

History 3

Chapter 3 — Skills: investigating the past

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Attribution: Classbasics Pty Ltd, vwx.au

Curriculum codes refer to the *Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0*, published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Classbasics is not affiliated with the VCAA; the VCAA does not endorse this resource and makes no warranties regarding it.

Distribution note: this document may be distributed, and whole pages may be removed from it, provided only WHOLE pages are removed (never part of a page). This allows teachers to remove tests, exams and subtopics they do not want to issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.

Significant effort has been made to ensure this content is legal. Please send any areas of concern to admin@vwx.au with appropriate document/legal references so errors can be verified and changes be made.

Contents

Section	Page
Asking questions about the past	2
Timelines: putting the past in order	12
What sources can tell us	23
How people in the past saw their world	37
Different interpretations of the past	51

Asking questions about the past

Teacher-facing (not student text). Owns content description VC2HH4S01 (Levels 3 and 4; code only, wording not reproduced). Draws on elaborations .E01 .E02 .E03 .E04. Cross-references: 1A (local community change), 2B (First Fleet). Reading load Yr3; any source line above the ceiling is read aloud by the teacher. The front-of-book First Nations exclusion note applies — no First Nations content is taught here; the worked referent is the First Fleet (convicts, marines, officials) and students' own communities.

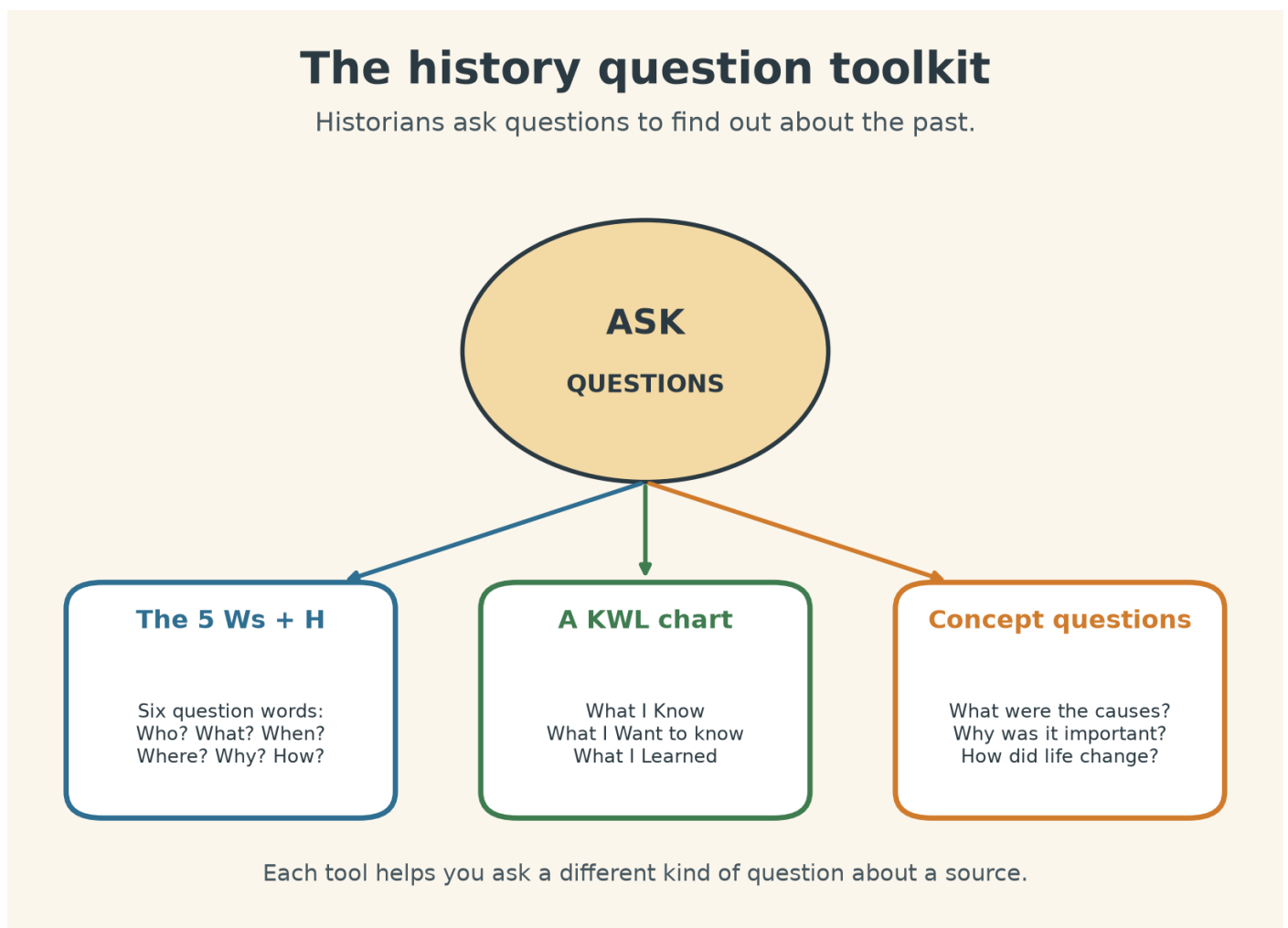
Teaching sequence

A **historian** is a person who finds out about the past. Historians do not only read about the past. They **ask questions**. A question that helps you find out about the past is called a **historical question**.

To answer their questions, historians look at **sources**. A **source** is a thing that gives us clues about the past. It can be a picture, a map, an object, a diary or a letter. The clues a source gives us are called **evidence**. Evidence helps us answer our questions.

When you ask questions and check sources to find out about the past, you are doing an **investigation**.

But how do you ask good questions? You use tools. In this section you will learn three tools: the **5 Ws + H**, a **KWL chart**, and **concept questions**.



A poster showing the three question tools: the 5 Ws and H, a KWL chart, and concept questions, all branching from a big “ask questions” circle

Tool 1 — The 5 Ws + H. These six question words help you look carefully at any source: **Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?**

The 5 Ws + H

Six question words that help you look closely at any source.

WHO? Which people?	WHAT? What happened?	WHEN? What time?
WHERE? Which place?	WHY? For what reason?	HOW? In what way?

Put them in front of a source and see what you can find out.

Six boxes showing the question words who, what, when, where, why, how, with a short hint under each

Tool 2 — A KWL chart. A KWL chart has three parts. **K** is what you already **Know**. **W** is what you **Want** to know. **L** is what you have **Learned**. You fill in K and W before you look at sources, and L at the end.

A KWL chart — our class asks about the First Fleet

K — What I already KNOW	W — What I WANT to know	L — What I have LEARNED
• Ships came from England. • There were convicts on the ships. • Captain Arthur Phillip was in charge.	• How long did the trip take? • What did people eat on the ships? • What did they build when they arrived?	• The trip took about 8 months. • There were 11 ships. • They first stopped at Botany Bay, then moved to Port Jackson.

Fill in K and W before you look at sources. Fill in L at the end.

A worked KWL chart about the First Fleet with three parts: know, want to know, and learned

You keep asking questions at every step of an investigation — **before, during and after**.

Questions before, during and after

You keep asking questions at every step of an investigation.



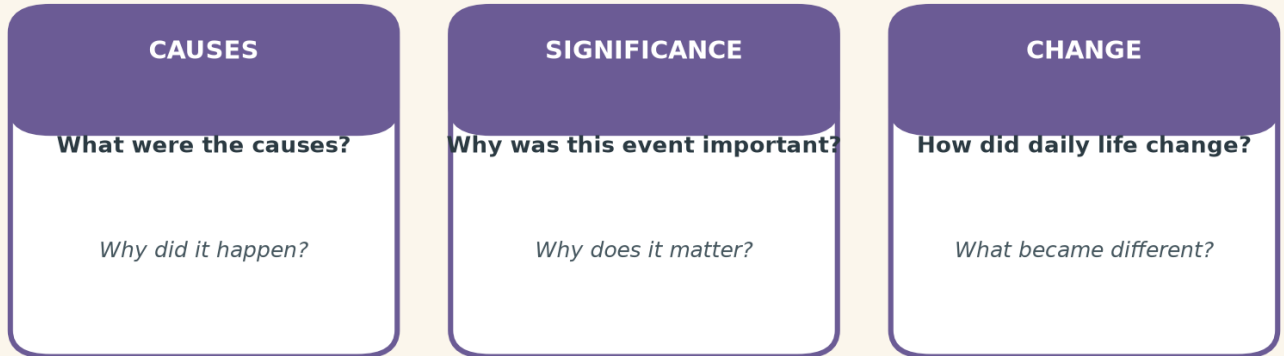
The KWL chart and the 5 Ws + H work at every one of these steps.

Three boxes — before, during and after — showing the questions you ask at each step of an investigation

Tool 3 — Concept questions. Some questions open up big ideas. Historians call these big ideas **concepts**. Three big concepts are **causes** (why something happened), **significance** (why something is important) and **change** (what became different).

Concept questions

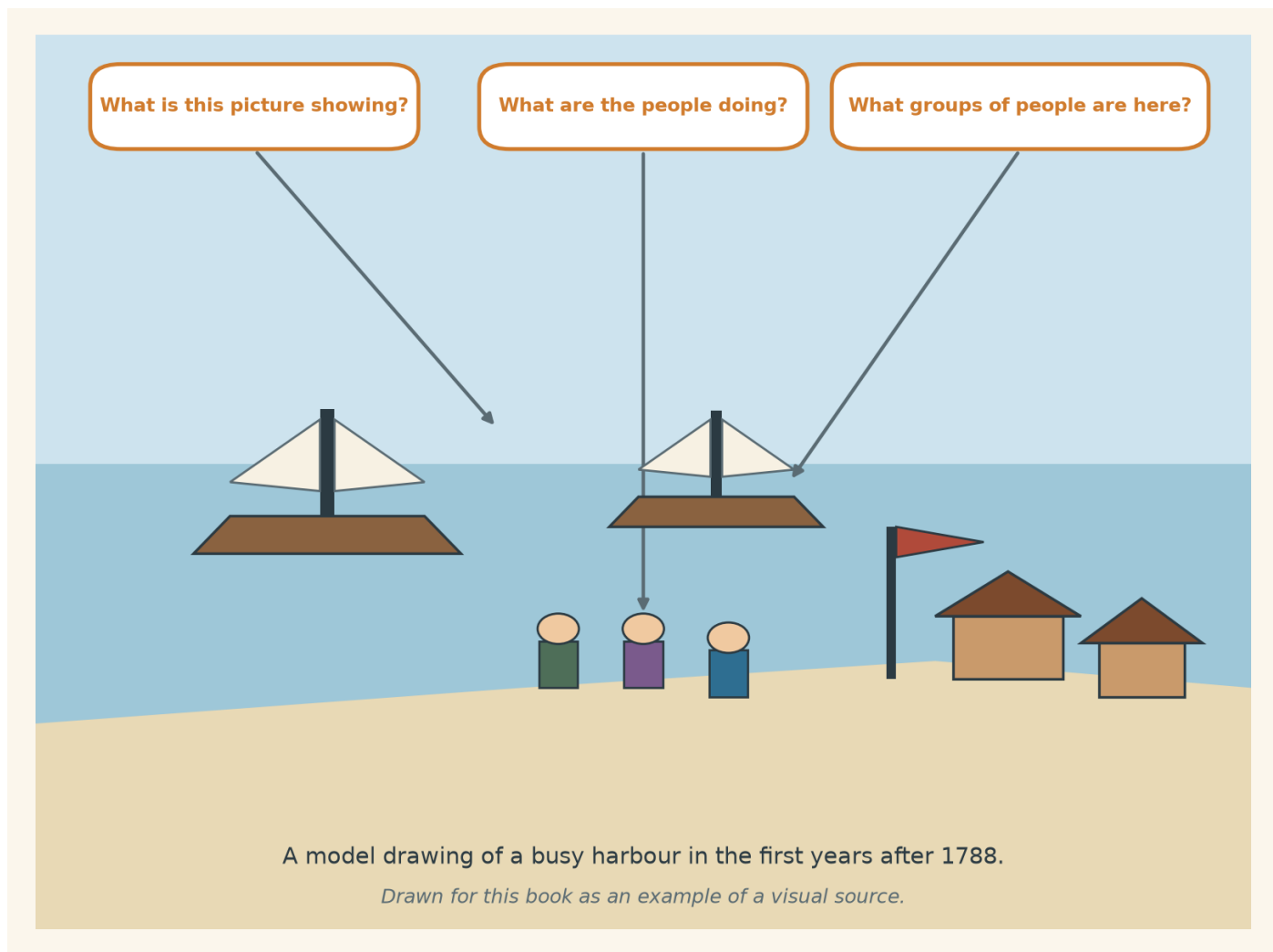
Some questions open up big ideas. Historians call these big ideas concepts.



Try these questions about the First Fleet, or about your own community.

Three boxes pairing each big concept — causes, significance and change — with the question that opens it

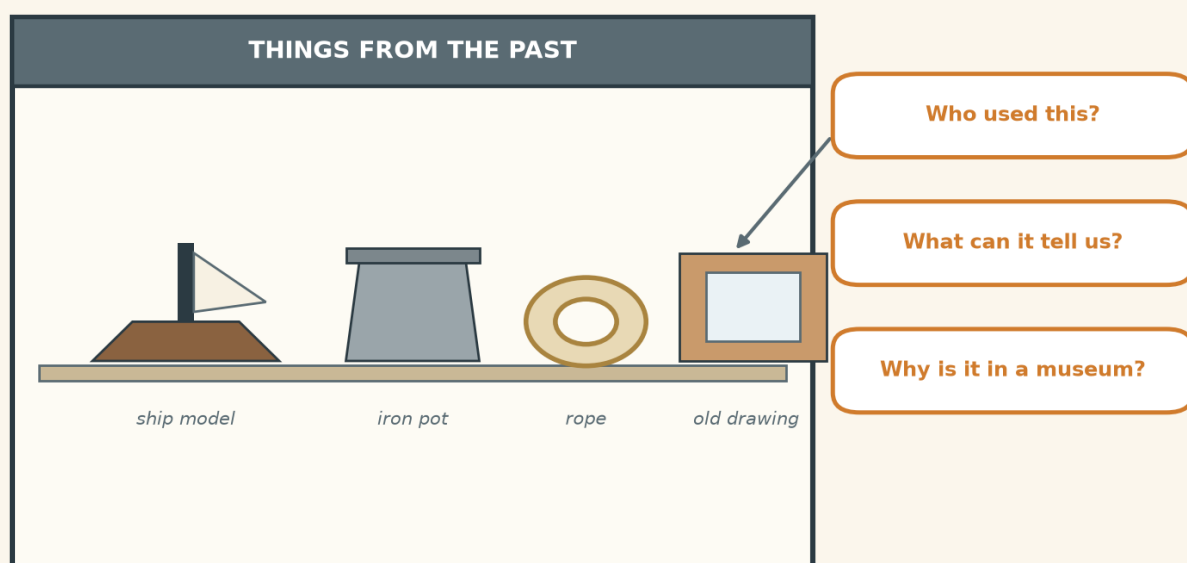
Looking at visual sources. A **visual source** is a source you look at, like a picture, a painting, a map or a photo. Good questions for a visual source are: *What is this picture showing? What groups of people are here? What are the people doing?*



A model drawing of a busy harbour with sailing ships, huts, a flag and people working, with question callouts

Museums ask questions too (.E03). A museum display, a video or a website about the past is built to answer questions. One of them is *Why is that important now?*

A museum display — Life in the first colony



A museum chooses objects and labels to help answer questions about the past.

A museum display case with a ship model, an iron pot, a roll of rope and an old drawing, with questions beside it

Here are some question starters and the evidence each one helps you find.

Question starters and the evidence they find

Question starter	The evidence it finds
What is this picture showing?	what the source shows
Who is in the source?	the people in it
What are the people doing?	how they lived and worked
When was it made?	how long ago it was
Why is this important?	why people remember it

Pick a starter, point it at a source, and see what you can find out.

A table matching question starters to the evidence each one helps you find

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — Reading a visual source (.E01). Look at the model harbour drawing above. We ask the visual-source questions and note the evidence we see.

Question	Evidence (what we see)	What it tells us about people's experiences
What is this picture showing?	A harbour with sailing ships, huts and a flag.	People set up a new camp by the sea after the First Fleet arrived in 1788.
What groups of people are here?	Convicts (people sent to work), marines (soldiers) and officers.	Many kinds of people came on the First Fleet.
What are the people doing?	Carrying things and building huts.	Life was hard work. People had to build everything they needed.

Worked example 2 — A full investigation (.E02, .E04). We use the tools to find out about the First Fleet. *Before:* “What do I know? What do I want to know?” *During:* we look at sources and ask the 5 Ws + H. *After:* we ask concept questions.

Stage	Tool	A question we asked
Before	KWL chart	What do I want to know about the trip?
During	5 Ws + H	Who was on the ships? How long did the trip take?

Stage	Tool	A question we asked
After	Concept (causes)	Why did Britain send the First Fleet?
After	Concept (change)	How did daily life change when people landed?

Practice tasks

With some help

- Q1.** Look at the harbour drawing. Write one **Who?** question about it.
- Q2.** Look at the harbour drawing. Write one **What are the people doing?** question.
- Q3.** Fill in a mini KWL chart about the First Fleet. Write one thing you **know** and one thing you **want** to know.
- Q4.** Look at the museum display. Write one question about the iron pot.
- Q5.** Write a concept question about the First Fleet that starts with “**What were the causes...?**”
- Q6.** Write a concept question about the First Fleet that starts with “**How did daily life change...?**”

On your own

- Q7.** Look at a photo or an old object from your own home or street. Use the 5 Ws + H to write three historical questions about it.
- Q8.** Your class is finding out about your local community. Write one question for **before**, one for **during** and one for **after**.
- Q9.** Pick any tool from this section. Use it to write two questions that would give evidence about people’s experiences on the First Fleet.

Source task (read together)

Teacher reads aloud: “A person on the ship might have written: *Today we landed at Port Jackson. We must build our huts before it rains.*” (This is a made-up example of a diary line, to show what a source can look like.)

Look at the harbour drawing while you listen. Then: 1. Write one question the diary line helps you answer. 2. Write one question it does **not** answer, and say which source could help.

Answers and examples (many answers will be different)

Q1. Example: *Who built the huts on the beach?* **Q2.** Example: *What are the people carrying from the ships?* **Q3.** Example: K — “There were 11 ships.” W — “What did people eat on the trip?” **Q4.** Example: *Who used the iron pot, and what did they cook in it?* **Q5.** Example: *What were the causes of Britain sending the First Fleet?* **Q6.** Example: *How did daily life change for convicts after they landed?* **Q7–Q9.** Your questions will be your own. Check each one uses a question word or a concept, and that a source could help answer it.

Teacher notes. Assessment focus: does the student’s question actually seek evidence about people’s experiences (not a yes/no trivia line)? Model the difference between “What colour is the ship?” (surface) and “What were the people doing on the ship?” (experience). Link to 2B for First Fleet facts and to 1A for the local-community investigation. All answers above are examples; accept any question that is answerable from a source and aimed at experience.

Timelines: putting the past in order

Chapter 3 — Skills for finding out about the past · VC2HH4S02

We are learning to: put important events and people's life stories in the order they happened, and spot what changed and what stayed the same.

What we are learning

Things happen in an order: one thing, then the next thing, then the next. Putting events in the order they really happened has a name: **chronology**. A **timeline** is a line that shows events in date order. You may have put your own life story in order before. In this section we do it with real events from the past.

These four steps make a good timeline:

How to make a timeline

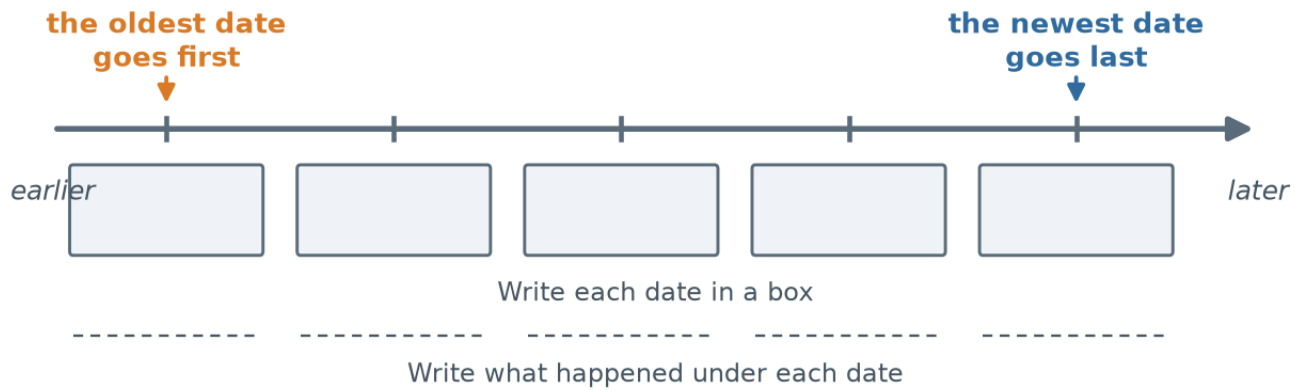


Steps 1 to 4 will help you build a timeline of any story from the past.

A poster with four numbered steps for making a timeline

A blank timeline looks like this. The oldest date always goes first:

A timeline puts events in date order



Leave room between events so the timeline is easy to read.

A blank timeline with five empty date boxes and five lines to write on, showing that the oldest date goes first and the newest date goes last

A **flow chart** is another way to show order. It is a line of boxes joined by arrows, with one event in each box. Flow charts are great for one person's **life story**:

Make your own life story flow chart

Who is your person?
When and where were they born?

What happened next in their life?

What happened after that?

What was their biggest event?

What happened last?

Tips

Pick one person from the past.

Put one event in each box.

Write the date in each box too.

Keep the dates in order: oldest first.

A blank flow chart with five empty boxes to fill in, with tips at the side

The people in our story. In Section 2A we met the first British **colony** — a new place that a far-away country starts and runs. These are the people in our story:

- **convicts** — people who broke the law in England and were sent to the colony as a punishment
- **marines** — the soldiers who sailed with the ships to guard the colony
- **officials** — people sent to help run the colony
- **free colonists** — people who chose to come and live in the colony; they were not convicts
- the **governor** — the person in charge of the colony, Arthur Phillip

Two words about the past. When we look at the past, we ask two questions: what changed, and what stayed the same?

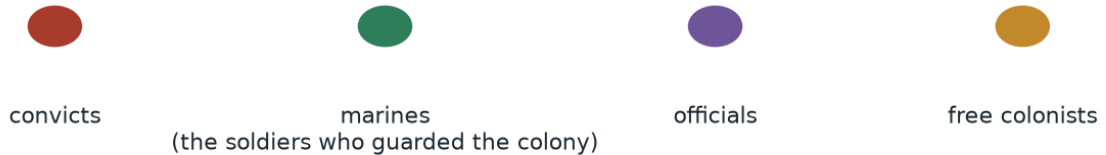
- **change** — something became different
- **continuity** — something stayed the same

People who study the past use these two words a lot. We can mark them on a timeline. We can also use a colour for each group of people. Here is the key we will use:

How to mark change and continuity



You can also use colours for the groups of people in the early colony:

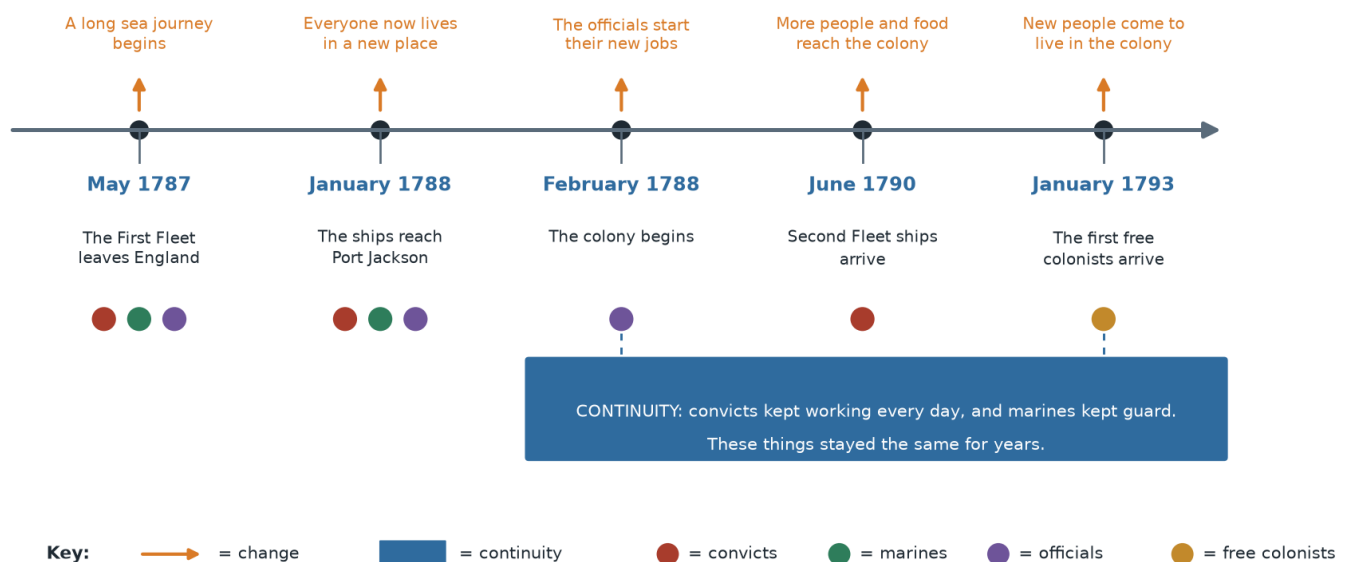


See the worked timeline for how the marks look on a real timeline.

A key with an orange mark for change, a blue mark for continuity, and four coloured dots for convicts, marines, officials and free colonists

Now look at a timeline that is marked for change and continuity. Every event gets an orange arrow (change), and a dot for each group it touched:

A timeline marked for change and continuity (1787 to 1793)



A timeline from 1787 to 1793 with orange change arrows, coloured group dots and a blue box showing what stayed the same

One more way to sort our ideas is a two-sided table:

Sorting our ideas: the first colony, 1788 to 1793

What changed	What stayed the same
Ships came from England with new people (1788, 1790 and 1793).	Convicts kept working for the colony every day.
A new British colony began (February 1788).	Marines kept standing guard.
Free colonists came to live in the colony (1793).	Arthur Phillip was governor from 1788 to 1792.

You can sort what you notice into two groups before you write about the past.

A two-sided table with what changed on one side and what stayed the same on the other, for the first colony between 1788 and 1793

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Build a timeline of the key stages of the beginning of the first British colony.

Working

Collect the events.

Put the dates in order.

Draw the line and mark each event.

Write each date and a short label.

Thinking

Each event needs a date. We use real events: James Cook sailing the east coast in 1770, the First Fleet leaving England in May 1787, the ships reaching Port Jackson in January 1788, the colony beginning in February 1788, more ships arriving in June 1790, and the first free colonists arriving in January 1793.

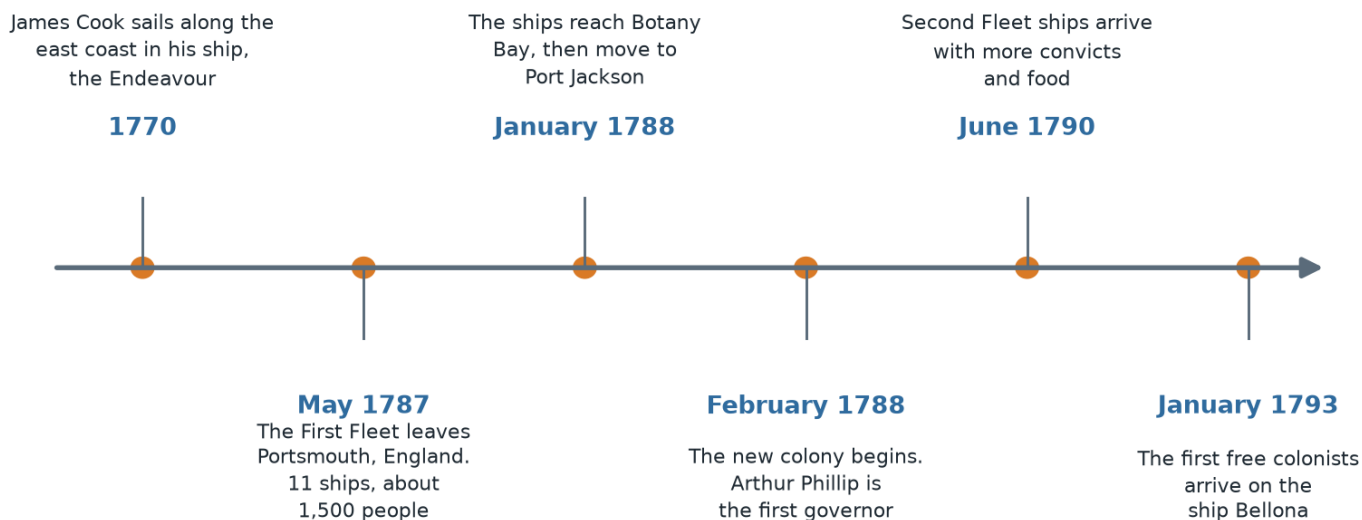
1770 is oldest, so it goes first. Then 1787. Two events are in 1788: January comes before February. Then 1790, then 1793.

The oldest date goes on the left. Leave room between events.

Now we can read the whole story from left to right.

Here is the finished timeline:

Timeline: the first British colony, in date order



Each event has a date and a short label. The dates run from oldest (left) to newest (right).

A timeline with six dated events from 1770 to 1793 about the beginning of the first British colony

The ships reached Port Jackson on 26 January 1788, and the colony began on 7 February 1788. A month or year is enough for a timeline, but a full date is even better when we know it.

Example 2 — with help

Build a flow chart that joins Arthur Phillip's life story to the real events he was part of.

Working

Start with his birth.

Add his life events in date order.

Join each box to the next with an arrow.

Check: one event per box, dates in order.

Thinking

Arthur Phillip was born in London in 1738. The oldest event goes in the first box.

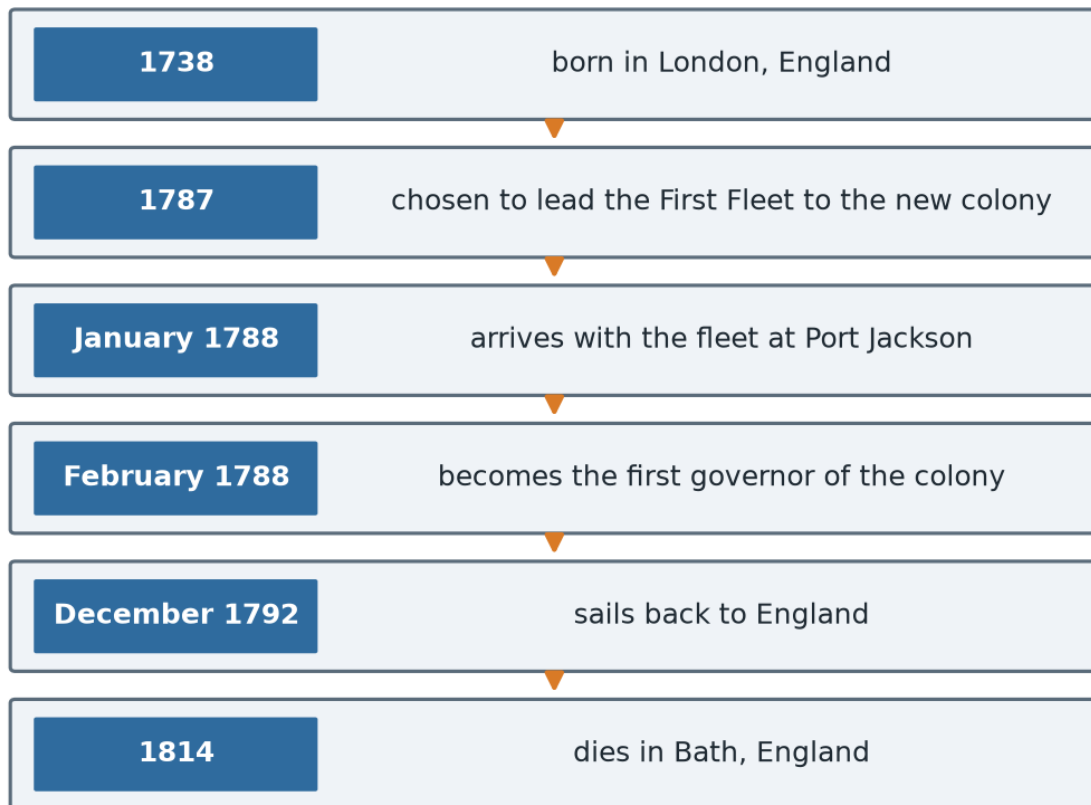
In 1787 he was chosen to lead the First Fleet. In January 1788 he arrived at Port Jackson. In February 1788 he became the first governor. In December 1792 he sailed back to England. He died in Bath in 1814.

The arrows show the order, like footsteps through his life.

His life story is now joined to real events: the First Fleet and the first colony.

Here is the finished flow chart:

Flow chart: the life story of Arthur Phillip



A flow chart can join one person's life story to real events, in date order.

A flow chart of six dated boxes showing the life story of Arthur Phillip from 1738 to 1814

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. Put these events in date order. Number them 1 to 6. The first one is done for you.

- (1) 1770 — James Cook sails along the east coast
- () June 1790 — more ships arrive with convicts and food
- () January 1793 — the first free colonists arrive
- () May 1787 — the First Fleet leaves England
- () February 1788 — the new colony begins
- () January 1788 — the ships reach Port Jackson

Q2. Match each date to its event. Write the letter next to the date.

Date	Event
1770	a. the new colony begins
May 1787	b. the first free colonists arrive
January 1788	c. the First Fleet leaves England
February 1788	d. James Cook sails along the east coast
June 1790	e. the ships reach Port Jackson
January 1793	f. more ships arrive with convicts and food

Q3. Copy these five dates into the boxes of a blank timeline, in the right order: **January 1788 · May 1787 · June 1790 · 1770 · January 1793.**

Q4. Match each person to what they did. Write the letter next to the person.

Person	What they did
Arthur Phillip	a. stood guard in the colony
James Cook	b. broke the law in England and was sent to the colony
a convict	c. chose to come and live in the colony
a marine	d. was the first governor
an official	e. sailed along the east coast in 1770
a free colonist	f. was sent to help run the colony

Q5. Write *change* or *continuity* next to each sentence.

- a. More convicts came to the colony in 1790.
- b. The marines stood guard every day.
- c. The colony began in February 1788.
- d. Arthur Phillip was governor from 1788 to 1792.
- e. Free colonists came to live in the colony in 1793.
- f. Convicts kept working for the colony every day.

Q6. Use the key of group colours. Write *convict*, *marine*, *official* or *free colonist* next to each sentence.

- a. I broke the law in England and was sent to the colony as a punishment.
- b. I am a soldier, and I guard the colony.
- c. I was sent from England to help run the colony.
- d. I chose to come and live in the colony. I arrived on the Bellona in 1793.

On your own

Q7. Make your own timeline of the beginning of the first British colony. Use at least five events, each with a date. You may use the events from Example 1 and the event cards below.

Q8. Make a flow chart of one life story from this book: Arthur Phillip or James Cook. Put one dated event in each box, in date order.

Q9. Look at the two-sided table in *What we are learning*. Add two more ideas to each side. Then write one sentence about what changed in the first colony, and one sentence about what stayed the same.

Source task

Read these cards with your teacher. They are like cards from a museum box about the first colony.

Event cards: put them in date order

C June 1790 Second Fleet ships arrive with more convicts and food	A 1770 James Cook sails along the east coast in the Endeavour	E February 1788 The new colony begins. Arthur Phillip is governor
F January 1793 The first free colonists arrive on the ship Bellona	B May 1787 The First Fleet leaves Portsmouth, England	D January 1788 The ships reach Botany Bay, then move to Port Jackson

Read each card with your teacher. Which event happened first? Which happened last? Write the letters in date order.

Six cards with letters A to F, dates and short lines of words, shown out of date order

- 1. Put the letters in date order, from oldest to newest.
 - 2. Which cards show change for the convicts? Tell a partner why.
-

Answers

Q1. 1770 = 1 · May 1787 = 2 · January 1788 = 3 · February 1788 = 4 · June 1790 = 5 · January 1793 = 6.

Q2. 1770 = d · May 1787 = c · January 1788 = e · February 1788 = a · June 1790 = f · January 1793 = b.

Q3. Left to right: 1770 · May 1787 · January 1788 · June 1790 · January 1793.

Q4. Arthur Phillip = d · James Cook = e · a convict = b · a marine = a · an official = f · a free colonist = c.

Q5. a. change · b. continuity · c. change · d. continuity · e. change · f. continuity.

Q6. a. convict · b. marine · c. official · d. free colonist.

Q7. Check: at least five events; each has a date; the dates run from oldest to newest; each event has a short label.

Q8. Check: one event in each box; the boxes run in date order; the first box is the person's birth; the arrows join the boxes.

Q9. Ideas that could go on the *changed* side: the ships came from England (1788, 1790, 1793); the colony began (February 1788); free colonists came (1793). Ideas for the *stayed the same* side: convicts kept working every day; marines kept standing guard; Arthur Phillip was governor from 1788 to 1792.

Source task. 1. The date order is A (1770), B (May 1787), D (January 1788), E (February 1788), C (June 1790), F (January 1793). 2. Any card with a good reason. For example: B and D, because the convicts left England and then lived in a new place — their lives changed a lot.

Worked answers

Q1. Read the dates. 1770 is the oldest, then May 1787, then January 1788, then February 1788, then June 1790, and January 1793 is the newest. So the order is: 1770, May 1787, January 1788, February 1788, June 1790, January 1793.

Q2. Look at each event and find its date in the list on the left. James Cook sailed the east coast in 1770 (d). The First Fleet left England in May 1787 (c). The ships reached Port Jackson in January 1788 (e). The colony began in February 1788 (a). More ships arrived in June 1790 (f). The first free colonists arrived in January 1793 (b).

Q3. The oldest date goes in the first box: 1770. Then May 1787. Two dates are in 1788 or later: January 1788 comes next, then June 1790, and the newest is January 1793.

Q4. Arthur Phillip was the first governor (d). James Cook sailed along the east coast in 1770 (e). A convict broke the law and was sent to the colony (b). A marine was a soldier who stood guard (a). An official was sent to help run the colony (f). A free colonist chose to come and live in the colony (c).

Q5. More convicts coming is change — the colony got bigger (a). The marines doing the same job every day is continuity (b). The colony beginning is change — something new started (c). One person staying governor for four years is continuity (d). Free colonists arriving is change — new people came (e). Convicts working every day is continuity (f).

Q6. A punishment for breaking the law tells us it is a convict (a). A soldier who guards is a marine (b). Someone sent to help run the colony is an official (c). Someone who chose to come, on the *Bellona* in 1793, is a free colonist (d).

Q7. A good answer uses the blank timeline. It has at least five dated events in order, for example: 1770, May 1787, January 1788, February 1788, June 1790, January 1793, each with a short label.

Q8. A good answer uses the blank flow chart. For Arthur Phillip: born in 1738; chosen to lead the First Fleet in 1787; arrived at Port Jackson in January 1788; became governor in February 1788; sailed back to England in December 1792; died in 1814.

Q9. A good answer adds two new ideas to each side of the table and writes two sentences, for example: “The colony changed when new ships and new people came.” and “The colony stayed the same because the convicts kept working every day.”

Source task. Read the date on every card first, not the letter. The oldest is 1770 (A), then May 1787 (B), then January 1788 (D), then February 1788 (E), then June 1790 (C), and the newest is January 1793 (F). For part 2, cards B, C and D all touch the convicts: they left England, more of them came, and they moved to a new place. Any choice with a reason is good thinking.

What sources can tell us

TEACHER-FACING METADATA – NOT STUDENT TEXT (the vocabulary gate excludes this block)

Section 3C – Chapter 3 – Strand: Historical Concepts and Skills

Sub-strand: Using historical sources

Owns: VC2HH4S03 (code only; wording not reproduced)

Draws on (linkage keys per D7, VCAA export order): .E01 .E02 .E03 .E04 .E05 (codes only; wording not reproduced)

.E03 [S2A PARTIAL EXCLUSION: Australian flag ONLY. Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander flags are excluded (CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1) and are NOT taught.]

.E05 [S2A PARTIAL EXCLUSION: minus Aboriginal Peoples' stories. Taught through paintings, maps, written records and accounts.]

Pairing (TOC Chapter 3 note): 3C works with 1A (community change through sources),

1B (the Australian flag) and 2B (the First Fleet).

Excluded, not taught (CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1, TOC S2A): the Aboriginal flag, the Torres

Strait Islander flag, Aboriginal Peoples' stories. Front-of-book notices are injected

by the assembler.

Source lines for real-world data beyond the curriculum referents (D9), all checked

24 August 2026:

- William Bradley, officer on HMS Sirius, left a journal and drawings of Sydney Cove

from 1788 (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).

- Ralph Clark, officer of the marines on the First Fleet, kept a diary through the

voyage (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).

- Watkin Tench, officer of the marines on the First Fleet, had his book A Narrative of

the Expedition to Botany Bay printed in London in 1789 (State Library of NSW;

National Library of Australia).

- James Cook's charts of Botany Bay, made in 1770 (British Library).

- Robert Hoddle drew the town plan of Melbourne in 1837 (Public Record Office Victoria; State Library of Victoria).

- The Argus, a Melbourne newspaper, began in 1846 (Trove, National Library of Australia).

- The Australian National Flag was first flown in Melbourne on 3 September 1901;

3 September is Australian National Flag Day (Australian Government).

Model texts (SOURCE_USE Rule 3, D9): 3c_firstfleet_arrival.png and

3c_newspaper_model.png

are original drawings made for this book and say so on their face.

Volume (TOC calibration): one teaching sequence; two worked examples; six scaffolded

and three unscaffolded tasks; one teacher-supported source task. Reading load Yr3:

sources beyond the ceiling are read aloud by the teacher; the student's task is to think about the source, not to decode it.

Teaching sequence

What is a source?

How do we know what happened long ago? We look for clues. In history, a clue is called a **source**. A source is anything left from the past that helps us find out about the past. A source can be a thing, a picture, a piece of writing, or a story that someone tells.

People who study the past are called **historians**. Historians ask questions of every source they find.

Features and content

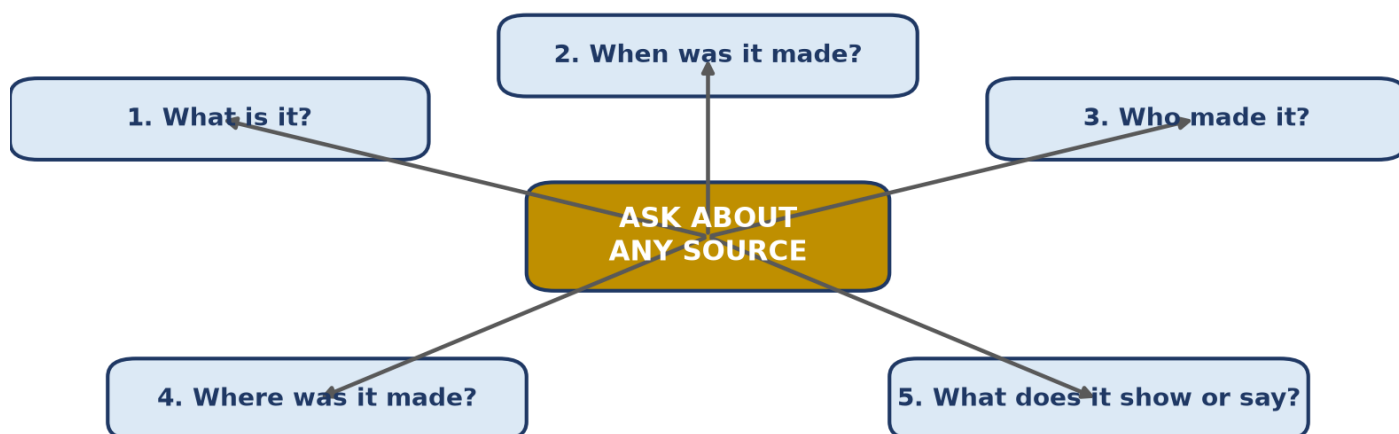
Every source has features and has content.

- The **features** of a source are what the source is like: what it is, when it was made, who made it, and where it was made.
- The **content** of a source is what is in it: what it shows, or what it says.

Here are the five questions we ask about any source.

How to read a source

Ask these five questions about any source



The FEATURES of a source are what it is like:

what it is, when it was made, who made it and where.

The **CONTENT** of a source is what is in it: what it shows or says.

A chart with a centre box reading ASK ABOUT ANY SOURCE and five question cards: what is it, when was it made, who made it, where was it made, and what does it show or say.

How old is it?

Finding *when* a source was made is a big part of reading its features. We look for clues.

- An **object**: what is it made of? A candle and a light bulb do the same job, but one is much older.

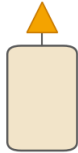
- An **artwork**: look at the clothes, the tools and the ships in a picture. They tell you when it was made.
- A **photograph**: old photos are black and white. Newer photos are in colour.

Look at these pairs. A **quill pen** is a pen made from a bird's feather. Say which one in each pair is older, and which clue told you.

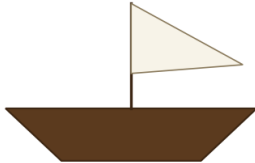
Old or new? Look for clues

Each pair shows the same job done in two ways. Which one is older?

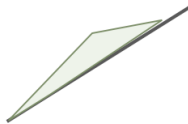
made long ago



a candle gave light

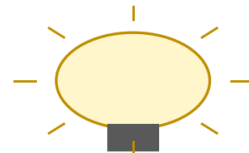


a sailing ship crossed the sea

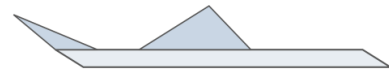


a quill pen wrote words

made more recently



a light bulb gives light



a jet plane crosses the sea



a laptop writes words

Clues: what it is made of, how it works, and what else it is with.

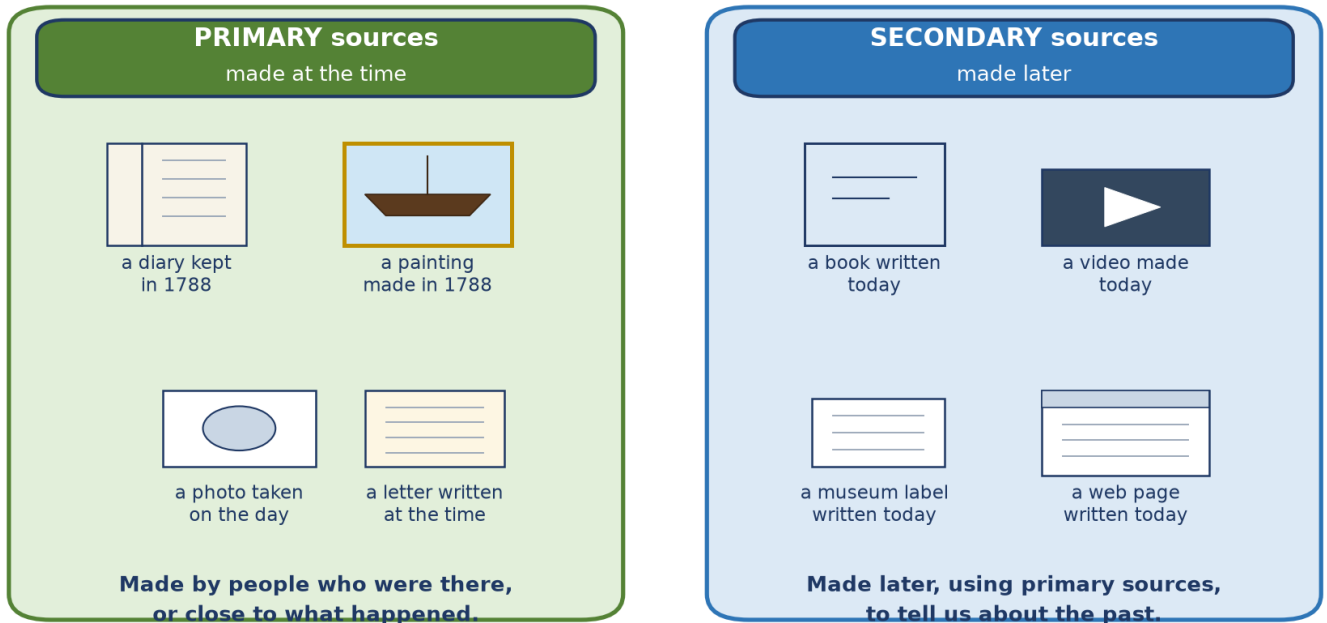
Three pairs of objects: a candle beside a light bulb, a sailing ship beside a jet plane, and a quill pen beside a laptop.

Two kinds of sources: primary and secondary

A **primary source** was made at the time of the event, by people who were there or close by. A diary kept in 1788 is a primary source. So is a picture made in 1788.

A **secondary source** was made later. It uses primary sources to tell us about the past. A book printed today about the First Fleet is a secondary source.

Two kinds of sources



Both kinds help historians — people who study the past — find out what happened.

Two panels: primary sources made at the time, with a diary, a painting, a photo and a letter; secondary sources made later, with a book, a video, a museum label and a web page.

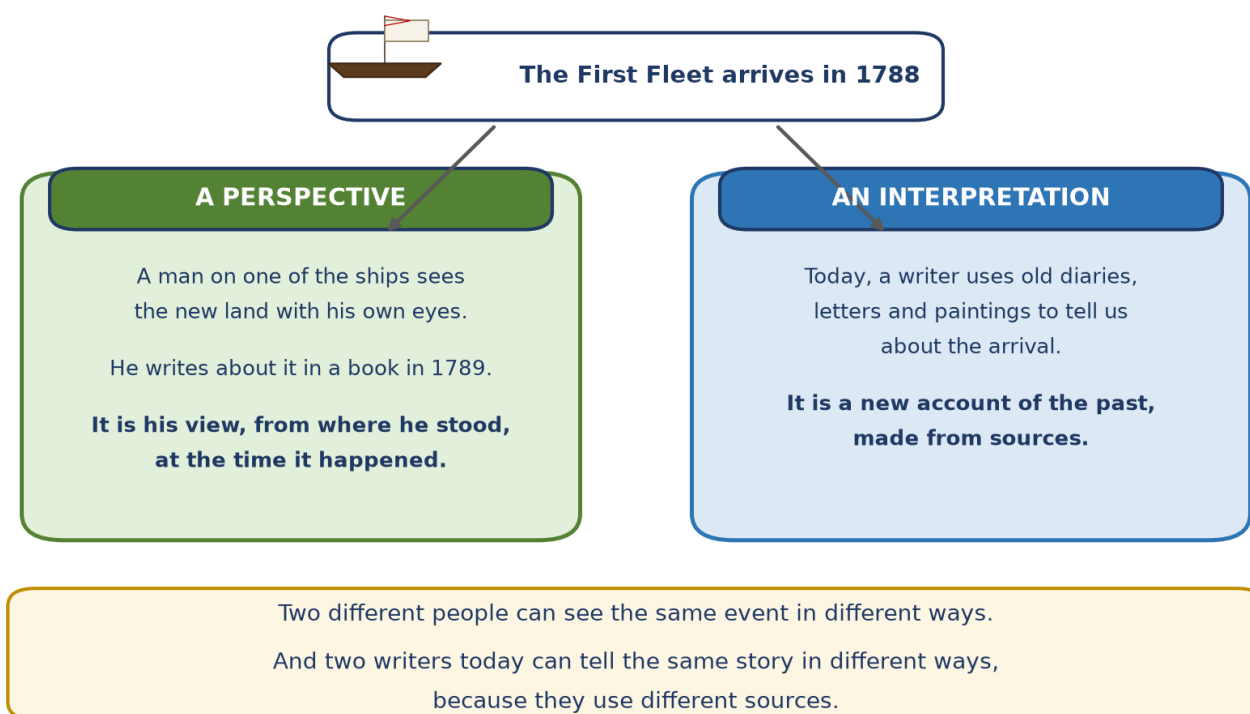
Both kinds help us. A primary source is close to the event. A secondary source puts the story together for us.

Perspective and interpretation

Historians use two more big words.

- A **perspective** is one person's view of an event, at the time. Two people at the same event can see it in different ways, because they stand in different places and live different lives.
- An **interpretation** is an account of the past made later, from sources. Two writers today can tell the same story in different ways, because they use different sources.

Perspective and interpretation



Made for this book.

A diagram: at the top, ships arrive in 1788; at left, a man on a ship writes his view at the time, a perspective; at right, a writer today uses old sources to make an interpretation.

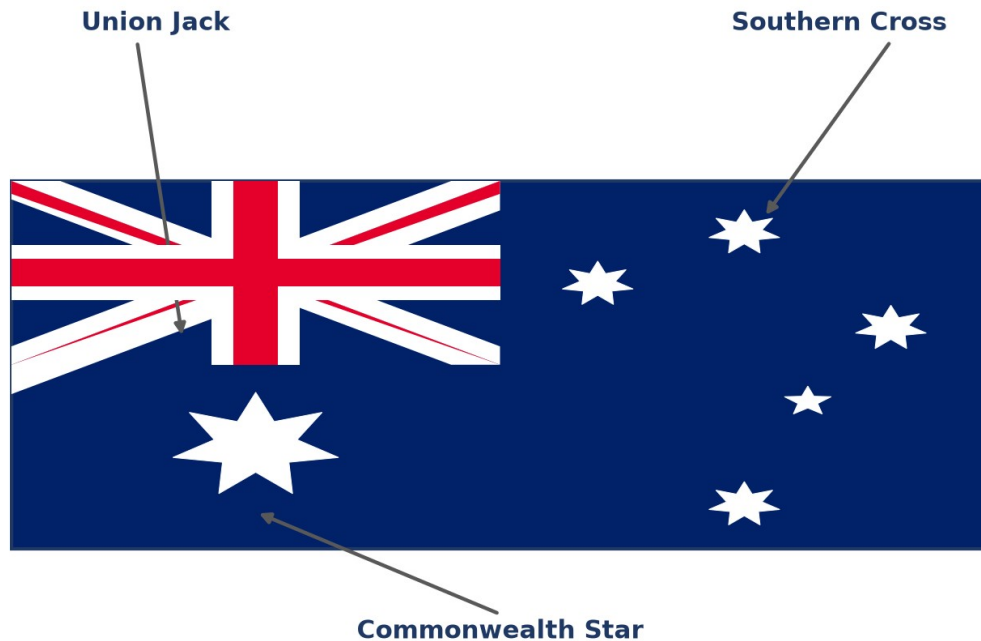
The context

One more word: the **context** of a source is what was happening at the time and place it was made. A picture of Sydney Cove in 1788 has the context of a new colony just beginning.

The flag is a source too

A **symbol** is a shape or picture that stands for something else. The Australian flag is full of symbols, so we can read it like any source. It was flown for the first time in Melbourne on 3 September 1901. That day is now Australian National Flag Day.

The Australian National Flag



Made for this book. The real flag was first flown in Melbourne in 1901.

A labelled drawing of the Australian National Flag: the Union Jack in the top corner, the Commonwealth Star below it, and the Southern Cross on the right half.

What do the symbols stand for?

What do the symbols on the flag stand for?



The Union Jack

It sits in the top corner of the flag.

It stands for Australia's history as a British colony.



The Commonwealth Star

It has seven points.

Six points stand for the six states. The seventh stands for the territories.



The Southern Cross

It is a group of five stars.

We can see these stars in Australia's night sky.

A symbol is a picture or shape that stands for something else.

The flag tells a story about our country — it is a source we can read.

Made for this book.

Three cards: the Union Jack stands for Australia's history as a British colony; the seven-pointed Commonwealth Star stands for the six states and the territories; the Southern Cross is a group of stars we can see in Australia's night sky.

Australia has six **states** — the big areas of land that make up our country, like Victoria — and some smaller land areas called **territories**. The Commonwealth Star has one point for each of them.

Five kinds of sources in our community

To find out about our community's people, places and events, today and long ago, we use five kinds of sources.

Five kinds of sources



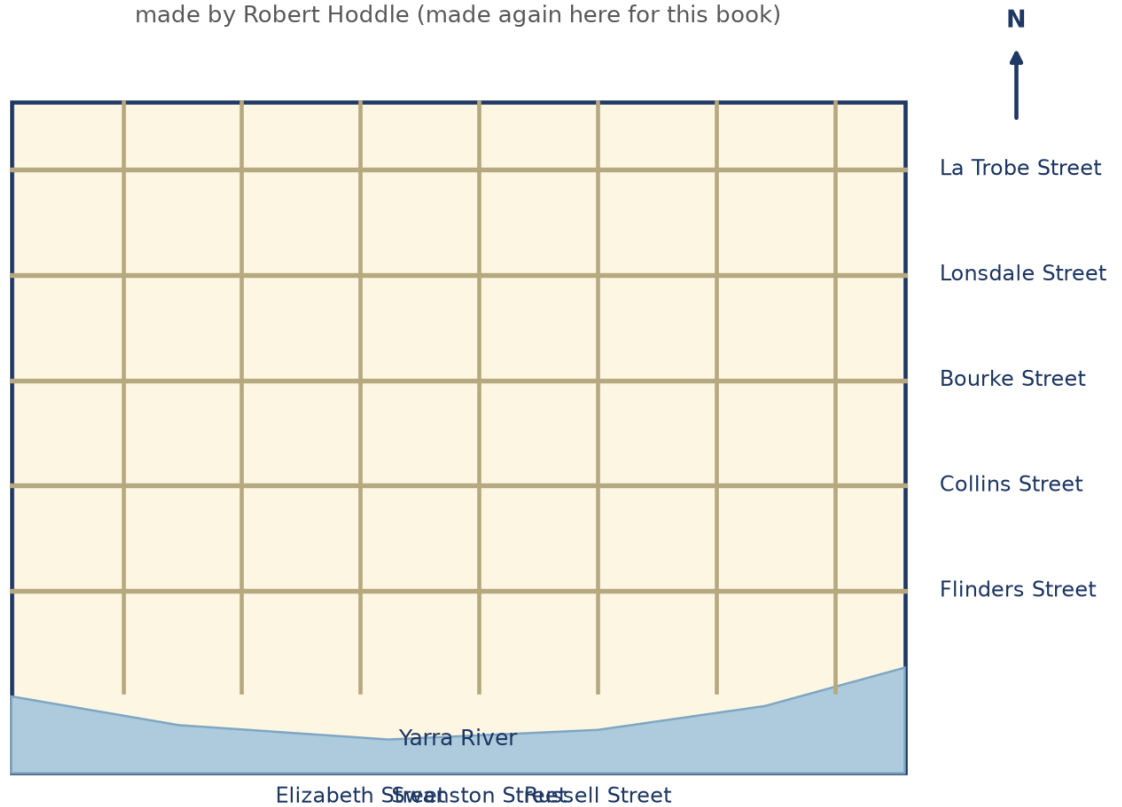
Made for this book.

Five cards: an artwork shows how someone saw a place; a photograph shows what things looked like; a newspaper tells the news of a day; a map shows where things are and their names; an oral history is a person telling what they remember.

A map is a strong source. In 1837, Robert Hoddle made the plan for a new town: Melbourne. His map shows streets in straight lines that cross each other, with the Yarra River along one side. We can still walk those streets today. The plan is a primary source: it was made at the time the town began.

The town plan of Melbourne, 1837

made by Robert Hoddle (made again here for this book)



Straight streets in a grid: that is what the 1837 plan shows us.

A copy of the 1837 plan of Melbourne, made for this book: a grid of straight streets named Flinders, Collins, Bourke, Lonsdale and La Trobe, crossed by Swanston, Elizabeth and Russell Streets, beside the Yarra River.

A newspaper tells the news of a day. In Melbourne, a newspaper called *The Argus* began in 1846, and old pages of it are primary sources for their own days. The page below is a **model** we made for this book, so you can see what an old newspaper page looks like.

Reading a newspaper from long ago



This page is a MODEL made for this book. It shows what an old newspaper looks like.

A model newspaper page, clearly labelled as made for this book. At the top is its name, The Townville Times, the date is Saturday 4 January 1890, and the big line says New Town Hall Opened.

An **oral history** is a person telling us what they remember. When your grandma tells you about her first day at school, that is a source.

Sources about the First Fleet

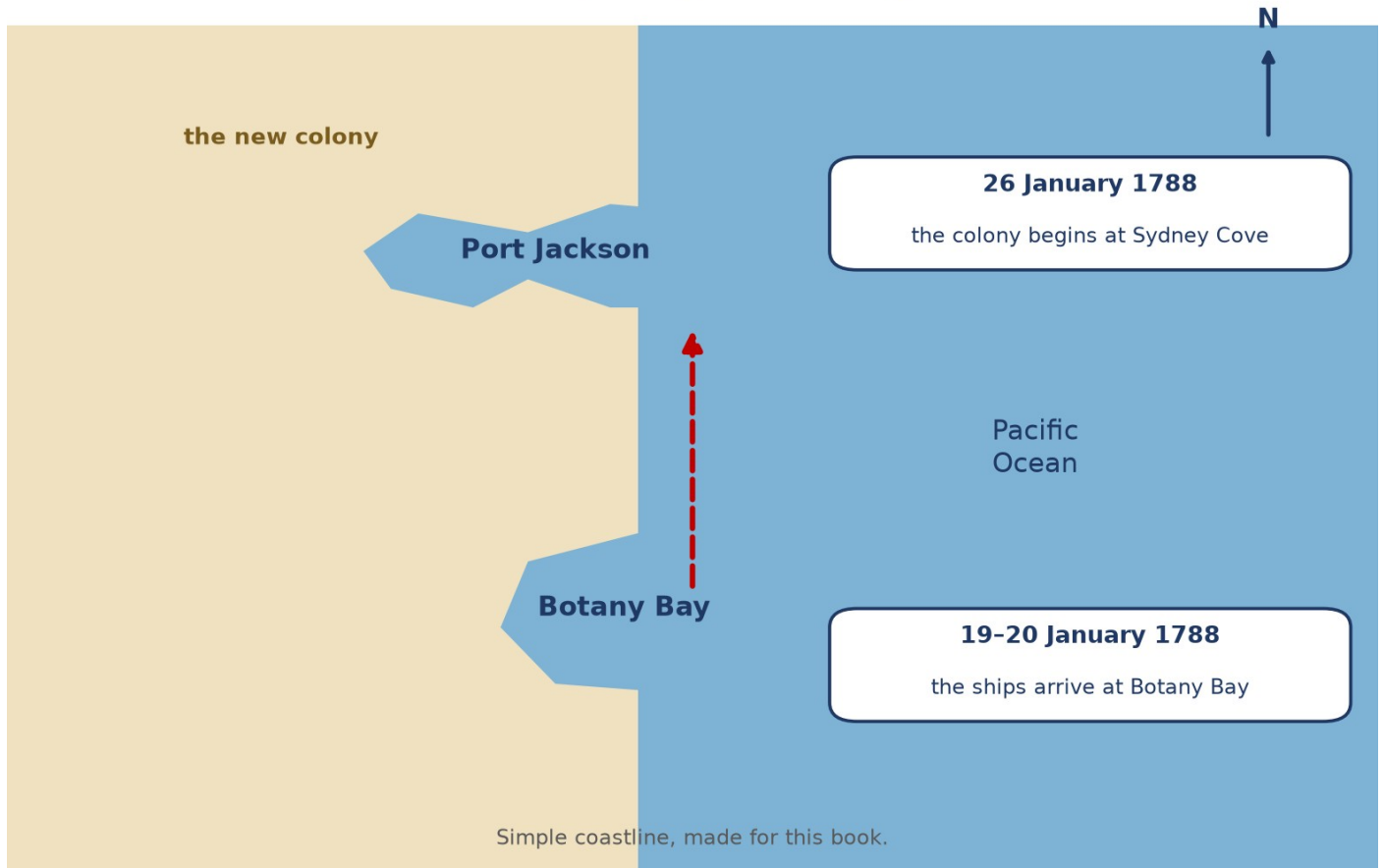
The **First Fleet** was the name given to the 11 ships that sailed from England in 1787 and reached Botany Bay in January 1788. About half the people on the ships were **convicts** — people who had broken the law in Britain and were sent to the new place instead of going to prison. The **marines** were soldiers who sailed on the ships to guard them.

Which sources help us find out about the ships and their arrival?

- **Paintings and pictures made at the time.** William Bradley sailed on HMS Sirius, one of the ships. He drew pictures of Sydney Cove in 1788.
- **Diaries and letters.** Ralph Clark, an officer of the marines, kept a diary the whole way. Watkin Tench, another marine officer, had a book about the trip printed in London in 1789, one year after the ships arrived. His book is a primary source.
- **Maps.** James Cook drew a map of Botany Bay in 1770, eighteen years before the ships came.
- **Accounts** — what people said and wrote about what happened.

The ships reached Botany Bay on 19–20 January 1788. A few days later they moved north to Port Jackson, and on 26 January 1788 the **colony** began at Sydney Cove. A colony is a new place, far from home, ruled by the country that sent its people there.

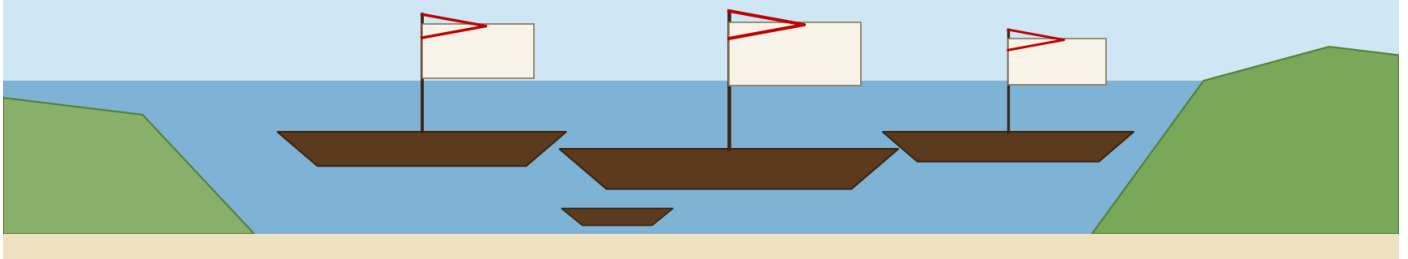
From Botany Bay to Port Jackson



A simple map of the coast with two places where the sea comes into the land: Botany Bay below and Port Jackson above. An arrow shows the ships moving north between them. One box reads 19-20 January 1788, the ships arrive at Botany Bay; the other reads 26 January 1788, the colony begins at Sydney Cove.

This last picture was made for this book. It helps us picture the scene, but it is **not** a source from 1788 — it was made later, by us, for you.

Ships of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove, 1788



This picture was made for this book. It is NOT a source from 1788.

A picture made for this book — not a source from 1788 — of sailing ships at anchor in a cove, with green land and a sandy beach.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help: reading a picture from 1788

Read this source with the five questions: **a picture of Sydney Cove made by William Bradley in 1788.**

Question	Answer	How we know
What is it?	A picture — an artwork.	We can see it was made by hand.
When was it made?	1788.	Bradley's journal of the trip carries the date.
Who made it?	William Bradley.	He sailed on HMS Sirius, and his name is on his work.
Where was it made?	Sydney Cove, at Port Jackson.	The picture shows the cove and the ships at anchor there.
What does it show?	Ships in the water and the new camp on the beach.	That is the content of the source.

The picture was made at the time, so it is a **primary source**. It also carries Bradley's **perspective**: it is one officer's view, from where he stood.

Example 2 — with help: two books about the First Fleet

Two books about the First Fleet. Which kind of source is each one?

Book	Made when?	Who made it?	Kind of source
Watkin Tench's book about the trip	printed in 1789, one year after the arrival	Tench, who sailed with the Fleet	primary
A history book about the	2020, long after	a writer who was not there	secondary

Book	Made when?	Who made it?	Kind of source
First Fleet, printed in 2020			

Both are books, but they are different kinds of sources. Tench's book gives us his **perspective** — the view of one marine officer. The 2020 book is an **interpretation**: a new account of the past, made from many sources.

Practice tasks

With help

- Q1.** Look at the pairs in the second figure. For each pair, say which one is older and circle the clue that told you.
- Q2.** Primary or secondary? Sort these six sources. (a) a photo of your classroom taken this week (b) a diary kept on the First Fleet (c) a book about the First Fleet printed in 2020 (d) a letter written by a convict in 1788 (e) a museum video about the First Fleet, made last year (f) a picture of Sydney Cove made in 1788
- Q3.** The Australian flag. (a) Name the three symbols on the flag. (b) How many points does the Commonwealth Star have? (c) What does the seventh point stand for? (d) Which group of stars on the flag can you see in our night sky?
- Q4.** Which kind of source would you use? Choose from: artwork, photograph, newspaper, map, oral history. (a) Find where Flinders Street is. (b) Find what was in the news on the day the town hall opened. (c) Find what your street looked like before you were born. (d) Find how your grandpa felt on his first day at school. (e) Find how a painter saw Melbourne long ago.
- Q5.** Pick one source from the left (primary) side of the third figure. Ask the five questions of it, and answer as many as you can.
- Q6.** Name two sources from this section that can tell us about the arrival of the First Fleet. For each, say one thing it can tell us.

On your own

- Q7.** A book printed last year about the First Fleet has old pictures in it. Your friend says the book is a primary source, because the pictures are old. Do you agree? Give your reason.
- Q8.** Find a source at home: a photo, a thing, a letter, or a story someone tells. List its features, then its content. Is it primary or secondary? Say why.
- Q9.** Your school has a sports day this week. Name one primary source you could make this week, and one secondary source someone could make next year about it. Say what each would show.

Source task

Your teacher will help with this one.

Look together at the picture of the ships at the cove (the last figure above). Your teacher will read its label: *"This picture was made for this book. It is NOT a source from 1788."* Then your teacher will read a line a marine on one of the ships might have written in his diary: *"This day we came to a fine new place. The water is deep and still. We will start our camp here."*

- Name three things you can see in the picture.
- Is the picture a source from 1788? How do you know?
- Name two clues that help you find out when a picture was made.

Answers

Q1. The candle is older than the light bulb (clue: how each one works). The sailing ship is older than the jet plane (clue: sails, no engine). The quill pen is older than the laptop (clue: what each is made of).

Q2. (a) primary (b) primary (c) secondary (d) primary (e) secondary (f) primary.

Q3. (a) The Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star, the Southern Cross. (b) Seven. (c) The territories. (d) The Southern Cross.

Q4. (a) map (b) newspaper (c) photograph (d) oral history (e) artwork.

Q5. For example, the diary kept in 1788: what is it — a book of notes; when — 1788; who — the person who kept it; where — on the ships; content — what happened each day.

Q6. Any two, for example: Bradley's picture of 1788 — what the cove looked like when the ships arrived; Tench's book of 1789 — what the trip and the arrival were like for the people on board; Clark's diary — daily life on the ships; Cook's map of 1770 — what Botany Bay was like before the ships came.

Q7. No — the book was made long after the event, by a writer who was not there, so it is secondary. (The old pictures inside it are primary sources, but the book itself is not.)

Q8. Answers will be different. Check: features listed (what, when, who, where) and content (what it shows or says), then a kind with a reason.

Q9. For example: primary — a photo of the sports day taken this week, or notes written on the day; secondary — a page about the sports day written next year, using the photo and the notes.

Source task. (a) For example: ships, water, boats, a beach, green land. (b) No — it was made for this book, long after 1788, so it is not a source from 1788. (c) Any two clues: when it was made or who made it; the clothes, ships or tools in it; black and white or colour.

Example answers

Q7. "I do not agree. A primary source is made at the time of the event. This book was printed last year, long after 1788, and its writer was not there. So the book is a secondary source. The old pictures inside it are primary sources — but a book made later is still secondary."

Q8. "My source is a photo of my mum's first day at school. Features: it is a photograph; it was made in 1994; it was made by my grandma; it was made at the school gate. Content: it shows my mum with a bag, in front of the school. It is a primary source, because it was taken at the time, by someone who was there."

Q9. "A primary source I could make this week is a photo of the sack race, taken on the day. It would show the race as it happened. A secondary source someone could make next year is a page in the school book about the sports day, written using our photos and notes. It would tell the story of the day, made later from sources."

Source task. "(a) I can see three sailing ships, a small boat, deep water and a sandy beach. (b) The picture is not a source from 1788. The label says it was made for this book, long after 1788. (c) Two clues: who made it and when, and the ships and clothes in the picture. An old black-and-white photo would be another clue."

Where we found these facts

Historians always say where they found things out. So do we.

- Bradley's pictures and Clark's diary: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
- Tench's book, printed in London in 1789: State Library of New South Wales; National Library of Australia.
- Cook's map of Botany Bay, 1770: British Library.
- Hoddle's plan of Melbourne, 1837: Public Record Office Victoria; State Library of Victoria.

- *The Argus* began in Melbourne in 1846: Trove, National Library of Australia.
- The Australian National Flag was first flown in Melbourne on 3 September 1901: Australian Government.

All checked on 24 August 2026.

How people in the past saw their world

TEACHER-FACING METADATA – NOT STUDENT TEXT (the vocabulary gate excludes this block)

Section 3D - Chapter 3 - Strand: Historical Concepts and Skills

Sub-strand: Using historical sources

Owns: VC2HH4S04 (code only; wording not reproduced)

Draws on (linkage keys per D7, VCAA export order): .E01 .E02 .E03 .E04
(codes only; wording not reproduced)

.E01 [Taught through the See-Think-Wonder thinking plan on diaries and images.]

.E02 [Taught through the local interview task; pairs with 1A.]

.E03 [S2A PARTIAL EXCLUSION: Aboriginal perspectives are excluded (CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1) and are NOT taught. The perspective sets are limited to convicts, soldiers/marines, convict guards and free colonists, using images, stories and diaries.]

.E04 [S2A PARTIAL EXCLUSION: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are excluded (CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1); these Peoples are NOT named in student text.

Taught through thoughts and feelings of convicts, convict guards and free colonists in early penal life.]

Pairing (TOC Chapter 3 note): 3D works with 1A (change in the local community through interviews and stories) and 2B (the people of the early colony). It also leans on 3C's primary/secondary distinction and hands forward to 3E (perspectives vs interpretations).

Excluded, not taught (CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1, TOC S2A): Aboriginal perspectives in the .E03/.E04 perspective sets. Front-of-book notices are injected by the assembler.

Contested-term handling (CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 1): the Victorian Curriculum uses the terms 'perspective' and 'evidence' but does not define them. This section therefore treats 'perspective' as the way one person sees and understands something (shaped by who they are and what has happened to them) and 'evidence' as the part of a source a reader can point to; every question in the section is answerable on those definitions alone, and both are defined at first use in the student text. 'Interpretation' is deliberately left to 3E.

Source lines for real-world data beyond the curriculum referents (D9), all checked 24 August 2026:

- Ralph Clark, officer of the marines, kept a diary from 9 March 1787 to 17 June 1792. He recorded the play staged by convicts at Sydney Cove, The Recruiting Officer, performed on the King's birthday (4 June 1789) at Governor Phillip's request (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).
- Elizabeth Macarthur arrived in the colony on 28 June 1790 (Second Fleet); her 1791 letter to her family in England describes her new home; her letters are held by the State Library of New South Wales.
- John Easty, private marine, kept a journal at Sydney Cove from 1788 to 1791, noting daily life and provisions (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).
- Watkin Tench, marine officer: A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay (London, 1789) and A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson (London, 1793).

- John White, surgeon of the First Fleet: A Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales (London, 1790).
- Thomas Watling, transported for forgery, arrived 7 October 1792; his letters were printed as Letters From An Exile At Botany Bay, To His Aunt In Dumfries (1794) — one of the few published words by a convict.
- David Collins, judge-advocate: An Account of the English Colony of New South Wales (London, 1798).
- A painting of Sydney Cove dated 1794 (State Library of New South Wales); long attributed to Watling but the attribution is debated, so the section labels it 'artist unknown'.
- The New South Wales Corps was raised in June 1789 and began arriving as guards with the Second Fleet in 1790, relieving the marines who sailed with the First Fleet.
- Food was short in the colony in 1790-1791 after supply ships failed to arrive and HMS Sirius was lost in March 1790.

Read-aloud administration (WORD_LEVEL_POLICY Rule 4 spirit; TOC volume note): the two source cards (3d_clark_card.png, 3d_macarthur_card.png) and the source task lines are READ ALOUD BY THE TEACHER. They are clearly labelled retellings in plain words of real, dated sources (never verbatim quotations), or clearly-labelled composites per D9. The student's task is to think about the source, not to decode it. No invented diary is presented as real.

Volume (TOC calibration): one teaching sequence; two worked examples built from real, dated, checkable referents; six tasks with help and three tasks on your own; one teacher-supported source task.

Figures: eight originals generated by gen_3d_fig1..fig8 scripts in src/, in diagrams/ (tables and figures in the text itself are additional).

Teaching sequence

The big idea

Long ago, real people lived through the same events — but they did not all see them the same way.

In history, the way a person sees and understands something is called their **perspective**.

Word watch: perspective. In this book, a *perspective* is the way one person sees and understands something. Who we are, and what has happened to us, changes how we see. Two people can watch the same thing happen and see it in two different ways — and both can be telling the truth about what they saw.

Four groups at Port Jackson

In 1788, Britain started a **colony** — a new home, far away, ruled by the country that sent people there — at Port Jackson (Sydney). Four groups of people lived there in the first years.

Four groups in the early colony at Port Jackson

Each group saw the colony in a different way

CONVICT

Who:

a person punished for a crime, sent to live and work in the colony.

Life:

most convicts did the hard work — building, cutting wood, farm work.

Words they might have said:

I cannot leave. I miss my family.

MARINE

Who:

a soldier who sailed with the First Fleet in 1788.

Life:

the marines guarded the colony and kept order.

Words they might have said:

We must keep this new colony safe.

CONVICT GUARD

Who:

a soldier whose job was to watch the convicts.

Life:

guards watched on the ships, at the work sites and at night.

Words they might have said:

I watch so no one runs away.

FREE COLONIST

Who:

a person who came to the colony by choice, not as punishment.

Life:

they could own land. They started farms and shops.

Words they might have said:

I came here to make a new home.

Four cards. A convict was a person punished with being sent to the colony. A marine was a soldier who sailed with the First Fleet. A convict guard was a soldier who watched the convicts. A free colonist came by choice.

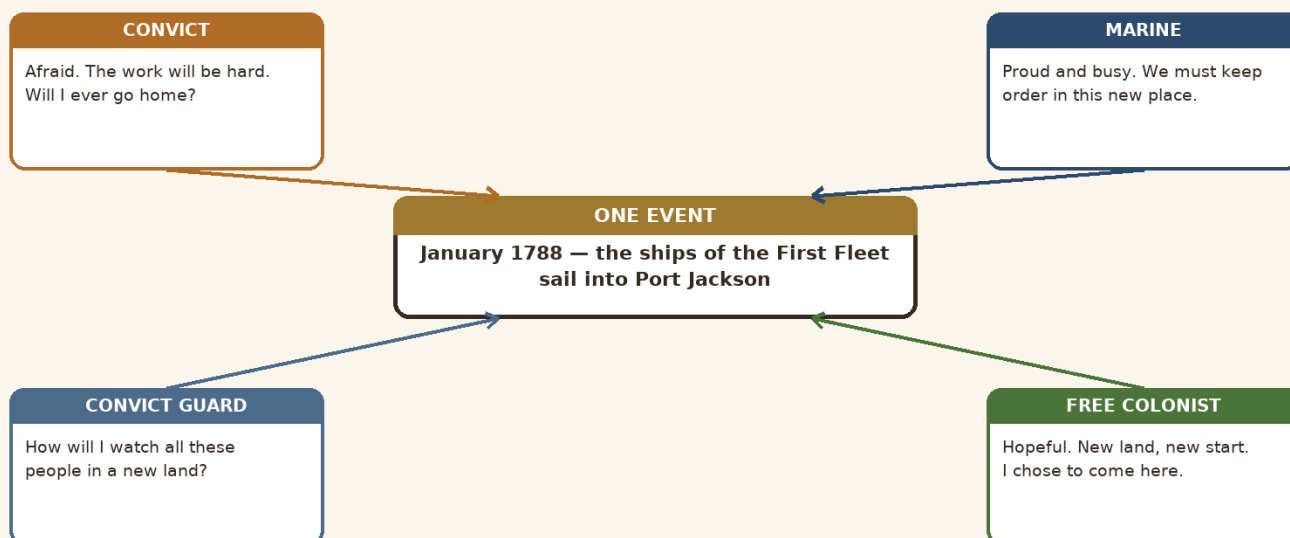
- A **convict** was a person who had broken the law in Britain. Their punishment was to be sent to live and work in the colony. Most convicts did the hard work: building, cutting wood, and work on farms.
- A **marine** (say: ma-REEN) was a soldier. The marines sailed with the **First Fleet** in 1788. They guarded the colony and kept order. In 1790, new soldiers came from Britain to take over the guard work.
- A **convict guard** was a soldier whose job was to watch the convicts — on the ships, at the work sites, and at night.
- A **free colonist** was a person who came to the colony by choice, not as punishment. Free colonists could own land and start farms and shops.

One event, four ways of seeing

In January 1788, the ships of the First Fleet sailed into Port Jackson. It was one event. But each group saw it in a different way.

One event — four different perspectives

Everyone saw the same ships on the same day. Each person saw the event in their own way.



A perspective is the way one person sees and understands something.

A picture of one event and four ways of seeing it. In the middle: January 1788, the ships of the First Fleet sail into Port Jackson. Around it, four groups — a convict, a marine, a convict guard and a free colonist — each with a different thought about the same day.

Same ships. Same day. Four different perspectives. That is what this section is about: finding those different ways of seeing, and showing **why** they were different.

Primary sources: voices from the time

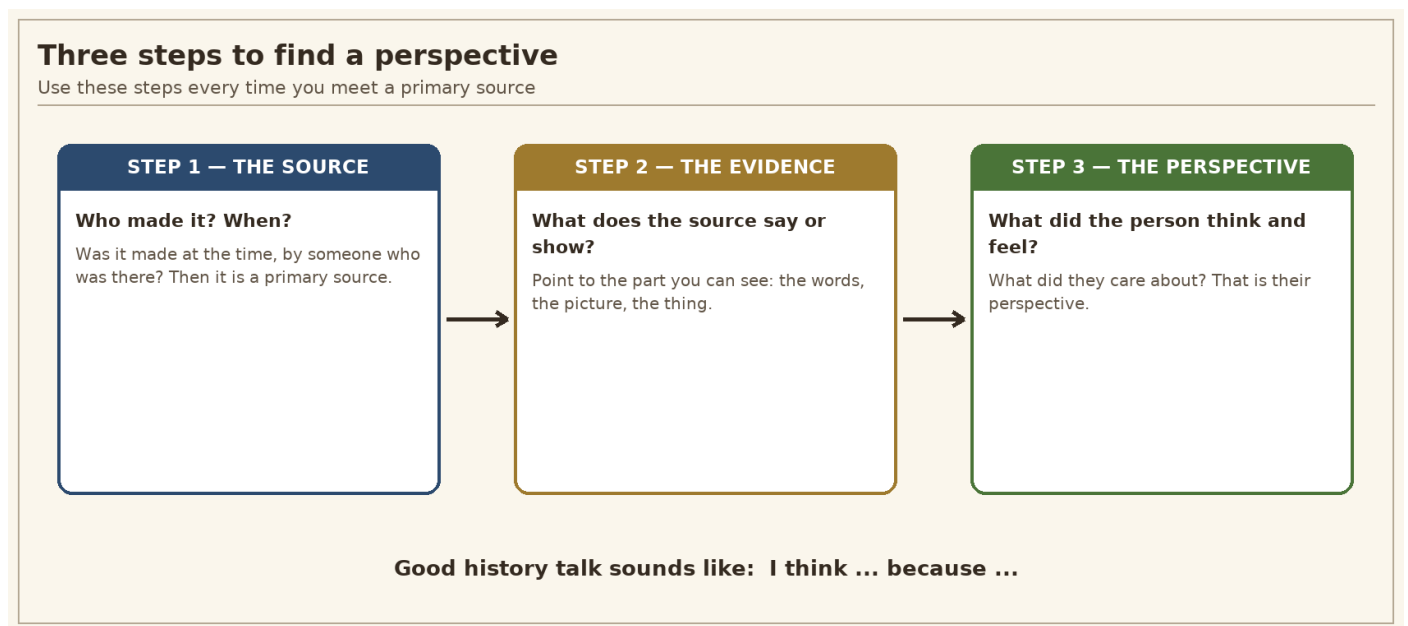
How do we know what people from the past thought and felt? We look at a **source** — anything left from the past that helps us find out about it. (You met sources in Section 3C.)

A **primary source** is a source made at the time, by someone who was there:

- a **diary** — a book where a person writes what happens each day;
- a **letter** — writing from one person to another;
- a **painting** or **drawing** made at the time;
- a **thing** from the time: a cup, a tool, a uniform, a coin.

A book written today about the past is not a primary source. It was not made at the time.

Three steps to find a perspective



Three boxes with arrows. Step 1, the source: who made it and when. Step 2, the evidence: what does it say or show. Step 3, the perspective: what did the person think and feel.

Step 1. **Who made this source? When?** If it was made at the time, by someone who was there, it is a primary source.

Step 2. **What does it say or show?** Look for the **evidence**.

Word watch: evidence. Evidence is the part of the source you can point to and say, “Look — here it is.”
The words on the page. The shapes in the picture. Evidence is what your ideas stand on.

Step 3. **What does that tell you about the person?** What did they think? What did they feel? What did they care about? That is their perspective.

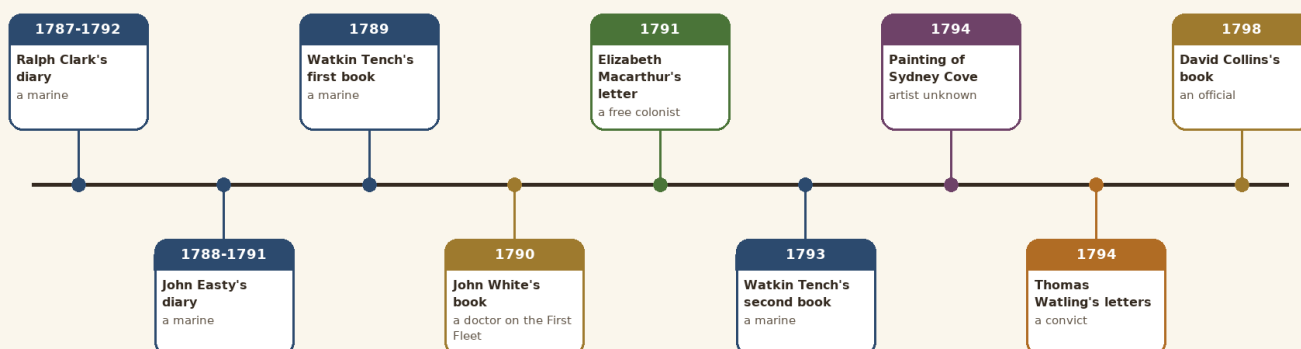
Whose words are left?

Here is something to think about. Officers and officials could write. They kept diaries, and their books were printed. Many convicts could not write at all. So more words from that time came from officers than from convicts.

That does not mean convicts had nothing to say. It means we must look carefully for their perspectives — in records, in pictures, and in the few writings that came from convicts themselves.

Primary sources from the early colony — who made them, and when

Real sources, with dates, that historians can look at today



Most words from that time came from officers and officials. Few convicts could write — but we can still look for their perspectives.

A timeline of sources from the early colony, 1787 to 1798: Clark's diary, Easty's diary, Tench's two books, White's book, Macarthur's letter, a painting of Sydney Cove, Watling's letters and Collins's book. Most came from officers and officials.

Be fair to people from the past

People from the past were real people. They had feelings, just like you. When we describe their perspectives:

- We use evidence from the source. We do not just guess.
- We say “I think ... because ...”. The *because* points to the evidence.
- Two people can read the same source and describe the perspective in a way that is a little different. That is fine — as long as each one can show evidence. And a person from the past may have felt two things at once: glad and afraid, proud and tired. Real feelings are often mixed.

A thinking plan for pictures: See — Think — Wonder

When we look carefully at a picture, a painting, or a thing from the past, we can use a thinking plan with three steps.

See — Think — Wonder

A thinking plan for pictures, paintings and things from the past

SEE	THINK	WONDER
What can you see? Only say what is really there. Start with: I can see ...	What does it make you think? Use the word because. Start with: I think ... because I can see ...	What do you want to find out? Ask a question. Start with: I wonder ...

Look before you say. Take your time.

A poster with three parts. See: what can you see, only say what is really there. Think: what does it make you think, use the word because. Wonder: what do you want to find out, ask a question.

This plan slows us down. We look before we say.

Interviews and stories close to home

You do not have to go back to 1788 to find perspectives. People in your own community see the same local place in different ways too.

An **interview** is when you ask someone questions and listen carefully to their answers.

With a grown-up, you could interview two people about one local place — a street, a park, a shop, or a beach. Ask each person:

- What is this place like?
- What do you remember about it?
- What do you like about it?

Then compare the answers. What is the same? What is different? Why might two people see one place in different ways? (This links with Section 1A, where you look at change in your local community.)

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help: a marine's diary

The teacher reads the source card aloud.

PRIMARY SOURCE 1 — A MARINE'S DIARY (teacher reads aloud)

Ralph Clark's diary — 4 June 1789, Sydney Cove

Arthur Phillip, the leader of the colony, asked Ralph Clark to put on a play. The actors were convicts. They chose a play called The Recruiting Officer.

It was the King's birthday. Many people came to watch. The convicts acted well.

Ralph Clark was a marine officer. He wrote about this night in his diary.

Retold in plain words from Ralph Clark's diary, 4 June 1789 (State Library of New South Wales). The real diary uses harder words.

A diary card for reading aloud. Ralph Clark's diary, 4 June 1789, Sydney Cove: the leader of the colony asked Clark to put on a play, the actors were convicts, and the play was acted well on the King's birthday. Retold from Clark's diary at the State Library of New South Wales.

Now use the three steps to describe Ralph Clark's perspective.

Step	What we do	What we find
1. Who and when?	Ralph Clark was a marine officer. He wrote his diary at Sydney Cove in 1789, at the time.	Made at the time by someone who was there — so it is a primary source .
2. The evidence: what does it say?	Clark wrote about the night of 4 June 1789. The leader of the colony asked him to put on a play. The actors were convicts, and they acted well. It was the King's birthday, and many people came to watch.	These are the facts the diary gives us.
3. The perspective: what does that tell us?	Clark chose to write this night down. Writing it down shows the night mattered to him. He was glad to see the convicts do something well.	Clark wanted the colony to go well. His perspective: this was a good night for the colony.

One event, two views: the convict actors saw the same night in their own way. Acting in a play might have been a happy break from hard work, and a chance to show they could do something well. Same event — two perspectives.

Example 2 — with help: a free colonist's letter

The teacher reads the source card aloud.

PRIMARY SOURCE 2 — A FREE COLONIST'S LETTER (teacher reads aloud)

Elizabeth Macarthur's letter — Sydney, 1791

Elizabeth Macarthur wrote to her family in England about her new home.

She said the soil was rich. She said the plants and trees were beautiful. She hoped the colony would do well.

Elizabeth was a free colonist. She came to the colony by choice in 1790.

Retold in plain words from a letter Elizabeth Macarthur wrote in 1791 (State Library of New South Wales). The real letter uses harder words.

A letter card for reading aloud. Elizabeth Macarthur's letter, Sydney, 1791: she wrote to her family in England about her new home, said the soil was rich and the plants beautiful, and hoped the colony would do well. Retold from her 1791 letter at the State Library of New South Wales.

Now use the three steps to describe Elizabeth Macarthur's perspective.

Step	What we do	What we find
1. Who and when?	Elizabeth Macarthur was a free colonist. She came to the colony in 1790. In 1791 she wrote a letter to her family in England.	A letter written at the time — so it is a primary source .
2. The evidence: what does it say?	She told her family about her new home. She said the soil was rich and the plants were beautiful. She hoped the colony would do well.	These are the words the letter gives us.
3. The perspective: what does that tell us?	Elizabeth came by choice. She wanted a good new home, so she looked for the good things in the colony.	Her perspective: hopeful. The colony was a fresh start, not a punishment.

Compare: in 1790 and 1791, marines like John Easty wrote in their diaries about food running short. Elizabeth and John lived in the same colony at the same time — but their words are not the same. They lived different lives, so they saw different things.

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. Which are primary sources? Tick them. For each tick, say who made it, and whether it was made at the time.

- (a) a diary written by a marine in 1789
- (b) a painting of Sydney Cove made in 1794
- (c) a book about the First Fleet written in 2026
- (d) a soldier's uniform from about 1790
- (e) a story your teacher tells you about the colony

Help: a primary source was made at the time, by someone who was there.

Q2. Three steps on a marine's diary. John Easty was a marine. He kept a diary in the colony from 1788 to 1791. The teacher reads this aloud:

In 1790 and 1791, there was very little food in the colony. Ships that should have brought food did not come. One ship, the Sirius, was lost. Each person got less food than before. John Easty wrote it all down.

(This is retold in plain words from Easty's diary, State Library of New South Wales.)

Use the three steps. (1) Who made the diary, and when? (2) What evidence do you hear? (3) What might Easty have felt, or cared about? Write or say one sentence for each step.

Q3. Who might have said it? These sentences are made up for practice. Match each one to the person who most likely said it: convict, marine, convict guard, or free colonist. Circle the word that helped you decide.

- 1. "I cannot leave this place, even though I want to. The work is hard every day."
- 2. "I stand watch all night. I must make sure no one runs away."
- 3. "I came here by choice. I hope my farm does well this year."
- 4. "I came on a big ship to guard the colony. I keep the rules."

Q4. Evidence, or guess? Here are three ideas about Ralph Clark's perspective on the play night. One is backed by evidence from the card. Two are guesses. Circle the one with evidence, and say why the others are guesses.

- 1. Clark thought the play was worth doing — the colony's leader asked him to put it on, and he wrote the night down.
- 2. Clark thought the actors should get paid.
- 3. Clark stayed home that night.

Q5. Same night, two views. Think about the play night of 4 June 1789. Copy and finish the table.

	What they saw or did	What they might have felt
Ralph Clark (marine)	watched the play; wrote about it in his diary	glad, proud
A convict actor (a made-up view)	acted in the play	...

Write one sentence for the actor. Use "might have".

Q6. Plan an interview. With a grown-up, plan an interview about a local place.

- (a) Choose one local place (a street, a park, a shop, a beach).
- (b) Write two questions you will ask.
- (c) Write the names of two people you will ask.
- (d) After the interviews: what was the same? What was different? Why might the two people see the place in different ways?

On your own

Q7. Choose one group from the four group cards. Write three or four sentences about how a person from that group might have seen the day the First Fleet sailed into Port Jackson, in January 1788. Use the writing frame.

Writing frame — describe a perspective

Use this frame after you have done the three steps

MY PERSPECTIVE WRITING

1. The person I am writing about is _____. They were a _____.

2. My source is _____.

3. In the source, I can see or hear: _____

This is my evidence.

4. I think this person felt _____ because _____.

5. Another person might have seen it in a different way because _____.

Good history talk: I think ... because ... — and point to the evidence.

A writing frame: the person I am writing about; my source; what I can see or hear in the source, which is my evidence; I think this person felt something because something; another person might have seen it in a different way.

Q8. Elizabeth Macarthur and John Easty lived in the same colony at the same time. Look at the letter card again, and think about the read-aloud from Easty's diary. Write: one thing that is the same about what they tell us, and one thing that is different. Then finish this sentence: "They saw the colony in different ways because ..."

Q9. Your friend says: "The officers wrote the diaries and the books. So we only need to listen to them." Do you agree? Write two or three sentences. Think about: were convicts real people too? What did they feel? Where can we look for their perspectives?

Source task

Your teacher will help with this one.

Your teacher shows your class a picture of a real painting: **a painting of Sydney Cove from 1794** (State Library of New South Wales). No one knows the artist's name for sure.

Then your teacher reads this aloud:

Watkin Tench was a marine. In 1793, his book about the colony came out. He wrote about the things he had seen: tents and small houses, a garden where food was growing, and the ships on the water.

(This is retold in plain words from Tench's book of 1793.)

Together, do **See** — **Think** — **Wonder** about the painting. Then:

- (a) The painting shows Sydney Cove in 1794. Name one thing you can see in the picture.
 - (b) Tench's book tells us what a marine saw. What did he care about? (Help: what did he choose to write about?)
 - (c) The painting and the book are both sources about the same place. Do they show exactly the same things? Why not?
-

Answers

Q1. (a) primary — a marine made it at the time; (b) primary — made at the time; (d) primary — a thing from the time. Not primary: (c) a book from 2026 was not made at the time; (e) a story told today was not made at the time.

Q2. (1) John Easty, a marine, wrote it from 1788 to 1791, at the time — so it is a primary source. (2) Evidence: very little food; the food ships did not come; the Sirius was lost; each person got less food. (3) For example: Easty might have felt worried and hungry. He cared about food and watched for the ships. He wrote it all down because it mattered.

Q3. 1 convict (“cannot leave”, “hard work”); 2 convict guard (“stand watch”, “no one runs away”); 3 free colonist (“by choice”, “my farm”); 4 marine (“guard the colony”, “keep the rules”).

Q4. Idea 1 has evidence: the card says the colony’s leader asked Clark to put on the play, and Clark wrote the night down. Idea 2 is a guess — the card says nothing about pay. Idea 3 is a guess — Clark wrote about the night, so he was there.

Q5. For example: the convict actor might have felt glad to act, and proud to do something well. They might have felt afraid too, because so many people were watching. Accept any answer that uses “might have” and gives a reason.

Q6. Answers will not all be the same. Look for two real questions, two people, and a note of what was the same and different — with a reason (different ages, different jobs, different memories).

Q7. For example (convict): “The person I am writing about is a convict. They came on a ship with many people. They could not leave. The work looked hard. I think they felt afraid and sad, because they were far from home and could not come back.” Accept any answer that uses the frame, the group cards, and “might have” or “I think ... because ...”.

Q8. Same: both tell us about life in the colony in about 1790–1791, and both are primary sources. Different: Elizabeth wrote about soil, plants and hope; John wrote about food running short. “They saw the colony in different ways because Elizabeth was a free colonist who came by choice, and John was a soldier who watched over the colony and its food.”

Q9. For example: “I do not agree. Convicts were real people with feelings too, and they were most of the people in the colony. Their words are harder to find, but we can still look for their perspectives — in records, in pictures, and in the few writings that came from convicts.”

Source task. (a) Answers will not all be the same (for example: ships, water, small houses, tents, hills). (b) Tench wrote about tents, houses, the garden and the ships — he cared about how the colony was growing. (c) No — the painting shows what the artist chose to paint, and the book tells what the writer chose to say. Each source shows us one part of the place, from one person’s point of view.

Example answers

Q7. “I am writing about a marine on the day the ships came in. My source is Ralph Clark’s diary. In the source, I can read that Clark wrote about the new place. I think a marine felt proud and busy, because the marines had a big job: to guard the colony. A convict might have seen the same day in a different way, because convicts could not leave.”

Q8. “Both sources tell us about life in the colony in the early 1790s. They are different because Elizabeth’s letter is full of hope about the soil and the plants, but Easty’s diary is about how little food there was. They saw the colony in different ways because Elizabeth came by choice and wanted a new home, and John was a soldier who had to keep watch.”

Q9. “I do not agree with my friend. The officers’ words are helpful, but they are not the only words that matter. Convicts were real people with feelings, and there were many more convicts than officers. Few convicts could write, so we must look for their perspectives in other sources — records, pictures, and the few writings convicts left, like Thomas Watling’s letters of 1794.”

Source task. “(a) I can see ships in the water and small houses on the land. (b) Tench cared about how the colony was growing. He chose to write about tents, houses, the food garden and the ships. (c) They do not show the same things. The artist painted what they thought was important to see, and Tench wrote what he thought was important to say. Two people, two ways of showing one place.”

Where we found these facts

People who study the past always say where they found things out. So do we.

- Ralph Clark’s diary, 1787–1792, and his account of the play on 4 June 1789: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
- Elizabeth Macarthur’s letter of 1791, and her arrival in June 1790: State Library of New South Wales.
- John Easty’s diary, 1788–1791: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
- Watkin Tench’s books of 1789 and 1793; John White’s book of 1790; David Collins’s book of 1798: State Library of New South Wales; National Library of Australia.
- Thomas Watling’s letters, printed in 1794: National Library of Australia.
- The painting of Sydney Cove, 1794: State Library of New South Wales (artist unknown — the name is not known for sure).
- Food running short in 1790–1791, and the loss of HMS Sirius in March 1790: records of the early colony, State Records New South Wales.

All checked on 24 August 2026. The read-aloud cards are retold in plain words from these real sources — they are not word-for-word quotations.

Different interpretations of the past

Teacher-facing metadata — not student text (TOC §1 D8: vocabulary gate does not apply).

- Book: History 3 — Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 3–4 band, Level 3 year. Chapter 3 (Skills: investigating the past), section 3E.
 - Owns: VC2HH4S05 (code only; wording not reproduced).
 - Draws on (linkage ids, export order): VC2HH4S05.E01 — **EXCLUDED entire per TOC §2A (D3); id retained as linkage key only.** VC2HH4S05.E02 — taught. (Codes only; wording not reproduced.)
 - Pairing: 2C (VC2HH4K10, different interpretations of early colonisation). 2C gives the knowledge of the words; 3E gives the skill of describing the interpretation a word carries. No First Nations content authored (CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1); no view attributed to any First Nations person or community (TOC §2 D9).
 - Real-world data and source line: First Fleet facts (11 ships; 1,420 people identified as embarking; arrived Botany Bay 18 January 1788; moved to Port Jackson 26 January 1788; commander Captain Arthur Phillip) — “First Fleet”, Wikipedia, retrieved 2026-08-24. The source-task voices are clearly labelled made-up composite examples (D9).
-

Teaching sequence

Part 1 — One past, many stories

Long ago, many things happened. People were born, ships sailed, towns grew. All of it is the past, and the past stays the same.

People who study the past are called **historians**. A historian looks at things left behind from long ago — letters, diaries, pictures, objects. These things are called **sources**. A source gives **evidence**. Evidence is a piece of proof about the past.

When a historian tells us about the past, that story is called an **interpretation**.

interpretation — someone’s way of telling about the past.

The past stays the same. Interpretations can be different. Two historians can look at the same event and tell two different stories about it.

Part 2 — Why interpretations are different

Why can two people tell different stories about the same past? Three big reasons.

1. **Different sources.** One historian reads a diary. Another looks at a map. Different clues make different stories.
2. **Different questions.** One asks, “What did the people eat?” Another asks, “What work did they do?” The questions change the story.
3. **Different words.** Words carry ideas. Two people can tell about the same event with different words — and the story changes with the words.

In this section we look hard at the third reason.

Why do interpretations differ?

They look at different sources.

One reads a diary.
One looks at a map.

They ask different questions.

One asks what people ate.
One asks what work they did.

They choose different words.

Words carry ideas.
Words change the story.

**The past stays the same.
The stories about it can differ.**

Three circles: different sources, different questions, different words — same past, stories can be different.

Part 3 — Two words for one event: 1788

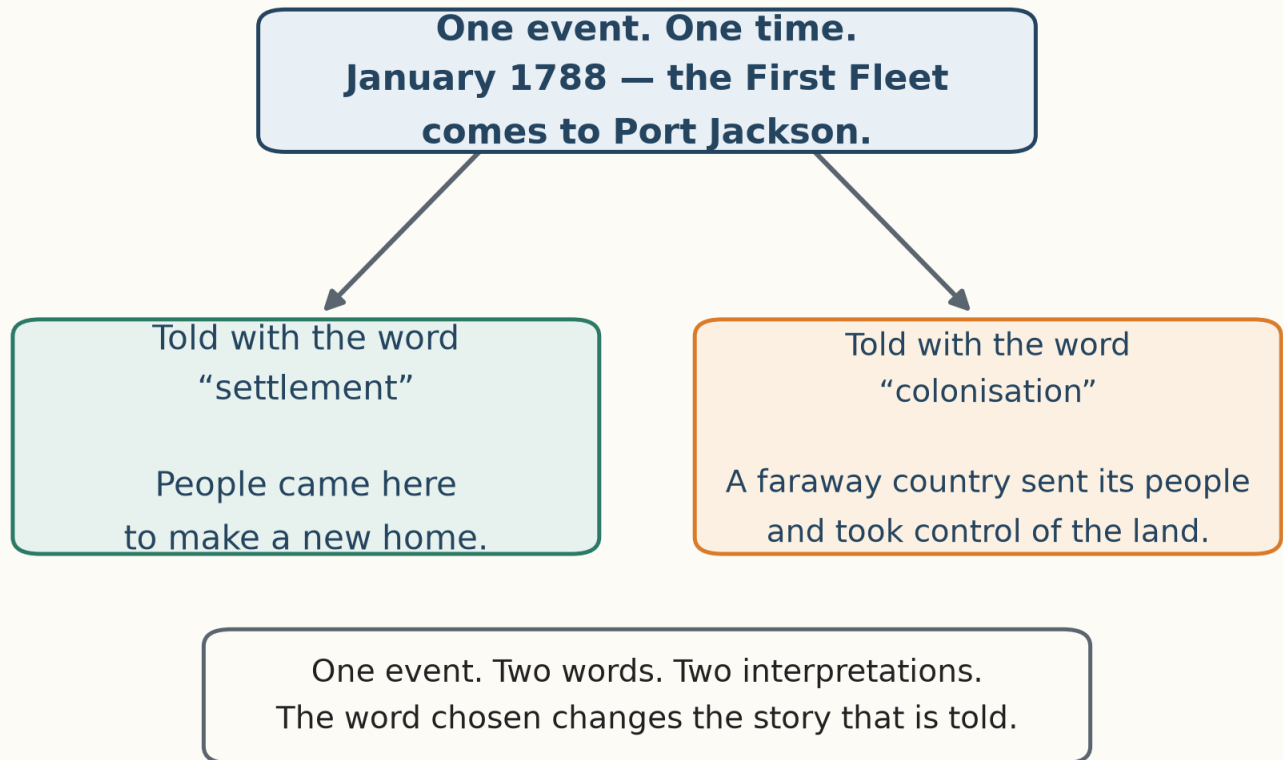
Here is one real event from the past. In January 1788, eleven ships from Britain arrived in Australia. These ships were called the **First Fleet**. More than 1,400 people were on the ships. Some were **convicts** — people who broke the law and were sent away as punishment. Some were soldiers. Some were ship workers. The man who led them was Captain Arthur Phillip.

The ships came first to Botany Bay. Eight days later they moved to Port Jackson.

Everyone can agree those facts happened. But people do not tell the story in the same words. Two words you will often hear are ‘settlement’ and ‘colonisation’. These are **contested** words.

contested — people do not agree about the word. They do not agree what it means, or which one is the right one to use.

One event, two words



One event box for January 1788 with two arrows to a settlement telling and a colonisation telling.

This is how this section uses the two words. There are other meanings too, and they are not exactly the same as these.

- A **settlement** is a new home people make in a new place.
- **Colonisation** is when a faraway country sends its people to another land and takes control of that land. A **colony** is a place ruled by a faraway country.

What does each word make you picture?

- ‘Settlement’ makes you picture people coming to live — houses, farms, gardens.
- ‘Colonisation’ makes you picture rules and power coming from far away.

Both words are about the same event. But they point at different parts of it. The word a person chooses tells you what that person wants you to see. That is why ‘settlement’ and ‘colonisation’ are two interpretations of one event, and why the words are contested.

Two words, used with care

settlement

a new home that people
make in a new place

makes you picture:
people coming to live,
farms, houses, gardens

colonisation

a faraway country sends its
people to another land and
takes control of it

makes you picture:
rules and power
coming from far away

In this section we use the words in this way.
Other meanings exist, and they are not
exactly the same as these.

A colony is a place ruled by a faraway country.

Two word cards: settlement means a new home in a new place; colonisation means a faraway country taking control.

Section 2C of this book tells us more about these words. Here, our job is the skill: to describe the interpretation a word carries.

Part 4 — How to describe an interpretation

1. **Find the facts.** What happened? When? Who was there?
2. **Find the story words.** Which words do more than tell the facts?
3. **Ask what they picture.** What do the words make you see in your head?
4. **Try the swap.** Say the same fact with the other word. Did the story change?

How to describe an interpretation



Four steps in order: find the facts; find the story words; ask what they picture; try the swap.

Worked examples

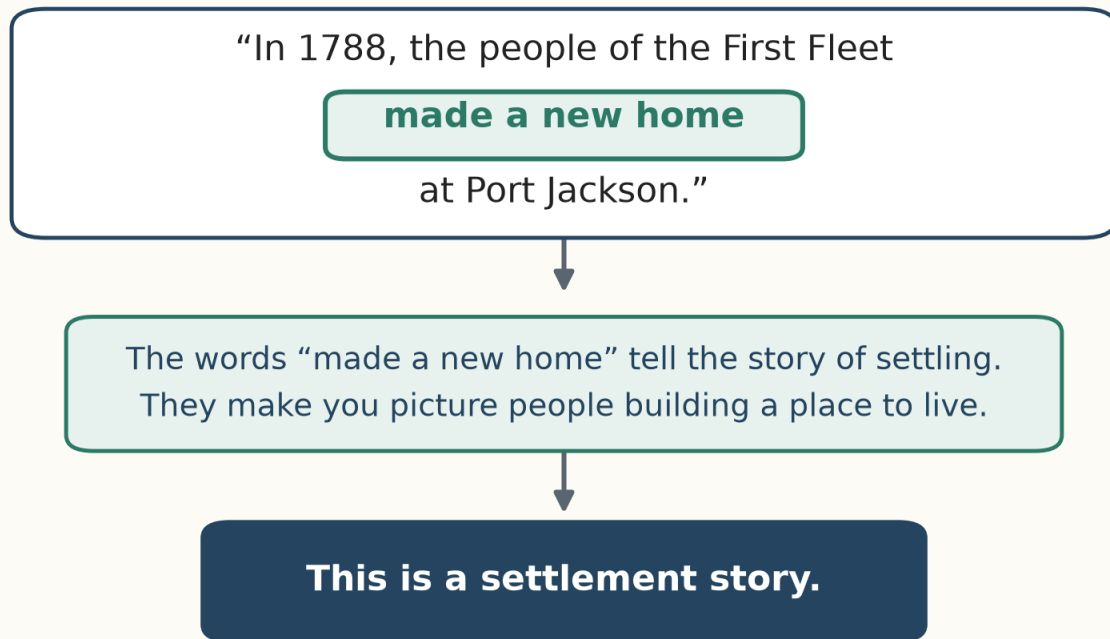
Example 1 — with help: finding the interpretation

Read this sentence about 1788:

“In 1788, the people of the First Fleet made a new home at Port Jackson.”

Step	What we do	Why
1	Facts: in 1788 the First Fleet came to Port Jackson.	The event. Everyone can check it.
2	Story words: “made a new home”.	These words do more than tell the facts.
3	They picture people building a place to live.	Houses, farms, families.
4	“made a new home” = the settlement story.	The words carry the idea of settling.

Example 1 — finding the interpretation



The sentence with 'made a new home' boxed, pointing to the label 'This is a settlement story.'

Example 2 — with help: the swap test

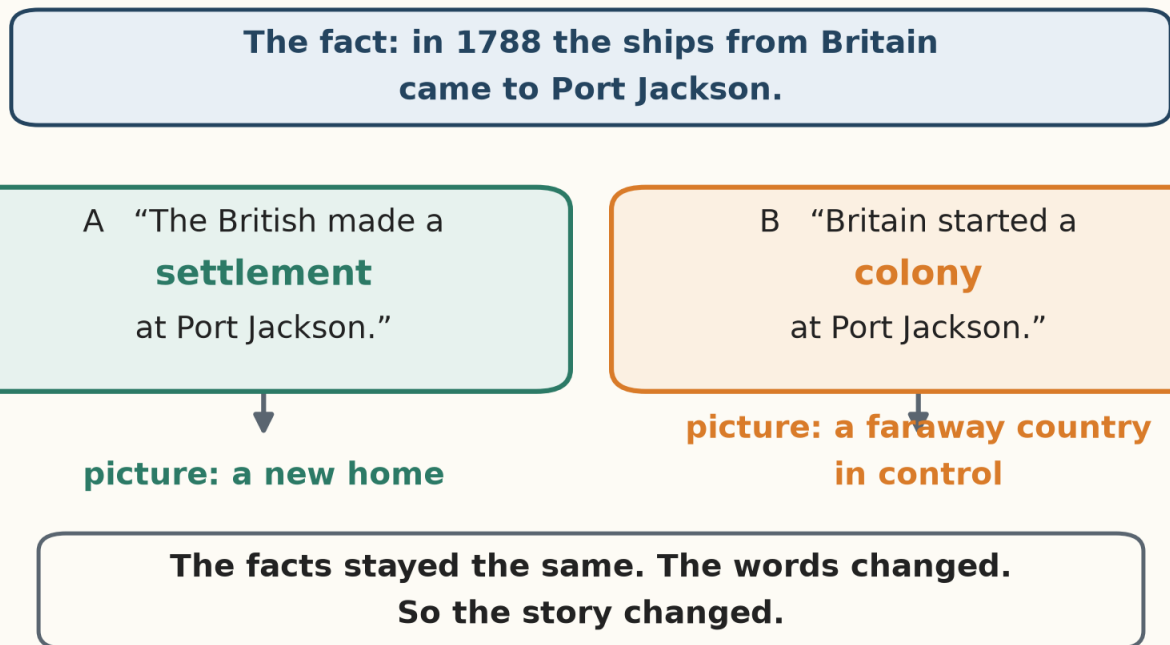
The same fact, told two ways:

A. "In 1788, the British made a settlement at Port Jackson."

B. "In 1788, Britain started a colony at Port Jackson."

Step	What we do	Why
1	The fact is the same in A and B.	1788, Port Jackson, people from Britain.
2	A uses "settlement"; B uses "colony".	Find the story words.
3	"settlement" pictures a new home. "colony" pictures a faraway country in control.	Ask what each word makes you see.
4	The swap changed the story.	Same fact, new words, new story. Choosing a word is choosing an interpretation.

Example 2 — the swap test



Cards A and B telling the same fact with ‘settlement’ and with ‘colony’, and the pictures each word gives.

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. Match each word to what it makes you picture. Draw a line.

Word	Picture
settlement	a faraway country taking control
colonisation	a thing left behind from the past
source	a new home people make in a new place

Q2. Circle the story words in each sentence.

- “The British settled at Port Jackson in 1788.”
- “In 1788, Britain took control of the land and started a colony.”
- “People came to live and make new homes.”

Q3. Finish this table in your own words.

Word	What it makes me picture
settlement	
colonisation	
colony	

Q4. Here is a fact: “In January 1788, the First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay.” Write two sentences about this fact. Use ‘settlement’ in one. Use ‘colony’ in the other. Start like this:

- A settlement story: “In 1788, ...”
- A colony story: “In 1788, ...”

Q5. Two children look at a picture of the First Fleet.

Mia says, “Look! They came to make a new home!”

Tom says, “Look! A faraway country sent its people and its rules!”

- Which child tells the settlement story?
- Which child tells the colonisation story?
- How do you know? Point to the words.

Q6. Look at the five cards in the picture. Write F for fact or I for interpretation.

- a. The First Fleet had eleven ships.
- b. The people came to make a better life.
- c. The ships arrived in January 1788.
- d. Britain took control of the land.
- e. The ships moved from Botany Bay to Port Jackson.

Sort the cards: fact or interpretation?

FACT pile

what really happened —
everyone can check it

INTERPRETATION pile

a way of telling about it —
someone's story words

The First Fleet
had eleven
ships.

The people came
to make a
better life.

The ships
arrived in
January 1788.

Britain took
control of
the land.

The ships moved
from Botany Bay
to Port Jackson.

Read each card. Write F for fact or I for interpretation.

Hint: story words like “better life” and “took control” tell you someone's side.

Five cards to sort into a fact pile and an interpretation pile.

On your own

Q7. One event, two stories. Write two sentences about the First Fleet coming to Port Jackson. Tell the settlement story in one. Tell the colonisation story in the other. Then say: what does each of your words make you picture?

Q8. A book about 1788 always uses the word ‘settlement’.

- a. What does that tell you about the story the book is telling?
- b. Does this book give you the whole story? Why, or why not?

Q9. Why does a good historian look at many sources before telling about the past? Use the words ‘evidence’ and ‘interpretation’ in your answer.

Source task — two voices from one ship (teacher reads aloud)

These are not real letters. They are made-up examples that show how two people on the same day could see things in different ways. Your teacher will read them to you.

Two voices from one ship

These are made-up examples, not real letters. Your teacher will read them.

**Card A — a convict
might have written:**

"Today we came to a new land. I do not know what will happen to me here. I hope I can make a home one day."

**Card B — an officer
might have written:**

"Today the ships arrived. We must start the colony. There is much work to do."

**Same day. Same ships. Two different stories.
Listen, then talk about what is different.**

Two made-up letter cards, Card A from a convict and Card B from an officer, clearly labelled as not real letters.

Card A — a convict might have written: "Today we came to a new land. I do not know what will happen to me here. I hope I can make a home one day."

Card B — an officer might have written: "Today the ships arrived. We must start the colony. There is much work to do."

1. Same day, same ships — do these two people tell the same story?
2. What is different about the two stories?
3. Which card sounds more like the settlement story? Point to the words that tell you.

Possible answers and things to say

Q1. settlement — a new home people make in a new place; colonisation — a faraway country taking control; source — a thing left behind from the past.

Q2. a. settled; b. took control, started a colony; c. came to live, make new homes.

Q3. Answers will be different. Check: does the picture match the word? (settlement — homes and farms; colonisation — control from far away; colony — a place ruled by a faraway country.)

Q4. Answers will be different. Example: "In 1788, people made a settlement at Port Jackson." / "In 1788, Britain started a colony at Port Jackson."

Q5. a. Mia. b. Tom. c. Mia's words "make a new home" tell the settlement story; Tom's words "faraway country" and "its rules" tell the colonisation story.

Q6. a. F; b. I; c. F; d. I; e. F. "better life" and "took control" are story words — they tell one side.

Q7. Answers will be different. Check: two stories told; the word for each named; the pictures match the words.

Q8. a. The book tells the story of people making a home there. b. No — it tells one side. A historian looks at many sources and many words before telling the story.

Q9. Answers will be different. Check: many sources give more evidence; more evidence helps a historian make a better interpretation.

Source task. 1. No — the two people see the day in different ways. 2. Card A talks about what happens to the person, and hope for a home; Card B talks about the colony and work. 3. Card A — “make a home” sounds like the settlement story. Card B’s words “start the colony” sound like the colonisation story.

There is no one right word to choose. In the talk tasks, the mark goes to the reasons you give, not the word you pick. A good answer says what the word means, what it makes you picture, and how the story changes.