. A table with five rows; each row names a pattern - two continuities and three changes - and gives the dated evidence from the timeline, such as the United Nations founded in 1945 and still working today, and the environment becoming a matter of politics from Silent Spring in 1962 to the Paris Agreement in 2015.

Causes and consequences. Sequence tells you what *could* have caused what - the cause must come before the effect - but sequence alone never proves a cause. Apply the three checks of Figure 6 before you write "caused".

Sequence is not the same as cause

Apply all three checks before you say one event caused another

1. ORDER

Did the supposed cause come
BEFORE the supposed effect?
If not, the claim fails
at once.

2. CONNECTION

Is there evidence linking the
two - something that shows
the first really helped
produce the second?

3. RIVALS

Could something else explain
the effect? A good claim
names its rivals and says
why it still stands.

A claim that PASSES - from Section 1C:

'Container shipping helped cause globalisation.'

Order: from 1956, before world trade grew - pass.

Connection: cheap freight made it possible to make
goods in one country and sell them in another - pass.

A claim that FAILS at the first check:

'The 1969 Moon landing caused the microchip.'

Order: the first microchips were built in 1958-59,
ten years BEFORE the landing - the claim runs
backwards. (The true order: chips flew to the Moon.)

The 'after this, therefore because of this' mistake

Assuming that event B was caused by event A just because B came after A is the most common
error in historical reasoning. The three checks exist to stop it.

Original figure for this book. Worked examples drawn from Section 1C.

Diagram titled Sequence is not the same as cause. Three panels give the checks - order, connection, rivals - and two worked examples: a claim that passes all three checks (container shipping helped cause globalisation) and a claim that fails the first check (the 1969 Moon landing caused the microchip, when the first microchips were built in 1958-59).

Pitfalls. Four traps catch most sequencing work. Name them in your group before you start, and check your finished line against them.

Four traps in sequencing work

Each one is easy to fall into - and easy to avoid once named

The trap	What it looks like	The fix
'After this, therefore because of this'	Treating B as caused by A only because B came after A	Apply the three checks from Figure 6; sequence alone is never enough
Choosing only friendly entries	Selecting only the events that support your claim	Include the entries that test your claim, and deal with them honestly
Uneven importance	Squeezing great events next to small ones, so the picture warps	Choose entries by how many people they reached, how much, and for how long
One scale for every story	Drawing only the world line, so national and local stories vanish	Draw parallel timelines - world, nation, local - on the same span

Notice what all four fixes share: they ask you to be fair to evidence that points away from your own claim. That fairness is the habit this whole chapter builds.

Original figure for this book.

Diagram titled *Four traps in sequencing work*. A table lists four traps - treating sequence as cause, choosing only friendly entries, uneven importance, and one scale for every story - with what each looks like and the fix for each.

Part 7: Worked inquiry 2 - ordering sources to make an argument

Sequencing is not only for events. Historians sequence their *sources* too: putting a set of sources in chronological order can itself become the evidence for an argument about continuity or change.

Below are eight sources about the movement for Federation in Australia. They describe the real artifacts listed in Section 2B's source table. The dates have been removed on purpose.

Your task.

1. Working from the clues and what you know from Section 2B, order the eight sources from earliest to latest. Record your order and the clue that fixed each date.
2. Mark the sources that belong to Thread 1 - steps led by politicians - and the sources that belong to Thread 2 - the widening of who took part. Some sources belong to both threads.
3. Compare your order with the model order in Figure 9 and correct any errors. Notice where a wrong order would have broken the argument.

Worked inquiry 2: eight sources without dates

Order them from earliest to latest using the clues and what you know from Section 2B - dates withheld on purpose

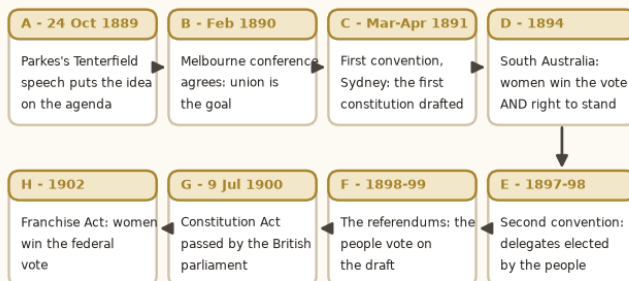


Original figure for this book. The cards describe the real artifacts listed in Section 2B's source table.

Diagram titled *Worked inquiry 2: eight sources without dates*. Eight source cards labelled A to H, each with a kind - newspaper report, official record, convention record, colonial law, electoral returns, British Act, federal law - and a short description plus a clue, with the dates withheld.

The model order, with dates restored

Compare your order from Figure 8 with this one and correct any errors



Thread 1 - steps led by politicians: A (1889) B (1890) C (1891) E (1897-98) G (1900)

Thread 2 - widening participation: D (1894) E (1897-98) F (1898-99) G (1900) H (1902)

Notice that sources E and G sit in BOTH threads: the second convention was organised by politicians but elected by the people, and the Constitution Act gave legal force to the people's referendum votes. The order shows change inside continuity - that is what sequencing lets you argue.

Original figure for this book.

Diagram titled *The model order, with dates restored*. The eight source cards are arranged in a snake from A to H with their dates - from the Tenterfield speech of 24 October 1889 to the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 - and two thread bands beneath: Thread 1, steps led by politicians (A, B, C, E, G), and Thread 2, widening participation (D, E, F, G, H), with sources E and G in both threads.

From order to argument. Once the order is fixed, the sequence itself can carry a claim. The question: *What changed in the movement for Federation between 1889 and 1902?* The paragraph below is one model answer. Each move is colour-coded so you can see the skeleton: claim, sequence used as evidence, explanation, then the other side of the pattern - continuity acknowledged.

Model paragraph: arguing from a sequence

Question: What changed in the movement for Federation between 1889 and 1902?

CLAIM	Between 1889 and 1902, the movement for Federation changed from a politicians' plan into the people's decision.
SEQUENCE AS EVIDENCE 1	The order of the sources shows it. In 1889, one speech by a premier - Parkes at Tenterfield - put the idea on the agenda, and in 1890 and 1891 only politicians met to plan it.
SEQUENCE AS EVIDENCE 2	Then the sequence widened: South Australia gave women the vote in 1894; the people elected the delegates of 1897-98; and in 1898 and 1899 the people themselves voted on the draft constitution.
SEQUENCE AS EVIDENCE 3	By 1902 the new federal parliament had passed the Commonwealth Franchise Act, giving women the federal vote and the right to stand.
EXPLANATION	Each step put the decision into more hands than the step before it. That widening of who decided is the change.
CONTINUITY ACKNOWLEDGED	Through it all, one thing continued: the colonies kept choosing to work together, from the first conference in 1890 to the first federal parliament in 1901.

Original figure for this book. Every move builds on the one before: claim, sequence as evidence, explanation, then the other side of the pattern - continuity acknowledged.

Diagram titled *Model paragraph: arguing from a sequence*. A colour-coded model paragraph in six moves: a claim that the movement for Federation changed from a politicians' plan into the people's decision; three moves using the sequence of sources as evidence; an explanation; and a continuity acknowledged - the colonies kept choosing to work together.

Between 1889 and 1902, the movement for Federation changed from a politicians' plan into the people's decision. The order of the sources shows it. In 1889, one speech by a premier - Parkes at Tenterfield - put the idea on the agenda, and in 1890 and 1891 only politicians met to plan it. Then the sequence widened: South Australia gave women the vote in 1894; the people elected the delegates of 1897-98; and in 1898 and 1899 the people themselves voted on the draft constitution. By 1902 the new federal parliament had passed the Commonwealth Franchise Act, giving women the federal vote and the right to stand. Each step put the decision into more hands than the step before it. That widening of who decided is the change. Through it all, one thing continued: the colonies kept choosing to work together, from the first conference in 1890 to the first federal parliament in 1901.

Check your understanding.

- Which two sources belong to both threads? What does each one show about change inside continuity?
- The model paragraph says the movement "changed from a politicians' plan into the people's decision". Which single source in the sequence is the strongest evidence for that claim? Explain your choice in one or two sentences.

Part 8: Practice

Scaffolded.

- Using Figure 4, list three entries from the technology thread in order and say, in one sentence each, what changed at each step.
- Figure 4 shows the institutions thread and the movements thread running side by side from 1962 on. Choose one pair of entries - one from each thread - that fall in the same decade, and say whether the pair shows the

movements thread influencing the institutions thread, or the reverse, or neither. Use the dates to justify your answer.

3. The movements thread includes the repeal of the marriage bar in 1966 and the equal pay decision of 1972 (Section 1E). Place one more entry from Section 1E on that thread, date it, and say whether it shows continuity or change in the long campaign for equal pay.
4. Apply the three checks of Figure 6 to this claim: “The invention of container shipping in 1956 caused the Berlin Wall to fall in 1989.” Which check does it fail, and why?
5. Using the five choices of Figure 2, plan (do not draw) a timeline of the interwar years 1919-1939 from Section 3A. State your span, threads, selection rule, scale and label style in five short sentences.
6. A partner says: “The 1960 ‘Year of Africa’ was a turning point.” Use the definition of turning point from Part 2 and two dated entries from Figure 4 to agree or disagree.

Unscaffolded.

7. Build a second thread for Figure 4 from any section of this book you choose (for example, Section 1E). State your five choices, date every entry, and add one sentence on how your thread runs beside the four already drawn.
8. Choose any cluster on Figure 4 (1945-50, 1989-91, or one you find yourself). Write a paragraph that uses the order of the entries inside the cluster as evidence for a claim about causes or consequences. Apply the three checks of Figure 6 before you hand it in.
9. Order these six developments from Section 1C and 6C from earliest to latest without looking at your notes: the World Wide Web proposed; Ghana independent; the Montreal Protocol; Sputnik; the first Earth Day; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Then check and correct.
10. “Between 1945 and the present, the world became more connected, and the connections became faster.” Discuss this claim using at least four dated entries from Figure 4, naming one entry that tests the claim as well as entries that support it.

Part 9: Source-based inquiry task

The question. *Between 1919 and 1955, did the way great powers made alliances change or continue?*

Below are six treaty extracts, described in modern words. **The extracts are out of order and the dates have been removed.**

- **Source 1.** A covenant that creates a League of Nations, whose members promise to respect each other’s independence and to refer disputes to arbitration before going to war. It is signed as part of the peace settlement that ends the First World War.
- **Source 2.** A charter that creates the United Nations. Its members pledge to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to be tolerant and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours.
- **Source 3.** A treaty in which twelve nations of North America and Western Europe agree that an armed attack against one of them in Europe or North America shall be regarded as an attack against them all.
- **Source 4.** A pact in which eight states of Eastern Europe, led by the Soviet Union, promise mutual defence in answer to a new Western alliance.
- **Source 5.** A pact of collective defence between the United States and several South-East Asian and Pacific states, signed after the wars in Korea and Indochina.
- **Source 6.** A pact in which Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan agree to resist aggression in the Middle East.

Your task.

1. Sequence the six sources from earliest to latest. For each, write the clue that fixed its date (which war, which region, which named power tells you when it must belong).
2. Identify one continuity across the sequence and one change. For each, quote the words in the extracts that show it.

3. Write a paragraph of 150-200 words answering the question. Your paragraph must use the sequence itself as evidence (as the model paragraph in Part 7 does), and it must acknowledge the other side of the pattern - the continuity if you argue change, the change if you argue continuity.

Model order (check after you finish). Source 1 (the League of Nations Covenant, signed with the Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919); Source 2 (the UN Charter, 1945); Source 3 (the North Atlantic Treaty, 1949); then Sources 4, 5 and 6 - the Warsaw Pact, SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, all 1954-55, in an order you may defend from the clues. A strong answer notices both the continuity - great powers kept making alliances to deter rivals, from the League's promises through the Cold War and its proxy wars (conflicts fought through third parties) - and the change - the League asked members to refer disputes to arbitration, while the later alliances promised that an attack on one would be answered by all.

What to look for

- **Sequencing as method, not decoration.** Students should fix the order *before* stating claims (Figure 3). Watch for the Part 7 and Part 9 tasks: if a student's argument changes when the order is corrected, the sequence is doing real work.
- **Continuity and change held together.** Strong responses name both in the same paragraph (the model paragraphs in Parts 7 and 9 show this). A response that sees only change, or only continuity, has read half the line.
- **Cause claims checked, not asserted.** The three checks of Figure 6 (order, connection, rivals) should appear in student reasoning by Part 8 task 4 and Part 9. The Latin-named fallacy of Figure 7 is the one to catch early.
- **Dates as evidence, not decoration.** Every continuity, change, cause and consequence claim should carry at least one date (Figure 5's bottom line).

Cross-links. 7A (the concepts this section applies); 7C-7F (sibling skills sections of Chapter 7); 1C and 6C (the referents of Worked inquiry 1); 2B (the sources behind Worked inquiry 2); 3A (the interwar referents of Part 8 task 5 and the practice span); 1E (the women's movement referents of the movements thread); Chapters 8A-8D (the depth studies where this method is reused at full independence).

Reading historical sources: purpose, features, content, context

For the teacher

This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–5) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable sources — Frank Hurley’s World War I composite photographs (part 6, .E05) and the preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (part 7, .E06 rewritten neutral) — six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. As a skills section in chapter 7, the skill itself is the task: content is drawn from chapters 1–6 (Federation 2B, the world wars in chapter 3 and 4A–4C, memory 4D, the Japan chapter 5, the environment movement chapter 6) and the prose is kept thin while the doing carries the weight (§3). Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2), including the hard words inside the two quoted primary sources (expedient, Dominion, and the preamble’s word for a union that cannot be broken — defined at first use, and the one word in this section with a ladder rank above the ceiling; see the gate note). The composite-photograph debate (part 6) steelmans both positions at equal depth (CONTESTED_TERMS Rules 4–5); marking is on the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion reached (Rule 5). All First Nations content is excluded per Rule 1 and §2A; nothing from the original .E06 example may be authored in later, including as context or a caption.

Curriculum alignment (VCAA export VC2_AS-CD-E1ab_29-07-2026.csv) — codes only:

VC2HH10S03 — Historical Concepts and Skills · Using historical sources

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10S03.E01 · VC2HH10S03.E02 · VC2HH10S03.E03 · VC2HH10S03.E04 · VC2HH10S03.E05 · VC2HH10S03.E06 (REWROTE neutral per §2A — see D3 note).

D3 note (binding): VC2HH10S03.E06 is rewritten neutral per §2A. The elaboration’s example source — the Bringing Them Home report (1997) — is replaced by a neutral source with rich context: the preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (UK). The skill is preserved in full: part 7 models how a source’s context explains the responses it drew, read from different sides (federalists such as Barton and Deakin; the New South Wales ‘No’ voters of 1898; the smaller colonies; readers today). The elaboration is cited by code only; none of its referents is taught. No First Nations material may be authored into this section later, including as context, background or a caption.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section teaches the skill named by the CD — analysing any source through purpose, features, content and context — in one sequence. Part 1 introduces the four lenses with provenance and the primary/secondary distinction; part 2 covers the three families of sources (.E01); part 3 separates sources from interpretations (.E02); part 4 builds the strengths-and-limits table (.E03); part 5 reads visual sources, including the curriculum’s named Hakenkreuz example (.E04). Worked inquiry 1 (part 6) applies the lenses to Frank Hurley’s World War I photographs and steelmans the debate his composite photographs caused (.E05). Worked inquiry 2 (part 7) applies them to the Constitution Act’s preamble — context first, then varying responses (.E06 rewritten). The section assumes no Level 9 sequence (D1): every term is defined at first use. Cross-links go to 2B, 3D/3E (the Hurley case), 4A–4D, chapters 5–6, and the sister skills sections 7D–7F and 8B–8D.

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
historical source	anything left over from the past that can be used as evidence about it
provenance	the who, where and when of a source
primary source	a record made at the time being studied, by someone inside the events
secondary source	an account made later, from primary sources, by someone looking back
interpretation	an account of the past built from sources after the events
purpose	why a source was made — what its maker wanted it to do

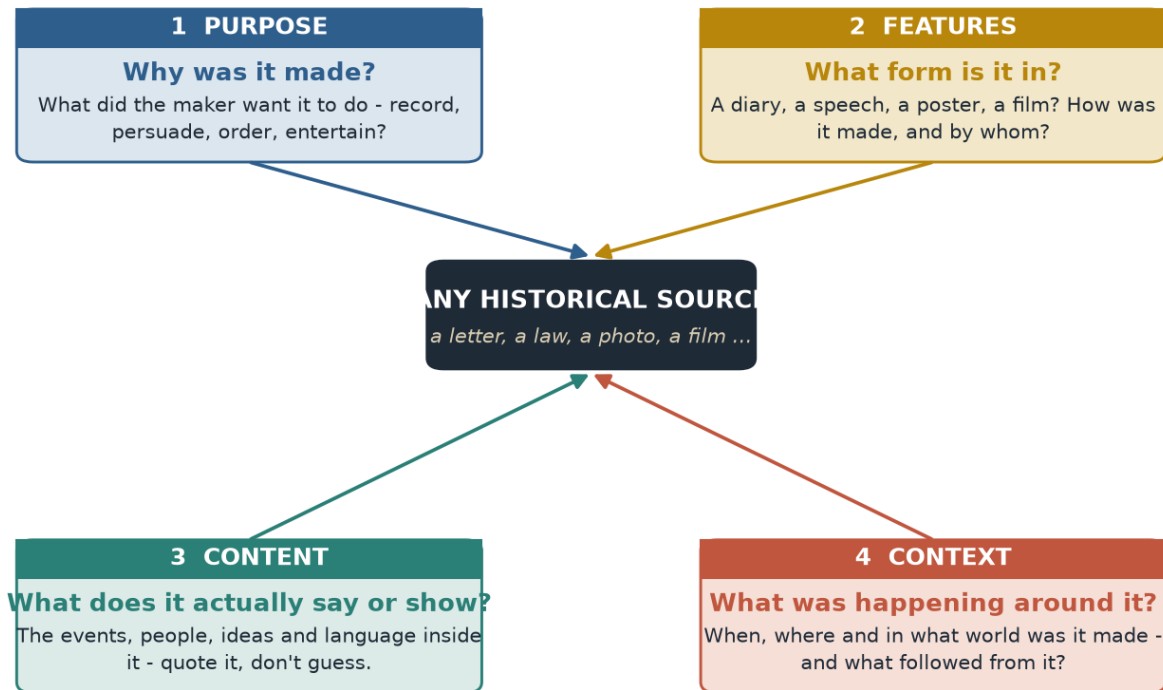
Word	Gloss used in this section
features	the form and make-up of a source — its type, language and construction
content	what a source actually says or shows
context	the time, place and situation a source was made in, and what was happening around it
contextual significance	what a source tells us mainly because of when, where and why it was made
composite photograph	one print joined together from several photographic negatives
symbol	a thing that stands for something else and carries meaning
stereotype	a fixed, simplified and often unfair image of a whole group of people
preamble	an opening statement to a law that says why the law exists
referendum	a vote in which the people answer one question
royal assent	the formal approval of a law by the monarch
indissoluble	unable to be broken apart (a word used inside the preamble itself)
expedient	useful or fitting for the purpose (a word used inside the preamble itself)
Dominion	a self-governing member of the British Empire, such as Australia in 1931
steelman	to state an opposing view in its strongest form before judging it

1. Four questions for any source

Historians build accounts of the past out of what survives from it: letters, laws, photographs, speeches, films, recordings, cartoons, diaries. Anything left over from the past that can be used as evidence about it is a **historical source**. This section teaches you the skill named in the curriculum for this chapter: how to analyse any source through four lenses — **purpose, features, content** and **context**. Figure 1 sets them out.

The four lenses for any historical source

Ask all four questions of every source you analyse.



Original figure for this book. The four lenses match the curriculum's own words: purpose, features, content, context.

A diagram of four lenses around any historical source: *purpose* (why was it made?), *features* (what form is it in?), *content* (what does it actually say or show?) and *context* (what was happening around it?)

Figure 1 — The four lenses for any historical source.

- **Purpose** asks why the source was made — what its maker wanted it to do: record, persuade, order, entertain. One source can have several purposes at once.
- **Features** asks what form it is in — a diary, a speech, a poster, a film — and how it was made, and by whom.
- **Content** asks what it actually says or shows. Quote it; do not guess.
- **Context** asks what was happening around it — when, where and in what world it was made, and what followed from it.

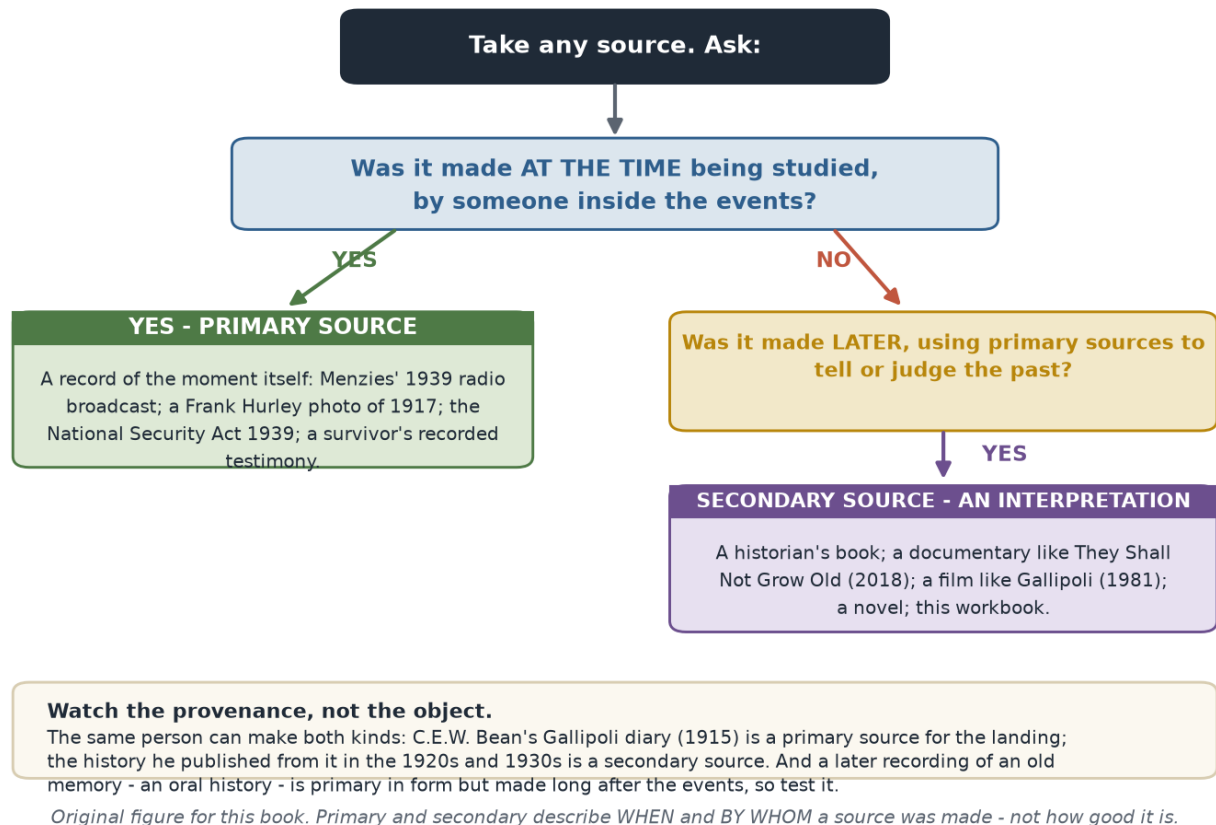
Start with **provenance**: the who, where and when of a source. Provenance fixes the other three lenses in place — you cannot judge purpose or context until you know who made the source and when.

Historians also sort sources into two kinds. A **primary source** is a record made at the time being studied, by someone inside the events. A **secondary source** is an account made later, from primary sources, by someone looking back.

Figure 2 gives you the decision path.

Sorting a source: primary or secondary?

Start with the source's provenance - who made it, where, and when.



A decision flow for sorting a source as primary or secondary, starting from its provenance, with a warning that the same person can make both kinds

Figure 2 — Sorting a source: primary or secondary?

Watch the two catches at the bottom of Figure 2, because they are favourite places to make a mistake. First, the same person can make both kinds: C.E.W. Bean's Gallipoli diary (1915) is a primary source for the landing; the official history he later published from it is a secondary source. What decides is not the person but when the record was made and what job it does. Second, an oral history — someone's memory recorded long after the events — is primary in form but made late, so memory has had time to change it. Test oral sources against other evidence, the same as any source.

2. The three families of sources

Sources come in three families: written, oral and visual — and many sources belong to two families at once. Figure 3 gives a real, dated example for every branch, and each example appears in another chapter of this book.

Three families of sources

Every source you meet belongs to one of these families - and many belong to two.

WRITTEN SOURCES	ORAL SOURCES	VISUAL SOURCES
Diaries Frank Hurley's wartime diary, 1917-1918 Letters soldiers' letters home from the world wars - the Australian War Memorial holds thousands Speeches Robert Menzies' radio broadcast, 3 September 1939 Newspapers The Argus (Melbourne) on Federation Day, 1 January 1901 Legislation the National Security Act 1939 Government reports the minutes of the Wannsee Conference, January 1942	Interviews recorded interviews with returned service personnel held by the Australian War Memorial Accounts survivors' recorded accounts of the Holocaust at the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne (opened 1992) Stories family and community stories passed on by word of mouth, later taped or filmed	Cartoons Will Dyson's World War I cartoons for London's Daily Herald - he was Australia's first official war artist Photographs Frank Hurley's official photographs of the Australian Imperial Force, 1917-1918 Paintings official war paintings held by the Australian War Memorial Film and video newsreels, home movies and documentaries of the time

Original figure for this book. All examples are real, dated sources you can look up; each is touched on in another chapter of this book.

Three columns for the written, oral and visual families of sources, each with real dated examples from the chapters of this book

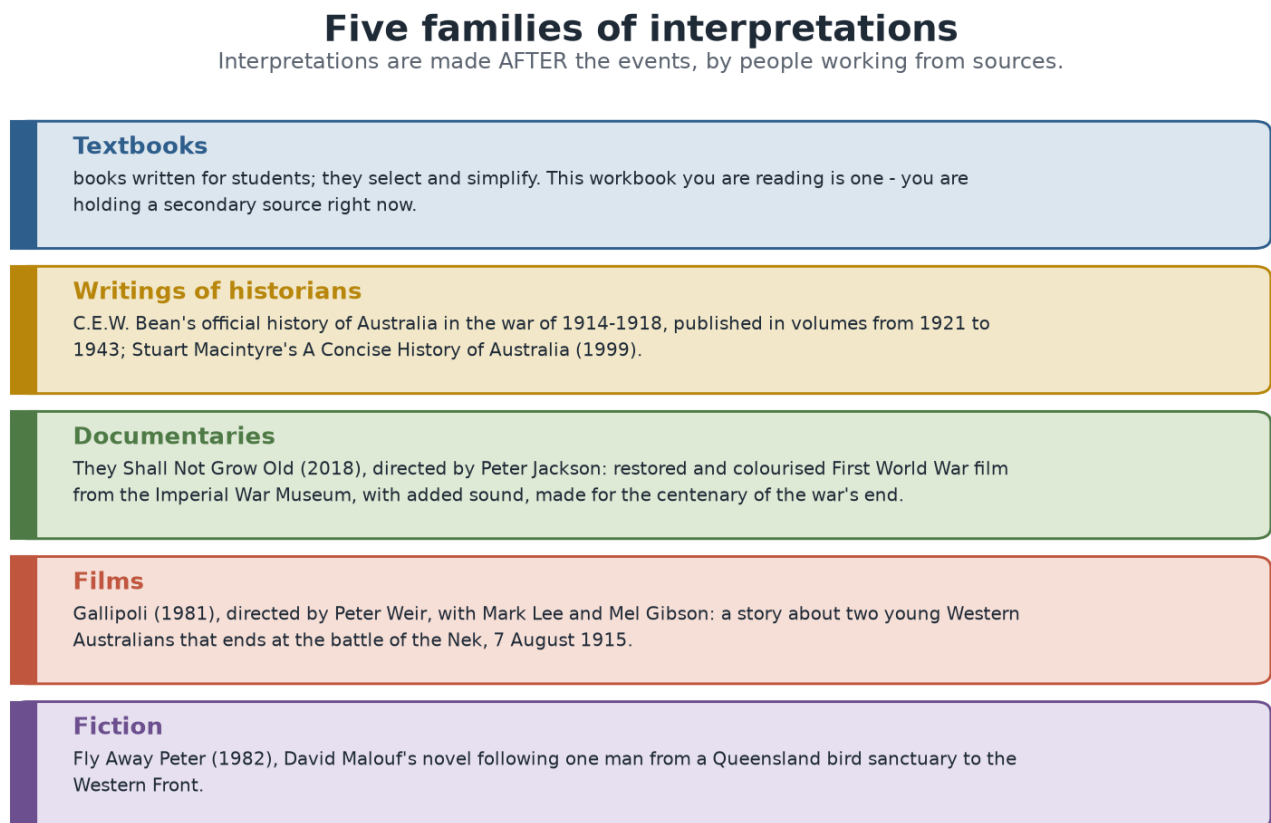
Figure 3 — The three families of sources, with dated examples.

The rule for using them is range. One source shows one view; a wide range of source types lets you check one account against another — a diary against a photograph, a letter against a law. The more kinds of source that agree, the stronger your answer.

3. Sources are one thing; interpretations are another

Do not confuse sources with **interpretations**. A source is evidence left over from the past. An interpretation is an account built from that evidence afterwards — by a textbook writer, a historian, a film-maker. You read them differently: you ask a source *what can you tell me about your time?* and you ask an interpretation *what sources do you stand on — and which ones did you leave out?*

Figure 4 sets out the five families of interpretations with real examples.



Original figure for this book. Each family reads the past through sources - and each can reach a different answer from the same evidence.

Five families of interpretations with dated examples: textbooks, historians' writings, documentaries, films and fiction

Figure 4 — Five families of interpretations.

Notice the first row: this workbook is listed there, because it is a secondary source — a selection of what happened, written for you. Every interpretation selects: two honest historians can study the same sources and reach different conclusions, because they ask different questions and weigh evidence differently. Section 7F teaches you to evaluate interpretations in full. The habit to start now: when someone makes a claim about the past, ask which sources it stands on.

4. Strengths and limitations

No source is perfect. Every source type is good at one job and weak at another, and knowing both sides before you trust a source is the skill. Figure 5 summarises eleven source types of modern history.

Source types of modern history: strengths and limits

Every source type helps you in one way and misleads you in another. Knowing both is the skill.

SOURCE TYPE	WHAT IT GIVES YOU (STRENGTHS)	WHAT TO WATCH FOR (LIMITS)
Diary	the maker's own words, close to the events; private and unplanned	one person's view; written for the self; mood and memory shape it
Letter	the maker's words to one chosen reader	written FOR someone, so some truth may be held back; wartime letters were opened by censors
Speech	careful public statements from people in the events; shows what leaders wanted others to feel	made to persuade; leaves out what hurts the case
Newspaper	dated, daily reports; many voices and views in one place	owners and editors choose what is printed; written in haste
Legislation	the exact words of the law, with dates — strong evidence of what a government decided	shows the law on paper, not what happened in real life
Government report	official records, counts and inquiries	written by the state, for the state; some things kept secret
Oral records — interviews, accounts, Cartoon stories	the actual voices of people, sometimes the only record of ordinary lives	made later, from memory; the interviewer shapes what is said
Photograph	opinion in one image; symbols do the arguing	opinion, not checked fact; exaggerates on purpose
Painting	a record of a single real moment	the photographer picks the angle; images can be cropped, staged or altered
Film and video	how an artist saw or imagined a scene	made to move the viewer; may be staged, finished long after, or invented
	movement, sound and place; newsreels of the time	edited for effect; often made for cinemas or governments, not for accuracy

Original figure for this book. Copy this table into your notes and add a real example from this book beside each row.

A table of eleven source types of modern history with a strengths column and a limits column for each

Figure 5 — Source types of modern history: strengths and limits.

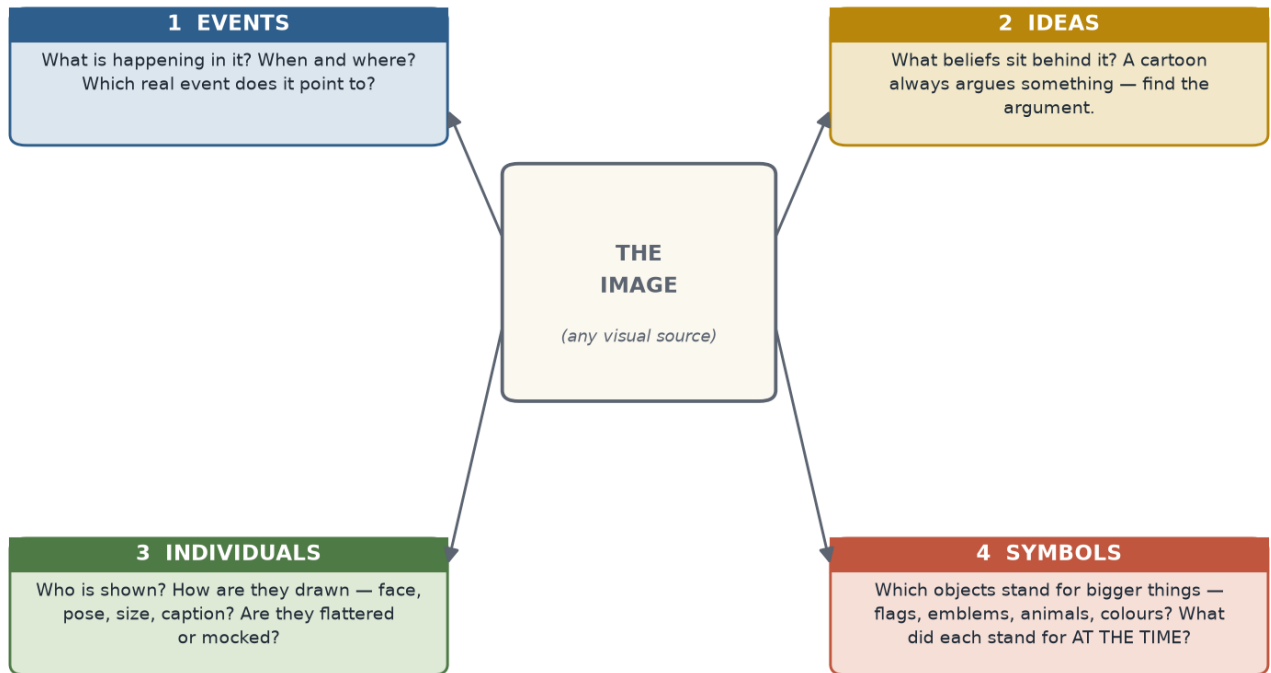
Read any row and you will see the pattern: strengths and limits come as a pair. A diary gives you the maker's own words, close to the events — and only one person's view, shaped by mood. A newspaper gives you dated, daily reports from many voices — and only what its owner chose to print. When you use a source in an answer, name the strength you are relying on and show you know the limit beside it. That one habit is worth more than any fact you could memorise.

5. Reading visual sources

Visual sources — cartoons, photographs, paintings, film — are read, not just looked at. The curriculum asks you to explain what a visual source represents — its events, ideas, people and symbols. Figure 6 gives the four steps.

Reading a visual source

A cartoon, photograph, painting or film frame. Explain what it represents — in four steps.



Original figure for this book. Symbols are the key step: their meanings change over time, so always ask what they meant when the image was made.

Four steps for reading a visual source around an image box: the events it shows, the ideas behind it, the individuals in it and the symbols it uses

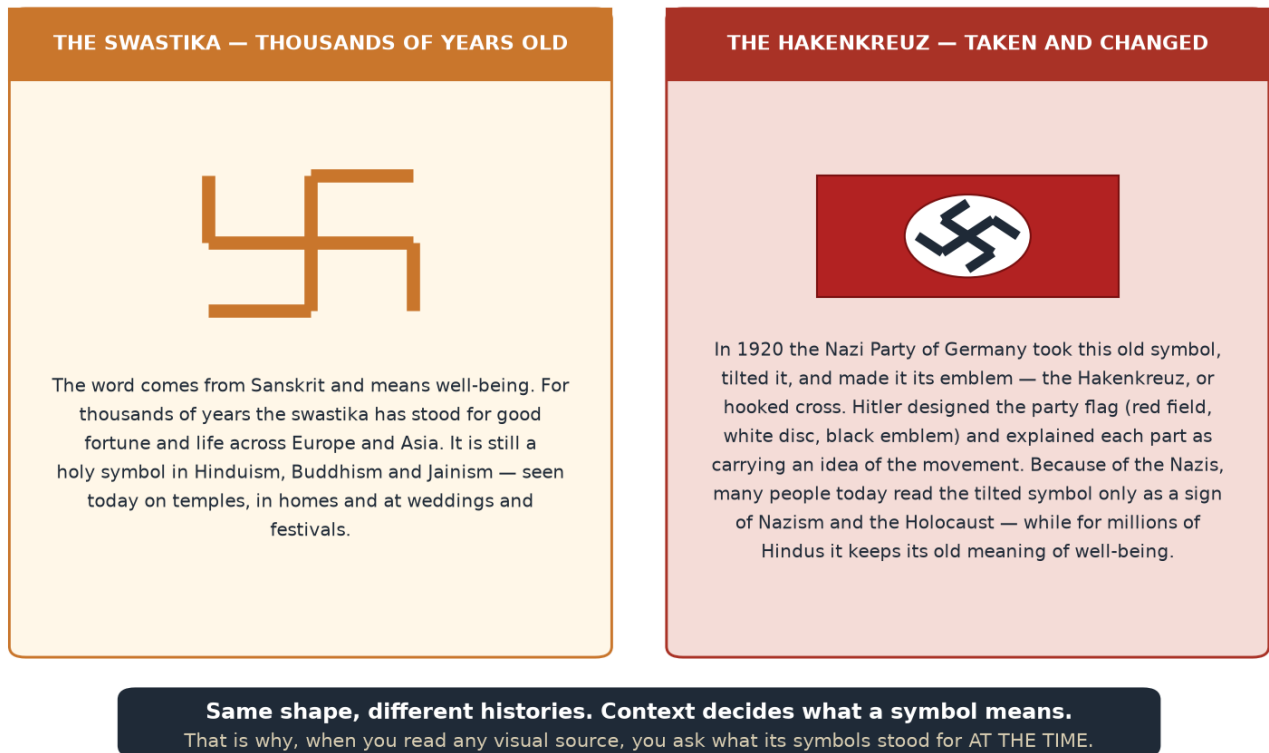
Figure 6 — Reading a visual source in four steps.

Step 4 is the one most students miss, so take it slowly. A **symbol** is a thing that stands for something else — a flag, an emblem, an animal, a colour. Symbols carry meanings, and meanings change over time, so the question is never *what does this symbol mean?* but *what did it mean when this source was made, to the people who saw it?*

The curriculum's own example is the clearest there is. Figure 7 sets out one shape with two histories: the swastika and the Nazi emblem made from it.

One symbol, two histories

Symbols carry meanings — and meanings can be taken and changed.



Original figure for this book.

Two panels comparing one shape with two histories: the swastika, an ancient symbol of well-being still sacred in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, and the Hakenkreuz, the tilted emblem the Nazi Party made from it in 1920

Figure 7 — One symbol, two histories.

Handle this example with care. For millions of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains the upright swastika remains a holy symbol of well-being today; it is the Nazi use — the tilted emblem called the **Hakenkreuz** (hooked cross) — that turned the shape into a sign of hatred in the West. The curriculum calls this a case of a symbol being taken from one culture and changed by another. Same shape, different histories — context decides the meaning.

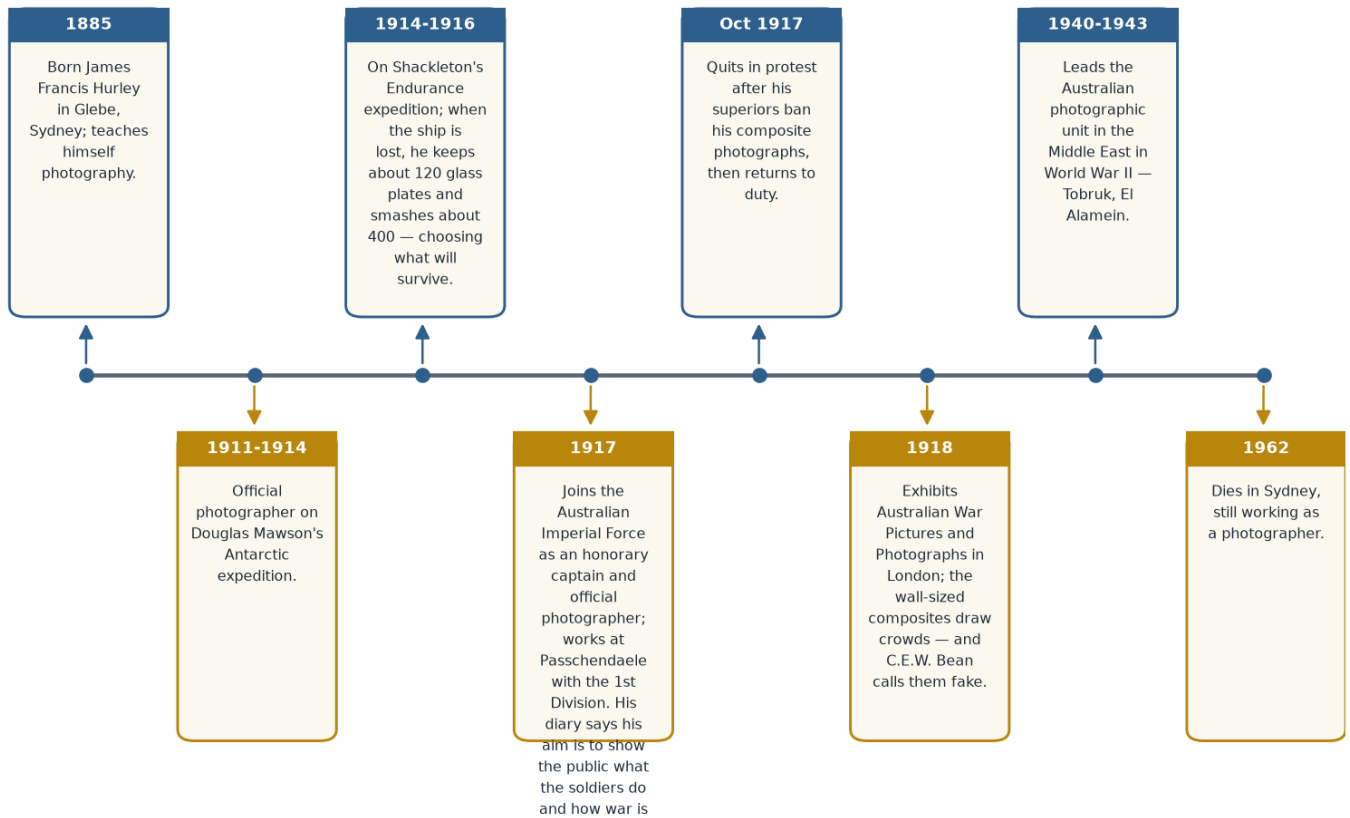
Two more things visual sources do, and you must spot both. They characterise people: cartoonists draw political figures with exaggerated features so you laugh at them, or fear them, at a glance. And they can trade in **stereotypes** — fixed, simplified and often unfair images of a whole group of people. Wartime posters and cartoons did this to enemy peoples in both world wars. When you meet such an image, do not repeat its claim; name what it is doing, who drew it, and what it wants you to think.

6. Worked inquiry 1 — Frank Hurley's composite photographs

Now the four lenses at full work, on a real case the curriculum names: Frank Hurley's World War I photographs, and the purpose of the composite photographs he made from them. Start with the man. Figure 8 puts his life on one line.

Frank Hurley (1885-1962): the camera goes to war

Australia's most famous photographer — before, during and after the world wars.



Original figure for this book. Hurley kept choosing what people would see — from the ice of Antarctica to the mud of Passchendaele.

A timeline of Frank Hurley's life and work from 1885 to 1962, from the Antarctic expeditions to the world wars

Figure 8 — Frank Hurley (1885–1962): the camera goes to war.

In 1917 Hurley joined the Australian Imperial Force as an honorary captain and official photographer. At Passchendaele he worked with the 1st Division, in mud that swallowed men and machines. His diary states his aim plainly: to “illustrate to the public the things our fellows do and how war is conducted.”

But the modern battlefield defeated the camera. The guns, the smoke and the men were spread too wide for one frame — no one who had not tried it, he wrote, could grasp how hard the task was. His answer was the **composite photograph** — one print joined from several negatives, so a single image could hold the scale of the event. As he put it, he had “tried and tried” to include the event on a single negative, “but the results are hopeless.” His superiors banned the technique; Hurley quit in protest in October 1917, then returned to duty. In 1918 his exhibition *Australian War Pictures and Photographs* drew crowds in London — and Australia's official war historian, C.E.W. Bean, attacked the composites as false records.

Was Hurley right or Bean? The steelman, both sides, is Figure 9.

Were Hurley's composites true? Both cases at full strength

A composite joins several negatives into one print. Hurley made them; Bean attacked them.

HURLEY'S CASE	BEAN'S CASE
1 One negative could not hold a modern battlefield: the guns, the mud, the smoke and the men were too spread out for one frame. 2 He tried and failed: no single shot, he wrote, could include the event — the results were hopeless. 3 A composite could show what it FELT like to be there — and his stated purpose was to show the public what the soldiers do. 4 The public responded: his 1918 London exhibition drew crowds, and visitors said the pictures made them see the war.	1 Official photographs are RECORDS: historians and families would use them for a hundred years, so they must show what really happened. 2 A composite puts things side by side that were never side by side — Bean called them fake. 3 Feeling is not the test of a record: a picture that moves you can still mislead you. 4 The military authorities agreed that the technique weakened the photographs' value as fact — and banned it.

Both sides wanted Australians to see the war. They disagreed about what a true picture is
That is the source-analysis question: purpose (persuade or record?) decides how you judge the features.

Original figure for this book.

Two columns setting out the strongest case on each side of the composite-photograph debate: Hurley's case that one negative could not hold a modern battlefield, and Bean's case that official photographs are records and must show what really happened

Figure 9 — The composite-photograph debate, steelmanned.

Notice that the two sides are really answering different questions. Hurley asks *can a photograph make the home front see the war?* — a purpose of communication. Bean asks *can a photograph record what actually happened?* — a purpose of evidence. Once you see that, the judgement follows from the purpose: composites work as communication and fail as records. That is the four lenses doing their job — purpose decides how you judge the features.

Here is the model analysis of Hurley's wartime composites:

- **Purpose** — to show the Australian public what its soldiers do; from his own diary, to illustrate and to move, not to file an exact record.
- **Features** — prints joined from several negatives; large exhibition scale; composed for drama and size.
- **Content** — the look of industrial war — guns, mud, smoke and men together — but not one real moment in one real place.
- **Context** — 1917–1918: a distant war with news under censorship, a home front that could only see the war through pictures, and cameras not yet able to capture the scale of the battlefield.

And the contextual significance — the .E05 skill, in one sentence: Hurley's composites are most valuable as evidence of how Australians of 1917–1918 wanted the war to be seen, and of the strain between seeing and believing that photography brought to modern war. **Contextual significance** means exactly that: what a source tells us mainly because of when, where and why it was made.

7. Worked inquiry 2 — a law's preamble, in context

Second worked inquiry, on a written source with rich context. Figure 10 reproduces the source: the **preamble** — the opening statement that says why a law exists — to the British Act that created the Commonwealth of Australia. Read it once before anything else.

SOURCE — the preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900

An Act of the British parliament creating the Commonwealth of Australia.

WHEREAS the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established:

And whereas it is expedient to provide for the admission into the Commonwealth of other Australasian Colonies and possessions of the Queen:

Provenance: British statute 63 & 64 Vict. c. 12; royal assent 9 July 1900. The words above are the Act's own preamble, unchanged.

How it came about: Australians drafted the Constitution at conventions in the 1890s; the people of the colonies voted for it at referendums in 1898-1900; the British parliament then passed it as a British law.

What followed: the Commonwealth began on 1 January 1901 (section 2B). Western Australia, which voted yes on 31 July 1900, is not named in the preamble — the second paragraph leaves the door open for colonies that had not yet voted.

Primary source reproduced for this book from the original statute (legislation.gov.uk).

A source card reproducing the preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, with a provenance line: British statute 63 & 64 Vict. c. 12, royal assent 9 July 1900

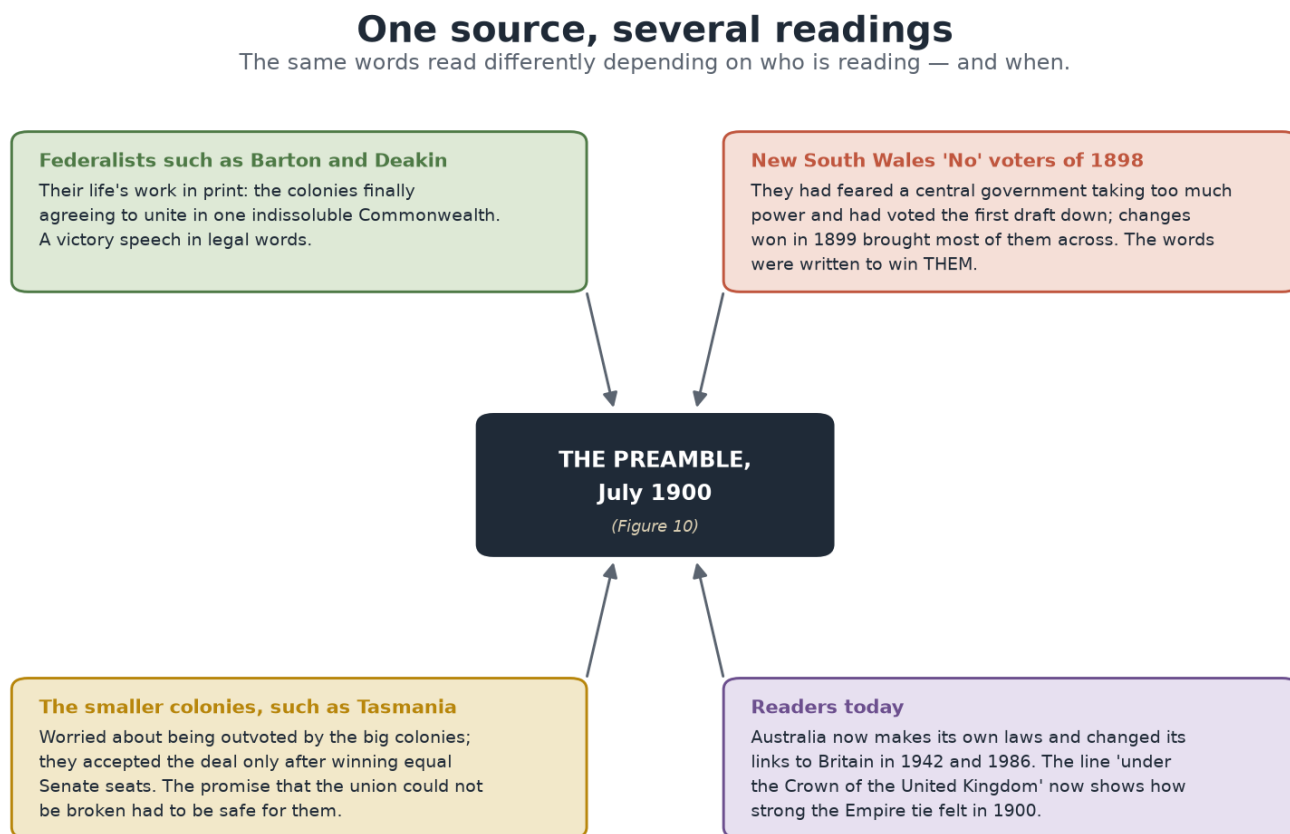
Figure 10 — The preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900.

The language is formal, and four of its words are hard. Fix them before you analyse: *whereas* means “given that”; *indissoluble* means unable to be broken apart; *expedient* means useful or fitting for the purpose; *hereby* means “by this Act itself”.

Now the lenses, starting with provenance and context, because this source lives in its context. Australians drafted their own constitution at conventions in the 1890s; the people of the colonies voted on it at **referendums** in 1898–1900; the British parliament then passed it as a British law, giving **royal assent** on 9 July 1900. The Commonwealth began on 1 January 1901 (section 2B tells the full story). Two context points matter for analysis. First, the preamble names five colonies — Western Australia had voted yes on 31 July 1900, after royal assent, and the second paragraph leaves the door open for colonies not yet in. Second, the words “under the Crown of the United Kingdom” state plainly what every reader of 1900 took for granted: the new nation was proud and British, and saw no clash between the two.

One more context point, and it sharpens the analysis: the preamble says “the people” agreed — but at the referendums only some of the people could vote. Women voted in South Australia and Western Australia, where they already held the vote; in the other colonies they did not. Noting who is inside a source’s words and who is outside them is a mark of strong analysis.

Next, the .E06 skill — how far a source’s context explains the responses it drew, read from different sides. Figure 11 shows four readers, four readings.



Original figure for this book. Context explains the spread: each reader's own history shapes what the same words mean.

One source with several readings: how federalists, the New South Wales No voters of 1898, the smaller colonies and readers today each read the same preamble differently

Figure 11 — One source, several readings.

The pattern is the lesson: the words did not change; the readers did. A federalist like Edmund Barton or Alfred Deakin read the preamble as the victory it announced. A New South Wales voter who had voted 'No' in 1898 — over fears that a central government would take too much power — read it as a promise that the changes won in 1899 would hold. Tasmania and the smaller colonies read that promise-word — that the union could not be broken — together with their equal Senate seats, as the safety they had demanded. And readers today read “under the Crown of the United Kingdom” as a marker of how strong the imperial tie still felt in 1900 — because Australia’s legal links to Britain have since changed, in 1942 and again in 1986.

Finally, the whole analysis in one colour-coded model. Copy the moves, not the words.

A model analysis — the preamble through four lenses

Worked example for Worked Inquiry 2. Each lens gets its own claim plus its evidence from the source.

PURPOSE

To make federation feel settled and solemn. The preamble is not law itself — it states WHY the law exists: to declare that the people of the colonies have agreed to unite.

FEATURES

Formal legal English ('whereas', 'indissoluble'); religious language ('humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God'); a two-part structure — what has happened, then a door left open for others to join.

CONTENT

Names five colonies agreeing to form one Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom; provides for later admission of other Australasian colonies.

CONTEXT

Written after a decade of conventions and referendums (1898-1900), at the height of the Empire. Federation meant giving up some colonial power; the promise that the union could not be broken was what eased the small colonies' fears.

Why this source is significant

In eight lines, the preamble shows how Australians wanted federation to feel: agreed, permanent, God-blessed — and still British.

Original figure for this book.

A colour-coded model analysis of the preamble through the four lenses — purpose, features, content, context — and a closing line on the source's significance

Figure 12 — A model analysis of the preamble through the four lenses.

8. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

1. **Sort the sources.** Copy the table and fill in both columns for each source, using Figures 2 and 3. The first row is done for you.

Source	Family (written/oral/visual)	Primary or secondary
Frank Hurley's wartime diary, 1917–1918	written	primary
a recorded interview with a returned servicewoman, held by the Australian War Memorial		
<i>The Argus</i> (Melbourne), 1 January 1901		
the <i>Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900</i> (UK)		
<i>They Shall Not Grow Old</i> (2018)		

a family story about World War II, taped in 2005 by a grandchild

2. **The Bean test.** Using Figure 2's decision path, explain in one sentence each why (a) Bean's 1915 diary and (b) his official history published from 1921 are different kinds of source, even though one man made both.
3. **Read the table.** From Figure 5: (a) give one strength and one limit of photographs as evidence; (b) why are wartime letters weaker than they look — what happened to them before they reached home? (c) which source type is described as "opinion in one image"?
4. **Four lenses on one symbol.** Using Figure 7, write one purpose sentence and one context sentence about the Nazi Party's use of the Hakenkreuz in the 1920s.
5. **Read the timeline.** From Figure 8: (a) in what year did Hurley join the Australian Imperial Force? (b) what did he do when Shackleton's ship was lost — and what does that choice tell you about him? (c) why did he quit in October 1917?
6. **Read the provenance line.** Using only Figure 10's card, answer: who passed the Act, and on what date did it receive royal assent? Name the five colonies listed in the preamble. Which colony had voted but is not named, and where does the preamble leave room for it?

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. **Four lenses on a source of your own.** Choose one source you have studied in chapters 5 or 6 — a source about Japan or about the environment movement. Write one sentence for each lens: purpose, features, content, context. End with one sentence of contextual significance: what does this source tell us mainly because of when and where it was made?
8. **Strengths and limits, steelmanned.** Choose one source type from Figure 5. Write the strongest case for trusting it and the strongest case against trusting it, then give one question for which you would use it anyway — and say why.
9. **Judge the debate.** "Hurley's composite photographs were false, so they have no value to historians." Write the strongest case for this claim and the strongest case against it, using Figure 9 and part 6. End with your own judgement, and say what decided you. Your answer is marked on the reasoning — terms defined, both sides stated at full strength, evidence cited — not on which side you choose.
10. **Context and responses.** "The preamble to the Constitution Act meant something different to every reader." Using part 7 and Figures 10–11, write one paragraph that explains why context shapes responses to a source. Use at least two of the four readings in Figure 11 and one detail of context from part 7.

9. Source-based inquiry

Read this primary source, then answer the questions below it.

"No Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom passed after the commencement of this Act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to a Dominion as part of the law of that Dominion, unless it is expressly declared in that Act that that Dominion has requested, and consented to, the enactment thereof."

— *Statute of Westminster* 1931 (United Kingdom), section 4 — the original words of the law, passed by the British parliament in December 1931. Two words explained: a **Dominion** was a self-governing member of the British Empire, such as Australia; to **enact** a law is to pass it. Australia adopted this statute in 1942 (*Statute of Westminster Adoption Act 1942*, Commonwealth), backdating the adoption to 3 September 1939, the day it entered World War II (section 4D).

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions this source could help you answer.
2. **Features:** this is legal language, not speech-making. Find the clause that does all the work — the two conditions a British law must meet before it can apply to a Dominion. Quote them.

3. **Content:** in your own words, what does section 4 stop the British parliament from doing?
4. **Context:** Australia waited eleven years to adopt this law, and then backdated the adoption to the first day of its war. What do those two facts together suggest about Australia's view of Britain between 1931 and 1942? Use section 4D to help you.
5. **Purpose and significance:** what was this law's purpose for the Dominions in 1931 — and what makes this single section significant for Australia's story? Name one other source you could use to test your answer.

What to look for

Score against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students weigh sources by testing their accuracy and value as evidence, and use that weighing to identify and evaluate different interpretations — the four lenses are the machinery under both. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script. Per CONTESTED TERMS Rule 5, mark the reasoning — terms defined, both sides steelmanned, evidence cited, limits acknowledged — never the conclusion reached. If a student raises excluded First Nations material (for example, in a perspective question about the preamble's "the people" or about the British Empire), redirect to the front-of-book note; do not develop it (D3).

- **Four lenses (part 1):** student can state purpose, features, content and context as questions and defines provenance; knows provenance comes first; knows the two catches of Figure 2 (the same maker can produce primary and secondary sources; oral histories are primary in form but made late, so test them).
- **Families (part 2, .E01):** the three families named with correct examples from Figure 3; the range rule stated — different source types check one another.
- **Interpretations (part 3, .E02):** student can separate a source from an interpretation and give the test question for each; all five families of interpretations named with their examples (this workbook; Bean's official history 1921–1943 and Macintyre 1999; *They Shall Not Grow Old* 2018; *Gallipoli* 1981; *Fly Away Peter* 1982).
- **Strengths and limits (part 4, .E03):** student can give the strength–limit pair for any row of Figure 5, and states that answers should name the strength they rely on and the limit beside it.
- **Visual sources (part 5, .E04):** the four steps named (events, ideas, individuals, symbols); the swastika/Hakenkreuz case handled with care — the ancient symbol of well-being distinguished from the Nazi emblem adopted in 1920, the tilted form named, and the point stated: context decides a symbol's meaning; stereotypes identified as fixed, simplified images of groups, not repeated as claims.
- **Worked inquiry 1 (part 6, .E05):** Hurley's facts correct (joined the AIF 1917 as honorary captain and official photographer; Passchendaele with the 1st Division; quit in protest October 1917 over the composite ban, then returned; London exhibition 1918; Bean's attack); both sides of Figure 9 stated at full strength; the resolution stated — purpose decides how features are judged (communication vs record); contextual significance given: the composites as evidence of how Australians wanted the war seen.
- **Worked inquiry 2 (part 7, .E06 rewritten):** provenance correct (British statute, royal assent 9 July 1900; Commonwealth began 1 January 1901); the Western Australia point made (voted yes 31 July 1900, after royal assent; the second paragraph leaves the door open); at least three of the four varying readings in Figure 11 explained; the "the people" limit noted — women could vote in South Australia and Western Australia at the referendums but not in the other colonies; the model analysis follows purpose–features–content–context and ends with a significance statement.
- **Source inquiry (part 9):** questions are genuinely historical; the two conditions quoted ("has requested, and consented to"); the content answer says the British parliament can no longer make law for a Dominion without that Dominion's request and consent; the context answer connects the eleven-year delay and the backdating to 3 September 1939 with Australia's changing view of Britain (section 4D); the evaluation names a test source — the *Statute of Westminster Adoption Act 1942* itself, a wartime speech, or records of the 1931 British debates.

Cross-links to skills sections: evaluating the value of sources as evidence (7D — this section's four lenses feed it); analysing perspectives, beliefs, values and attitudes from sources (7E — part 7's varying readings feed it); evaluating historical interpretations and debates (7F — part 3's source/interpretation split feeds it); analysing causes and consequences (8B); evaluating historical significance (8C); constructing sustained historical arguments (8D). Content cross-links: Federation (2B); Australians at war — the Hurley case links to the experiences of those who fought and to the significant events of the wars (3D/3E, per the chapter block note); the Holocaust and World War II (4A–4C);

memory and legacies (4D); the Japan chapter (5) and the environment movement chapter (6), which supply the student-chosen sources for task 7.

Sources for this section. All figures are original artifacts drawn for this book from the values stated here (SOURCE_USE Rule 3). Quotations and real-world data carry the following source lines; web sources were retrieved 2026-08-25.

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 9 and 10: VC2HH10S03 with elaborations .E01–.E06 (VCAA export, 29 July 2026).
- *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900* (UK), 63 & 64 Vict. c. 12 — preamble reproduced verbatim in Figure 10; royal assent 9 July 1900; the Commonwealth began 1 January 1901; referendum votes across the colonies 1898–1900, Western Australia voting yes on 31 July 1900 — legislation.gov.uk, retrieved 2026-08-25; the Federation sequence as taught in section 2B of this book.
- Women at the Federation referendums — women voted in South Australia and Western Australia, where they already held the vote, but not in the other colonies — per the franchise record of each colony, as taught in section 2B of this book.
- *Statute of Westminster* 1931 (UK), section 4 — reproduced verbatim in part 9; legislation.gov.uk, retrieved 2026-08-25. *Statute of Westminster Adoption Act 1942* (Commonwealth), backdated to 3 September 1939 — original statute, as taught in section 4D of this book.
- Frank Hurley (1885–1962) — biographical sequence (born Glebe, Sydney; Mawson’s Antarctic expedition 1911–1914; Shackleton’s *Endurance* expedition 1914–1916, keeping about 120 glass plates when the ship was lost; Australian Imperial Force official photographer from 1917, honorary captain; resigned in protest over the composite ban, October 1917; *Australian War Pictures and Photographs*, London, 1918; Australian photographic unit in the Middle East 1940–1943; died in Sydney 1962) verified against “Frank Hurley”, [Wikipedia \(en.wikipedia.org\)](https://en.wikipedia.org), retrieved 2026-08-25. Hurley’s wartime diary and papers are held by the State Library of New South Wales; his AIF photographs are held by the Australian War Memorial.
- Frank Hurley, wartime diary, 1917–1918 (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales) — the quotations in part 6: his stated aim (“to illustrate to the public the things our fellows do and how war is conducted”) and the single-negative passage (“To include the event on a single negative, I have tried and tried, but the results are hopeless”).
- C.E.W. Bean’s objection to Hurley’s composite photographs as false records — the dispute is recorded in both men’s papers; see also Hurley’s diary, October 1917.
- The swastika as an ancient symbol of well-being (the word is from the Sanskrit) and a sacred symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism — stable general knowledge, reflected in the education collections of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne (jhc-museum.org.au). The Nazi Party’s adoption of the tilted emblem (the Hakenkreuz) in 1920 and the party flag — red field, white disc, black emblem — designed by Adolf Hitler, verified against “Nazi flag”, [Wikipedia \(en.wikipedia.org\)](https://en.wikipedia.org), retrieved 2026-08-25.
- *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2018), directed by Peter Jackson — restored and colourised World War I film from the Imperial War Museum, made for the centenary of the war’s end.
- *Gallipoli* (1981), directed by Peter Weir, with Mark Lee and Mel Gibson, ending at the battle of the Nek, 7 August 1915 (section 3C of this book).
- David Malouf, *Fly Away Peter* (Sydney: Penguin, 1982).
- C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, 12 volumes (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1921–1943); Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Will Dyson, Australia’s first official war artist — World War I cartoons for London’s *Daily Herald*; Australian War Memorial collection and biography.
- *The Argus* (Melbourne), Federation Day issue, 1 January 1901 — National Library of Australia, Trove (trove.nla.gov.au), retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Robert Menzies, radio broadcast declaring Australia at war, 3 September 1939 — National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra.
- *National Security Act 1939* (Commonwealth) — original statute, National Archives of Australia.

- Minutes of the Wannsee Conference, 20 January 1942 — held at the Political Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office; reproduced at the House of the Wannsee Conference Memorial, Berlin.
- Australian War Memorial, oral history collection — recorded interviews with returned service personnel.
Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne — recorded accounts of survivors; the Centre opened in 1992 (section 4D of this book).

Judging the value of sources as evidence

For the teacher

This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–6) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable sources, three inline scaffolded tasks, six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. Chapters 7–8 carry the most doing and the least prose (§3): the skill itself is the task, and every source the section evaluates is drawn from Chapters 1–6 (D6) — the Menzies broadcast of 1939 (3B), the July Crisis documents of 1914 (3A), the Dual Alliance of 1879 (new here, sourced below), the reform-era record (2E), the repatriation record (4D), and the Curtin statement and Churchill memoir on the fall of Singapore (3E, 4D). Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2). CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 5 is met in part 2: the strongest form of the position “a source that gets things wrong is worthless” is stated before it is answered, and the section’s own position is then tested by the propaganda case in part 3. All First Nations content is excluded per Rule 1 and §2A — see the D3 note below; no excluded material may be authored in later, including as context or a caption. Vocabulary gate: `gate_7d.py` (this folder) checks all student-facing text — prose, tasks, tables, alt text and figure lettering — against the ladder at ceiling Yr10; quoted source artifacts are reported but not gated (house practice; see the gate header).

Curriculum alignment (VCAA export VC2_AS-CD-E1ab_29-07-2026.csv) — codes only:

VC2HH10S04 — Historical Concepts and Skills · Using historical sources

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10S04.E01 · VC2HH10S04.E02 · VC2HH10S04.E03 (partial — see D3 note) · VC2HH10S04.E04 · VC2HH10S04.E05 · VC2HH10S04.E06.

D3 note (binding): the export text of VC2HH10S04.E03 names groups whose voices may be missing from a source. Per §2A, .E03 is **partial**: the Indigenous-peoples example is **dropped**, and the skill — identifying absent voices — is taught through the remaining referents: women, men, children, ethnic groups and minority groups. Part 5 therefore works its two absent-voices cases (the reform-era record via 2E; the July Crisis record via 3A) entirely through those remaining referents, and part 4’s model paragraph points the silence forward to part 5 without naming any excluded material. No First Nations content may be authored into this section later, including as context, background or a caption; if a student raises such material, redirect to the front-of-book note (D3) without developing it.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): the Chapter 7 block specifies: “7D teaches reliability and usefulness as question-dependent, accuracy versus purpose, absent voices (→ 2E, 4D), and comparing sources for similarities, differences, inconsistencies and causes/consequences.” The section follows that order. Part 1 establishes the core of .E01 — value is not fixed inside a source; it depends on the question asked — using the Menzies broadcast read against three questions. Part 2 gives the five-move method used all section (setting the question; provenance; reliability checks including corroboration; usefulness checks including relevance, .E04; a graded verdict). Part 3 is .E02: accuracy and purpose, worked through four real cases from Chapters 2–3 (the Harvester judgement records, Fisher’s pledge, recruiting posters, enlistment rolls). Worked inquiry 1 (part 4) compares three sources on why World War I began — the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum of 23 July 1914, the Serbian reply of 25 July 1914 and the Dual Alliance of 7 October 1879 — for similarities, differences and inconsistencies (.E05) and for causes of different time spans and consequences intended and unintended (.E06), closing with a model evaluation paragraph. Part 5 teaches absent voices (.E03, partial per §2A) through the reform-era record (→ 2E) and links the same method to the repatriation record of the wars (→ 4D). Worked inquiry 2 (part 6) evaluates two sources on the fall of Singapore — Curtin’s statement of 27 December 1941 and Churchill’s 1950 memoir — for significance and continuity-and-change, showing that timing decides what a source can be evidence for. The source-based inquiry (part 8) pairs Fisher’s pledge of 1914 with Menzies’ broadcast of 1939 (both 3B) for a full student-run evaluation across two wars. The section assumes no Level 9 sequence (D1) and no specific order of the skills chapters: primary and secondary sources, provenance and perspective are each re-established in one sentence at first use.

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
evidence	information from a source that helps answer a question about the past

Word	Gloss used in this section
reliability	how far a source can be trusted: how well its account stands up when checked
usefulness	how well a source helps answer the question you are actually asking
accuracy	whether what a source says is correct
purpose	what the maker wanted a source to do
provenance	who made a source, when, where, and how it has come down to us
corroboration	checking what one source says against other sources
perspective	a point of view shaped by who someone is and where they stand
primary source	a record made at the time being studied
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
ultimatum	a final set of demands, backed by a threat of what will follow if they are refused
alliance	a formal agreement between countries to support each other
absent voices	people who lived through events but whose words have not survived in the record
censorship	official checking and cutting of news and letters in wartime
conscripted	forced by law to serve in the armed forces

Sources (SOURCE_USE — real referents carry a source line; collections consulted and retrieved 2026-08-25; original documents cited where one is reproduced):

Referent	Source line
Robert Menzies, radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939 (“Australia is also at war”)	Sound recording held by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia; transcript held by the National Archives of Australia; also reproduced in section 3B
Andrew Fisher’s pledge, Adelaide Town Hall, 31 July 1914 (“to the last man and the last shilling”) — reported speech, wording varies between papers	<i>The Argus</i> (Melbourne), 1 August 1914, via Trove, National Library of Australia; also reproduced in section 3B
Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, 23 July 1914 (48-hour deadline); Serbian reply, 25 July 1914	Diplomatic documents held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna; printed in the official document collections of the July Crisis published by the signatory governments after 1918; also reproduced in section 3A
Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, signed at Vienna, 7 October 1879: mutual assistance with the whole military force if either empire was attacked by Russia; at least neutrality if attacked by another power, unless that power was supported by Russia; part of Bismarck’s alliance system; ended with the defeat of both empires in 1918	Wikipedia, “Dual Alliance (1879)”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Sir Edward Grey’s judgement on the ultimatum — “the most formidable document I have ever seen addressed by one state to another”	Sir Edward Grey, <i>Twenty-Five Years, 1892–1916</i> (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), vol. 2; quoted in section 3A (paraphrased in this section)
Harvester judgement, November 1907: H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration;	Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

Referent	Source line
basic wage of 7 shillings a day measured against the “normal needs of the average employee”	records; also reproduced in section 2E
Recruiting campaigns: posters, pamphlets and rallies of the Australian Parliamentary Recruiting Committee from 1915	Australian War Memorial collections; also described in section 3B
First World War enlistment and service records	National Archives of Australia (service records); Australian War Memorial; also described in section 3B
John Curtin, statement published in the <i>Melbourne Herald</i> , 27 December 1941 — Australia “looks to America”	John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library records; also cited in sections 3E and 4D
Winston S. Churchill, <i>The Second World War</i> , vol. 4, <i>The Hinge of Fate</i> (London: Cassell, 1950) — the fall of Singapore as “the worst disaster” in British military history	Original publication; also cited in section 3E
Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (No. 17 of 1901), royal assent 23 December 1901	Original statute; also reproduced in section 2E
Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 — women could vote and stand for the federal parliament; first woman elected in 1943 (Dame Enid Lyons)	Original statute, National Archives of Australia; also reproduced in section 2E

1. The big question

Everything this book has claimed so far rests on sources — diaries, speeches, laws, treaties, photographs, statistics. But a source does not come with a value printed on it. Historians treat every source the way a court treats a witness: they ask what it is worth *for the question they are asking*. Three words first.

- **Evidence** is information from a source that helps answer a question about the past.
- **Reliability** means how far a source can be trusted: how well its account stands up when it is checked against other sources and against what its maker could have known.
- **Usefulness** means how well a source helps answer the question you are actually asking.

Here is the idea that drives this whole section: **the value of a source is not fixed inside it. It depends on the question you ask.** The same source can be strong evidence for one question and weak evidence for another.

Test it on a source you met in section 3B: Prime Minister Robert Menzies’ radio broadcast of 3 September 1939, announcing that Australia was at war.

One source, three questions, three verdicts

The source stays still; the question moves. Value follows the question.

THE SOURCE

Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia - radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939

Fellow Australians. It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.

PROVENANCE

Sound recording: National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.
Transcript: National Archives of Australia. Studied in section 3B.

Question 1

Why did Australia enter World War II?

Very useful: it states the official reason for entering the war.

Question 2

How did ordinary Australians feel in September 1939?

Weak on its own: one official voice. Needs checking against diaries, newspapers and recruiting records.

Question 3

How did the government want Australians to think about the war?

Very useful: direct evidence of the official view - a sad duty, not an adventure.

Nothing changed about the source between question 1 and question 2. The source stood still; the question moved.

A diagram with two columns. The left column shows one source: Robert Menzies' radio broadcast to the nation of 3 September 1939, with a note that the recording is held by the National Film and Sound Archive and the transcript by the National Archives. The right column shows three questions, each with its own verdict. Question one: why did Australia enter World War II? Verdict: very useful, because it states the official reason. Question two: how did ordinary Australians feel in September 1939? Verdict: weak on its own, because it is one official voice and needs checking against diaries, newspapers and recruiting records. Question three: how did the government want Australians to think about the war? Verdict: very useful, because it is direct evidence of the official view.

Read the three verdicts again. Nothing changed about the source between question one and question two — the source stood still; the question moved. That is the whole skill of this section.

Notice one more thing about question three. A source that is weak evidence about *what happened* can still be strong evidence about *how people saw things*. The broadcast is one man's official speech, so it cannot tell you what a factory worker or a farmer felt. But for a question about the view the government wanted Australians to hold in 1939, the very same speech is first-class evidence — an account with a particular perspective is useful for revealing the attitudes of its time.

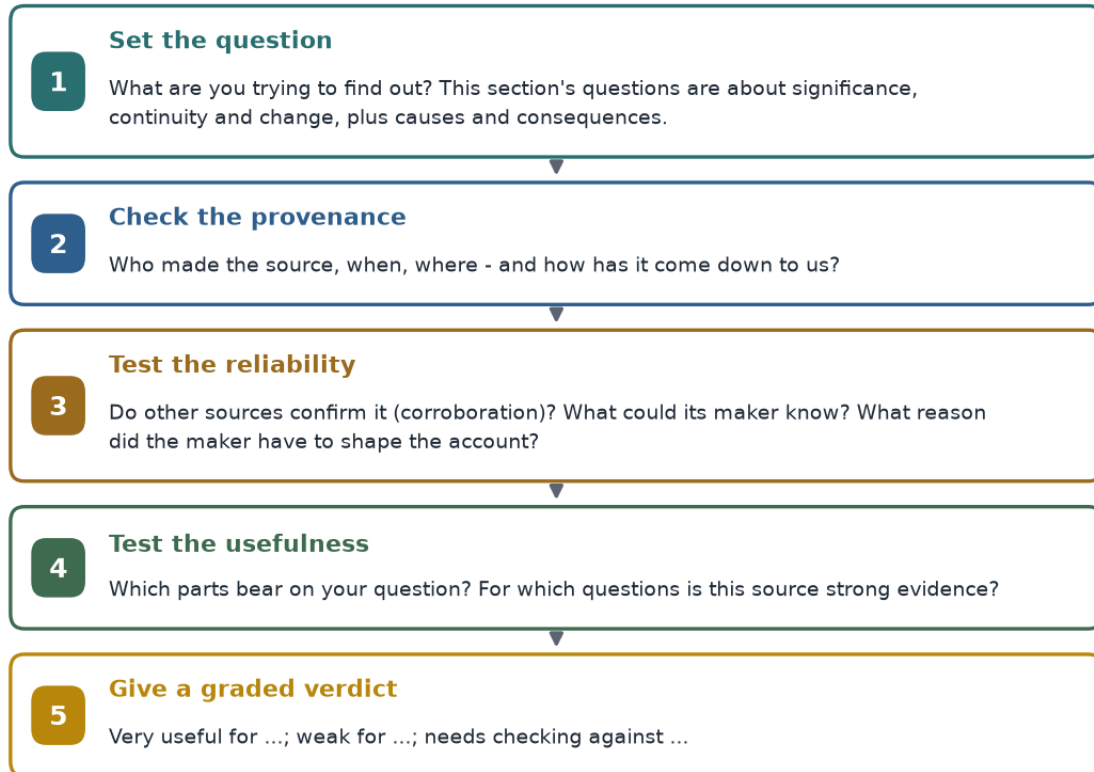
Task A (scaffolded). Section 3B also gives you Andrew Fisher's pledge of 31 July 1914: Australia would stand by Britain "to the last man and the last shilling". Match that source to the three verdicts in the figure above, and say which of these three questions it answers best: (a) why did Australia enter World War I? (b) what were the battles of 1914–1918 actually like? (c) how strongly did Australian politicians support Britain in 1914? Give one reason for your choice.

2. Judging value: the five moves

Historians do not judge a source by gut feeling. They work through five moves, in order.

Judging the value of a source: five moves

Work the moves in order. The verdict is graded, not yes-or-no.



Apply the five moves in order, and let the verdict follow from them.

A flow diagram of five numbered moves for judging the value of a source, running top to bottom. Move one: set the question, about significance, continuity and change, or causes and consequences. Move two: check the provenance, meaning who made the source, when, where, and how it has come down to us. Move three: test the reliability, asking whether other sources confirm it, what the maker could know, and what reason the maker had to shape the account. Move four: test the usefulness, asking which parts bear on the question and for which questions the source is strong. Move five: give a graded verdict, in the form very useful for one question, weak for another, needs checking against a third source. A note at the bottom says that verdicts are graded, not yes or no.

Two of those moves carry special names.

- **Provenance** — move two — is the who, when, where and how of a source: who made it, when, where, and how it has come down to us (a recording, a transcript, a newspaper report, an original file). Provenance is not decoration. It decides what the source can possibly know, and who it can possibly speak for.
- **Corroboration** — inside move three — means checking what one source says against other sources. One source alone is one voice; agreement between independent sources strengthens a claim, and disagreement tells you where to look next.

Move five deserves a warning of its own. A value judgement is **graded**, not yes-or-no. “This source is useless” is almost never the honest verdict, because a source that is weak for one question is usually strong for another.

State the objection in its strongest form before you dismiss it, because it is a strong one. “*A source that gets things wrong cannot be trusted — so it is worthless.*” That is right about questions of fact: if a source reports an event incorrectly, it cannot be your evidence for what happened. But press the claim one step further and it breaks. A source

that gets things wrong on purpose — a poster that exaggerates, a speech that flatters — still tells you something true: what its maker *wanted people to believe*. That is a real historical question, and for it the “worthless” source is first-class evidence. The honest verdict is graded: unreliable about the event, highly useful about the attitude behind it.

3. Accuracy and purpose

Two features of a source do most of the work in move three and move four: its **accuracy** (does it get things right?) and its **purpose** (what did its maker want it to do?). Cross the two and you get four cases. Every case below is a real source from this book.

Accuracy and purpose: four real cases

Cross what a source gets right with what it was made to do.

Accurate, and made to record The records of the Harvester judgement, November 1907: the court set a basic wage of 7 shillings a day (section 2E). Strong for: what wage did the court set? Weak for: how workers felt.	Accurate, but made to persuade Fisher's pledge of July 1914, truthfully reported in The Argus of 1 August 1914 - but the speech itself was made to win support (section 3B). Strong for: attitudes, and loyalty to Britain. Weak for: events.
Made to persuade, not to record Recruiting posters, campaigns from 1915: not describing the war, but filling it (section 3B). Strong for: what governments wanted men to feel. Weak for: the facts of the war.	Accurate, but a different question First World War enlistment rolls: who enlisted, and when, in exact detail (section 3B). Strong for: who and when. Silent on why - that needs diaries and letters.

Do not ask only 'can this source be trusted?' Ask 'trusted for what - and useful for which question?'

A two-by-two grid of four real cases, crossing accuracy against purpose. Top left, accurate and made to record: the records of the Harvester judgement of November 1907, which set a basic wage of seven shillings a day, strong evidence for what wages the court set and weak evidence for how workers felt. Top right, accurate and made to persuade: Andrew Fisher's pledge of July 1914 as reported in The Argus, a true report of a speech made to win support, strong evidence for attitudes and weak evidence for events. Bottom left, made to persuade rather than to record: recruiting posters of the campaigns from 1915, weak evidence for the facts of the war and strong evidence for what the government wanted men to feel. Bottom right, accurate but answering a different question: First World War enlistment rolls, which record who enlisted and when but are silent on why, which needs diaries and letters. The caption reads: do not ask only whether a source can be trusted; ask what it can be trusted for, and which question it serves.

Read the four cases slowly; they are the whole of part 3.

- **Accurate, and made to record.** The records of the Harvester judgement (November 1907) give the court's own words and its number: a basic wage of 7 shillings a day (section 2E). For the question “what wage did the court set?” they are as good as evidence gets. For the question “how did workers feel about their employer?” they say almost nothing.
- **Accurate, but made to persuade.** Fisher's pledge was reported truthfully in *The Argus* of 1 August 1914 — but the speech itself was made to win support, in an election week, by a politician. It is strong evidence that

loyalty to Britain ran deep in Australian politics (section 3B). It is weak evidence about what the war would be like.

- **Made to persuade, not to record.** The recruiting posters of the campaigns from 1915 were not trying to describe the war; they were trying to fill it. As evidence of battles they are poor. As evidence of what governments wanted young men to feel — duty, shame, adventure — they are exactly the source a historian needs.
- **Accurate, but answering a different question.** The enlistment rolls of World War I record who enlisted and when, accurately and in detail. Ask them *why* those men enlisted and they fall silent. That question needs diaries, letters and recruiting records of another kind.

The pattern: accuracy and purpose do not give a source one value. They tell you *which questions* the source can serve.

Task B (scaffolded). Sort three more sources from this book into the four cases of the grid: a soldier's diary from the front (section 3D); a recruiting poster (section 3B); a newspaper report published under wartime censorship (section 3G). For each one: is it accurate about what it reports? What was it made to do? Name one question it answers well.

4. Worked inquiry 1 — comparing three sources on why World War I began

Now watch the five moves run on a full inquiry. The question is about **causes**: what caused World War I — and what *kind* of cause does each source show? Section 3A read the ultimatum closely; here you will evaluate three sources side by side. Read the three source cards first.

Source A - the ultimatum from Austria-Hungary to Serbia

23 July 1914: a final set of demands with a 48-hour time limit

PROVENANCE

Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, 23 July 1914; wording shortened and set in modern words. Diplomatic documents held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna; printed in the official July Crisis document collections published after 1918. Studied in section 3A.

Austria-Hungary demands that Serbia, within 48 hours:

1. Suppress all publications that stir up hatred against Austria-Hungary.
2. Dissolve the societies that work against Austria-Hungary.
3. Remove from office the officials whom Austria-Hungary names.
4. Accept Austro-Hungarian representatives taking part, inside Serbia, in the inquiry into the killing of 28 June 1914.

If Serbia refuses, Austria-Hungary will act.

How to read it in this section

Read for part 4: what kind of cause can this source show - and what can it never show?

A source card for the ultimatum sent by Austria-Hungary to Serbia on 23 July 1914, labelled Source A. The framed text, set in modern words, lists the demands: suppress publications hostile to Austria-Hungary; dissolve societies that stir up hatred against it; remove officials named by Austria-Hungary; and accept Austro-Hungarian representatives taking part, inside Serbia, in the inquiry into the killing of 28 June - all within 48 hours. The provenance line names the Austrian State Archives in Vienna and the official July Crisis document collections published after 1918, and notes that the ultimatum is also studied in section 3A.

Source B - Serbia's reply to the ultimatum

25 July 1914: an answer inside the 48-hour deadline

PROVENANCE

Serbian reply to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, 25 July 1914; summary set in modern words. Diplomatic documents held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna; printed in the official July Crisis document collections published after 1918. Studied in section 3A.

Serbia agrees to most of the demands:

- it will suppress the named publications;
- it will dissolve the named societies;
- it will remove the officials Austria-Hungary names.

But Serbia will not let Austro-Hungarian officials take part in its own courts: that, Serbia says, touches its independence. Serbia offers to put the matter before an international court, or before the great powers.

Austria-Hungary declared the reply unsatisfactory, broke off relations, and declared war on 28 July 1914.

How to read it in this section

Read for part 4: does this reply remove the reasons for war - or leave a puzzle?

A source card for Serbia's reply to the ultimatum, dated 25 July 1914, labelled Source B. The framed text, set in modern words, says Serbia agrees to most demands: it will suppress the named publications, dissolve the named societies, and remove the officials Austria-Hungary names; but it will not let Austro-Hungarian officials take part in its own courts, because that touches its independence, and it offers to put the matter before an international court or the great powers. A closing line records that Austria-Hungary declared the reply unsatisfactory, broke off relations, and declared war on 28 July. The provenance line names the Austrian State Archives in Vienna and the official July Crisis document collections published after 1918.

Source C - the Dual Alliance, Germany and Austria-Hungary

Signed at Vienna, 7 October 1879 - a peacetime treaty

PROVENANCE

Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, signed at Vienna, 7 October 1879; extract set in modern words. Part of Bismarck's system of alliances; the two empires stood together until their defeat in 1918.

Article 1: If either empire is attacked by Russia, the other will come to its help with the whole of its army, and peace will be made only in common.

Article 2: If either empire is attacked by another power, the other will at least stay neutral; but if the attacker is supported by Russia, both will fight together.

How to read it in this section

Read for part 4: written 35 years before the war - what kind of cause does a treaty like this show?

A source card for the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, signed at Vienna on 7 October 1879, labelled Source C. The framed text, set in modern words, gives two articles: Article 1, that if either empire is attacked by Russia the other will come to its help with the whole of its army, and peace will be made only in common; and Article 2, that if either empire is attacked by another power the other will at least stay neutral, but if the attacker is supported by Russia both will fight together. The provenance line notes that the treaty was part of Bismarck's system of alliances and that the two empires stood together until their defeat in 1918.

All three are **primary sources** — records made at the time they describe — and all three are official documents, state speaking to state. Now compare them, move by move.

Comparing sources A, B and C: what each can do

Compare before you conclude: each source answers some questions and points to the others for the rest.

	Source A (ultimatum)	Source B (reply)	Source C (Dual Alliance)
Made	23 July 1914, in the crisis	25 July 1914, in the crisis	7 October 1879, in peacetime
Kind of cause it can show	Short-term: the trigger - the demands that opened the final week	Short-term: how the trigger failed - most demands accepted, war still came	Long-term: the alliance structure that widened any quarrel
What it cannot show	Why the crisis became a general war; what ordinary people wanted	The same: states only, no voices from below	The crisis of July 1914 itself - it was written 35 years earlier

Similarities

All three are official, all are between states, all are primary sources - and none speaks for ordinary people.

The puzzle

Serbia agreed to most demands, yet war came within three days. A and B alone cannot explain it; C, and Germany's promise to stand by Austria-Hungary, widen the view.

Consequences

C was intended to protect two empires and keep the peace between them. As an unintended consequence, it helped turn a Balkan quarrel into a European war.

A comparison web for the three July Crisis sources, labelled A, B and C. Rows: when each was made, with A and B in the July 1914 crisis and C in peacetime 1879; what kind of cause each can show, with A showing the short-term trigger, B showing how the trigger failed, and C showing the long-term alliance structure; the similarities, that all three are official, between states, primary sources, and none speaks for ordinary people; the puzzle, that Serbia agreed to most demands yet war came within three days, which A and B alone cannot explain; and consequences, that C was intended to protect two empires but as an unintended consequence helped turn a Balkan quarrel into a European war. The caption reads: compare before you conclude, because each source answers some questions and points to the others for the rest.

Follow the reasoning in the web, then read it once more as a written evaluation.

A model evaluation: the value of sources A, B and C

Four moves - claim, evidence, test, graded verdict.

CLAIM

The ultimatum and Serbia's reply are strong evidence for the short-term trigger of World War I, but on their own they cannot explain why the crisis became a general war.

EVIDENCE

The ultimatum of 23 July 1914 set demands Serbia could not really accept within 48 hours. Serbia's reply of 25 July agreed to most of them. Austria-Hungary declared war on 28 July regardless.

TEST

Read together, the two documents raise a puzzle: if Serbia gave in, why war? Answering it needs other sources - the Dual Alliance of 1879 and Germany's promise to stand by Austria-Hungary - which show the long-term alliance structure that widened the quarrel.

VERDICT

Graded: sources A and B are very useful for the trigger and its failure, weak on the deeper causes; source C is very useful for the long-term structure, silent on July 1914; none speaks for ordinary people - that silence is taken up in part 5.

Notice: the verdict is graded by question, and the silence is treated as evidence, not an oversight.

A colour-coded model paragraph evaluating the value of the three July Crisis sources as evidence for why World War I began. A blue claim panel states that the ultimatum and the Serbian reply are strong evidence for the short-term trigger of the war but cannot on their own explain why the crisis became a general war. A green evidence panel notes that the ultimatum of 23 July 1914 set demands Serbia could not really accept within 48 hours, that Serbia's reply of 25 July agreed to most of them, and that Austria-Hungary declared war on 28 July regardless. A red test panel explains that the two documents together raise a puzzle - if Serbia gave in, why war? - and that answering it needs other sources, including the Dual Alliance of 1879 and Germany's promise to stand by Austria-Hungary, which show the long-term alliance structure that widened the quarrel. A gold verdict panel gives the graded judgement: sources A and B very useful for the trigger and its failure but weak on deeper causes, source C very useful for the long-term structure but silent on July 1914, and none of them speaking for ordinary people, whose silence is taken up in part 5.

Question 1 — Similarities and differences. What do the three sources share, and where do they differ? *Modelled answer:* all three are official, all are between states, and all are primary sources; none was made by an ordinary person. But A and B are crisis documents of July 1914, written under a 48-hour deadline, while C is a peacetime treaty written 35 years earlier. They were made in different worlds, for different purposes.

Question 2 — The puzzle. Sources A and B together raise a problem they cannot solve. What is it, and what further evidence does it point to? *Modelled answer:* Serbia agreed to most of the demands, yet Austria-Hungary declared war within three days. If the ultimatum was truly about grievances, the reply should have settled them — so something else was driving the crisis. The documents point beyond themselves: to Germany's promise to stand by Austria-Hungary whatever it did (section 3A), and to the alliance structure that source C shows.

Question 3 — Causes and consequences. Which source is evidence for short-term causes, and which for a long-term cause? What was source C *intended* to do, and what did it actually help bring about? *Modelled answer:* A and B are evidence for the short-term trigger — the crisis itself and its failure to settle. C is evidence for a long-term cause: the alliance system had been in place since 1879, 35 years before the shots at Sarajevo. Its intended consequence was to protect the two empires and keep the peace between them. One unintended consequence was that once Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia and Russia moved its armies to Serbia's side, the treaty pulled Germany into the quarrel and helped turn a Balkan war into a European one.

5. Whose voices are absent?

Comparing sources is not only about what they say. It is also about who is not speaking. The records that survive were mostly made by people with power, literacy and time — governments, courts, unions, newspapers. The people they governed, judged, employed or ignored often never made a record at all. Historians call these the **absent voices** of the record.

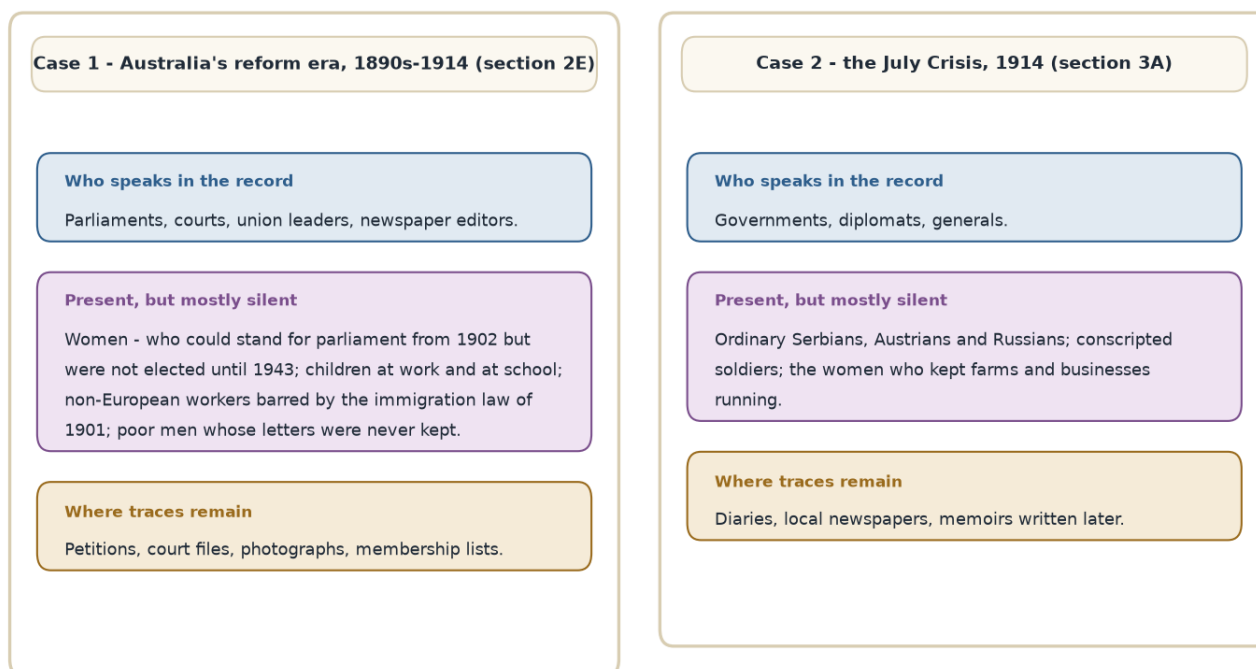
The method has four steps:

1. **List who was there.** Who was present in, or affected by, the event?
2. **List who speaks.** Whose words actually survive in the sources you have?
3. **Name the gap.** The difference between the two lists is the absence. The missing are most often women, children, ordinary working men, ethnic groups and minority groups — people with the least power to put words on the record.
4. **Look for traces.** Absence from the record is not absence from history. Petitions, court files, photographs, membership lists, letters and later memoirs may hold fragments.

The figure works the method on two cases you already know.

Absent voices: who speaks, who is silent, where traces remain

The four steps: list who was there; list who speaks; name the gap; look for traces.



Absent from the record does not mean absent from history.

A diagram with two worked cases of absent voices, each with three columns: who speaks in the record, who was present but is mostly silent, and where traces can be found. Case one, Australia's reform era from the 1890s to 1914, links to section 2E: parliaments, courts, union leaders and newspaper editors speak; women, who could stand for parliament from 1902 but were not elected until 1943, children at work and at school, non-European workers barred by the immigration law of 1901, and poor men whose letters were never kept are mostly silent; traces include petitions, court files, photographs and membership lists. Case two, the July Crisis of 1914, links to section 3A: governments, diplomats and generals speak; ordinary Serbians, Austrians and Russians, conscripted soldiers, and the women who kept farms and businesses running are mostly silent; traces include diaries, local newspapers and memoirs written later. The caption reads: absent from the record does not mean absent from history.

Notice what the second case adds to worked inquiry 1. Sources A, B and C of part 4 are all state-to-state documents — so their silence about ordinary people is not an accident. It is built into the kind of source they are. A diplomatic note cannot speak for a conscripted soldier, and no amount of close reading will make it do so. The silence is itself evidence: it tells you what kind of history those sources can and cannot support.

The same method travels. Section 4D studies what the world wars left behind: the official record of **repatriation** — the government work of helping returned service personnel rebuild civilian life — is rich in unit files, medical records and pension files. But the men who came home with wounds of body and mind, and the families who cared for them, appear mostly through other people's paperwork. Their voices are the absent ones, and finding their traces — private letters, hospital records, oral histories recorded later — is part of the historian's job.

Task C (scaffolded). Apply the four steps to the Harvester judgement of 1907 (section 2E). (a) Who spoke in the hearing — which people and which bodies? (b) The court measured the wage against “the normal needs of the average employee”: whose needs might that phrase leave out? (c) Name two absent voices, and say where a historian might look for traces of them.

6. Worked inquiry 2 — two sources on the fall of Singapore

The second inquiry changes the concept. This time the questions are about **significance** and **continuity and change**: how significant was the fall of Singapore (15 February 1942), and did it change Australia's alliances? Read the two sources.

Two sources on the fall of Singapore - one inside the crisis, one looking back

Timing decides what a source can be evidence for.

Source D - a prime minister inside the crisis

Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

PROVENANCE

John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia; statement published in the Melbourne Herald, 27 December 1941 - seven weeks before Singapore fell on 15 February 1942. A primary source: made at the time. Also cited in sections 3E and 4D.

Evidence that Australia's turn toward the United States had begun before the fall.

Source E - a wartime leader looking back

In the fourth volume of his war memoirs, published in 1950, Winston Churchill called the fall of Singapore 'the worst disaster' in British military history.

PROVENANCE

Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War, volume 4, The Hinge of Fate (London: Cassell, 1950). A later account of the event by one of its central figures. Also cited in section 3E.

Secondary source for the event itself; primary evidence of how the event looked afterwards.

Same event, two timings: one voice weeks before the fall, one voice eight years after.

Two source cards side by side about the fall of Singapore. The left card, labelled Source D, is headed *A prime minister inside the crisis* and quotes John Curtin's words published in the Melbourne Herald on 27 December 1941: *without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.* The provenance line notes that Curtin wrote seven weeks before Singapore fell on 15 February 1942, and that the source is a primary source. The right card, labelled Source E, is headed *A wartime leader looking back* and reports that Winston Churchill, in the fourth volume of his war memoirs, published in 1950, called the fall of Singapore the worst disaster in British military history. The provenance line notes that the source is a later account of the event, written by one of its central figures, and is therefore a secondary source for the event but primary evidence of how the event looked afterwards. The caption reads: *same event, two timings - one voice weeks before the fall, one voice eight years after.*

The move that matters here is **timing**. Ask of every source: when did the maker speak, relative to the event being studied?

- Source D was written on **27 December 1941** — **seven weeks before** Singapore fell. Curtin cannot be evidence about the fall itself; it had not happened. But his words are direct evidence that Australia's turn toward the United States had already begun *before* the disaster — while the war was still going badly in other places.
- Source E was written in **1950** — **eight years after** the event, by Britain's wartime leader. It cannot be evidence about what Australian leaders decided in December 1941. But it is powerful evidence of how the fall looked in hindsight: from London, it read as the end of an empire's claim to protect its own.

So the two sources are not rivals; they measure different things. And value follows question, exactly as in part 1. For the question "*had Australia's alliances begun to change before Singapore fell?*", source D is strong and source E is

weak. For the question “*how did the fall weigh on British leaders afterwards?*”, source E is strong and source D cannot answer at all.

One caution about source E, which you must always apply to later accounts: a memoir is a **secondary source** for the events it describes, but it is a **primary source** for the views its author held later. Churchill’s book is evidence about 1950 as well as about 1942 — and a historian using it says which of those two questions it is serving.

A model evaluation: sources D and E on Singapore

Four moves - claim, evidence, test, graded verdict.

CLAIM

The two sources measure different things: Curtin shows the change was already under way before Singapore fell; Churchill shows how large the fall looked afterwards.

EVIDENCE

Curtin wrote on 27 December 1941, seven weeks before the fall of 15 February 1942. Churchill wrote in 1950, calling the fall ‘the worst disaster’ in British military history.

TEST

Timing is the test. Curtin cannot be evidence about the fall itself - it had not happened. Churchill cannot be evidence about Australia’s decisions of December 1941 - he wrote later, and as a British leader, not an Australian one.

VERDICT

Each source is very useful for a different question: Curtin for the start of the change in Australia’s alliances, Churchill for the weight the event carried afterwards. Neither speaks for the roughly 15,000 Australians taken prisoner - their story needs camp records and letters.

Notice: the verdict matches each source to the question it can serve, and names what neither source can do.

A colour-coded model paragraph evaluating sources D and E as evidence for judging how significant the fall of Singapore was, and for the change in Australia’s alliances. A blue claim panel states that the two sources measure different things: Curtin shows the change was already under way before Singapore fell, while Churchill shows how large the fall looked afterwards. A green evidence panel cites Curtin’s words of 27 December 1941, written seven weeks before the fall of 15 February 1942, and Churchill’s verdict of 1950, the worst disaster in British military history. A red test panel explains that timing is the test: Curtin cannot be evidence about the fall itself because it had not happened, and Churchill cannot be evidence about the decisions of December 1941 because he wrote later, and as a British leader rather than an Australian one. A gold verdict panel gives the graded judgement: each source very useful for a different question - Curtin for the start of the change in Australia’s alliances, Churchill for the weight the event carried afterwards - and neither speaking for the roughly 15,000 Australians taken prisoner, whose story needs camp records and letters.

Question 4 — Provenance and timing. When did each maker speak, relative to the fall of Singapore? What can each source therefore be evidence for? *Modelled answer:* Curtin wrote on 27 December 1941, before the fall; Churchill wrote in 1950, eight years after it. Curtin is evidence for the change beginning; Churchill is evidence for the event’s later weight. Neither is evidence for what the other describes.

Question 5 — Value follows question. Name one question for which source D is the stronger source, and one for which source E is stronger. *Modelled answer:* D is stronger for “did Australia’s turn toward the United States begin

before Singapore fell?” E is stronger for “how did British leaders afterwards judge the scale of the defeat?” For a full answer to “how significant was the fall for Australia?” a historian would use both — and add sources neither contains.

Question 6 — Absent voices. Whose war is missing from both sources? *Modelled answer:* the roughly 15,000 Australians taken prisoner at Singapore, the nurses who served there, the families at home, and the people of Malaya and Singapore themselves. Both sources speak from the top — a prime minister and a war leader — and neither speaks for the captured or the civilians. Their traces lie in camp records, Red Cross files, letters and later memoirs.

7. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

1. **Match the source to the question.** Four sources: the Menzies broadcast of 3 September 1939; the records of the Harvester judgement of November 1907; a recruiting poster of the campaigns from 1915; the First World War enlistment rolls. Four questions: what basic wage did the court set in 1907? Why did Australia enter World War II? What did governments want men to feel about enlisting? Who enlisted, and when? Match each source to the question it serves best, then name one question none of the four can answer alone (and say which further source would).
2. **Run the five moves on Fisher’s pledge.** Section 3B records the pledge’s provenance: reported speech from a public meeting on 31 July 1914, printed in the next day’s newspapers, with the exact wording varying a little between papers. Use moves two to five: what does that provenance let the source be trusted for? What weakens it as a fixed quotation? For which question is it strong anyway? End with one graded verdict sentence.
3. **Sort the quadrants.** Place these three sources in the four cases of part 3: a letter from a soldier at the front (section 3D); a recruiting poster (section 3B); a newspaper report published under wartime censorship (section 3G). For each: accurate about what? Made to do what? One question it serves well.
4. **Find the absence.** Use the four steps of part 5 on sources A, B and C of part 4: who speaks in them, who is absent, and where might traces of the absent be found?
5. **Copy the web.** From memory, redraw the comparison of part 4: three columns (sources A, B, C) and the rows — when made, kind of cause shown, the puzzle, consequences. Then check against the figure and correct your errors in another colour.
6. **Write two verdicts.** Write one graded verdict sentence each for sources D and E, answering the question: how significant was the fall of Singapore for Australia? Use the pattern *very useful for ...*, *weak for ...*, *needs checking against ...*

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. Evaluate the value of one source from this book as evidence for a question you set yourself. Run the five moves of part 2, use at least two dated facts, and end with a graded verdict.
 8. One source, two questions. Choose any source from this book and show that its value changes with the question asked of it: write one paragraph giving two questions and two different verdicts for the same source, and explain the difference.
 9. Compare two sources from this book that bear on the same event. Identify one similarity, one difference, and one inconsistency or silence, and say what each source can do that the other cannot.
 10. Causes or consequences, from sources. Using at least two sources from this book, identify one short-term cause and one long-term cause of an event studied in this book — or one intended consequence and one unintended consequence. Write one paragraph naming the sources and dating the events.
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8. Source-based inquiry

Two sources, twenty-five years apart, one skill: judge their value as evidence. Read the sources, plan your answers with the figure, then answer the questions.

Source 1 — reported speech, printed in a newspaper. Andrew Fisher, leader of the opposition, speaking at a public meeting at the Adelaide Town Hall on 31 July 1914, pledged that Australia would stand by

Britain “to the last man and the last shilling”. The pledge was printed in the next day’s newspapers — for example *The Argus* of Melbourne, 1 August 1914 — and the exact wording varies a little from paper to paper. (Section 3B studies the pledge in full.)

Source 2 — primary source, quoted from the official transcript. Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939: “Fellow Australians. It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.” (Sound recording: National Film and Sound Archive of Australia; transcript: National Archives of Australia.)

Your evaluation planner: two pledges, 25 years apart

Plan first, write second. Fill each cell before you answer.

Move	Source 1 - Fisher's pledge, 31 July 1914	Source 2 - Menzies' broadcast, 3 September 1939
Question	Set one question that both sources can help answer.	Set one question that both sources can help answer.
Provenance	Who spoke? When, where - and how do we have the words?	Who spoke? When, where - and how do we have the words?
Reliability	Reported speech; the wording varies between papers. What can it be trusted for?	A recording of the speaker's own voice. What does that add?
Usefulness	What does it show about why Australia entered the war? About the mood of the moment?	What does it show about why Australia entered the war? About the mood of the moment?
Verdict	Write one graded verdict sentence.	Write one graded verdict sentence.

The five moves of part 2:



Question



Provenance



Reliability



Usefulness



Verdict

An evaluation planner table for the source-based inquiry, with the five moves of part 2 as rows and the two sources as columns: source 1, Andrew Fisher’s pledge of 31 July 1914, and source 2, Robert Menzies’ radio broadcast of 3 September 1939. Each cell carries a prompt. Question: set one question both sources bear on. Provenance: who spoke, when, where, and how do we have the words? Reliability: for source 1, reported speech with wording that varies between papers; for source 2, a recording of the speaker’s own voice. Usefulness: what does each source show about why Australia entered the war, and about the mood of the moment? Verdict: write one graded verdict sentence for each source. The caption reads: plan first, write second.

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions that both sources can help answer, and one question that neither source can answer.
2. **Reliability:** source 1 is reported speech whose wording varies between newspapers; source 2 is the speaker’s own recorded voice. How does that difference affect what each source can be trusted for?
3. **Purpose:** what was each speaker trying to do — and how does that purpose shape each source’s usefulness?
4. **Continuity and change:** what is the same in the two sources, and what is different, about how Australia entered its two world wars? Use one detail from each source.
5. **Evaluate:** write a graded verdict on the value of each source as evidence for the question *why did Australia enter each war?* Name one other source that could corroborate or challenge each.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. For this section the evaluating is aimed at the concepts the content description names — significance, continuity and change, causes and consequences — and the mark is a graded, question-dependent verdict, not a yes-or-no. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script. Per the §2A disposition of .E03, absent-voices work stays with the remaining referents — women, men, children, ethnic groups, minority groups; if a student raises excluded material, redirect to the front-of-book note (D3) without developing it.

- **Value follows the question (part 1, .E01):** student can hold the source still and move the question — the Menzies broadcast is very useful for the official reason Australia entered World War II, weak on ordinary Australians’ feelings without corroboration, and strong evidence of the view the government wanted held; the same pattern applied to Fisher’s pledge in Task A (strongest for (c), politicians’ loyalty to Britain).
- **The five moves (part 2, .E04):** provenance and corroboration are defined at first use and used correctly; verdicts are graded (“very useful for X, weak for Y, needs checking against Z”) rather than yes-or-no; the steelman is engaged — a source unreliable about events can still be first-class evidence of attitudes.
- **Accuracy and purpose (part 3, .E02):** the four cases are kept distinct — Harvester records (accurate, made to record), Fisher’s pledge (accurate, made to persuade), recruiting posters (persuasion as their whole purpose), enlistment rolls (accurate, but answering a different question); Task B sorting is defensible per source.
- **Worked inquiry 1 (part 4, .E05 + .E06):** similarities and differences identified (all official, between states, primary; A and B crisis documents of July 1914, C a peacetime treaty of 1879); the puzzle named (Serbia agreed to most demands, yet war came within three days) and answered with further evidence (Germany’s promise to Austria-Hungary, the alliance structure); short-term causes located in A and B, a long-term cause in C; intended and unintended consequences of the Dual Alliance distinguished. Dates correct: ultimatum 23 July 1914, reply 25 July, war declared 28 July, Dual Alliance signed 7 October 1879.
- **Absent voices (part 5, .E03 partial):** the four steps are used; absences named within the remaining referents — women (standing from 1902, none elected until 1943), children, poor men, non-European workers barred by the 1901 law for the reform era; ordinary Serbians, Austrians and Russians, conscripted soldiers, women keeping farms and businesses running for the July Crisis; the 4D link (repatriation files versus the wounded and their families) is available. Silence is treated as evidence about the kind of source, not as an oversight.
- **Worked inquiry 2 (part 6, .E01 + .E04 + .E05):** timing is the test — Curtin wrote 27 December 1941, seven weeks before the fall of 15 February 1942; Churchill wrote in 1950; each source’s value is matched to the question it can serve; the memoir rule applied (secondary for the event, primary for later views); absent voices named (the roughly 15,000 Australians taken prisoner, nurses, families, the people of Malaya and Singapore).
- **Practice and inquiry (parts 7–8):** task 1 matches correctly (Harvester → wage; Menzies → entry to World War II; poster → feelings about enlisting; rolls → who and when; “why” needs diaries and letters); task 2 handles the reported-speech nuance; task 6 verdicts are graded; source-based inquiry answers run the five moves on both pledges, use the reported-speech versus recorded-voice contrast, and the continuity-and-change answer notices both the sameness (entering at Britain’s side; “also”) and the change (the mood of 1939 versus 1914).

Cross-links to skills sections: formulating questions (7A), sequencing (7B), source purpose, features, content and context (7C), perspectives from sources (7E), interpretations and debates (7F), continuity and change (8A), causes and consequences (8B), significance (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D). **Content links:** reform era and the 1901 Act (2E), causes of World War I (3A), Fisher’s pledge and Menzies’ broadcast (3B), enlistment (3B), diaries and letters (3D), the fall of Singapore (3E), recruiting and censorship (3B, 3G), repatriation and the turn to the United States (4D).

Perspectives, beliefs and values: reading people from sources

For the teacher

*This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–4) with two worked inquiries (parts 5–6), six scaffolded practice tasks and four unscaffolded tasks (part 7), and one source-based inquiry task (part 8), per the §3 volume calibration. Chapters 7–8 carry the most doing and the least prose (§3): the skill itself is the task. The content the skill works on is the 18th-century journeys to Australia (chapter block: “7E teaches representativeness of perspectives and why some were never recorded, using 18th-century journeys to Australia (ships’ logs, convict testimonies — → 2C)”), so every source here is a voyage record of 1787–1790, and the section links forward to 2C. Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2); subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2) in the subject-words table below. All First Nations content is excluded per Rule 1 and §2A — S05’s elaborations carry no First Nations examples and none is authored in, including as context, background or a caption; if a student raises such material, redirect to the front-of-book note (D3) without developing it. All twelve figures are original artifacts made for this book. Vocabulary gate: `gate_7e.py` (this folder) checks all student-zone text — prose, tasks, tables and alt text — plus the figure lettering extracted verbatim by AST from the `gen_7e.py` scripts; quoted source artifacts (the QUOTED lists in the figure scripts and the part-8 source blockquote) are reported but not gated (house practice: a historian quoting a source may not rewrite its words).**

Curriculum alignment (VCAA export `VC2_AS-CD-E1ab_29-07-2026.csv`) — codes only:

VC2HH10S05 — Historical Concepts and Skills · Using historical sources

Draws on (linkage only, D7): `VC2HH10S05.E01` · `VC2HH10S05.E02` · `VC2HH10S05.E03` · `VC2HH10S05.E04`.

§2A / Rule 1 note (binding): §2A lists S05 as not affected, and its elaborations above are quoted verbatim with nothing dropped. Even so, no First Nations content is authored anywhere in this section — the silences work of part 3 stays inside the voyage record (convicts, convict women, marines, officers), and no excluded material appears as context, background or a caption.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): the chapter block specifies: “7E teaches representativeness of perspectives and why some were never recorded, using 18th-century journeys to Australia (ships’ logs, convict testimonies — → 2C).” The section follows that order. Part 1 fixes the four words of the skill and the six kinds of source that carry them (.E02). Part 2 sets up the case study: the First Fleet voyage of 1787–1788 and the six surviving records of it, none made by a convict (.E04). Part 3 teaches representativeness with one week and two sources (.E01) and then asks why some perspectives were never recorded (.E03). Part 4 uses the Second Fleet of 1790 to show how variations in perspective lead to different historical interpretations (.E04). Worked inquiry 1 (part 5) models a five-step perspective analysis on Tench’s account of the convicts’ irons; worked inquiry 2 (part 6) models the representativeness question. The section assumes no prior skills sequence (D1): primary and secondary sources and provenance are each re-established in one sentence at first use.

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
perspective	the way a person or group sees and explains events, shaped by who they are, what they want and what they have lived through
belief	something a person holds to be true — about the world, about other people, about what is right
value	what a person or group treats as important and worth protecting — order, loyalty, liberty, profit, faith
attitude	a settled way of feeling and acting towards someone or something — towards convicts, towards authority, towards risk
primary source	something made or written at the time being studied, by

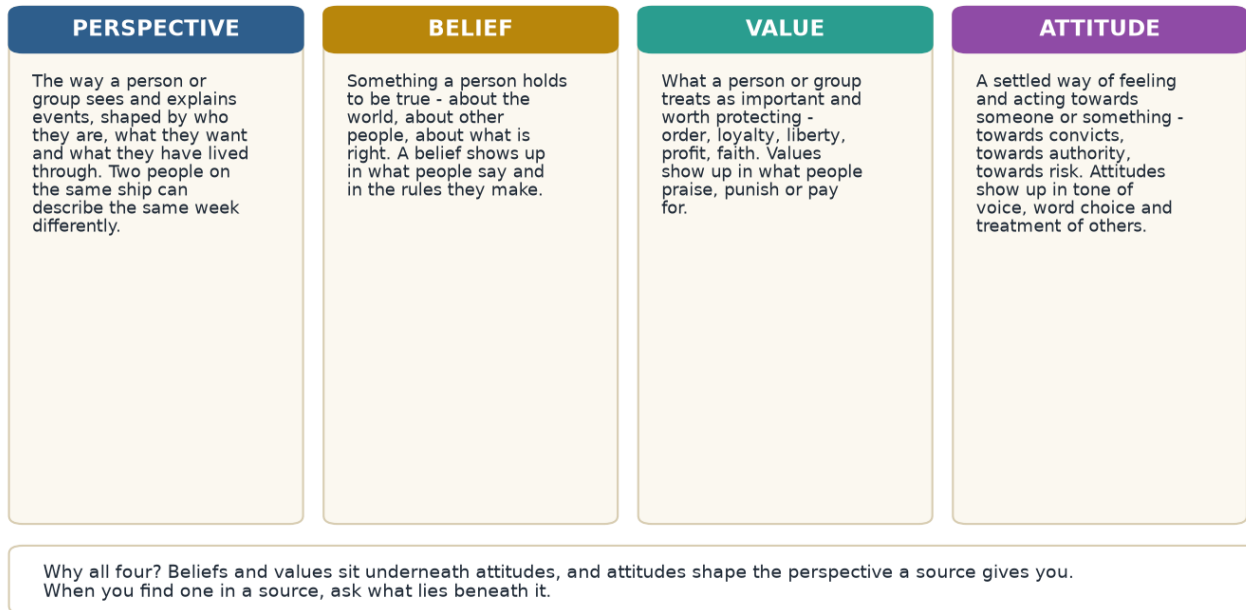
Word	Gloss used in this section
secondary source	someone who was there or took part something made later, by someone working from primary sources — a historian's book, a documentary, this workbook
provenance	who made a source, when, where, and how it has come down to us
representative	able to stand for a larger group; a view is representative if it was widely shared at that time
interpretation	the story a historian tells about the past, built from the evidence they choose and the weight they give it
silence	a person or view the record does not carry; an absence in the sources
informer	a person who secretly reports on their own group to the people in power
read against the grain	using a source made for one purpose to learn something its maker did not mean to show

1. Four words, one skill

History is not only about what happened. It is about who saw what happened — and what they thought about it. A ship's officer, a judge, a surgeon and a private soldier can sail on the same fleet and leave four different pictures of it, because each of them saw it from a different place and cared about different things. This section teaches you to read those pictures properly, using four words: **perspective**, **belief**, **value** and **attitude**.

Four words, one skill

This section is about reading people from the past through what they left behind.



Four concept cards side by side. **PERSPECTIVE**: the way a person or group sees and explains events, shaped by who they are, what they want and what they have lived through; two people on the same ship can describe the same week differently. **BELIEF**: something a person holds to be true, about the world, about other people, about what is right; it shows up in what people say and in the rules they make. **VALUE**: what a person or group treats as important and worth protecting, such as order, loyalty, liberty, profit, faith; values show up in what people praise, punish or pay for. **ATTITUDE**: a settled way of feeling and acting towards someone or something, towards convicts, towards authority, towards risk; attitudes show up in tone of voice, word choice and treatment of others. A strip below reads: beliefs and values sit underneath attitudes, and attitudes shape the perspective a source gives you.

Figure 1 — The four words of this section, and how they connect.

The four words are tools, not decorations. When you read a source, you never read the past straight: you read one person's **perspective**. Underneath that perspective sit **attitudes** — settled ways of feeling towards people and things — and underneath those sit **beliefs** about what is true and **values** about what matters. Find one of the four in a source and ask what lies beneath it.

Beliefs, values and attitudes are not printed on the page with labels attached. They show up in what people chose to make and keep: in diaries, letters, laws, official reports, and in the posters, songs and prints of the day. The curriculum names six kinds of source that carry them; Figure 2 lists those six, and adds a second question that matters for any period: is this kind of source even in the record for the 1780s?

Where beliefs, values and attitudes show up

Six kinds of source carry them - but not every kind exists for every period.

In the record for the 1780s?	
Diaries and journals Day-by-day private records. Show what the writer noticed, and how they felt about it.	Yes - several survive from the 1787-1788 voyages
Letters Private words to one person or to the public. Show what the writer wanted someone else to know or feel.	Some - sent home from ships and the early colony
Laws Rules made by those in power. Show what a government valued enough to force on everyone.	Yes - British and colonial acts from 1786 onward
Official accounts and reports Records kept for an authority - ships' logs, returns, published government narratives. Show the official view.	Yes - logs, muster returns, published accounts
Propaganda and popular culture Posters, songs, prints, films made to persuade or entertain. Show what audiences were meant to believe.	Prints and songs exist in the 1780s; posters and film come later
Oral accounts Spoken memories, recorded later. Give a voice to people who left no written record.	Not for the 1780s - sound recording did not exist yet
Every one of these can carry a perspective - but only if someone made it, and only if it survived. That last point is one of this section's big questions.	

Six rows, one per source kind, each with a short description and a column headed “In the record for the 1780s?”. Diaries and journals: day-by-day private records that show what the writer noticed and how they felt — yes, several survive from the 1787–1788 voyages. Letters: private words to one person or to the public — some, sent home from ships and the early colony. Laws: rules made by those in power, showing what a government valued enough to force on everyone — yes, British and colonial acts from 1786 onward. Official accounts and reports: records kept for an authority, such as ships’ logs, returns and published government narratives — yes. Propaganda and popular culture: posters, songs, prints and films made to persuade or entertain, showing what audiences were meant to believe — prints and songs exist in the 1780s; posters and film come later. Oral accounts: spoken memories, recorded later, giving a voice to people who left no written record — not for the 1780s, because sound recording did not exist yet. A strip below reads: every one of these can carry a perspective, but only if someone made it and only if it survived.

Figure 2 — Where beliefs, values and attitudes show up, and what survives for the 1780s.

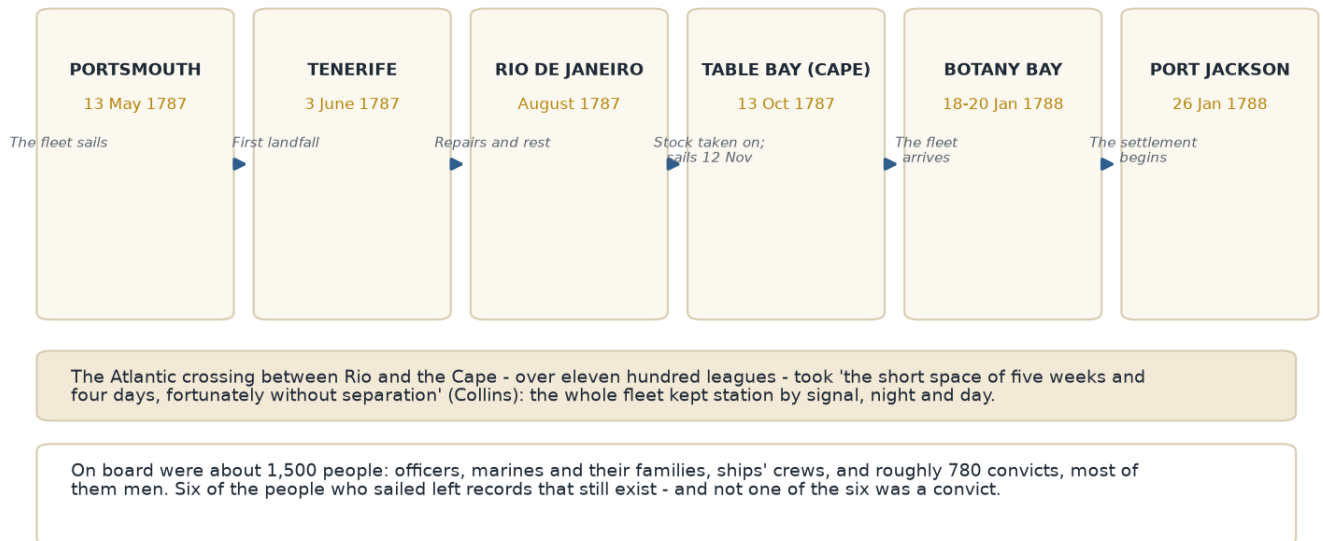
One kind needs care in this section. An **oral account** is a spoken memory, recorded out loud, and it is often the only way to hear people who never wrote. But for the voyages of the 1780s there are no recorded voices: sound recording lay a century in the future. For those voyages the skill must work with the writing that survived — and with the **silences** in it. That last point is one of the big questions of this section.

2. The voyage the sources describe

On 13 May 1787, eleven ships sailed from Portsmouth, England: six transports carrying convicts, ships carrying marines and stores, and the supply ship *Sirius* with the colony’s governor, Arthur Phillip, on board. The fleet called at Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope, and after more than eight months at sea reached Botany Bay on 18–20 January 1788. Within days Phillip moved the settlement to Port Jackson, where the ships anchored on 26 January 1788. On board were about 1,500 people: officers, marines and their families, ships’ crews, and roughly 780 convicts, most of them men. This fleet is usually called the First Fleet. (*Source: the fleet’s own records, as printed in Collins, 1798, and Tench, 1789; Wikipedia, “First Fleet”, retrieved 2026-08-25.*)

The voyage the sources describe: Portsmouth to Port Jackson, 1787-1788

Eleven ships, about eight and a half months at sea. Dates below come from the fleet's own records.



A chain of six stop cards joined by arrows, left to right: PORTSMOUTH, 13 May 1787, the fleet sails; TENERIFE, 3 June 1787, first landfall; RIO DE JANEIRO, August 1787, repairs and rest; TABLE BAY (CAPE), 13 October 1787, stock taken on, sails 12 November; BOTANY BAY, 18–20 January 1788, the fleet arrives; PORT JACKSON, 26 January 1788, the settlement begins. A strip below notes that the Atlantic crossing between Rio and the Cape, over eleven hundred leagues, took five weeks and four days without separation, the whole fleet keeping station by signal night and day. A second strip notes that on board were about 1,500 people, roughly 780 of them convicts, most of them men, and that six of the people who sailed left records that still exist, and not one of the six was a convict.

Figure 3 — The voyage the sources describe: Portsmouth to Port Jackson, 1787–1788.

Six of the people on those ships left records that still exist today. Two became printed books read all over Britain; four survive as handwritten originals, kept today in Australian libraries. Figure 4 lists all six, with the rank, ship and record of each writer.

Whose words survived the voyage?

The six surviving First Fleet records were all written by officers, officials, a surgeon and one marine.

WHO (and rank)	SHIP	THE RECORD	HELD TODAY
Watkin Tench, captain-lieutenant of marines	<i>Charlotte</i>	A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay - published in London in 1789, the year after arrival, and read across Britain	Printed book, many copies survive
David Collins, judge-advocate of the colony	<i>Sirius</i>	An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales - an official history published in London in 1798	Printed book, many copies survive
Ralph Clark, second lieutenant	<i>Friendship</i>	A private diary, 9 March 1787 to 17 June 1792 - he writes of the convicts, and of being homesick	State Library of New South Wales
Arthur Bowes Smyth, ship's surgeon	<i>Lady Penrhyn</i>	A journal, 22 March 1787 to 12 August 1789, with 25 watercolour drawings - weather, sickness, the women convicts' ship	Original: National Library of Australia
William Bradley, lieutenant	<i>Sirius</i>	A Voyage to New South Wales - a journal with charts and drawings	State Library of New South Wales
John Easty, private marine	<i>Scarborough</i>	A diary, 1786-1793 - the lowest-ranking First Fleet author whose journal survives	State Library of New South Wales

A table of the six surviving records of the voyage. Watkin Tench, captain-lieutenant of marines, *Charlotte*: A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay, published in London in 1789, the year after arrival. David Collins, judge-advocate of the colony, *Sirius*: An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, an official history published in London in 1798. Ralph Clark, second lieutenant, *Friendship*: a private diary, 9 March 1787 to 17 June 1792, held at the State Library of New South Wales. Arthur Bowes Smyth, ship's surgeon, *Lady Penrhyn*: a journal, 22 March 1787 to 12 August 1789, with 25 watercolour drawings, original at the National Library of Australia. William Bradley, lieutenant, *Sirius*: A Voyage to New South Wales, a journal with charts and drawings, State Library of New South Wales. John Easty, private marine, *Scarborough*: a diary, 1786–1793, the lowest-ranking First Fleet author whose journal survives, State Library of New South Wales.

Figure 4 — Whose words survived the voyage?

Look at the ranks in Figure 4. Two officers of the marines, a navy lieutenant, a ship's surgeon, a judge-advocate, and one private soldier: John Easty, the lowest-ranking writer of the six. Not one of the six was a convict. The roughly 780 convicts — the largest group on the ships — left no diary, no letter, no account of their own. Almost everything convicts said about the voyage reached the record through officials: as testimony, or as a confession. When you read the voyage, you read it from above decks.

The six records also fall into three kinds, and the kind shaped the content. Ask what a record was **for** before you ask what it says.

Three kinds of record, three different jobs

Ask what a record was FOR before you ask what it says - the purpose shaped the content.

OFFICIAL RECORDS	PRIVATE RECORDS	PUBLIC RECORDS
<i>made for an authority</i> - Kept as a duty: ships' logs, musters, returns, reports. - Record what the authority cared about: position, weather, rations, discipline, deaths. - Careful with feelings; careful too, sometimes, with blame. - Example here: the masters' returns of Second Fleet deaths, 1790.	<i>made for the writer</i> - Diaries, journals, letters home. - Record what the writer noticed and felt: weather, sickness, loneliness, the people around them. - More open about feelings - but still one person's eyes. - Example here: Ralph Clark's diary; John Easty's diary.	<i>made for an audience</i> - Published books, newspapers, later films. - Record what the maker wanted readers to believe - chosen, shaped and sometimes sold. - Watch for the intended reader, and for what was left out. - Example here: Tench's Narrative, published in London in 1789.

The same event - a death at sea, a punishment, a plot - would be written differently in each of these three, because each was made for someone different.

Three columns. **OFFICIAL RECORDS**, made for an authority: kept as a duty, such as ships' logs, musters, returns and reports; they record what the authority cared about, position, weather, rations, discipline, deaths; careful with feelings, and sometimes careful with blame; example here, the masters' returns of Second Fleet deaths, 1790. **PRIVATE RECORDS**, made for the writer: diaries, journals, letters home; they record what the writer noticed and felt, weather, sickness, loneliness, the people around them; more open about feelings, but still one person's eyes; example here, Ralph Clark's diary and John Easty's diary. **PUBLIC RECORDS**, made for an audience: published books, newspapers, later films; they record what the maker wanted readers to believe, chosen, shaped and sometimes sold; watch for the intended reader and for what was left out; example here, Tench's Narrative, published in London in 1789. A strip below reads: the same event — a death at sea, a punishment, a plot — would be written differently in each of these three, because each was made for someone different.

Figure 5 — Three kinds of record, three different jobs.

3. One week, two sources

Late in May 1787, a little over a week after leaving Portsmouth, the fleet was still in home waters. In that one week, two of our six writers recorded two very different things. Figure 6 sets them side by side.

One week, one fleet, two records

May 1787, still in home waters. Both writers sailed with the fleet - and they saw different things.

WHAT TENCH NOTICED

Watkin Tench, marine officer on the *Charlotte*, went below to watch the convicts as the fleet prepared to leave England:

"I strolled down among the convicts, to observe their sentiments at this juncture. A very few excepted, their countenances indicated a high degree of satisfaction ... more genial skies and change of scene banished repining and discontent, and introduced in their stead cheerfulness and acquiescence."

Days later, on 20 May 1787, the fleet was told it could release the convicts from their irons. Tench wrote that he did so with 'great pleasure ... without a single exception.'

Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, London, 1789.

WHAT COLLINS RECORDED

David Collins, judge-advocate, on Sunday 20 May 1787 - the same day the irons came off:

"Sunday the 20th was marked by the discovery of a design formed among the convicts on board the Scarborough transport to mutiny and take possession of the ship. The information was given by one of the convicts ... two dozen lashes were inflicted ... on each of the offenders, who stedfastly denied the existence of any such design as was imputed to them."

Two accused men, punished on the flagship, denying everything. A convict informer. A plot - real or claimed - aboard one ship of eleven.

Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1, London, 1798.

Neither writer is wrong. Tench tells you about the convicts under his own eyes on his own ship; Collins tells you about the worst thing that happened across the whole fleet that week. Put them together and you get a fuller past than either gives alone - and a warning: never let one source speak for everyone.

Two cards side by side. Left, *WHAT TENCH NOTICED*: Watkin Tench, marine officer on the *Charlotte*, went below to watch the convicts as the fleet prepared to leave England, and wrote that, a very few excepted, their faces showed a high degree of satisfaction, and that once at sea their complaint and discontent gave way to cheerfulness. Days later, on 20 May 1787, the fleet was told it could release the convicts from their irons, and Tench wrote that he did so with great pleasure, without a single exception. Right, *WHAT COLLINS RECORDED*: David Collins, judge-advocate, on Sunday 20 May 1787, the same day the irons came off, recorded the discovery of a plot formed among the convicts on board the *Scarborough* to seize the ship; the information was given by one of the convicts; two dozen lashes were given to each of the offenders, who denied that any such plot existed. A strip below reads: neither writer is wrong; Tench tells you about the convicts under his own eyes on his own ship, Collins about the worst thing that happened across the whole fleet that week; never let one source speak for everyone.

Figure 6 — One week, one fleet, two records.

Neither writer is wrong. Tench gives you one officer's view of the convicts under his own eyes, on his own ship, on one day. Collins gives you the record of the worst thing that happened across the whole fleet that same week: a plot discovered on one ship of the eleven, an informer, two accused men punished on the flagship, denying everything. The two pictures sit side by side, and both are true as far as they go. That is the first lesson of this section: a source is always someone's view from somewhere. The next question is the skill of *EO1* — is that view **representative**? Could it stand for a majority view, or a minority view, at that time?

Test it on the cheerful convicts. Can Tench's picture stand for all 780? The plot on the *Scarborough* says that some convicts were desperate enough to risk seizing a ship at sea. The two accused men said the plot never existed — or said so when they were punished for it. The informer was one convict who chose to tell the officers. Three sightings, a handful of convicts, three different views — and the other 775 left no view of their own in the record at all. So the honest answer is: Tench's view is representative of what one officer could see from his own deck in one week. For the fleet as a whole it is one view, dated and placed, never **the** view.

That last sentence — “the other 775 left no view of their own” — is a **silence**, and explaining silences is the skill of .E03. A silence in the sources is not an accident. Historians ask what stopped the record being made. Figure 7 gives four reasons that work for the 1780s voyages.

Why some voices never reached the record

A silence in the sources is not an accident. Historians ask what stopped the record being made.

1. Writing was a skill of trade and rank

Every one of the six surviving voyage writers was an officer, an official, a surgeon or a marine. The convicts were mostly labourers and servants, and the voyage gave no lessons.

2. Prisoners had no paper, ink or privacy

Convicts were kept below decks, secured at night. Even a convict who could write had nothing to write with, and no place to do it.

3. Records were made for power, not about it

Logs, returns and reports existed to run the voyage and answer to London. They recorded convicts as numbers, cargo and problems.

4. What reached print was chosen

Only accounts with a publisher or an official blessing became public. Tench's book sold because it served British curiosity.

THE RESULT IN OUR CASE STUDY

Of roughly 780 convicts on the First Fleet, no diary survives from the voyage.

Convict women appear in the record mostly as numbers - on ship lists, and in the Second Fleet death returns.

Convicts speak chiefly when officials quote them: an informer, two men denying a plot.

So the surviving voyage is seen almost entirely from above decks.

The skill is to notice the silence AND use what remains. A punishment entry, a death return, a rule about who may go on deck - each one still tells us something about the people it was aimed at, read against the grain.

Four reason cards and a result card. 1, Writing was a skill of trade and rank: every one of the six surviving voyage writers was an officer, an official, a surgeon or a marine; the convicts were mostly labourers and servants, and the voyage gave no lessons. 2, Prisoners had no paper, ink or privacy: convicts were kept below decks, secured at night; even a convict who could write had nothing to write with and no place to do it. 3, Records were made for power, not about it: logs, returns and reports existed to run the voyage and answer to London; they recorded convicts as numbers, cargo and problems. 4, What reached print was chosen: only accounts with a publisher or an official blessing became public; Tench's book sold because it served British curiosity. The result card reads: of roughly 780 convicts on the First Fleet, no diary survives from the voyage; convict women appear in the record mostly as numbers, on ship lists and in the Second Fleet death returns; convicts speak chiefly when officials quote them, an informer, two men denying a plot; so the surviving voyage is seen almost entirely from above decks. A strip below reads: the skill is to notice the silence AND use what remains; a punishment entry, a death return, a rule about who may go on deck each still tells us something about the people it was aimed at, read against the grain.

Figure 7 — Why some voices never reached the record.

A silence is still evidence. A rule that convicts may go on deck only in turn by day tells you about the lives of the people it controlled. A punishment entry tells you what those in power would not allow. A death return tells you who counted, and at what price. To **read against the grain** means using a source made for one purpose to learn something its maker did not mean to show. The convict view of the voyage is missing — but the record, read against the grain, still shows you the shape of the life that view was living.

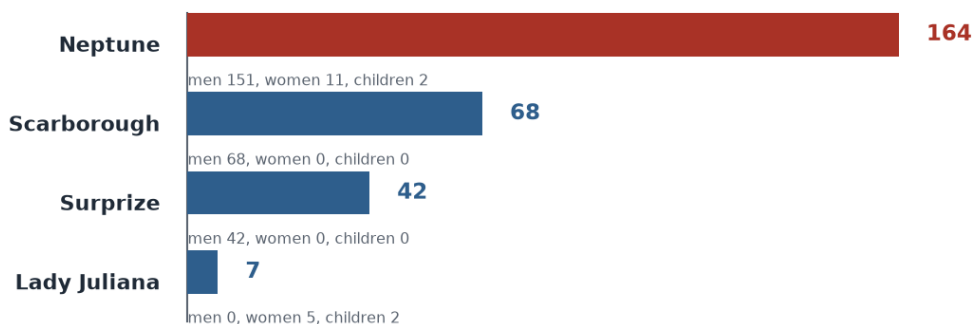
4. The Second Fleet: two ways to tell a voyage

Three years later the same route was run again, and this time the record is darker. The Second Fleet of 1790 brought about a thousand convicts to Sydney in four ships: the *Lady Juliana*, which sailed from Plymouth on 29 July 1789

with 222 women and reached Sydney on 3 June 1790; and the *Surprise*, the *Neptune* and the *Scarborough*, which reached Sydney at the end of June 1790. By the masters' own returns — the numbers the ships' captains gave when asked — 281 people had died at sea. When the ships landed, the colony counted 488 people under medical treatment by 13 July 1790. (Source: Collins, 1798; Wikipedia, “*Second Fleet (Australia)*”, retrieved 2026-08-25.)

Deaths on the Second Fleet voyage, as reported by the masters

From the return printed in David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1 (London, 1798).



READ IT LIKE A HISTORIAN

These are the numbers the ships' masters gave when asked - the men whose conduct the numbers judge. About a thousand convicts sailed; by the masters' own returns, 281 died at sea. The colony counted 488 people under medical treatment by 13 July 1790. Whose perspective do you trust in a figure like this - and what would you check it against?

A horizontal bar chart of deaths on the Second Fleet voyage as reported by the masters, from the return printed in Collins, 1798. *Neptune* 164 (men 151, women 11, children 2), shown in red; *Scarborough* 68 (men 68); *Surprise* 42 (men 42); *Lady Juliana* 7 (women 5, children 2). A panel below reads: these are the numbers the ships' masters gave when asked, the men whose conduct the numbers judge; about a thousand convicts sailed; by the masters' own returns 281 died at sea; the colony counted 488 people under medical treatment by 13 July 1790; whose perspective do you trust in a figure like this, and what would you check it against?

Figure 8 — Deaths on the Second Fleet voyage, as reported by the masters.

Look at Figure 8 like a historian. The numbers are the masters' numbers: the perspective carried by the chart is the perspective of the men whose conduct the numbers judge. The *Lady Juliana*'s low death count shows the voyage could be run with far fewer deaths — the same route, a very different outcome. So the first question is not “what do the numbers say?” but “whose numbers are these, and what would you check them against?”

David Collins asked exactly that question in 1798, and he pointed at the contract. Government had paid the contractors per head for every convict embarked — not per head landed alive. Collins wrote that, if profit alone was consulted, “the dead were more profitable ... than the living.” His account also records that deaths on the *Neptune* were hidden for a time so that the dead men's rations could be kept, and that the sick who landed were, in his words, a sight this colony had never seen. (Source: Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1, London, 1798.) Two of the masters were later tried over the treatment of the convicts and found not guilty. (Source: Wikipedia, “*Second Fleet (Australia)*”, retrieved 2026-08-25.)

Source - an official explains a disaster

David Collins, judge-advocate of the colony, writing in 1798 about the Second Fleet of 1790.

THE CONTRACT, IN COLLINS'S WORDS

"A contract had been entered into by government with Messrs. Calvert, Camden, and King, merchants of London, for the transporting of one thousand convicts, and government engaged to pay £17 7s 6d per head for every convict they embarked."

AND HIS JUDGEMENT ON IT

"This sum being as well for their provisions as for their transportation, no interest for their preservation was created in the owners, and the dead were more profitable (if profit alone was consulted by them, and the credit of their house was not at stake) than the living."

David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1, London, 1798. Collins sailed with the First Fleet and served as judge-advocate; he was in Sydney when the Second Fleet arrived in June 1790.

An official source criticising the men who ran the voyage: whose perspective is this, and what might it be defending?

A styled card carrying two verbatim passages from Collins, 1798. **THE CONTRACT, IN COLLINS'S WORDS:** "A contract had been entered into by government with Messrs. Calvert, Camden, and King, merchants of London, for the transporting of one thousand convicts, and government engaged to pay £17 7s 6d per head for every convict they embarked." **AND HIS JUDGEMENT ON IT:** "This sum being as well for their provisions as for their transportation, no interest for their preservation was created in the owners, and the dead were more profitable (if profit alone was consulted by them, and the credit of their house was not at stake) than the living." The provenance line notes that Collins sailed with the First Fleet and served as judge-advocate, and was in Sydney when the Second Fleet arrived in June 1790. A strip below asks: an official source criticising the men who ran the voyage — whose perspective is this, and what might it be defending?

Figure 9 — An official explains a disaster.

Notice, too, whose view Figure 9 carries. Collins is an official of the colony criticising private contractors. His blame falls on the merchants and the masters — which also protects the government that chose them and signed the contract. A source that criticises power still has a perspective of its own. That is not a reason to discard it; it is a reason to place it, exactly as you place Tench and Collins in part 3.

Set the two fleets side by side and two defensible stories of the voyages appear. Figure 10 states each story at its strongest, with every claim tied to a dated source.

The same voyages, two defensible stories

Each column is the strongest case its evidence allows. Your job is to weigh them, not pick a side early.

STORY A - A VOYAGE RUN WITH CARE	STORY B - A VOYAGE OF RISK AND POWER
- Irons came off within a week of sailing; Tench freed every convict under his charge (May 1787). (Tench, 1789) - Sick-list kept small by fires between decks, gunpowder explosions and dry bedding. (Tench, 1789) - Convicts allowed on deck in turn by day, secured at night - a standing rule of the fleet. (Collins, 1798) - The fleet stayed together: Cape crossing in five weeks and four days, 'without separation'. (Collins, 1798)	- A convict plot to seize the Scarborough was discovered before the fleet left home waters; two men were flogged (May 1787). (Collins, 1798) - The same ship carried another plot in 1790, betrayed by convict Samuel Burt. (Collins, 1798) - Second Fleet: 281 deaths at sea by the masters' own returns; deaths hidden on the Neptune to keep the rations. (Collins, 1798) - 'Both the living and the dead exhibiting more horrid spectacles than had ever been witnessed in this country.' (Collins, 1798)

Both stories use real evidence, and both leave something out. Story A is strongest for the First Fleet; Story B is strongest for the Second. Historians who stress one over the other are choosing what their evidence will carry - that choice is an interpretation.

Two columns, each stated at its strongest. *STORY A — A VOYAGE RUN WITH CARE*: irons came off within a week of sailing and Tench freed every convict under his charge (Tench, 1789); the sick-list was kept small by fires between decks, gunpowder explosions and dry bedding (Tench, 1789); convicts were allowed on deck in turn by day and secured at night, a standing rule of the fleet (Collins, 1798); the fleet stayed together, the Cape crossing made in five weeks and four days, without separation (Collins, 1798). *STORY B — A VOYAGE OF RISK AND POWER*: a convict plot to seize the Scarborough was discovered before the fleet left home waters and two men were flogged (Collins, 1798); the same ship carried another plot in 1790, betrayed by convict Samuel Burt (Collins, 1798); on the Second Fleet 281 deaths at sea by the masters' own returns, and deaths hidden on the Neptune to keep the rations (Collins, 1798); the living and the dead exhibiting more horrid spectacles than had ever been witnessed in this country (Collins, 1798). A strip below reads: both stories use real evidence and both leave something out; Story A is strongest for the First Fleet and Story B for the Second; historians who stress one over the other are choosing what their evidence will carry, and that choice is an interpretation.

Figure 10 — The same voyages, two defensible stories.

The difference between Story A and Story B is not a difference in facts: both columns use true, dated facts. The difference is in which facts carry the story — the care of 1787–1788, or the disaster of 1790; the irons removed, or the plot and the lash. That choice is an **interpretation**. The **variations in perspective** in the sources — officer and official and contractor, all of them above decks — are what make the different interpretations possible. When a historian stresses one column over the other, they are choosing what their evidence will carry, and you are allowed to ask what they left on the table.

5. Worked inquiry 1 — the five-step perspective analysis

Question. What **perspectives, beliefs, values and attitudes** show in Tench's account of freeing the convicts' irons on 20 May 1787 — and how far can that account stand for others?

Figure 11 shows the five steps this section uses for any source: origin, content, perspective, silence, weight. The table works the steps on Tench’s irons passage.



Five step cards stacked. 1 ORIGIN, who made it, when, from what position: Watkin Tench, captain-lieutenant of marines, writing for British readers, published in London in 1789, within a year of the voyage. 2 CONTENT, what does it actually say: he freed every convict under his charge from their irons on 20 May 1787, and he calls the order humane and his own part in it a pleasure. 3 PERSPECTIVE, whose beliefs, values and attitudes show through: an officer who values order and mercy in the same breath; removing irons is both kind and a calculated risk he is proud of taking. 4 SILENCE, who is missing from this telling: the convicts themselves; their relief, fear or opinion of the officer is never asked and never recorded. 5 WEIGHT, how far can this stand for others: one officer, one ship’s detachment, one day; it cannot stand for the whole fleet, still less for the convicts’ view of it; check it against Collins’s same-week record of the Scarborough plot.

Figure 11 — The five-step perspective analysis, worked on Tench’s irons passage.

Step	What we do	Why it matters
1. Origin	Tench was a captain-lieutenant of marines; he wrote for British readers; the book was published in London in 1789, within a year of the voyage.	Provenance tells you whose view you hold, and how close in time and place the writer was to what he tells.
2. Content	He freed every convict under his charge from their irons on 20 May 1787; he calls the order humane and his own part in it a pleasure.	The exact words are the evidence; the value words (“humane”, “pleasure”) are where attitudes show.
3. Perspective	An officer who values order and mercy in the same breath: removing	This is the analysis step — the beliefs, values and attitudes the

Step	What we do	Why it matters
	irons is both a kindness and a calculated risk he is proud of taking.	source carries.
4. Silence	The convicts themselves. Their relief, fear or opinion of the officer is never asked and never recorded.	What is missing is part of the perspective: the source shows you one side of a relationship.
5. Weight	One officer, one ship's detachment, one day. Check it against Collins's same-week record of the Scarborough plot.	This is .E01: how far one individual's perspective stands for the many or the few at that time.

Model answer. Tench's account of 20 May 1787 shows an officer who values order and mercy together. He freed every convict under his charge from their irons, and he calls the order humane and his own part in it a pleasure: those are the words of a man proud of a calculated risk. His **belief** — that the convicts under his eye were calm and content — is strong for the people he could actually see, on his own ship, because he was there. His **attitude** towards the convicts is one of controlled kindness: they are people to be managed, trusted, and watched. But the **perspective** is one officer's, looking down from above decks a week out of port, and the **silence** is the whole convict side of the story: their view of the irons, the ships and the voyage is never asked and never recorded. In the same week, Collins was recording the *Scarborough* plot and its floggings. So the source is very useful for an officer's values and attitudes, and useful for one ship's mood in one week — but it cannot stand for the fleet, and it cannot stand for the convicts.

6. Worked inquiry 2 — is Tench's cheerful picture representative?

Question. Is Tench's view of the convicts in May 1787 **representative** — a majority view, a minority view, or a view we cannot fully test?

Step	What we do	Why it matters
1. Restate	We are testing whether one individual's perspective can stand for a larger group at that time.	.E01 is a question about weight, not about truth: a true account can still be a narrow one.
2. Place the view	Tench, an officer, on the <i>Charlotte</i> , one week out of Portsmouth, looking at the convicts under his own eyes.	A view is always located; naming where it stands is the first check on its weight.
3. Gather the other sightings	Collins records the Scarborough plot in the same week; an informer chose to tell; two accused men denied it; Easty, a private marine, kept his own diary of the voyage.	Other positions give other sightings; representativeness is tested by range, not by volume.
4. Weigh	Tench saw cheerfulness on his ship; plotters and an informer appear on another; the other 775 convicts left no view of their own.	With three sightings and a silence, no census exists; majority and minority views cannot be counted, only mapped.
5. Verdict with a limit	Tench's view is representative of what one officer could see from his own deck; for the 780 it is one dated, placed view — never the view.	The honest verdict names what the source can stand for and what it cannot. That naming is the skill.

Model answer. Tench's cheerful convicts are a true picture of one place and one week, and a narrow one. It is the view of an officer, on one ship of eleven, looking at the people under his own charge days after leaving England. Against it, Collins's same-week record of the *Scarborough* plot shows desperate men on another ship; the two accused men, denying the plot under the lash, show a third view; and the other 775 convicts left no words of their own at all. So the question "majority or minority view?" cannot be counted — no census of convict views exists, because the conditions of the voyage stopped the record being made. The strongest answer says exactly that: Tench's perspective

is representative of an officer's view from above decks, and it is one view among several for the fleet, to be dated, placed and checked against Collins — never allowed to speak for everyone.

7. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

Task 1. The four words. (a) In your own words, define **belief**, **value** and **attitude**. (b) From Figure 6, give one line from each writer that shows an attitude, and say towards what or whom.

Task 2. Source kinds. Sort these six items into the six kinds of Figure 2: (i) Ralph Clark's private diary; (ii) a letter a marine sent home from the *Sirius*; (iii) a British Act of Parliament setting the punishment of transportation; (iv) the masters' returns of Second Fleet deaths; (v) a printed song sold in London about a voyage; (vi) a recorded spoken memory of a sea voyage, made in the 1900s. Then name the one kind that cannot exist for the 1780s voyages, and say why.

Task 3. The writers. From Figure 4: (a) which writer held the highest position, and which the lowest? (b) which two records became printed books, and in what years? (c) where are the originals of Clark's diary and Easty's diary held today?

Task 4. One week, two sources. From Figure 6: (a) what did Tench record about the convicts as the fleet left England, and about the irons on 20 May 1787? (b) what did Collins record on that same day? (c) explain in two sentences why both accounts can be true.

Task 5. Kinds of record. Sort these four into official, private and public records (Figure 5): the masters' death returns; Easty's diary; Tench's *Narrative*; Collins's *Account*. For each, add one line on how its purpose shaped its content.

Task 6. Reading the chart. From Figure 8: (a) which ship reported the most deaths, and how many? (b) which reported the fewest? (c) whose perspective do the numbers carry, and what one other count mentioned in part 4 would you check them against?

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

Task 7. John Easty's diary is the only surviving voyage record by a man without officer rank — a private marine. Write one paragraph on what Easty's view can stand for, and what it cannot. Use the word **representative**, and give one dated detail from this section.

Task 8. Convict women appear in the voyage record mostly as numbers — on ship lists, and in the Second Fleet death returns. Using two of the four reasons in Figure 7, explain why the beliefs, values and attitudes of the women on the *Lady Penrhyn* were almost never recorded.

Task 9. Choose Story A or Story B (Figure 10) as the better story of the **First Fleet**. Defend your choice with two dated details, and concede one dated detail to the other side.

Task 10. The same route, three years apart, two histories. In one paragraph, explain how the variations in perspective between the records of 1787–1788 and the records of 1790 can lead to different historical **interpretations** of the voyages to Australia.

8. Source-based inquiry

One source, four questions, one paragraph. Read the source below, plan with Figure 12, then answer questions 1–5 in your book.

Source — David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1, London, 1798. “Sunday the 20th [May 1787] was marked by the discovery of a design formed among the convicts on board the Scarborough transport to mutiny and take possession of the ship. The information was given by one of the convicts to the commanding marine officer on board ... the ringleaders (two in number)

should be brought on board the Sirius, there punished ... and two dozen lashes were inflicted ... on each of the offenders, who stedfastly denied the existence of any such design as was imputed to them."

Source for the inquiry - a plot at sea

David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1, London, 1798.

THE PASSAGE

"Sunday the 20th [May 1787] was marked by the discovery of a design formed among the convicts on board the Scarborough transport to mutiny and take possession of the ship. The information was given by one of the convicts to the commanding marine officer on board ... the ringleaders (two in number) should be brought on board the Sirius, there punished ... and two dozen lashes were inflicted ... on each of the offenders, who stedfastly denied the existence of any such design as was imputed to them."

Collins was the colony's judge-advocate - its senior legal officer. He sailed on the Sirius with the First Fleet, wrote this account eleven years later from his official notes, and published it in London in 1798.

PUT THE PERSPECTIVE QUESTIONS TO IT

ORIGIN

Who is speaking - and from what position?

VOICE

Whose words reach you directly? Whose only through him?

SILENCE

What did the accused men say in their own words? Do you have it?

REPRESENTATIVE?

One ship, one week - can this stand for all 780 convicts?

A card carrying the Collins passage verbatim, with a provenance card below it: Collins was the colony's judge-advocate, its senior legal officer; he sailed on the Sirius with the First Fleet, wrote this account eleven years later from his official notes, and published it in London in 1798. Below, four question cards: **ORIGIN** — who is speaking, and from what position? **VOICE** — whose words reach you directly, and whose only through him? **SILENCE** — what did the accused men say in their own words, and do you have it? **REPRESENTATIVE?** — one ship, one week: can this stand for all 780 convicts?

Figure 12 — The source for the inquiry, and the four questions to put to it.

1. **Origin.** Who is speaking, and from what position? When did the event happen, and when was the account published — and does that gap matter?
2. **Voice.** Whose words reach you directly in this passage? Whose reach you only through Collins?
3. **Beliefs, values, attitudes.** What does Collins's telling show that he, and the authority he served, valued — and what attitude towards the convicts shows in the way the punishment is recorded?
4. **Silence and weight.** What did the two accused men say in their own words? Do you have it? Can one ship's one week stand for all 780 convicts — and what word from part 1 names that question?
5. **Write.** One paragraph: what this source lets you know about the perspectives on board the fleet in May 1787. Name one thing it is strong on, and one thing it cannot give.

Answers

Task 1. (a) A belief is something a person holds to be true; a value is what a person or group treats as important and worth protecting; an attitude is a settled way of feeling and acting towards someone or something. (b) Any reasoned pairings. For example: Tench's "great pleasure" at freeing the irons shows an attitude of controlled kindness towards the convicts under his charge; Collins's record of the floggings shows an attitude of firm punishment towards convicts who threatened order.

Task 2. (i) diaries and journals; (ii) letters; (iii) laws; (iv) official accounts and reports; (v) propaganda and popular culture; (vi) oral accounts. The kind that cannot exist for the 1780s voyages is the oral account: sound recording did not exist yet, so no spoken memory of those voyages was ever captured.

Task 3. (a) Highest: David Collins, judge-advocate of the colony (or Tench, a captain-lieutenant; Collins held the senior civil office). Lowest: John Easty, private marine. (b) Tench's *Narrative*, London, 1789; Collins's *Account*, London, 1798. (c) Both at the State Library of New South Wales.

Task 4. (a) Tench recorded that, a very few excepted, the convicts' faces showed a high degree of satisfaction as the fleet left England, and that on 20 May 1787 he freed every convict under his charge from their irons with great pleasure, without a single exception. (b) Collins recorded, on the same day, the discovery of a plot on the *Scarborough* to seize the ship, told by an informer; two accused men were flogged and denied everything. (c) Both can be true because each writer saw a different slice of the fleet: Tench his own ship's deck, Collins the worst event across eleven ships. A source is always someone's view from somewhere.

Task 5. Official: the masters' death returns (kept as a duty, to answer to London — so they are numbers, not lives); Collins's *Account* (an official history — so it defends and explains the colony's rulers as well as recording them). Private: Easty's diary (made for himself — so it is open about what he noticed and felt). Public: Tench's *Narrative* (made for British readers and sold — so it is chosen and shaped for its audience).

Task 6. (a) The *Neptune*, 164 deaths (men 151, women 11, children 2). (b) The *Lady Juliana*, 7. (c) The numbers carry the masters' perspective — the men whose conduct the numbers judge. Check them against the colony's own count: 488 people under medical treatment by 13 July 1790.

Task 7. A strong answer locates Easty (private marine, *Scarborough*, diary 1786–1793) and then weighs his view: it can stand for the voyage as one ordinary soldier saw it — below the officers, above the convicts, close to the sick and the punished — and it is precious as the lowest-ranking surviving voice; but it cannot stand for the convicts, nor for the women, nor for the officers' decisions, and it is still one man's eyes. Representative is used as a question, not a label.

Task 8. A strong answer uses two reasons with force: writing was a skill of trade and rank, and the women on the *Lady Penrhyn* were mostly labourers and servants whom the voyage gave no lessons; and records were made for power, not about it, so the women entered the record as numbers on a list and in a death return, not as people with views. It may add that prisoners had no paper, ink or privacy. It ends with the point that a silence is not an accident: the record's shape shows who it was made for.

Task 9. A strong answer chooses one story, defends it with two dated details (for A: irons off within a week, May 1787; the Cape crossing in five weeks and four days without separation), concedes one to the other side (for B: the Scarborough plot and floggings of May 1787), and names the move: choosing which true facts carry the story is an interpretation.

Task 10. A strong answer shows that the records of 1787–1788 (Tench's cheerful convicts, the irons removed, the fleet kept together) and the records of 1790 (281 deaths by the masters' own returns, deaths hidden on the *Neptune*, Collins's "the dead were more profitable") are all genuine, dated, and almost all from above decks; that historians stressing care choose the first set, and historians stressing risk and power choose the second; and that the variation in perspective in the sources — different writers, ranks, fleets and purposes — is what makes both interpretations possible. The answer ends by weighing, not by picking.

Source-based inquiry. 1. Collins, judge-advocate of the colony; the event happened 20 May 1787 at sea; the account was published in London in 1798, eleven years later, from his official notes — the gap matters for small details, less for the shape of an official record. 2. Collins's own words reach you directly; the informer's and the accused men's

words reach you only through him, and the accused are reported in summary, denying everything. 3. His telling values order, discipline and the authority of officers: a plot is answered by public punishment on the flagship, and the denial is recorded without being weighed. 4. The accused said the plot never existed — in Collins’s summary only; their own words are a silence. One ship, one week cannot stand for all 780; the word is **representative**. 5. See the model response below.

Model responses

These are fully worked answers. Read them to see how a strong response is built: a clear point, dated evidence, a link back to the question, and an honest limit.

Model for the source-based inquiry — extended response

Collins’s account of the Scarborough plot is a primary source for May 1787 and an official’s view of his own fleet. Its origin gives it strength and limits at once: Collins sailed with the First Fleet as judge-advocate, its senior legal officer, and wrote from official notes, but he published eleven years later, in London, for British readers. In the passage, the only words that reach us directly are Collins’s own: the informer’s story and the accused men’s denials are reported in summary, so the convicts’ side of the event is a silence we can see but cannot hear. The beliefs, values and attitudes on show are those of authority: order must hold, a plot is answered by punishment on the flagship, and the denial of the punished men is recorded without being weighed. For the question “what did those in power believe and value in May 1787?” the source is therefore strong. For the question “what did the convicts believe and want?” it is weak: it gives one informer and two accused men denying the plot, in a summary written by the men who flogged them. And for the fleet as a whole, one ship’s one week is not representative of 780 convicts — the same week, Tench was recording cheerful convicts on another ship. So the source is very useful for the perspective of authority, useful for the fact that a plot was believed and punished, and silent on the views it punished; a historian would set it beside Tench, Easty and the punishment records before letting it speak for anyone but its maker.

Model for Task 10 — extended response

The voyages of 1787–1788 and of 1790 were run along the same route with very different outcomes, and the records of each carry different perspectives, so historians can tell two true stories. The First Fleet records — Tench’s cheerful convicts of May 1787, the irons removed “without a single exception”, the fleet kept together across the Cape crossing — carry the perspective of officers and officials whose voyage went well, and they support an interpretation of the journeys as voyages run with care. The Second Fleet records — 281 deaths at sea by the masters’ own returns, deaths hidden on the *Neptune* to keep the rations, 488 landed people under medical treatment by 13 July 1790, and Collins’s judgement that, if profit alone was consulted, “the dead were more profitable ... than the living” — carry the perspective of an official explaining a disaster, and they support an interpretation of the journeys as voyages of risk and power. Both sets of facts are genuine and dated, and almost all were written above decks, so the variation in perspective is not only between the two fleets but within the record itself: officer against official, official against contractor. That variation is exactly what makes the different historical interpretations possible. A strong reading therefore does not pick one story; it weighs them, naming which facts each interpretation carries and which it leaves on the table.

Cross-links to skills sections: questioning and refining inquiry (7A), sequencing and chronology (7B), source purpose, features, content and context (7C), evaluating the value of sources (7D), interpretations and debates (7F), continuity and change (8A), causes and consequences (8B), significance (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D). **Content link:** the 18th-century journeys to Australia and the convict experience (2C).

Sources for this section. Retrieval date for all web sources: 2026-08-25.

- VCAA, *Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0: Humanities — History*, Levels 9–10 content description VC2HH10S05 and elaborations E01–E04 (VCAA export retrieved 2026-07-29).
- **Watkin Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay** (London, 1789) — primary source; Project Gutenberg ebook no. 3535; quotations checked against this text.
- **David Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, vol. 1** (London, 1798) — primary source; Project Gutenberg ebook no. 12565; the plot passage, the contract passage, the death returns and the Rio–Cape leg checked against this text.

- **Ralph Clark’s diary** (State Library of New South Wales), **Arthur Bowes Smyth’s journal and watercolours** (National Library of Australia), **William Bradley’s journal** (State Library of New South Wales) and **John Easty’s diary** (State Library of New South Wales) — holdings and details checked against the corresponding Wikipedia articles, retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Wikipedia, “First Fleet” and “Second Fleet (Australia)” — fleet dates, ship movements, death counts and the later trial of two masters, retrieved 2026-08-25.
- All twelve figures are original artifacts drawn for this book from the values and words shown; none is reproduced from any publisher.

Weighing up historical interpretations and debates

For the teacher

*This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–10) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable sources, two inline scaffolded tasks, six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. Chapters 7–8 carry the most doing and the least prose: every skill here is practised on content taught in Chapters 1–6 (D6) — the WWI causes debate (3A), the conscription votes (3B), the three historians of colonial society (2E). Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2); the contested label ‘historical debate’ carries a **CONTESTED_TERMS** Rule 1 fallback definition before use, and each side of every debate is steelmanned before it is evaluated (Rules 4–5). All First Nations content is excluded per Rule 1 and §2A; none may be authored in later, including as context or a caption — the E05 skill is therefore taught through a neutral example of historiographical change (the writing of the conscription debates), never through the elaboration’s original example.*

Curriculum alignment (VCAA export VC2_AS-CD-E1ab_29-07-2026.csv) — codes only:

VC2HH10S06 — Historical Concepts and Skills · Using historical sources

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10S06.E01 · VC2HH10S06.E02 · VC2HH10S06.E03 · VC2HH10S06.E04 · VC2HH10S06.E05.

D3 note (binding): VC2HH10S06.E05 is **REWROTE neutral** — the elaboration’s example (historians’ changing interpretations of frontier conflicts) is replaced by a neutral example of historiographical change: the writing of the conscription debates since 1936 (Scott’s official volume, the campaigners’ and debate histories of 1966–1970, Fitzhardinge’s 1979 biography of Hughes, and the digital turn via Trove). The skill — analysing how interpretations change as questions and sources change — is preserved entire. The excluded example must not be authored in later, including as context, background or a caption — redirect any raised material to the front-of-book note.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section teaches debates (WWI causes, conscription in Australia — → 3A/3B), evaluating an exhibition, film, documentary or video game as an interpretation, and historians’ changing views over time (example rewritten per §2A). The five-part anatomy (question, positions, evidence, over time, judgement) is the section’s one reusable instrument: every figure and every task runs on it. The four-move model paragraph (claim, evidence, limits, verdict) is the anatomy folded into prose. Facts of the two debates are familiar on purpose — 3A taught the responsibility debate and 3B the referendum dates — so the thinking load falls on the evaluating, not on new content. Skills cross-links: historical questions (7A), sequencing (7B), source purpose and context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), sustained interpretation with citations (8D).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
interpretation	a reasoned reading of the past, built from evidence, that historians argue about
historical debate	an argument carried on over shared evidence about what the past means
primary source	a record made at the time being studied
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
steelman	to state someone’s case in its strongest form before testing it
conscription	compulsory military service: making people serve, not asking for volunteers
plebiscite	a national vote that tells the government what the people want but does not itself make a law
ultimatum	a final demand: meet it, or face action

Word	Gloss used in this section
mobilisation	readying a country's armies, ships and supplies for war

Sources (SOURCE_USE — real referents carry a source line; collections consulted and retrieved 2026-08-25; original documents cited where one is reproduced):

Referent	Source line
Outbreak of World War I: Archduke Franz Ferdinand killed at Sarajevo 28 June 1914; Germany's 'blank cheque' 5 July; Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia 23 July; declarations of war 28 July–4 August 1914; pre-war crises — Morocco 1905 and 1911, Bosnia 1908, Balkan Wars 1912–13; alliance systems, arms race and mobilisation plans	Wikipedia, "Causes of World War I" and "July Crisis", retrieved 2026-08-25
Conscription votes: 28 October 1916, No by 72,476 (51.6% to 48.4%); 20 December 1917, No by 166,588 (53.8% to 46.2%); state patterns; the AIF voted Yes in 1917; Hughes left Labor after the first defeat and led the Nationalist Party from February 1917	Wikipedia, "Conscription in Australia", "1916 Australian conscription referendum" and "1917 Australian conscription referendum", retrieved 2026-08-25
Ballot question of 28 October 1916, wording as printed	Wikipedia, "1916 Australian conscription referendum", retrieved 2026-08-25
Yes and No advocates: Hughes, Cook, Holman, the Australian Natives' Association, the Salvation Army, most church leaders, major newspapers, Norman Lindsay's posters; Fisher, Tudor, Ryan, Curtin, trade unions including the IWW, Vida Goldstein's Women's Peace Army, Daniel Mannix	Wikipedia, "Conscription in Australia" and "Vida Goldstein", retrieved 2026-08-25
Daniel Mannix: Archbishop of Melbourne 1917–1963; campaigned against both votes; reported words comparing Ireland's wrongs by Great Britain with Belgium's by Germany	Wikipedia, "Daniel Mannix" and "Conscription in Australia", retrieved 2026-08-25
Australian War Memorial, Canberra: First World War galleries, photographs, objects and dioramas	Wikipedia, "Australian War Memorial", retrieved 2026-08-25
Gallipoli (1981), directed by Peter Weir: ends with the Nek, 7 August 1915; a star called it 'the shattering of a dream for Australia'; historical-accuracy critiques citing Robert Rhodes James, Les Carlyon and the finding that little British command was exercised at the Nek and the officer behind the film's colonel was Australian	Wikipedia, "Gallipoli (1981 film)", retrieved 2026-08-25
Kokoda Front Line! (1942), produced by Ken G. Hall, footage by Damien Parer; Australia's first Academy Award	Wikipedia, "Damien Parer", retrieved 2026-08-25
Valiant Hearts: The Great War (Ubisoft, 2014): fictional characters with unlockable factual entries	Wikipedia, "Valiant Hearts: The Great War", retrieved 2026-08-25
Historians of colonial society: W. K. Hancock, <i>Australia</i> (1930); Russel Ward, <i>The Australian Legend</i> (1958); Marilyn Lake, <i>Getting Equal</i> (1999), <i>Drawing the Global Colour Line</i> (2008, with Henry Reynolds), <i>Progressive New World</i> (2019)	Wikipedia biographical entries, retrieved 2026-08-25
Writing the conscription debates: Ernest Scott, <i>Australia During the War</i> (Volume XI of the Official History, 1936); E. J. Holloway, <i>The Australian Victory over Conscription in 1916–17</i> (1966); J. M. Main,	Wikipedia, "Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918" (Scott), "1916 Australian conscription referendum" bibliography (Holloway; Main; Fitzhardinge) and "Trove", retrieved 2026-08-25

Conscription: The Australian Debate, 1901–1970 (1970); L. F. Fitzhardinge, *The Little Digger, 1914–1952* (1979); Trove, National Library of Australia (700+ digitised newspapers)

1. The big question

Two historians can agree about every fact and still disagree about the past. They can agree that Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914, and still argue about *what the war means*: was it caused by deep forces building for years, or by the choices of a few summer weeks? Facts are not what historians debate. What they debate is what the facts mean.

An **interpretation** is a reasoned reading of the past, built from evidence, that historians argue about. When two or more interpretations meet over shared evidence, you have a **historical debate**. This section teaches you to evaluate both: to weigh each interpretation fairly and judge how far it holds.

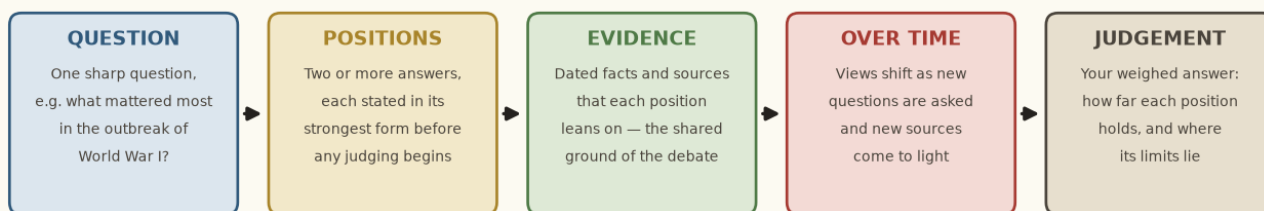
The label ‘historical debate’ is contested — people use it loosely. So this section defines it before using it.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *historical debate* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: an argument carried on over shared evidence — between people at the time, between historians since, or between both — in which each side must give dated evidence and answer the other’s strongest form. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

A debate in that sense is not a quarrel of opinions. It is an argument anyone may join, if they bring evidence. Every debate in this section has the same five parts. Learn the anatomy now; you will use it all the way through.

The anatomy of a historical debate

Every debate in this section has the same five parts — find them before you judge



FACTS are not up for debate — what historians debate is what they MEAN

Fact: Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914.

Interpretation: was the war caused by deep forces, or by the choices of a few weeks?

A debate is not a quarrel of opinions. It is an argument carried on over shared evidence — and anyone may join it.

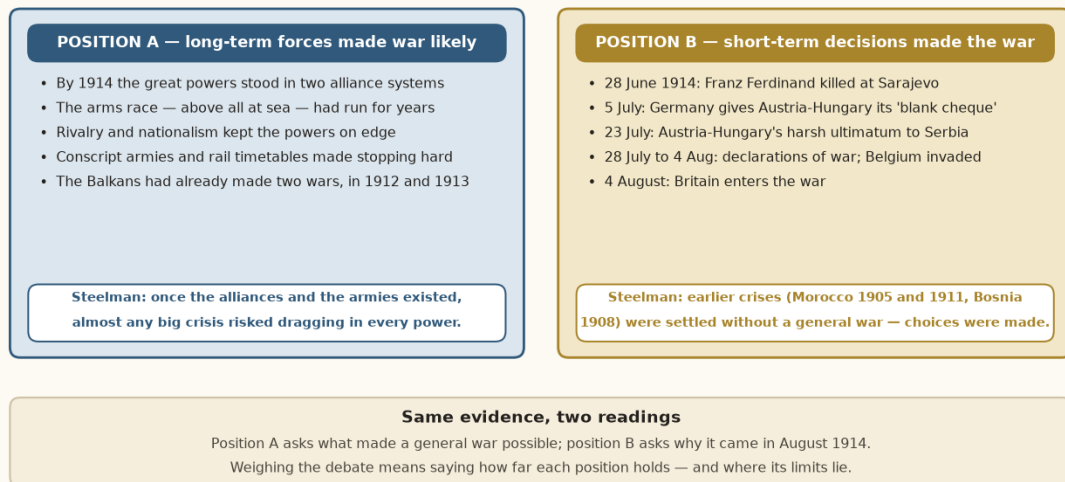
A flow diagram of the five parts of a historical debate joined by arrows: QUESTION (one sharp question, e.g. what mattered most in the outbreak of World War I?), POSITIONS (two or more answers, each stated in its strongest form before any judging begins), EVIDENCE (dated facts and sources that each position leans on — the shared ground of the debate), OVER TIME (views shift as new questions are asked and new sources come to light), and JUDGEMENT (your weighed answer: how far each position holds, and where its limits lie); below, a strip distinguishing fact from interpretation using Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia on 28 July 1914, and a closing line: a debate is not a quarrel of opinions, it is an argument carried on over shared evidence.

2. A debate explored: what mattered most in the outbreak of World War I?

Section 3A asked *who* was responsible for the war of 1914. This part asks the E01 question: granted that many causes were at work, **which mattered most?** Two positions own this debate.

A debate explored: what mattered most in the outbreak of World War I?

Both positions use the same dated events — they differ over what counts as decisive



A two-panel diagram of the debate over the outbreak of World War I. Position A (blue): long-term forces made war likely — two alliance systems by 1914, the arms race above all at sea, rivalry and nationalism, conscript armies and rail timetables that made stopping hard, and the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913; steelman: once the alliances and the armies existed, almost any big crisis risked dragging in every power. Position B (gold): short-term decisions made the war — Sarajevo 28 June 1914, the 'blank cheque' of 5 July, the ultimatum to Serbia of 23 July, declarations of war 28 July to 4 August, Britain entering on 4 August; steelman: earlier crises (Morocco 1905 and 1911, Bosnia 1908) were settled without a general war — choices were made. A bottom strip reads: same evidence, two readings.

Read the two positions against the anatomy. The **question** is what mattered most. The **positions** are steelmanned: to **steelman** a position is to state it in its strongest form before any judging begins. (Two more words from the diagram: an **ultimatum** is a final demand — meet it, or face action; **mobilisation** is the readying of a country's armies, ships and supplies for war, and **nationalism** the belief that your nation matters above all.) The **evidence** is shared — both panels lean on the same dated events, which is exactly what makes it a debate and not two monologues. The difference is what each position counts as decisive.

Notice what evaluating is *not*. It is not picking the side you like. It is asking, of each position: what can it explain, and what can it not explain? Position A struggles to explain why the war came in 1914 and not in 1905 or 1908, when the same long-term forces were there. Position B struggles to explain why a Balkan crisis pulled every great power in within five weeks. The **judgement** you reach is allowed to be a weighing, not a yes/no.

The same five parts will sort the Second World War's causes, long- and short-term, when you meet that debate in Chapter 3.

Task A (scaffolded). Using the diagram: (a) copy the two steelman boxes into your book in your own words — a steelman loses its point if it is weak; (b) list two dated events that *both* positions use; (c) write one sentence beginning "Position A explains ... but cannot explain ...", and one doing the same for Position B.

3. Worked inquiry 1 — evaluating a debate

Now watch the anatomy become a paragraph. The model below makes a **claim**, gives **evidence**, tests the **limits**, and ends with a weighed **verdict**.

Worked inquiry 1 — evaluating a debate

A model paragraph in four moves: claim, evidence, limits, verdict

CLAIM

If the question is what mattered most, the long-term forces carry the greater weight: the alliance systems, the arms race and the mobilisation plans made a general war possible. But possible is not the same as certain.

EVIDENCE

By 1914 Europe was divided into two armed camps; the Anglo-German naval race and the railway timetables of the conscript armies meant that one local war risked pulling in every power. Yet earlier crises — Morocco (1905, 1911), Bosnia (1908), the Balkan Wars (1912–13) — had been settled without a general war. The crisis of July 1914 became a war because of dated decisions: Germany's 'blank cheque' to Austria-Hungary (5 July), the ultimatum to Serbia (23 July), and the rush of declarations from 28 July to 4 August.

LIMITS

Position A cannot explain why the war came in 1914 rather than in 1905, 1908 or 1911, when the same kinds of tension existed. Position B cannot explain why a crisis in the Balkans, far from the great powers' own borders, drew them all in within five weeks — only the alliances can.

VERDICT

The long-term forces mattered most, because they made a general war possible; the short-term decisions fixed the date. Without the first, the second could not have grown beyond the Balkans; without the second, the first might have kept the peace a while longer.

Read it twice: once for sense, once move by move — every green claim is dated, and the red move tests the claim instead of smashing it.

A colour-coded model paragraph evaluating the debate over the outbreak of World War I in four moves: a blue CLAIM panel arguing that the long-term forces carry the greater weight because they made a general war possible; a green EVIDENCE panel citing the two armed camps by 1914, the naval race and rail timetables, the settled crises of Morocco 1905 and 1911, Bosnia 1908 and the Balkan Wars 1912–13, and the dated decisions of July 1914 from the blank cheque of 5 July to the declarations of 28 July to 4 August; a red LIMITS panel noting what each position cannot explain; and a gold VERDICT panel judging that the long-term forces mattered most because they made a general war possible while the short-term decisions fixed the date.

Read it twice: once for sense, once move by move.

Question 1 — Where is the evidence dated? *Modelled answer:* every green claim carries a date or a year (1914, 1905, 1911, 1908, 1912–13, 5 July, 23 July, 28 July to 4 August). A claim without dates is an opinion; a claim with dates is an interpretation.

Question 2 — What do the limits do? *Modelled answer:* the red move tests each position instead of smashing it. It says what each one can and cannot explain — which is the only way to find out how far each one holds.

Question 3 — Why is the verdict a weighing rather than a yes/no? *Modelled answer:* because both positions carry real evidence. The verdict says what each one owned: the long-term forces made a general war possible; the short-term decisions fixed the date. Neither owns the whole answer.

4. Four forms, one skill: evaluating public history

Historians are not the only people who interpret the past. Museums, films, documentaries and video games do it too — and the curriculum asks you to evaluate them as interpretations, with the same care you give a historian.

Four forms of public history — four kinds of interpretation

Each form decides what to show, what to leave out, and how to tell the story

MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

First World War galleries, photographs, objects and built dioramas.
Curators choose what goes in each room, in what order, under what words.

How the form shapes the message:

Rooms, order and labels are choices — the visitor walks one fixed argument.

FILM

Gallipoli (1981), directed by Peter Weir

Fictional characters inside real events;
it ends with the attack at the Nek,
7 August 1915. Camera, music and casting
tell the audience how to feel.

How the form shapes the message:

A feature film casts heroes and picks an ending — feeling leads the facts.

DOCUMENTARY

Kokoda Front Line! (1942), produced by Ken G. Hall

Real footage shot by Damien Parer on the
Kokoda Track; Australia's first Oscar-
winning film. Shot in wartime and cut
for audiences at home in 1942.

How the form shapes the message:

Made in wartime for audiences at home — persuasion was part of the job.

VIDEO GAME

Valiant Hearts: The Great War (Ubisoft, 2014)

Fictional heroes in a world built from
soldiers' letters, trench visits and
archives; unlockable entries give real
facts. The player moves through the war.

How the form shapes the message:

The player acts inside the story; the facts arrive as unlockable extras.

None of these is 'just the story'. Each is an interpretation — and each can be evaluated.

A four-panel diagram of four forms of public history, each with a real example and a note on how the form shapes the message: MUSEUM EXHIBITION — Australian War Memorial, Canberra, with First World War galleries, photographs, objects and dioramas, where curators choose what goes in each room, in what order, under what words; FILM — Gallipoli (1981), directed by Peter Weir, fictional characters inside real events, ending with the attack at the Nek on 7 August 1915, with camera, music and casting telling the audience how to feel; DOCUMENTARY — Kokoda Front Line! (1942), produced by Ken G. Hall, real footage shot by Damien Parer on the Kokoda Track, Australia's first Oscar-winning film, cut for audiences at home in 1942; VIDEO GAME — Valiant Hearts: The Great War (Ubisoft, 2014), fictional heroes in a world built from soldiers' letters, trench visits and archives, with unlockable factual entries. A closing line reads: none of these is 'just the story'; each is an interpretation, and each can be evaluated.

None of the four is 'just the story'. A museum room is arranged by someone; a film ends where its director chooses to end; a wartime documentary was cut for home audiences; a game decides what you may do and what you must watch. Each form shapes the message it carries. So each form can be evaluated with the same five questions.

Five criteria for evaluating an interpretation

Use the same five questions on a museum display, a film, a documentary or a game



ACCURACY

Does it agree with the dated evidence? What does it get right, and where does it stray?



INCLUSION AND OMISSION

What is shown, and what is left out? An interpretation is shaped as much by its silences.



PERSPECTIVE

Who made it, when, and from whose side? Whose voices are heard — and whose are missing?



PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Why was it made? To teach, to honour, to sell tickets, to win a war? For whom?



HOW THE FORM SHAPES THE MESSAGE

Display order, camera angles, music, game rules: the form carries meaning of its own.

A good evaluation does not ask 'is it biased?' — every interpretation has a point of view. It asks what the point of view shows, and what it hides.

A five-row diagram of the criteria for evaluating an interpretation: ACCURACY — does it agree with the dated evidence, what does it get right and where does it stray?; INCLUSION AND OMISSION — what is shown and what is left out, an interpretation is shaped as much by its silences; PERSPECTIVE — who made it, when, and from whose side, whose voices are heard and whose are missing?; PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE — why was it made, to teach, to honour, to sell tickets, to win a war, for whom?; HOW THE FORM SHAPES THE MESSAGE — display order, camera angles, music, game rules: the form carries meaning of its own. A closing strip reads: a good evaluation does not ask 'is it biased?' — every interpretation has a point of view; it asks what the point of view shows, and what it hides.

Read the criteria carefully. The question is never 'is it biased?' — every interpretation has a point of view, including yours. The questions are: what does the point of view **show**, and what does it **hide**? And what does the form itself add that plain facts would not?

Task B (scaffolded). Take the video game card, *Valiant Hearts*. Apply two of the five criteria to it using only what the card tells you: (a) HOW THE FORM SHAPES THE MESSAGE — what does a game do that a museum room cannot? (b) INCLUSION AND OMISSION — the card says the facts arrive as 'unlockable extras'. What does that choice show, and what might it hide? One or two sentences each.

5. Worked inquiry 2 — evaluating a film as an interpretation

The same four moves now evaluate a real film: *Gallipoli* (1981), directed by Peter Weir.

Worked inquiry 2 — evaluating a film as an interpretation

The same four moves, now applied to *Gallipoli* (1981), directed by Peter Weir

CLAIM

Gallipoli is a powerful interpretation of Australians in World War I — and, like every interpretation, it is worth testing for what it shows as well as for what it simplifies.

EVIDENCE

The film is set inside real events and ends with the failed attack at the Nek on 7 August 1915. Its story — young men who volunteer in 1914 and die in 1915 — matches the record of mass volunteering and the heavy losses of the light horse. Its anti-war message was read that way by audiences: in 1981, one of its stars called *Gallipoli* 'the shattering of a dream for Australia'.

LIMITS

Historians question who the film blames. It suggests British officers sent Australians to their deaths — but little British command was exercised at the Nek, and the officer the film's colonel is based on was Australian. Historian Les Carlyon blamed the tragedy mostly on two Australian officers, and historian Robert Rhodes James found no evidence that British commanders treated Australian troops with contempt.

VERDICT

As an interpretation of how later Australians remembered the war — made in 1981, sixty-six years after the events — it is highly useful. As an account of who gave the orders in 1915, it needs correcting. The skill is to hold both findings at once.

Notice the verdict separates two questions: what the film tells us about 1915, and what it tells us about 1981.

A colour-coded model paragraph evaluating the film Gallipoli (1981) in four moves: a blue CLAIM panel stating that the film is a powerful interpretation of Australians in World War I, worth testing for what it shows as well as what it simplifies; a green EVIDENCE panel noting that the film is set inside real events and ends with the failed attack at the Nek on 7 August 1915, that its story of young volunteers who die in 1915 matches the record of mass volunteering and heavy light-horse losses, and that 1981 audiences read its anti-war message, one star calling it 'the shattering of a dream for Australia'; a red LIMITS panel noting that historians question who the film blames — Les Carlyon blamed the tragedy mostly on two Australian officers, and Robert Rhodes James found no evidence that British commanders treated Australian troops with contempt; and a gold VERDICT panel judging the film highly useful as an interpretation of how Australians of 1981 remembered the war, but needing correcting as an account of who gave the orders in 1915.

Question 1 — Which of the five criteria does the green move answer? *Modelled answer:* ACCURACY (the Nek, 7 August 1915; mass volunteering; light-horse losses) and PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE (the 1981 audiences who read an anti-war message). A film is two things at once: a claim about 1915 and a product of 1981. Good evaluations keep the two apart.

Question 2 — What do the limits do here? *Modelled answer:* they correct the film's blame with historians' findings — Carlyon's and Rhodes James's — without denying the film's power. The red move evaluates; it does not boycott.

Question 3 — Why can the verdict hold two findings at once? *Modelled answer:* because they answer different questions. 'What does the film tell us about 1915?' and 'What does it tell us about 1981?' are two questions, and the film scores differently on each. That split is the skill.

6. Comparing historians: same society, different questions

In 2E you met three historians weighing labels like 'a working man's paradise'. This part uses them again, for a different job: **comparing** historians' views of colonial society — the question asked, the answer given, the evidence used.

Comparing historians: three views of Australian society, 1750-1914

Find what is alike, what differs, and what explains the difference

Compare across	W. K. Hancock wrote in 1930	Russel Ward wrote in 1958	Marilyn Lake wrote in 2008 and 2019
Question asked	Is there a distinct Australian character?	Where did a distinct identity come from?	Whose identity is told? Who is left out?
Answer given	Yes — but he admired and criticised it in one breath, and attacked the trust in tariffs and state aid.	From the bush: outback workers bred an equal spirit — mateship — that shaped the culture.	Australian reforms were watched and copied around the world — and so was the White Australia policy.
Evidence used	History and politics, written between the wars	Ballads, bush writers, outback workers' and union records	Policy records; debates over immigration and voting rights; world comparison
ALIKE: all three agree there is an Australian story worth explaining. DIFFERENT: what each counts as decisive — the state and its tariffs, the bush and its mateship, race and exclusion. WHY: each generation asked different questions, with different evidence.			

Books: W. K. Hancock, *Australia* (1930); Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (1958); Marilyn Lake, *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2008, with Henry Reynolds) and *Progressive New World* (2019).

A comparison table of three historians of Australia's society, 1750 to 1914, across three rows — question asked, answer given, evidence used. W. K. Hancock, wrote in 1930: is there a distinct Australian character? — yes, but he admired and criticised it in one breath and attacked the trust in tariffs and state aid; evidence: history and politics written between the wars. Russel Ward, wrote in 1958: where did a distinct identity come from? — from the bush, where outback workers bred an equal spirit, mateship, that shaped the culture; evidence: ballads, bush writers, outback workers' and union records. Marilyn Lake, wrote in 2008 and 2019: whose identity is told, who is left out? — Australian reforms were watched and copied around the world, and so was the White Australia policy; evidence: policy records, debates over immigration and voting rights, world comparison. A strip below reads: **ALIKE** — all three agree there is an Australian story worth explaining; **DIFFERENT** — what each counts as decisive; **WHY** — each generation asked different questions with different evidence. A footer lists the books: Hancock, *Australia* (1930); Ward, *The Australian Legend* (1958); Lake, *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2008, with Henry Reynolds) and *Progressive New World* (2019).

Compare like with like. The **alike** row matters as much as the differences: all three agree there is an Australian story worth explaining. The **different** row is about what each historian counts as decisive — the state and its laws, the bush and its workers, or who was included and who was left out. And the **why** is the historian's craft in one line: each generation asks different questions, and brings different evidence to answer them.

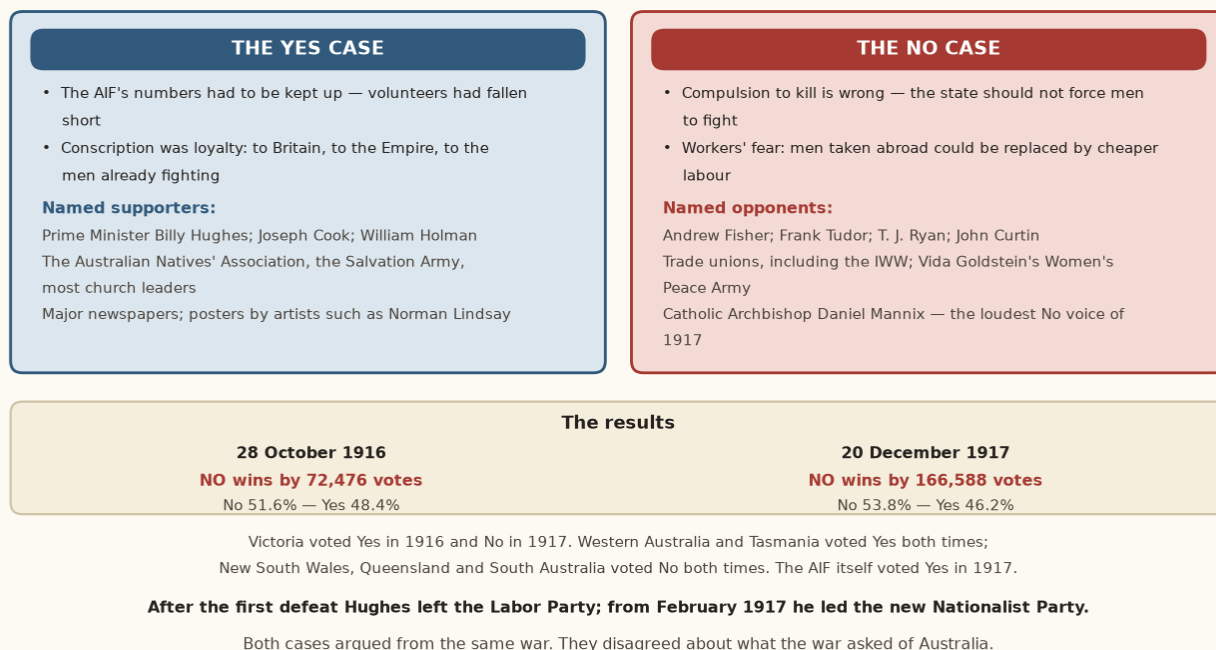
That is not a weakness of history. It is how history learns.

7. Two readings of one event: the conscription debates

3B taught you the story: two national votes on **conscription** — compulsory military service — put to Australians as **plebiscites**, votes that advised the government but made no law. This part evaluates the rival readings of those votes, as they were argued at the time.

Interpretations of an event: the conscription votes, 1916-1917

Two national votes on forcing men to serve overseas — two rival readings of the war



A two-panel diagram of the conscription debates of 1916-1917. The YES case (blue): the AIF's numbers had to be kept up because volunteers had fallen short, and conscription was loyalty — to Britain, to the Empire, to the men already fighting; named supporters: Prime Minister Billy Hughes, Joseph Cook, William Holman, the Australian Natives' Association, the Salvation Army, most church leaders, major newspapers and posters by Norman Lindsay. The NO case (red): compulsion to kill is wrong — the state should not force men to fight; and workers' fear that men taken abroad could be replaced by cheaper labour; named opponents: Andrew Fisher, Frank Tudor, T. J. Ryan, John Curtin, trade unions including the IWW, Vida Goldstein's Women's Peace Army, and Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix, the loudest No voice of 1917. A results strip: 28 October 1916, No won by 72,476 votes, 51.6% to 48.4%; 20 December 1917, No won by 166,588 votes, 53.8% to 46.2%; Victoria voted Yes in 1916 and No in 1917, Western Australia and Tasmania Yes both times, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia No both times, the AIF itself Yes in 1917; after the first defeat Hughes left the Labor Party and from February 1917 led the new Nationalist Party. Closing line: both cases argued from the same war — they disagreed about what the war asked of Australia.

Both cases argued from the same war. They disagreed about what the war asked of Australia. That is the shape of a real debate: shared facts, rival meanings. Before you judge either side, steelman it.

The Yes case, steelmanned

The AIF was bleeding; volunteers no longer replaced the fallen, and the men already at the front deserved reinforcements.

In 1914 Australia had promised to stand with Britain and the Empire; the promise was made by the nation, and nations keep promises.

Every other duty of war (taxes, loans, hardship) was already shared by compulsion; service was the last unequal burden.

The No case, steelmanned

Compulsion to kill is a line no state should cross: a war for freedom should not end freedom at home.

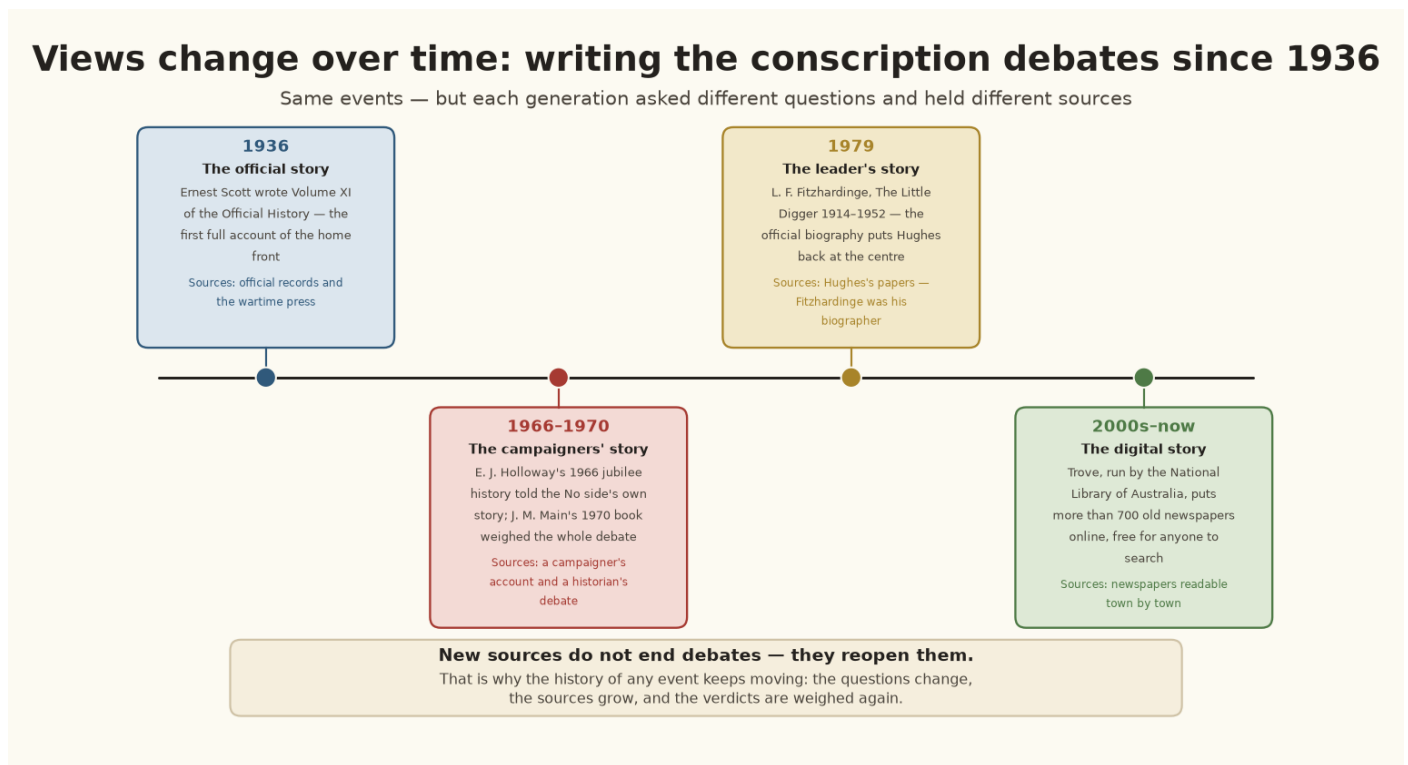
Workers feared that men taken abroad would be replaced by cheaper labour, undoing decades of hard-won conditions.

The votes themselves: twice, a majority of Australians said no — and in 1917 the No margin grew, not shrank.

Task C (scaffolded). Using the diagram and the table: (a) which No argument answers the strongest Yes argument most directly, and why? (b) the AIF voted Yes in 1917 while the nation voted No. Give one reading of that fact from each side, steelmanned.

8. Views change over time: writing the conscription debates

The skill in this part is analysing how the writing of **one event** has changed over time, as new questions were asked and new sources came to light. The event is the conscription debates you just weighed.



A timeline of four stages in the writing of the conscription debates since 1936. 1936 (blue): the official story — Ernest Scott wrote Volume XI of the Official History, the first full account of the home front, from official records and the wartime press. 1966-1970 (red): the campaigners' story — E. J. Holloway's 1966 jubilee history told the No side's own story, and J. M. Main's 1970 book weighed the whole debate. 1979 (gold): the leader's story — L. F. Fitzhardinge, Hughes's official biographer, put Hughes back at the centre in *The Little Digger 1914-1952*, from Hughes's papers. 2000s-now (green): the digital story — Trove, run by the National Library of Australia, puts more than 700 old newspapers online, free for anyone to search, so the campaigns can be read town by town. A closing strip reads: new sources do not end debates — they reopen them.

Trace the change. Scott wrote the official story from official records — so the story ran on official lines. Holloway had stood on the No side, and his 1966 history told the campaigners' story; Main then set the whole debate out for historians to weigh. Fitzhardinge, holding Hughes's private papers, put the leader back at the centre. And Trove changed the evidence base itself: when 700 newspapers can be searched, the debate can be re-run town by town, letter by letter.

Same events, four tellings. None of the four is 'the truth' finally found; each is an interpretation shaped by its questions and its sources. **New sources do not end debates — they reopen them.** That is why the history of any event keeps moving.

9. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

1. **Anatomy-spotting.** For the debate in part 2, list the five parts of the anatomy and one thing the diagram gives you for each part.
2. **Date the evidence.** Match each item to its year or date: Sarajevo killings; the 'blank cheque'; the ultimatum to Serbia; Britain enters the war; first conscription vote; second conscription vote; Scott's official volume; Fitzhardinge's *The Little Digger*. (1936; 1979; 5 July 1914; 23 July 1914; 28 June 1914; 4 August 1914; 28 October 1916; 20 December 1917.)

3. **Sort the forms.** For the four cards in part 4: (a) which are primary sources for a historian studying World War I, which are secondary, and which are *both* depending on the question? (b) give one strength each form has over the others.
4. **Complete the steelman.** Copy the two-column table from part 7 from memory; then check it against the original and rewrite any cell you had weakened.
5. **Move-spotting.** List the four moves of the model paragraphs in order. For worked inquiry 2, say in one sentence what each move did.
6. **Criteria match.** Match each question to its criterion: ‘Who is left out?’; ‘What does the music do?’; ‘Whose voices are heard?’; ‘Does it agree with the dated evidence?’; ‘Why was it made, and for whom?’

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. Evaluate the debate about what mattered most in the outbreak of World War I. Use the four moves, at least three dated pieces of evidence from each position, and at least one limit for each position.
 8. Choose **one** of the four forms in part 4 and evaluate it as a historical interpretation using all five criteria. End with a weighed verdict, not a yes/no.
 9. Compare Hancock and Ward using the table in part 6: one similarity, one difference, and one reason the difference exists (question asked, or evidence used, or both).
 10. Identify the two rival readings of the conscription votes in part 7, then use part 8 to explain how the writing of the debates changed between 1936 and now. Name what changed: the questions, the sources, or both.
-

10. Source-based inquiry

Read the two sources, then answer the questions below them.

SOURCE 1 — the question on the ballot paper, 28 October 1916

Primary source — an official document of the first conscription vote

"Are you in favour of the Government having, in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over citizens in regard to requiring their military service, for the term of this war, outside the Commonwealth, as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?"

PROVENANCE

Ballot question, military service vote,
28 October 1916 (the first of two votes).
Wording as printed on the ballot paper.

KIND OF SOURCE

Primary source: made at the time,
by the government, for the vote.
It is also an argument — read it as one.

READ CAREFULLY

The question never says the word conscription. Voters had to decide what 'the same compulsory powers ... outside the Commonwealth' meant in practice — and they had to decide under the words 'in this grave emergency'. A source that frames its own question is already doing some of the persuading.

Result of this vote: No won by 72,476 votes — 51.6% to 48.4%.

A source card for Source 1: the question printed on the ballot paper of 28 October 1916 — 'Are you in favour of the Government having, in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over citizens in regard to requiring their military service, for the term of this war, outside the Commonwealth, as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?' Panels give the provenance (ballot question, military service vote, 28 October 1916, the first of two votes, wording as printed), the kind of source (primary source, made at the time by the government for the vote — and also an argument, to be read as one), and a read-carefully note (the question never says the word conscription; voters had to decide what 'the same compulsory powers ... outside the Commonwealth' meant under the words 'in this grave emergency'). A result line: No won by 72,476 votes, 51.6% to 48.4%.

SOURCE 2 — Daniel Mannix, during the conscription debates

Primary source — reported words of the loudest No voice of 1917

"Ireland had been more wronged by Great Britain than
Belgium had been by Germany."

— Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne

PROVENANCE

Spoken during the conscription
debates of 1916–1917. Mannix was
Archbishop of Melbourne from
1917 to 1963.

CONTEXT

Britain told Australians the war was
fought to defend Belgium. Mannix
turned that argument around, speaking
for many Australians of Irish birth.

READ CAREFULLY

This is reported speech — written down by others, not a recording — so treat the exact
words with care. But the position is real and dated: Mannix campaigned against both
votes, and his voice carried far beyond the church. Ask what the No case gained from
having him — and what the Yes case made of him.

**Result of the second vote, 20 December 1917: No won again —
by 166,588 votes, 53.8% to 46.2%.**

A source card for Source 2: reported words of Daniel Mannix during the conscription debates — 'Ireland had been more wronged by Great Britain than Belgium had been by Germany.' Panels give the provenance (Mannix was Archbishop of Melbourne from 1917 to 1963 and campaigned against both votes), the context (Britain told Australians the war was fought to defend Belgium; Mannix turned that argument around, speaking for many Australians of Irish birth), and a read-carefully note (this is reported speech, written down by others, so treat the exact words with care; but the position is real and dated — ask what the No case gained from having him, and what the Yes case made of him). A result line: 20 December 1917, No won again, by 166,588 votes, 53.8% to 46.2%.

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions that Source 1 could help you answer, and one question that needs Source 2 as well.
2. **Infer:** Source 1 never says the word conscription. What did its writers assume voters already knew? What does Source 2 assume about *why* Australia was fighting?
3. **Context:** both sources come from a nation at war, two votes, one year apart. Explain why the No margin **grew** between 1916 and 1917, using at least one fact from each source and one fact from part 7.
4. **Perspective:** whose voice is heard in each source — and whose is missing? A source that frames its own question (Source 1) is already doing some of the persuading: say how.
5. **Evaluate:** taken together, do these two sources support the reading 'the conscription debates were a debate about the war's meaning, not about winning the war'? Write a short evaluation using the four moves: claim, evidence, limits, verdict.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. For this strand, that analysing is aimed at interpretations and debates: positions are claims to weigh over shared evidence, not teams to cheer for. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script.

- **Anatomy (part 1):** student can name all five parts and separate fact from interpretation using the 28 July 1914 example; the contested label is used as defined, not loosely.

- **WWI debate (part 2, .E01):** the steelmans are real — each position stated in its strongest form; the shared-evidence idea is used (same dates, rival meanings); the judgement is a weighing, and the same instrument is offered for WWII's long- and short-term causes (→ 3A/3B).
- **Worked inquiry 1 (part 3):** student can name the four moves, find the dates in the green move, and accept a weighed verdict as a judgement rather than a fudge.
- **Four forms (part 4, .E02):** all four referents are real and named (AWM; *Gallipoli* 1981; *Kokoda Front Line!* 1942; *Valiant Hearts* 2014); evaluation runs on the five criteria, and the 'is it biased?' trap is refused in favour of show/hide.
- **Worked inquiry 2 (part 5):** the 1915/1981 split is held — the film scored separately as an account of the war and as an account of later memory; historians' corrections (Carlyon; Rhodes James) are used as limits, not as a boycott.
- **Comparing historians (part 6, .E03):** comparison runs on question/answer/evidence; the alike row is used as well as the different row; the why is attributed to changing questions and evidence (→ 2E).
- **Conscription readings (part 7, .E04):** both sides steelmanned before judging; dates and margins accurate (72,476 and 166,588; 51.6/48.4 and 53.8/46.2); the AIF-Yes fact is read from both sides.
- **Views over time (part 8, .E05, neutral example per §2A):** student traces Scott 1936 → Holloway 1966/Main 1970 → Fitzhardinge 1979 → Trove, and states the mechanism of change (questions and sources), never the excluded example; if a student raises excluded material, redirect to the front-of-book note (D3) without authoring it.
- **Practice and inquiry (parts 9–10):** evaluations show the four moves with dated evidence; source work distinguishes primary from secondary and reads Source 1 as both document and argument; the perspective answer notices framing ('in this grave emergency') and reported speech.

Cross-links to skills sections: historical questions (7A), sequencing and chronology (7B), source purpose and context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), sustained interpretation with citations (8D).