

History Level 6

Chapter 3 — Doing history: questions, chronology and sources

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Asking and developing questions to guide historical investigations

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH6S01 (Historical Inquiry Methods and Skills, Levels 5&6):

asking and developing historical questions that steer an investigation.

Elaboration linkage (D10 — linkage only, not a teaching order): .E01 (whole — questions covering historical concepts at every stage of an investigation), .E02 (whole — questions for judging how valuable a source is), .E03 (taught without its ethical/cultural-protocols example, §2A — probing and open-ended questions are taught; the ethical-questions example is not).

Achievement standard coverage: this section owns the standard's sentence on developing and asking questions for investigations of continuity and change in Australia's history across 1800–2000. Every question students build here is practised on continuity-and-change material from Chapters 1–2.

D11 — skills taught through Chapters 1–2 knowledge: no new historical facts are taught in this section. All practice runs on material already taught: the gold rush and Eureka (Sections 1C/1F) and Federation and migration (Sections 2A/2C). The sources used (the Eureka flag, *The Argus*, the Welcome Nugget, Bonegilla photographs) are real and named in the sources list.

Key subject terms defined at first use in this section (D4): historical question, investigation, source, primary source, secondary source, context, evidence, probing question, open-ended question; licence is re-defined at first use (taught in Section 1C).

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

This section teaches the **questioning moves** of historical inquiry, practised entirely on Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 content. The suggested flow:

1. **Questions start history (toolkit):** introduce the six question words (Figure 3a_question_words.png) and the idea that big questions are built from small words.
2. **Weak to strong:** use Figure 3a_makeover.png to show the three tests of a strong question — open, testable with evidence, worth asking.
3. **Before, during, after:** introduce the inquiry cycle (Figure 3a_inquiry_cycle.png); the italic questions in the figure are the curriculum's own examples from the elaborations.
4. **Testing sources:** define source, primary/secondary source, context and evidence; work the four-step checklist (Figure 3a_source_check.png).
5. **Purposes:** probing, open-ended and comparing questions (Figure 3a_purposes.png). Per §2A, the ethical/cultural-protocols example from .E03 is not taught.
6. **Worked demonstration 1:** test the Eureka flag as a source with E02 value questions (Figure 3a_eureka_flag.png).
7. **Worked demonstration 2:** run one source — *The Argus*, New Year 1901 — through before, during and after questions (E01).
8. **Consolidate:** the working-material timeline (Figure 3a_sources_timeline.png) shows where every practice source lives; then the plan-your-own-investigation writing task (Figure 3a_plan.png).

Common misconceptions to address: that a question answered by one date is a strong historical question (it is a useful stepping stone, not the destination); that any question is a historical question (a historical question must be testable against sources); that a source can answer every question (sources are silent about some things — the flag cannot say who made it); that “value” means good/bad (it means how useful a source is for *your* question).

Key ideas

1. History starts with a question

Historians are people who ask the past questions. A **historical question** is a question about the past that can be investigated using **sources** — the things historians study, such as objects, photographs, letters, newspapers, laws and numbers. An **investigation** is the organised search for an answer: you ask, you find sources, you test them, and you build your answer from what they show.

The six question words below are the historian's toolkit. On their own they are small; joined together, they build the big questions of this book — questions like *Who voted for Federation, and why did they vote that way?*

The historian's question toolkit

Every big history question is built from these six little words. Most of them join two or more together.

WHO

finds the people in the story

WHAT

finds what happened and what changed

WHEN

finds dates, times and order

WHERE

finds the places things happened

WHY

finds causes — why things happened

HOW

finds the way things happened

Example: Who voted for Federation, and why did they vote that way? (WHO + WHY)

Six cards showing the question words *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *how* — with what each word helps a historian find out, and an example question joining *who* and *why*

2. What makes a question strong?

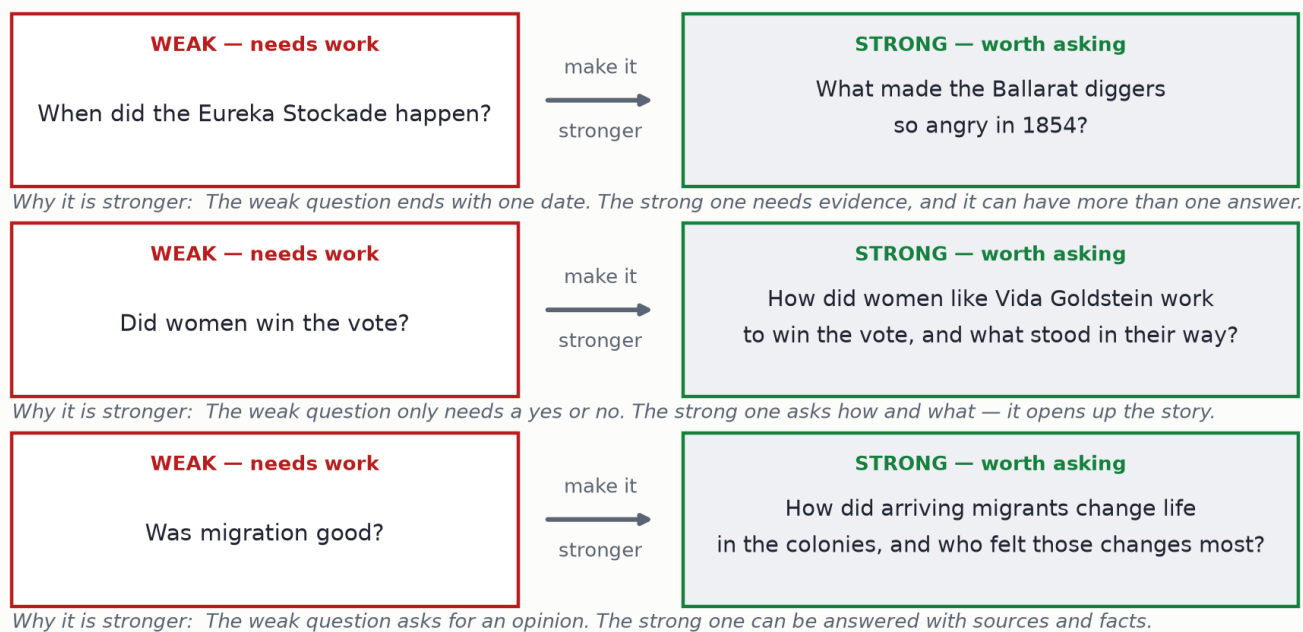
Not all questions are equally useful for history. A strong historical question passes three tests:

- **Open** — it cannot be finished with a single date or a yes or no; more than one idea can be brought to it;
- **Testable** — sources can supply **evidence** for it (evidence is the clues a source gives towards an answer);
- **Worth asking** — answering it tells us something important about the past.

A question that fails the tests is not “wrong” — it is usually a stepping stone. The trick is to remake it into a stronger one.

Fixing a weak question

A strong question is open, can be tested with evidence, and is worth asking.



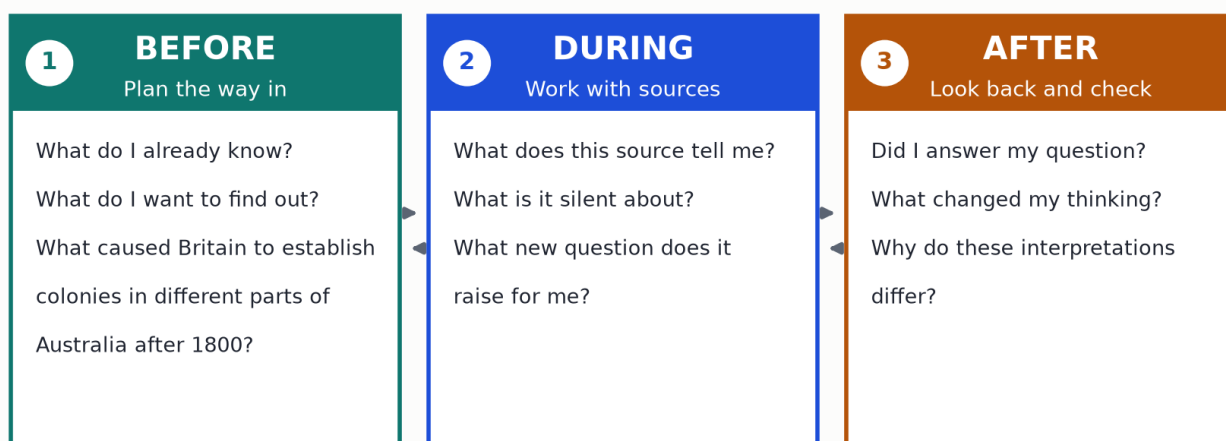
Three rows pairing a weak question with a stronger version, with a note under each pair explaining why the strong question is better

3. Questions before, during and after

Questions do the most work when they are asked at every stage of an investigation — before you start, while you work with sources, and when you look back. Asking at each stage **frames** the inquiry: it sets it up, keeps it on track, and checks what it found.

Questions at every step of an investigation

You ask before you start, while you read sources, and when you look back.



and the after-questions often send you back to the start

The three questions in italics are the Victorian Curriculum's own examples of the kinds of questions historians ask.

Three panels labelled before, during and after showing the questions a historian asks at each stage of an investigation, with an arrow looping back from after to before

The three questions in italics in the figure are the Victorian Curriculum’s own examples of the kinds of questions historians ask. Notice that the after-questions often raise a new investigation — inquiry loops back to the start.

4. Testing a source with questions

Two more words need defining. A **primary source** was made at the time, by people who were there — the Eureka flag, a newspaper page printed on the day, a photograph taken at the time. A **secondary source** was made later, looking back — this book, a museum film, a documentary.

The **context** of a source is when and where it was made, and what was happening then. Context matters because a source always comes from somewhere: a Melbourne newspaper of 1901 sees the world from Melbourne in 1901.

Historians test any source with four questions — its **features** (what can we see or read in it?), its **type** (object, photograph, newspaper, law, numbers?), its **context**, and its **value**: what can it tell us, and what can it *not* tell us? Value does not mean good or bad; it means how useful the source is for *your* question.

Testing a source with questions

Work down the list. Each step is a question you ask the source.

1	FEATURES	What features does this source have? <i>Think about: words, pictures, size, material, who made it</i>
▲		
2	TYPE	What kind of source is this? <i>Think about: object, photo, letter, newspaper, law, numbers</i>
▲		
3	CONTEXT	What was happening around the time this primary source was made? <i>Think about: when and where it was made, and what was happening then</i>
▲		
4	VALUE	What can it tell us — and what can it not tell us? <i>Think about: its clues, and its gaps and limits</i>
Then make your call: How useful is this source for MY question?		

A four-step checklist for testing a source: features, type, context and value, ending with the judgement question, how useful is this source for my question

5. Questions for different purposes

Different jobs need different kinds of questions.

- A **probing question** digs for one precise detail — *What did the gold licence cost in 1851?* (A **licence**, as Section 1C showed, is an official permit you pay for — on the goldfields, the permit a digger had to buy to dig.)
- An **open-ended question** lets many answers in and draws ideas out — *Why do people still disagree about what Eureka means?*
- A **comparing question** puts two times or groups side by side to spot continuity and change — *How was voting in 1900 different from voting in 1851?*

One good investigation uses all three.

Questions for different purposes

Pick the kind of question that fits what you are trying to do. One investigation uses all three.

PROBING seeks detail	OPEN-ENDED draws out ideas	COMPARING spots change and continuity
WHAT IT DOES dig into one spot: who, what, when, where	WHAT IT DOES lets many answers in: why, how, what do you think	WHAT IT DOES puts two times or groups side by side
EXAMPLE <i>What happened at the Eureka Hotel in October 1854?</i>	EXAMPLE <i>Why do people still disagree about what Eureka means?</i>	EXAMPLE <i>How was voting in 1900 different from voting in 1851?</i>
Answer: a precise fact.	Answer: ideas backed by evidence.	Answer: what changed, what stayed.

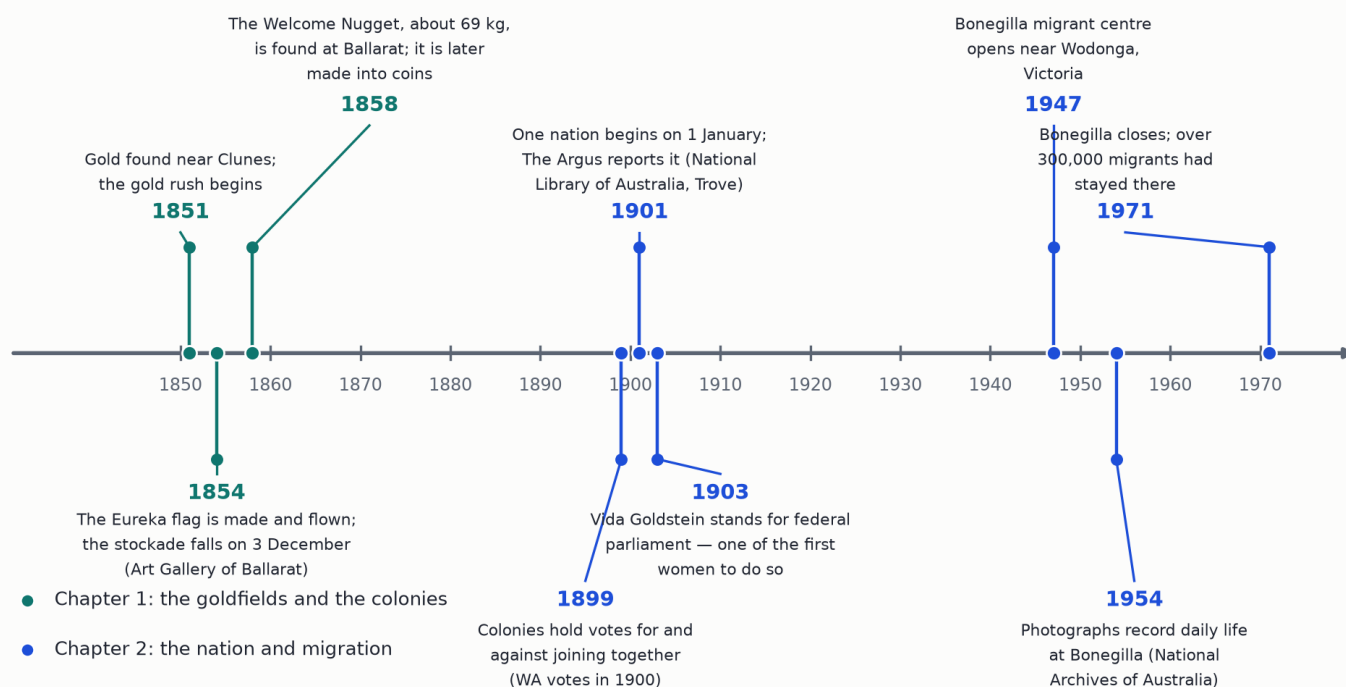
Three cards for probing, open-ended and comparing questions, each with what the question type does, an example, and the kind of answer it brings

6. The working material for our questions

Every question in this section is practised on real people, places, events and sources you have already met in Chapters 1 and 2. The timeline below maps them. Each dot is held in a real collection — the Art Gallery of Ballarat, the National Library of Australia's Trove, or the National Archives of Australia — so any question you build here can be tested against a source that actually exists.

This section's working material, 1851 to 1971

Every dot is real. The colours show which chapter of this book it comes from.



A timeline from 1851 to 1971 of the real events and sources this section practises on, colour-coded by chapter, including the gold rush, the Eureka flag, the Welcome Nugget, Federation, Vida Goldstein and Bonegilla

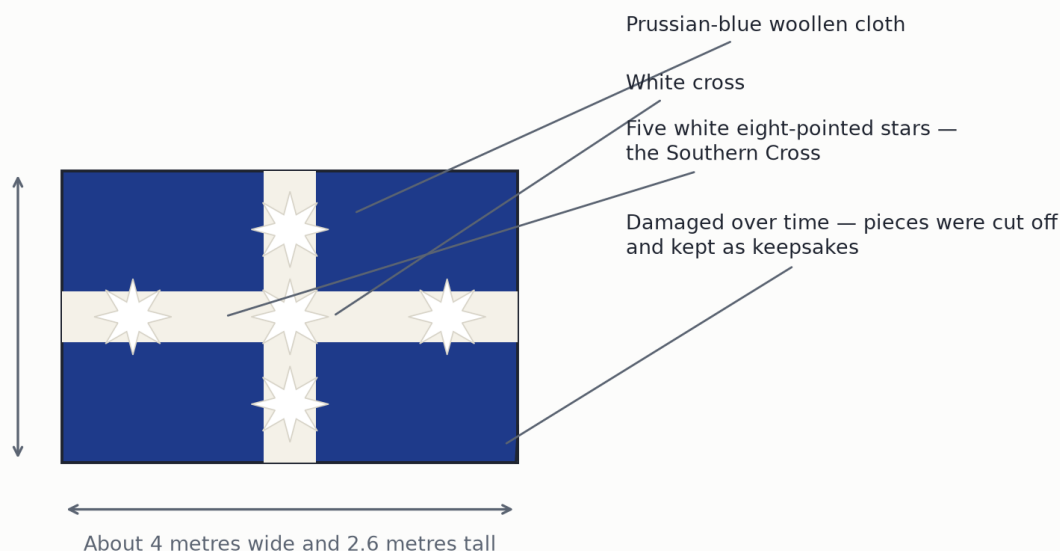
Worked demonstrations

These two demonstrations show the questioning moves on two real sources: an **object** and a **newspaper**. Watch the moves, then try them yourself in the practice tasks.

Worked demonstration 1 — testing the Eureka flag (value questions)

The source. The flag flown by Ballarat diggers in 1854 survives. It is a Prussian-blue woollen flag with a white cross and five white eight-pointed stars, about 4 metres wide and 2.6 metres tall. It was flown during the diggers' protest and later used as evidence in the 1855 treason trials. It is held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat. Figure 3a_eureka_flag.png is an original drawing made for this book from the real flag — study it as you would study the object.

Meet the source: the Eureka flag (made 1854)



An original drawing made for this book, based on the real flag held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.
 Flown by Ballarat diggers during their 1854 protest. • Also used as evidence in the 1855 treason trials.

What can this object tell you? What can it not tell you?

An original labelled drawing of the Eureka flag made for this book: a Prussian-blue field with a white cross and five white eight-pointed stars, about four metres wide and 2.6 metres tall, with a note that the real flag is held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat

How a historian questions it.

Step	Move	What we can say here
1	Features — what can we see?	Blue woollen cloth, a white cross, five eight-pointed stars in the shape of the Southern Cross, a large size (made to be seen by a crowd), and damage — pieces were cut off over time and kept as keepsakes.
2	Type — what kind of source is this?	An object, and a primary source: made in 1854 and actually flown at Ballarat.
3	Context — when, where, what was happening?	Ballarat, December 1854: the diggers' protest against the licence; afterwards the flag was produced as evidence at the 1855 treason trials.
4	Value — what can it tell us, and what can it not?	It can tell us what the protest flag looked like, that the diggers chose the Southern Cross as their sign, and that the flag mattered enough to be kept, flown in court and saved. It cannot tell us who made it — no record proves a maker, and several names have been suggested — or how many diggers stood under it, or what they decided.

The point to copy: work features → type → context → value in that order, and always name what the source is *silent* about before you judge its value for your question.

Worked demonstration 2 — one newspaper through before, during and after

The source. *The Argus* was a Melbourne newspaper that ran from 1846 to 1957. Its New Year 1901 issues report the beginning of the new nation: the ceremony in Centennial Park, Sydney, on 1 January 1901, where Lord Hopetoun was sworn in as the first Governor-General, and Edmund Barton became the first prime minister. The issues are digitised on the National Library of Australia's Trove.

How a historian questions it, stage by stage.

Step	Move	What we can say here
1	BEFORE — frame the inquiry	From Section 2A we know the colonies voted in referendums during 1898–1900 (Western Australia on 31 July 1900), and the new nation was to begin on 1 January 1901. So we expect big news and a proud tone — and we can ask: <i>whose</i> pride is it?
2	DURING — work with the source	The pages tell us what happened in Sydney and how Melbourne reported it. They are silent about the people who voted no, and about the women who still could not vote for the new parliament in most colonies. A during-question: <i>What does this source indicate about how Melbourne felt, and what does it leave out?</i>
3	AFTER — look back and check	<i>How useful was The Argus for my question?</i> For “what happened on 1 January 1901 and how one big city felt about it”, it is a strong primary source — printed on the day. For “how all Australians felt”, it is one city’s view, so we would check other sources too. The after-question raises the next investigation.

The point to copy: the same source is asked different questions at each stage — before questions come from what you know, during questions come from the source itself, after questions judge the source against your big question.

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Use Figure 3a_question_words.png. Match each starter question to the question word that does most of the work: (a) *What did the gold licence cost in 1851?* (b) *Why did the diggers build the stockade?* (c) *Where was the Welcome Nugget found?* (d) *Who was sworn in as the first Governor-General?*

Q2. Use Figure 3a_makeover.png as your model. Remake these weak questions into strong ones: (a) *When did Bonegilla open?* (b) *Did the gold rush change the colonies?* Write one sentence under each remake saying which test (open, testable, worth asking) the weak question failed.

Q3. Sort these questions into **before**, **during** or **after**: (a) *What do I already know about the gold rush?* (b) *What is this source silent about?* (c) *Why do these interpretations differ?* (d) *What do I want to find out?* (e) *Did the evidence change my thinking?*

Q4. Use the four-step checklist in Figure 3a_source_check.png. For the Eureka flag, write one question of your own for step 1 (features), step 2 (type) and step 3 (context).

Q5. Use Figure 3a_purposes.png. Label each question **probing**, **open-ended** or **comparing**: (a) *How heavy was the Welcome Nugget?* (b) *How was voting in 1900 different from voting in 1851?* (c) *Why do people still disagree about what Eureka means?*

Q6. Use Figure 3a_sources_timeline.png. Choose two dots. For each, write one strong question and name the collection where a source for it is held (Art Gallery of Ballarat, National Library of Australia/Trove, or National Archives of Australia).

Q7. Explain in two sentences why *What made the Ballarat diggers so angry in 1854?* is a stronger historical question than *When did the Eureka Stockade happen?*

Q8. Step 4 of Figure 3a_source_check.png asks what a source can **not** tell us. Write two things *The Argus's* New Year 1901 issues cannot tell us, and one thing they can.

Tasks to try on your own

Q9. Choose one topic from Chapter 1 or Chapter 2 (the gold rush, Eureka, Federation, migration, or a person from this book). Build one big historical question for it. List the two or more question words it joins, and say in one sentence how it passes each of the three tests (open, testable, worth asking).

Q10. For your Q9 topic, write one **before**, one **during** and one **after** question.

Q11. Choose one real source for your Q9 topic from Figure 3a_sources_timeline.png. Run it through the four-step check (features, type, context, value) and end with your value judgement: *How useful is this source for my question?*

Q12. Discuss: “A good historical question is one that sources can answer.” Give each side its strongest form. Agree side: history must be testable — a question no source could ever touch is guessing, not history. Disagree side: some questions are worth asking even when sources are silent — *Who made the Eureka flag?* has no proven answer, yet asking it shows where the records have gaps, and keeps historians looking. Say which side you land on and why.

Evidence-based writing task

“Plan your own history investigation.”

Choose one topic from Chapter 1 or Chapter 2 and plan a full investigation using the questions this section has taught. Use Figure 3a_plan.png to plan, then write one to two paragraphs. Your response must:

1. state your topic and your **big question**, and say why it is open, testable and worth asking;
2. include at least two **before** questions, two **during** questions and one **after** question;
3. name two real **sources** you would use, say whether each is primary or secondary, and say where each is held;
4. include one **probing** question and one **open-ended** question for your topic;
5. finish with one paragraph answering: *why is your big question worth asking?*

Success checklist: every source named is real and its collection is stated · the big question passes the three tests · before/during/after questions are correctly placed · the probing and open-ended questions do their different jobs · the closing paragraph gives a reason, not a repeat.

Plan your own history investigation

Choose one topic from Chapter 1 or Chapter 2, then fill in every box in your own words.

MY TOPIC	Pick one: the gold rush • Eureka • Federation • migration • a person from this book
MY BIG QUESTION	One open question worth investigating. It should not be answerable with a single date or a yes or no.
BEFORE questions	Two questions to ask before you start. What do you already know? What do you want to find out?
DURING questions	Two questions to ask while you work with sources. What does each source tell you? What is it silent about?
AFTER questions	One question to ask when you look back. Did you answer your big question? What changed your thinking?
MY SOURCES	Name two sources you would use. Say where each one is held (for example: a museum, an archive, Trove).
ONE PROBING question	A question that digs for one precise detail.
ONE OPEN-ENDED question	A question that lets many answers in.

Finish with one paragraph: why is your big question worth asking?

A planning chart with boxes for my topic, my big question, before, during and after questions, my sources, one probing question and one open-ended question

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. (a) what; (b) why; (c) where; (d) who. (Accept how/what arguments if justified — (a) is also defensible as how much, since cost is a measure.)

Q2. Model remakes: (a) *Why did Australia open migrant centres like Bonegilla after 1947, and what did life feel like there?* — the weak form fails “open” (one date ends it). (b) *How did the gold rush change life in the colonies, and who felt those changes most?* — the weak form fails “open” (yes/no ends it). Any remake passing the three tests earns the mark; the sentence must name the failed test correctly.

Q3. (a) before; (b) during; (c) after; (d) before; (e) after.

Q4. Accept any accurate question per step. Examples — features: *How many stars does the flag have, and how many points on each?* (five; eight). Type: *Is the flag a primary or secondary source, and why?* (primary — made and flown in 1854). Context: *What was happening on the Ballarat diggings when the flag was made?* (the licence protest of late 1854).

Q5. (a) probing; (b) comparing; (c) open-ended.

Q6. Accept any two dots with a strong question and a correct collection. Examples — 1854 flag: *What did the flag’s makers want onlookers to feel?* (Art Gallery of Ballarat). 1954 Bonegilla photographs: *What do the photographs show about daily life at the camp?* (National Archives of Australia). 1901: *How did The Argus describe the Sydney ceremony?* (National Library of Australia, Trove).

Q7. The date question is answered by one fact and closes; the strong question is open (anger had several causes — the fee, the checks, no vote, land), needs evidence, and leads into the whole Eureka story.

Q8. Cannot: how people outside Melbourne felt; what the no-voters thought; (also acceptable) how women felt about being unable to vote in most colonies. Can: what happened at the Sydney ceremony and how Melbourne reported it on the day.

Q9. Award for a question passing the three tests with the joined words listed. Example: *How did Vida Goldstein work for the vote, and what stood in her way?* (how + what; open; testable against election records and her own writings; worth asking because it recovers work the yes/no version hides).

Q10. Check placement: before questions draw on existing knowledge and set up; during questions engage a source (including “silent about”); after questions look back or compare interpretations.

Q11. Award for the four steps in order with an accurate value judgement tied to the student’s own question, including one named silence.

Q12. Award for both sides stated in their strongest form before a position is chosen. Agree side: testability separates history from guessing. Disagree side: silent-source questions expose gaps in the record (the flag’s maker) and keep the search going. Either landing accepted with reasoning.

Writing task. Use the success checklist. Look for: a real topic and big question passing the three tests; correctly placed before/during/after questions; two named real sources with primary/ secondary classification and collection; one probing and one open-ended question doing their different jobs; a closing paragraph that argues worth rather than restating the question. A plan built on a different topic from the model still earns full marks.

Sources used in this section (for the teacher)

All sources are real and citable; data verified 24 August 2026.

1. **The Eureka flag (1854)** — held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat; Prussian-blue woollen field, white cross, five white eight-pointed stars, about 260 × 400 cm; flown during the 1854 Ballarat protest and produced as evidence at the 1855 treason trials; maker contested in published accounts (several names suggested, none proven). Figure 3a_eureka_flag.png is an original drawing made for this book from descriptions of the real flag. Cross-reference: Section 1C sources 2 and 11 (Carboni’s eyewitness account; the contested tolls).
2. **The Argus (Melbourne), 2 June 1846 – 19 January 1957** — newspaper of record, digitised on the National Library of Australia’s Trove; its New Year 1901 issues report the 1 January 1901 proclamation ceremony at Centennial Park, Sydney (Lord Hopetoun sworn in as first Governor-General; Edmund Barton first prime minister). Federation facts cross-reference Section 2A (referendums 1898–1900, Western Australia 31 July 1900).
3. **The Welcome Nugget** — found 9 June 1858 near Bakery Hill, Ballarat, by a party of 22 Cornish miners; about 2,217 troy ounces (≈ 69 kg); sold and bought by the Royal Mint in November 1859 and coined; published histories of the Ballarat goldfields, verified 24 August 2026. No confirmed contemporary photograph is claimed.
4. **Bonegilla Migrant Centre, 1947–1971** — near Wodonga, Victoria; over 300,000 migrants stayed there; records and photographs held by the National Archives of Australia, verified 24 August
5. **Vida Goldstein** — stood for the federal parliament at the 1903 election, one of the first four women to do so; published biographies and election records, verified 24 August 2026.

Sequencing events chronologically: timelines, continuity and change, causes and consequences

Curriculum links (audit metadata). This section owns VC2HH6S02 (putting key events, developments and people's lives in date order so that patterns of continuity and change, plus causes and consequences, come into view). Draws on elaborations VC2HH6S02.E01 (putting events, ideas, movements and people's lives in order along timelines), VC2HH6S02.E02 (adding notes to a flow chart or timeline showing what changed, what continued, and what led to what), VC2HH6S02.E03 (building timelines or tables with digital tools, ordering key events of the 1800s and 1900s — colonial developments or migrant arrivals, for example) and VC2HH6S02.E04 (ordering events and lifetimes into a narrative about Australia's colonial past and what Federation brought). Achievement-standard sentences served: the one on organising events, developments and lives in date order to build a narrative, and the one on identifying and comparing patterns of continuity and change across 1800–2000.

Boundaries. This section teaches the *sequencing* skill only: putting events, developments and lives in date order on timelines and tables, adding notes for continuity/change and cause/consequence, and turning a sequence into a narrative. Describing and comparing the causes of Federation as content is Chapter 2's job (Sections 2A-2B); analysing patterns and rates of change is Section 4A's; constructing full causal explanations is Section 4B's. All working material here is drawn from Chapters 1-2 (per the series plan, skills sections rehearse taught knowledge).

First Nations content: none (content policy Rule 1). This section carries no cross-curriculum priority link in TOC §2A; no First Nations examples appear anywhere in it.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Hook with the four-steps figure: ask students to retell a familiar story backwards and say why it felt wrong - order carries meaning. 2. Use the century strip to fix the frame: every event this book studies sits on one line, 1800-2000, arrow pointing right. 3. Worked demonstration 1 models building and reading the Federation timeline; students then read it back in Q1 and rebuild a timeline in Q7/Q9. 4. Worked demonstration 2 models adding notes to a flow chart (cause/consequence arrows, continuity/change boxes); the colour code (amber cause, teal consequence, green continuity, purple change) runs through the whole section and the writing task. 5. Part 4 does the E04 move explicitly: a life beside the nation's events. Ask "what was already true when she was born? what changed in her lifetime?" 6. Part 5 models the digital table (E03); the cut-out cards are the paper check that ordering survives without the app. 7. Close with the model narrative and the faulty timeline: language features first, then errors. Mark the writing task on sequence, evidence and the change/continuity closing, not on which events a student chooses.

What you will learn in this section

History is full of amazing stories - gold, protests, new laws, a brand-new nation - but they only make sense when they sit in the right order. In this section we build one habit: **put the past in date order, then ask what the order shows.**

Our title uses one long word for this habit - it simply means **in date order**, from first to last. In this section we will usually say "in date order".

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

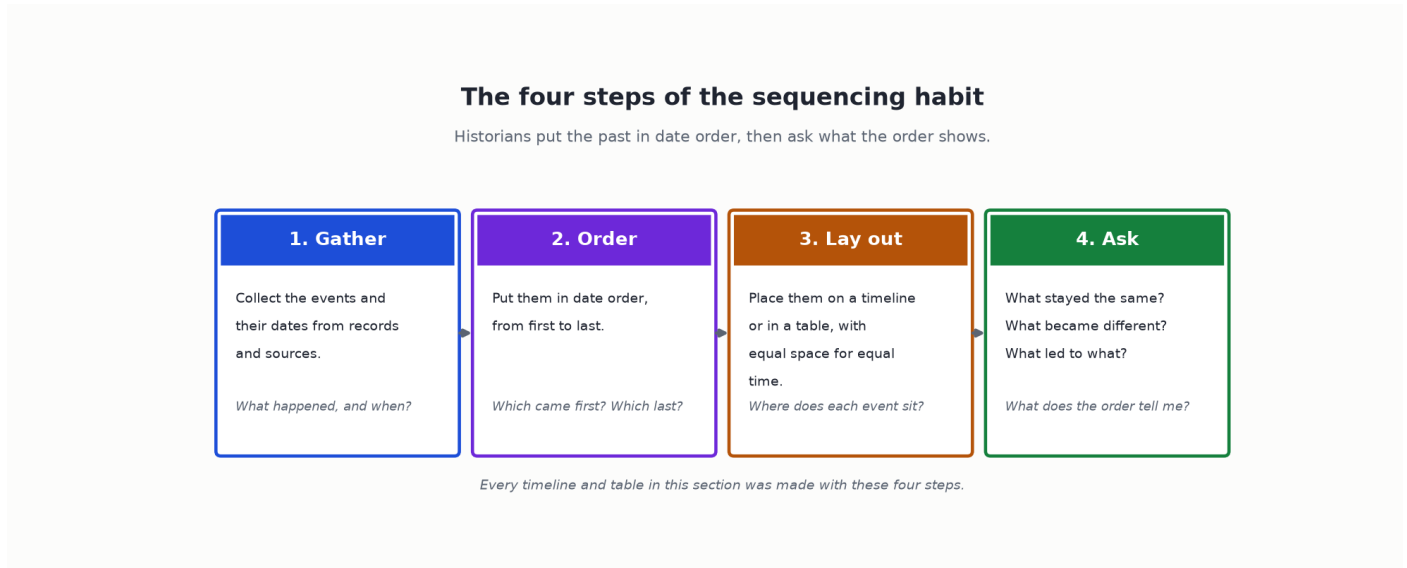
- **sequence** (verb) - to put events in date order, from first to last.
- **timeline** - a line that shows events in date order, with equal space for equal time, a title and an arrow showing which way time flows.
- **continuity** - what stays much the same over time. **Change** - what becomes different.
- **cause** - what makes something happen. **Consequence** - what happens as a result.
- **narrative** - a story told in order. A history narrative is a story built from a sequence, with evidence behind it.

Every fact in this section comes from Chapters 1 and 2 of this book, so nothing here is new content - this is where we learn to *use* what you already know the way historians do.

Part 1: Why order matters

Imagine telling the story of a football match by starting with the final score, then the first goal, then the team running onto the ground. Your listener would be lost. The past works the same way: **order carries meaning**. Which law came first? Was the protest before or after the new rule? Was this person even alive when that happened? Sequencing answers all of these.

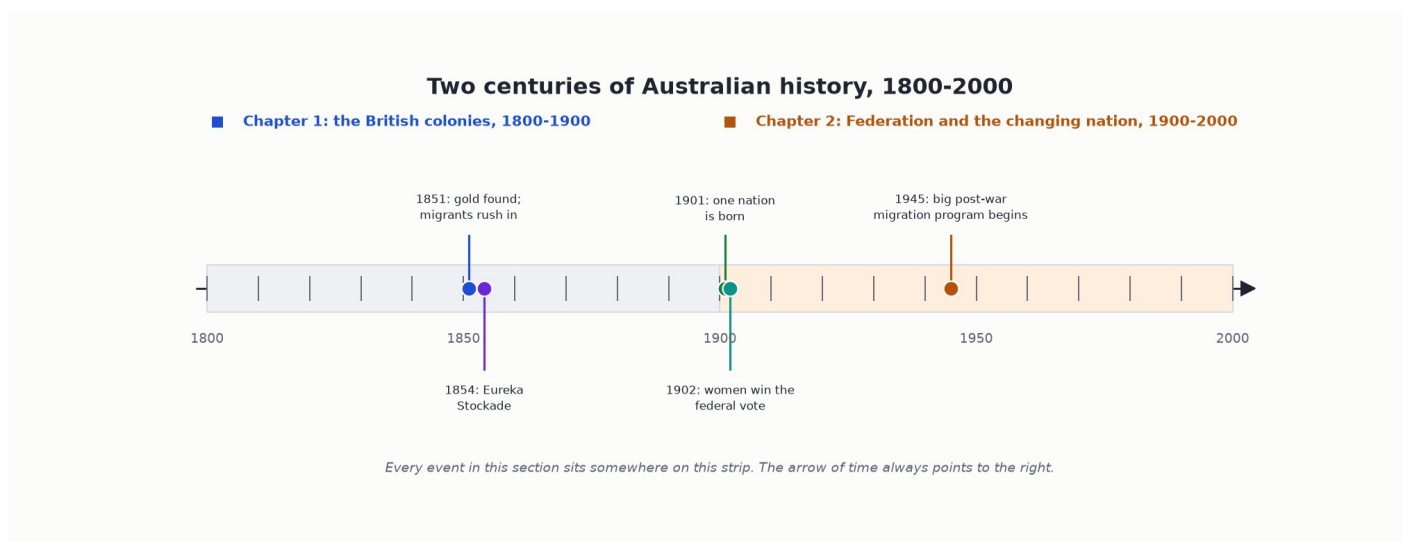
Historians do the sequencing with four steps.



Four numbered step cards - gather, order, lay out, ask - joined by arrows to show the sequencing habit

Notice step 4. A sequence is not just a list: once events sit in date order, the order itself starts asking you questions. *What led to what? What stayed the same? What became different?* Those three questions are the heart of history.

Here is the frame for everything in this book. Every event you studied in Chapters 1 and 2 sits somewhere on this two-century strip.



A 200-year timeline strip from 1800 to 2000 with a band for Chapter 1 and a band for Chapter 2, and five marked events: gold in 1851, Eureka in 1854, one nation in 1901, women's federal vote in 1902, and the post-war migration program in 1945

Two things to notice. First, the arrow: time only flows one way, and every good timeline shows it. Second, the spacing: 1851 sits halfway between 1800 and 1900 because it *is* halfway - equal time gets equal space. That rule is what makes a timeline honest.

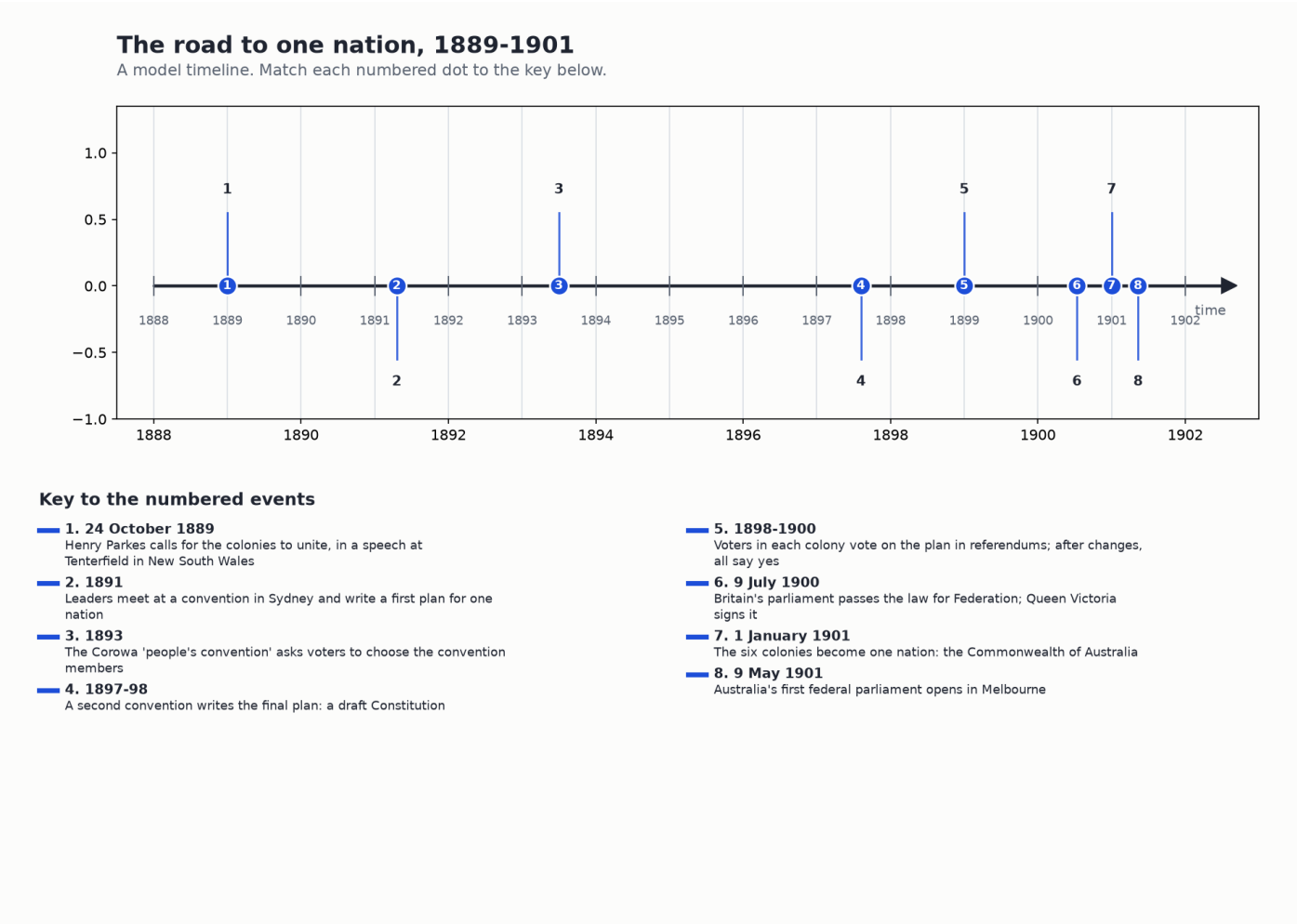
Part 2: Reading and making a timeline

The Federation story is perfect for practising the four steps, because it has real records with real dates: the records of the Australasian Federation Conventions and of the federation referendums (National Archives of Australia and Museum of Australian Democracy; retrieved 24 August 2026).

Worked demonstration 1: how to build and read a timeline

Step	What we do	Why it works
1	Gather the events <i>and</i> their dates from records: e.g. 24 October 1889, Henry Parkes's Tenterfield speech calls for the colonies to unite.	A timeline is only as good as its evidence.
2	Put them in date order, first to last: 1889 speech, 1891 first convention, 1893 Corowa, 1897-98 drafting convention, 1898-1900 referendums, 9 July 1900 British law signed by Queen Victoria, 1 January 1901, 9 May 1901.	Ordering first stops us drawing before we know.
3	Lay them out with equal space for equal time, a title, and an arrow pointing right.	Honest spacing lets the <i>gaps</i> carry meaning too.
4	Ask: what led to what? What do the gaps show?	The order is the evidence for causes and consequences.

Here is the finished timeline.



A timeline of Federation from 1889 to 1901 with eight numbered events, from the Tenterfield speech to the opening of the first federal parliament in Melbourne, with a key beside it

Now read it like a historian. The gap between event 1 (1889) and event 7 (1901) is **12 years**: one nation did not happen quickly - it took a decade of meetings, drafts and votes. Look at the order of events 5, 6 and 7: the voters said yes in referendums *before* Britain's parliament passed the law, and the law came *before* the first day of the new nation. The sequence itself tells you that Federation was built step by step - agreement first, law second, nation third.

Part 3: Adding notes to a flow chart - causes, consequences, continuity, change

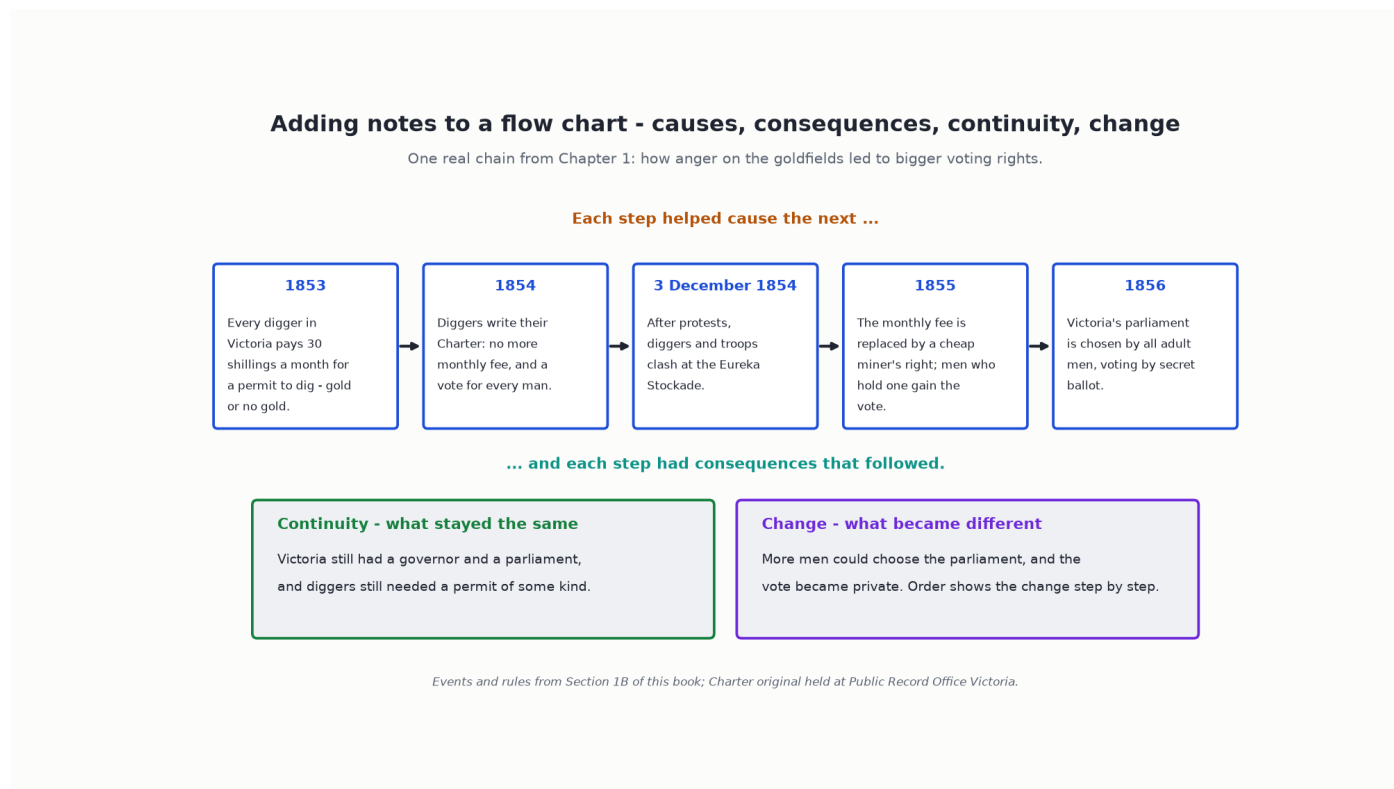
A timeline shows order; notes on the timeline show *meaning*. The move: adding notes to a flow chart or timeline that show what changed, what continued, and what led to what. We will use one real chain from Chapter 1: the anger on the Victorian goldfields. The events and rules are the ones you met in Section 1B, and the Charter original is held at Public Record Office Victoria (retrieved 24 August 2026; the figure puts the Charter in simpler words for students).

Worked demonstration 2: how to add notes to a sequence

Step	What we do	Why it works
1	Check the order first: 1853 permit, 1854 Charter, 3 December 1854 Eureka, 1855 miner's right and the vote, 1856 secret ballot.	Notes on a wrong order teach the wrong story.
2	Label the arrows between boxes with cause words: the 30-shilling permit <i>helped cause</i> the Charter; the	Cause words (<i>because, so, helped cause</i>) make the links visible.

Step	What we do	Why it works
	Charter and the protests <i>helped cause</i> the clash at Eureka; Eureka <i>helped cause</i> the 1855 changes.	
3	Add a consequence note after the last box: more men could choose the parliament, and the vote became private (1856).	Consequence words (<i>as a result, led to</i>) point forward in time.
4	Add two summary boxes: one green (continuity), one purple (change).	It forces both questions: what stayed? what became different?

Here is the chain with its notes added.



A flow chart of five goldfields events from 1853 to 1856 joined by arrows labelled as cause links, with a consequence label and two boxes: continuity in green and change in purple

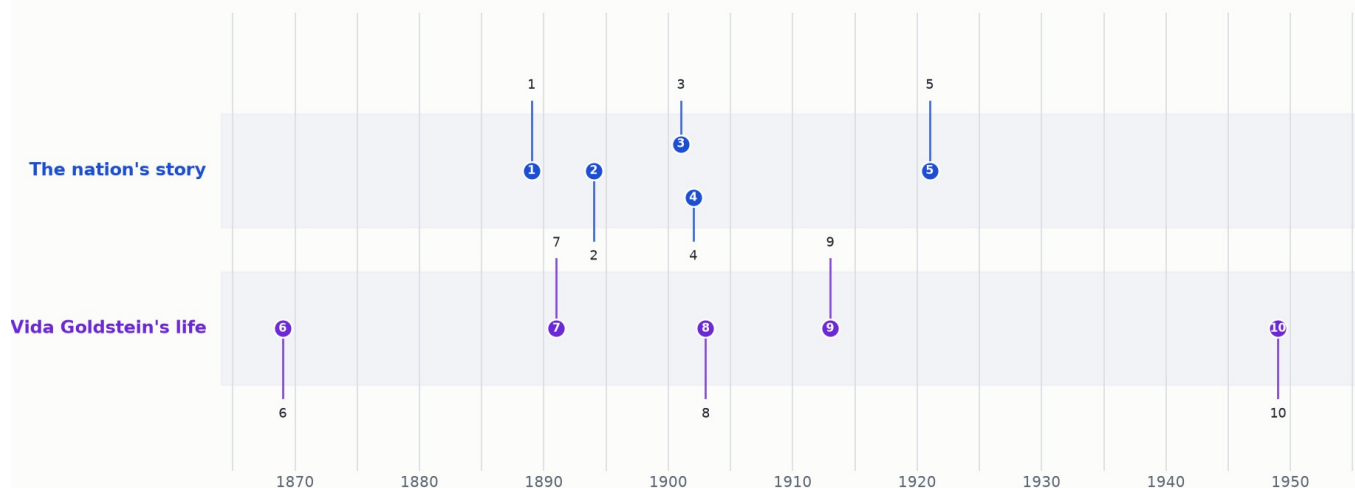
Read the colour code carefully, because we keep it for the whole section: **amber for causes, teal for consequences, green for continuity, purple for change**. One chain, four kinds of meaning - and all of them came from asking questions of the *order*.

Part 4: A life inside the bigger story

Historians also sequence **lives** - and a life makes the biggest sense when it runs beside the nation's story. Meet Vida Goldstein (1869-1949), born at Portland in Victoria, who spent her life campaigning for women's right to vote and to stand for parliament (life dates from the Australian Dictionary of Biography and the National Museum of Australia; retrieved 24 August 2026).

A life inside the bigger story: Vida Goldstein, 1869-1949

Her life line runs beside the nation's events. Match each numbered dot to the key below.



Key to the numbered events

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 1889 — Henry Parkes calls for the colonies to unite (Tenterfield speech)</p> <p>2 1894 — women in South Australia win the right to vote and to stand for parliament</p> <p>3 1901 — the six colonies become one nation</p> <p>4 1902 — a federal law gives women the vote in federal elections</p> <p>5 1921 — Edith Cowan becomes the first woman elected to an Australian parliament (WA)</p> | <p>6 1869 — Vida Jane Goldstein is born at Portland, Victoria</p> <p>7 1891 — she joins the campaign for women's right to vote</p> <p>8 1903 — she stands for the Senate in Victoria: the first woman to stand for federal parliament</p> <p>9 1913 — she founds the Women's Political Association; she stands for parliament five times in all by 1917</p> <p>10 1949 — she dies in Melbourne</p> |
|---|---|

History 6 · Section 3B

Two timeline lanes side by side over the same years, 1864 to 1956: the nation's story in blue and Vida Goldstein's life in purple, with ten numbered events matched to a key below

Use the key, then ask the ordering questions. Vida was born in 1869 - twenty-two years *before* she joined the campaign in 1891, and thirty-three years before the federal vote law of 1902. She stood for the Senate in 1903, **one year after** the 1902 law made it possible for women to stand - the sequence shows the law coming first, then her historic stand. And look at dot 5: by the time Edith Cowan was elected in 1921, Vida had already stood for parliament five times. One life, one nation, one shared line: that is sequencing doing real historical work.

Part 5: Tables and digital tools

Timelines are not the only way to sequence. A **table** is a timeline folded into rows: one row per event, the year in its own column, sorted first to last. Historians do this with digital tools every day - and so can you. The events below are the migration story you studied in Sections 1B and 2B (migration records, National Archives of Australia; retrieved 24 August 2026).

A model table made in a digital app: migration, 1851-1973

Each row holds one event. The rows are sorted by year, first to last.

Year	Event	Why it matters
1851	Gold is found in New South Wales and Victoria.	Hundreds of thousands of migrants arrive to dig.
1855	Victoria's law taxes Chinese arrivals 10 pounds each.	It limits how many can come by ship.
1860	Cameleers arrive with camels from India and the Afghanistan region.	They carry goods across dry country where horses fail.
1901	A new federal law can keep migrants out with a dictation test.	It lets the government choose who may come.
1945	After World War II, Australia starts a big program to bring migrants from Europe.	Workers are needed to build and to fill new factories.
1958	The dictation test is removed from migration law.	The rules start to open up.
1966	Migration rules change so people from more countries can come.	Migrant families arrive from Asia as well as Europe.
1973	Australia names its official multicultural policy.	Migrants are encouraged to keep parts of their culture.

How this table was made in a table app: type one row per event, put the year in its own column, then use the sort tool to order the rows by year. Finish with the 'why it matters' column.

Events drawn from Sections 1B and 2B of this book.

A model table made in a table app, with eight migration events from 1851 to 1973 sorted by year, each row giving the event and why it matters, plus a tip box on sorting by year

Three table habits to copy: one event per row; the year in its own column so the sort tool can order it; and a “why it matters” column so the table holds meaning, not just dates. Read the order: from 1851 to 1973 the rules swing from *come* (gold) to *keep out* (the dictation test) to *open up again* (1958-1973). The sequence is the story.

No app handy? The same skill works with paper. Cut out these eight cards (the same eight events, shuffled) and put them in date order.

Event cards: cut them out, then put them in date order

These are the same eight events as the model table - shuffled. Write the year next to each letter.

C A new federal law can keep migrants out with a dictation test.	F Australia names its official multicultural policy.
A Gold is found in New South Wales and Victoria.	G The dictation test is removed from migration law.
B Cameleers arrive with camels from India and the Afghanistan region.	H Migration rules change so people from more countries can come.
D After World War II, Australia starts a big program to bring migrants from Europe.	E Victoria's law taxes Chinese arrivals 10 pounds each.

Hint: find the oldest event first. Check your order against the model table when you finish.

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Eight lettered cards, A to H, each describing one migration event without its year, shuffled out of order, to cut out and sequence

Part 6: From sequence to story

The final move is turning a sequence into a **narrative** - a story in order, with the links made visible. Here is a model, built only from the Federation timeline in Part 2. The coloured parts are the language of sequencing.

From sequence to story: a model narrative

This story uses the events of the Federation timeline. The coloured parts are the language of sequencing.

In 1889, the six colonies were separate places. Each had its own laws,

and goods were taxed at the borders. Henry Parkes believed the colonies

would be stronger as one country, so he called on them to unite.

By 1898, leaders had met at conventions and written a plan for one nation,

and voters in each colony said yes to it in referendums.

As a result, on 1 January 1901, the six colonies became one country:

the Commonwealth of Australia. Trade became simpler because there were

no more border taxes, and one federal parliament made laws for the nation.

Yet much stayed the same: each state kept its own parliament, and

Australia stayed part of the British Empire.

Key to the colours

● time phrases - say when

● cause words - say why

● consequence words - say what followed

● change words - say what became different

● continuity words - say what stayed the same

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A model narrative of Federation, about ten lines, with time phrases in blue, cause words in amber, consequence words in teal, change words in purple and continuity words in green, plus a key to the colours

Every coloured family does one job: blue says *when*, amber says *why*, teal says *what followed*, purple says *what became different*, green says *what stayed the same*. A sequenced narrative is just a timeline wearing these words.

Finally, read like a historian by spotting a sequence done badly. This student timeline breaks the rules we set in Part 1. Find the four mistakes before you read the flags.

A student's timeline - can you find four mistakes?

Read it like a historian. What is wrong, and why does each mistake make it hard to read?



- 1 These dates are not in date order.
- 2 The gaps between marks are not equal for equal time.
- 3 One mark has no date at all.
- 4 There is no title, and no arrow to show time's direction.

The events are real ones from the Federation timeline. Fix the timeline in your workbook.

A faulty student timeline with the dates 1891, 1901, 1889 and one undated mark, uneven spacing, no title and no arrow, above four numbered red flags listing the mistakes

A timeline with the wrong order tells the wrong story; a timeline with uneven spacing hides the gaps; a mark without a date cannot be checked; and without a title and an arrow, a reader cannot even tell which way time flows. Fixing this timeline in your workbook is exactly the habit this section builds.

Practice questions - with help

- Q1.** Use the Federation timeline (Part 2). (a) What is the first numbered event, and its date? (b) What is the last? (c) How many years passed between the Tenterfield speech and 1 January 1901?
- Q2.** Use the cut-out cards (Part 5). Write the letters in date order, with the year beside each. Check against the model table.
- Q3.** Use the faulty timeline (Part 6). List its four mistakes, and say why each one makes the timeline hard to trust.
- Q4.** Use the goldfields flow chart (Part 3). (a) Name one cause link (which event helped cause which?). (b) Name one consequence of the whole chain. (c) Give one continuity. (d) Give one change.
- Q5.** Use the lives figure (Part 4). (a) Which came first: Vida's birth or the Tenterfield speech, and by how many years? (b) Was her 1903 Senate stand before or after the 1902 federal vote law? (c) What does that order tell you about why her stand was possible in 1903?
- Q6.** Use the digital table (Part 5). (a) Which event sits in the top row? (b) How many years are between the gold rush (1851) and the post-war migration program (1945)? (c) Between 1901 and 1973, what changed about who could come to Australia?
- Q7.** Draw your own timeline with equal spacing, a title and an arrow for these four dates from the lives figure: 1889, 1894, 1901, 1921. Label each mark with one short line.
- Q8.** Sort these words and phrases from the model narrative into five lists - *time*, *cause*, *consequence*, *change*, *continuity*: "In 1889", "because", "As a result", "became one country", "stayed the same", "By 1898", "so", "kept".
-

Practice questions - on your own

- Q9.** Choose five dated events from Chapters 1-2 (at least one from each chapter). Build a timeline with equal spacing, a title and an arrow, then add two notes: one cause link and one consequence, using amber/teal label words of your own.
- Q10.** Here is a democracy chain to add notes to: 1855 (Victoria) men who hold a miner's right gain the vote; 1856 (Victoria) the secret ballot; 1894 (South Australia) women win the right to vote and to stand; 1902 (federal law) women vote in federal elections. Add one cause note, one consequence note, one continuity note and one change note.
- Q11.** Put a life inside the bigger story. Choose Henry Parkes, Edith Cowan or Vida Goldstein. Give three dated events from the person's life and two dated events from the nation's story, put all five in date order, and write two sentences on what the order shows.
- Q12.** Two students each draw the goldfields chain (1853, 1854, 1855, 1856). Ana's timeline has a title, an arrow, dates in order and equal spacing. Ben's has no arrow, uneven spacing and the dates in the order 1855, 1853, 1856, 1854. Say whose timeline is easier to read, and give three sequencing rules to fix the other one.
-

Evidence-based writing task

Write a sequenced narrative (about 150 words): **Choose one story from this section - Federation, the goldfields chain, or the migration story 1851-1973 - and tell it in date order.**

Your narrative must include:

1. at least three time phrases (e.g. *In 1889*, *By 1898*, *As a result*, *on 1 January 1901*);

2. at least one cause word and one consequence word (*because, so, as a result, led to*);
3. two real dates taken from a figure or table in this section, named in your writing;
4. one closing sentence that says what **changed** and what **stayed the same**.

Check before handing in: your events are in true date order; every fact can be pointed to in a figure, table or source line in this section; your colours would match the key in Part 6 (blue when, amber why, teal what followed, purple change, green continuity).

Answers (questions with help)

Q1. (a) The Tenterfield speech: 24 October 1889, Henry Parkes calls for the colonies to unite. (b) The first federal parliament opens in Melbourne, 9 May 1901. (c) 12 years (1889 to 1901).

Q2. A (1851), E (1855), B (1860), C (1901), D (1945), G (1958), H (1966), F (1973).

Q3. (1) Dates not in date order (1891, 1901, then 1889) - the story reads wrong. (2) Unequal gaps for equal time - the spacing hides how long things took. (3) One mark has no date - it cannot be checked or ordered. (4) No title and no arrow - a reader cannot tell what it is or which way time flows.

Q4. (a) Example: the 30-shilling permit helped cause the Charter (or: Eureka helped cause the 1855 changes). (b) More men could choose the parliament, and voting became private. (c) Victoria still had a governor and a parliament; diggers still needed a permit of some kind. (d) The vote became private, and more men could choose the parliament.

Q5. (a) Vida's birth (1869), 20 years before the 1889 speech. (b) After - one year after the 1902 law. (c) The law had to come first: once the 1902 federal law let women vote and stand, her 1903 stand became possible. The order is the explanation.

Q6. (a) 1851, gold found in New South Wales and Victoria. (b) 94 years. (c) In 1901 the dictation test let the government choose who may come; by 1958-1973 the test was removed, rules opened to more countries, and multicultural policy encouraged migrants to keep their cultures.

Q7. Check: title present; arrow pointing right; marks in the order 1889, 1894, 1901, 1921 with gaps growing honestly (5 years, 7 years, 20 years); one short label per mark.

Q8. Time: "In 1889", "By 1898". Cause: "because", "so". Consequence: "As a result". Change: "became one country". Continuity: "stayed the same", "kept".

Model responses (point form)

Q9. Example (gold and migration). Sequence: 1851 gold; 1855 Victoria's 10-pound tax on Chinese arrivals; 1860 cameleers arrive; 1901 dictation test; 1945 post-war program. Cause note (amber): *because* gold was found, hundreds of thousands of migrants rushed in. Consequence note (teal): *as a result* of the rush, Victoria wrote a tax that singled out one group. Equal spacing, title, arrow all present.

Q10. Cause: the secret ballot (1856) grew out of the diggers' push for a fair say, so Eureka's anger helped cause private voting. Consequence: *as a result* of 1894 in South Australia, women there could vote and stand, ahead of the federal law of 1902. Continuity: through all four steps, parliaments still made the rules. Change: the "who may vote" grew from some men (1855) to include women in federal elections (1902).

Q11. Example (Edith Cowan). Life: 1861 born in Western Australia; 1921 elected to a state parliament; 1924 leaves parliament. Nation: 1894 South Australian women win the vote and the right to stand; 1902 federal law lets women vote in federal elections. Order shows: the 1894 and 1902 laws came *before* her 1921 election - the changed rules made her election possible; and she was born three decades before the first of those laws, so most of her life was lived under the old rules.

Q12. Ana's is easier to read: correct order, honest spacing, title and arrow. Fixes for Ben's: (1) put the dates in date order, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856; (2) give equal space to equal time; (3) add a title and an arrow pointing right so a reader knows the story and its direction.

Writing task - model points (Federation). Time phrases: *In 1889* (Tenterfield speech); *By 1898* (conventions and referendums); *As a result, on 1 January 1901*. Cause: *because* Parkes and later leaders believed the colonies would be stronger together, they pressed them to unite. Consequence: trade *became simpler* as a result of removing border taxes. Named dates: 24 October 1889 and 1 January 1901 (from the Part 2 timeline). Closing: the six colonies changed into one nation, yet each state kept its own parliament - change and continuity in the same sentence.

Historical sources: describing features, content and context

Curriculum links (audit metadata). This section owns VC2HH6S03 (describing what historical sources are like — their features, their content and the context they were made in). Draws on elaborations VC2HH6S03.E01 (whole - different views on the vote for women, with reasons proposed), VC2HH6S03.E02 (whole - checking a source's publishing details) and VC2HH6S03.E03 (whole - a table summarising sources by their features, type, context and content). Working material is drawn from Chapters 1 and 2 per the series plan: the goldfields and Eureka (1B, 1C), the vote for women (2B), Federation (2A) and post-war migration (the 1D/2C migration thread). Achievement-standard sentence served: the one on naming the features, the content and the context of primary and secondary sources (the following clause, on the value of evidence, is owned by section 3D). Every source named is a real, citable artifact with its holding collection; all holdings checked and retrieved 24 August 2026.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Hook with the size: tell students the 1891 petition is about 260 metres long, then ask what a request that big must have felt like to a parliament. 2. Teach the two kinds early (Part 2 figure) and run the sort test on three quick examples before the three questions. 3. Teach the three-question frame (Part 3 figure); run Worked demonstration 1 together so the model answer for the petition is on the board before students try one themselves. 4. In Part 4, have students predict what each side of the vote question said before revealing the AGAINST column - then ask who made each source and what they wanted (this is the proposing- reasons move of E01). 5. In Part 5, Worked demonstration 2 models the summary table; students add the petition row, then one row of their own from Chapters 1-2. 6. Close with the routine figure (Part 7) and the writing task; mark on the reasoning steps (features, content and context kept separate, sources named), not on the conclusion reached.

What you will learn in this section

How do we know about the past? Nobody alive today stood on the Ballarat goldfields in 1854, and nobody alive today handed the 1891 petition to the Victorian parliament. We know about these things because **sources** survived.

This section teaches one skill, in three parts: how to describe the **features**, the **content** and the **context** of a historical source.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **source** - anything left over from the past, or made later about the past, that can tell us about it.
- **primary source** - made at the time, by people who were there.
- **secondary source** - made later, by people looking back at the past.
- **features** - what kind of thing a source is, and how, when, where and by whom it was made.
- **content** - what a source says or shows: its words, pictures, people, objects and message.
- **context** - what was happening at the time and place a source comes from; the background you need in order to understand it.
- **suffrage** - the right to vote. You will meet this word inside the real names of two sources below; in the rest of this section we simply say “the vote”.

Every source used in this section is real. Each one sits in a named collection - an archive, a library, a museum or a parliament - and most can be opened on a screen from your classroom.

Part 1: Sources of many kinds

A source is not just an old book. Anything that carries information about the past can be a source - paper, paint, stone, cloth, a building, a photo. Look at the table:

Types of sources - with a real example of each

Type of source	A real example	Where it is kept
Written documents	the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition, about 30,000 signatures on paper	Public Record Office Victoria
Newspapers	The Argus, a Melbourne newspaper, Federation Day - 1 January 1901	State Library of Victoria; free to read online through Trove
Photographs	a 1949 photograph of British migrants waving from the deck of their ship	National Archives of Australia
Posters	the 'Australia - Land of Tomorrow' migration poster, shown 1949-1951	National Archives of Australia
Paintings	The Big Picture by Tom Roberts, finished 1903 - the first federal parliament	Parliament House, Canberra
Objects	the Eureka flag, made by 1854 and flown at Ballarat	Art Gallery of Ballarat
Places and buildings	Bonegilla migrant camp, Victoria, open 1947-1971 - the buildings still stand	the place itself, now a museum
Pages written later	a Public Record Office Victoria web page about the 1891 petition	online, at prov.vic.gov.au

Every one of these can be seen, held or visited - that is what makes them sources historians can check.

Table of eight types of historical sources, each with a real example from Australia between 1800 and 2000 and the collection that keeps it

Notice two things. First, the types are very different - a 260-metre petition and a camp in the bush are both sources. Second, every example has an address: a collection that keeps it, or a place you can visit. That is what makes a source checkable. If a “source” has no home that anyone can visit, a historian cannot check it - and a source you cannot check is not yet a source.

Part 2: Two kinds of sources

Historians sort every source into two kinds before they use it.

Two kinds of sources - same topic, different kind

Primary source

Made at the time, by people who were there

Can be:

- letters and diaries
- photos, posters, objects
- government records, newspapers of the day
- buildings and places

Example: the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition

Made in 1891 by women in Victoria who wanted the vote. They collected the signatures themselves. The petition is left over from the event itself.

Secondary source

Made later, by people looking back

Can be:

- books and articles by historians
- museum web pages
- documentaries and timelines
- your textbook, too

Example: a web page about the petition

Written today by staff at the Public Record Office Victoria, using the petition and other records. They were not there in 1891 - they look back with evidence.

Sort test: was it made at the time? Yes - primary. Made later, to explain the past? Secondary.

Two panels comparing primary sources, made at the time by people who were there, with secondary sources, made later by people looking back, using the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition and a modern web page about it

The sort test is short: **was it made at the time?** Yes - primary. Made later, to explain the past? Secondary.

Watch the test at work on one topic. The petition itself is primary: it was made in 1891 by the very women who wanted the vote, and it is left over from the event. A web page about the petition, written by staff at the Public Record Office Victoria this century, is secondary: its writers were not there in 1891 - they looked back at records, the way a historian does.

One kind is not "better" than the other. A primary source puts you face to face with the past. A secondary source gives you the background - the context - that a primary source never spells out. Good historians use both, and they always know which kind they are holding.

Part 3: Three questions - features, content, context

Describing a source means answering three questions, in order.

The three questions to ask about any source

Answer all three, in order, and you have described a source like a historian.

1. FEATURES	2. CONTENT	3. CONTEXT
What kind of thing is it? What sort of source? (letter, photo, poster, building ...) Who made it? When and where was it made? What is it made of? How big is it? How was it shared - printed, handwritten, painted, built?	What does it say or show? What words, pictures or objects can you see in it? Who or what is it about? What is its message? What can you learn from it straight away?	What was happening at the time? What year and place does it come from? What was going on there then? What do you need to know to understand it? Why then? Why there?

Three panels showing the three questions to ask about any source: features, what kind of thing is it; content, what does it say or show; context, what was happening at the time

Worked demonstration 1: describing a real source, question by question

Worked demonstration 1 - describing a real source

The 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition, Victoria

FEATURES - what kind of thing is it?

A petition - a written request to parliament. Paper pages joined end to end onto cloth, about 260 metres long. Signed by almost 30,000 women. Collected across Victoria by women's groups and presented to parliament on 29 September 1891. Kept today at the Public Record Office Victoria.

CONTENT - what does it say or show?

It asks the Victorian parliament to give women the vote. Its content is nearly all names - thousands of them, in different handwriting - which shows how many women wanted this, and how hard the collectors worked to get every signature.

CONTEXT - what was happening at the time?

In the 1890s, women in Victoria could not vote in parliament elections. Groups formed to change that: they held meetings, wrote letters and collected signatures. In 1891 the parliament did not agree - Victoria's women waited until 1908 for the vote. The petition shows how big and organised the campaign was, years before it won.

Source: original petition, Public Record Office Victoria (prov.vic.gov.au); retrieved 24 August 2026.

Worked demonstration card describing the features, the content and the context of the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition, kept at the Public Record Office Victoria

Now the publishing details - the small print that pins a source down (this is what E02-style checking looks like for a newspaper):

Publishing detail	The Argus, Federation Day
Name of the paper	<i>The Argus</i>
City	Melbourne
Date	1 January 1901 - the day the Commonwealth of Australia began
What kind of source	a newspaper printed that day: primary for Federation
Where to read it now	State Library of Victoria, and free online through Trove

The same move works on any source. The petition has no publisher, so its details are: who made it (women's groups), when (1891), where (Victoria), and who keeps it now (Public Record Office Victoria). Checking those details before you describe a source is step 2 of the routine in Part 7 - it stops you describing the wrong thing.

Part 4: One issue, different views

Sources do not all agree - and that is a good thing, because different views show you what people cared about. In Victoria around 1900, one issue divided the colony: should women have the vote?

One issue, different views: should women have the vote?

Victoria, 1891-1900. Both sides used the same kind of source - petitions and letters - to argue.

FOR the vote		AGAINST the vote	
Source	the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition	Source	a petition against the vote, Victoria, 1900
Features	about 30,000 signatures on paper about 260 metres long; presented to parliament 29 September 1891	Features	22,978 signatures; presented to the Victorian parliament in 1900
Content	a request that women be allowed to vote in parliament elections	Content	a request that women NOT be given the vote; its writers said voting was not 'woman's sphere'
Context	made by women's groups while parliament was debating a bill to give women the vote - the bill failed that year	Context	made while Victoria's parliament was again debating the vote for women; letters against the vote also appeared in <i>The Argus</i> newspaper

Historian's move: who made each source, and what did they want? That is where reasons for different views come from.

Two columns of sources on the question of votes for women in Victoria: the 1891 petition for the vote with about 30,000 signatures, and the 1900 petition against it with 22,978 signatures

Both sides used the same kinds of sources: petitions, letters to newspapers such as *The Argus*, and drawings - a cartoon against the vote appeared in the magazine *Melbourne Punch* in 1900, drawn by George Dancey. Victoria's parliament heard all of it; the bill failed in 1891, and Victoria's women did not win the vote until 1908 - while South Australian women had won it back in 1895.

Now do the historian's move from the figure: **propose reasons for the different views**. Do not say one side was silly. Ask who made each source and what they wanted. The petition collectors wanted a say in the laws they had to obey; the 1900 writers believed voting sat outside "woman's sphere". Two views, two pictures of what women should be able to do - and the sources let you see both pictures clearly. That is exactly what sources are for.

Part 5: A table of sources

One source is a story; a table of sources is a toolkit. Historians keep tables like this so they can see, at a glance, what each source is and what it holds.

Worked demonstration 2: building the table

Step	What we do	Why it works
1	Pick sources on the topics we are studying (here: Chapters 1 and 2).	A table is only as good as its sources.
2	Name each source and its type.	Type tells you what the source can carry.
3	Write its features in a few words.	Features say what kind of thing it is.

Step	What we do	Why it works
4	Write its context in a few words.	Context says why it was made then and there.
5	Write the information it contains.	That is the content - the pay-off.

Here is the table, filled in for four real sources:

A source table - four real sources from Chapters 1 and 2				
Source	Type	Features	Context	What it tells us
Ballarat Reform League Charter, 27 November 1854	handwritten document	a list of demands passed at a public meeting at Bakery Hill, Ballarat; kept at the Public Record Office Victoria	goldfields, 1854; diggers paid a permit fee and had no vote; weeks before the Eureka Stockade	what the diggers wanted changed, in their own words
'Australia - Land of Tomorrow' poster, shown 1949-1951	poster	coloured printed poster advertising assisted passages; kept at the National Archives of Australia	after World War II, Australia wanted more workers; British adults could come for 10 pounds	how the government sold the idea of moving to Australia to British families
The Big Picture by Tom Roberts, finished 1903	painting	a very large oil painting of the first federal parliament, opened 9 May 1901 in Melbourne; hangs in Parliament House, Canberra	the six colonies had just become one nation, and the country wanted to mark the moment	how the new nation chose to picture its first day
Bonegilla migrant camp, Victoria, 1947-1971	place - buildings still standing	a camp in north-east Victoria where about 300,000 migrants first stayed; now a museum you can visit	the years of the big migration schemes after World War II	what the first weeks in Australia felt like for many new arrivals

One table, four sources, all real. Your turn: add a row for the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition.

Model source table that sums up four real sources - the Ballarat Reform League Charter, the Australia Land of Tomorrow poster, The Big Picture painting and Bonegilla migrant camp - by type, features, context and the information each contains

Your turn is set in the practice questions: add a fifth row for the 1891 petition, then one more row for any source you choose from Chapters 1 or 2.

Part 6: Where sources live

Sources are kept by collections whose whole job is to look after them and let people check them.

Where do sources live?

Real collections you can visit or search online - all of them hold sources used in this section.

Public Record Office Victoria

the Victorian government's records: petitions like the 1891 petition, court files, school and hospital records

prov.vic.gov.au

National Archives of Australia

the Commonwealth's records: migration posters and passenger lists, citizenship files, photos

naa.gov.au

State Library of Victoria

newspapers, books, maps and photos - including The Argus issues from Federation week

slv.vic.gov.au

Trove, run by the National Library of Australia

a free online doorway to millions of old newspaper pages - you can read Federation Day news from your classroom

trove.nla.gov.au

Museums and galleries

the Art Gallery of Ballarat keeps the Eureka flag; Parliament House, Canberra hangs The Big Picture; Bonegilla's camp buildings are themselves a source

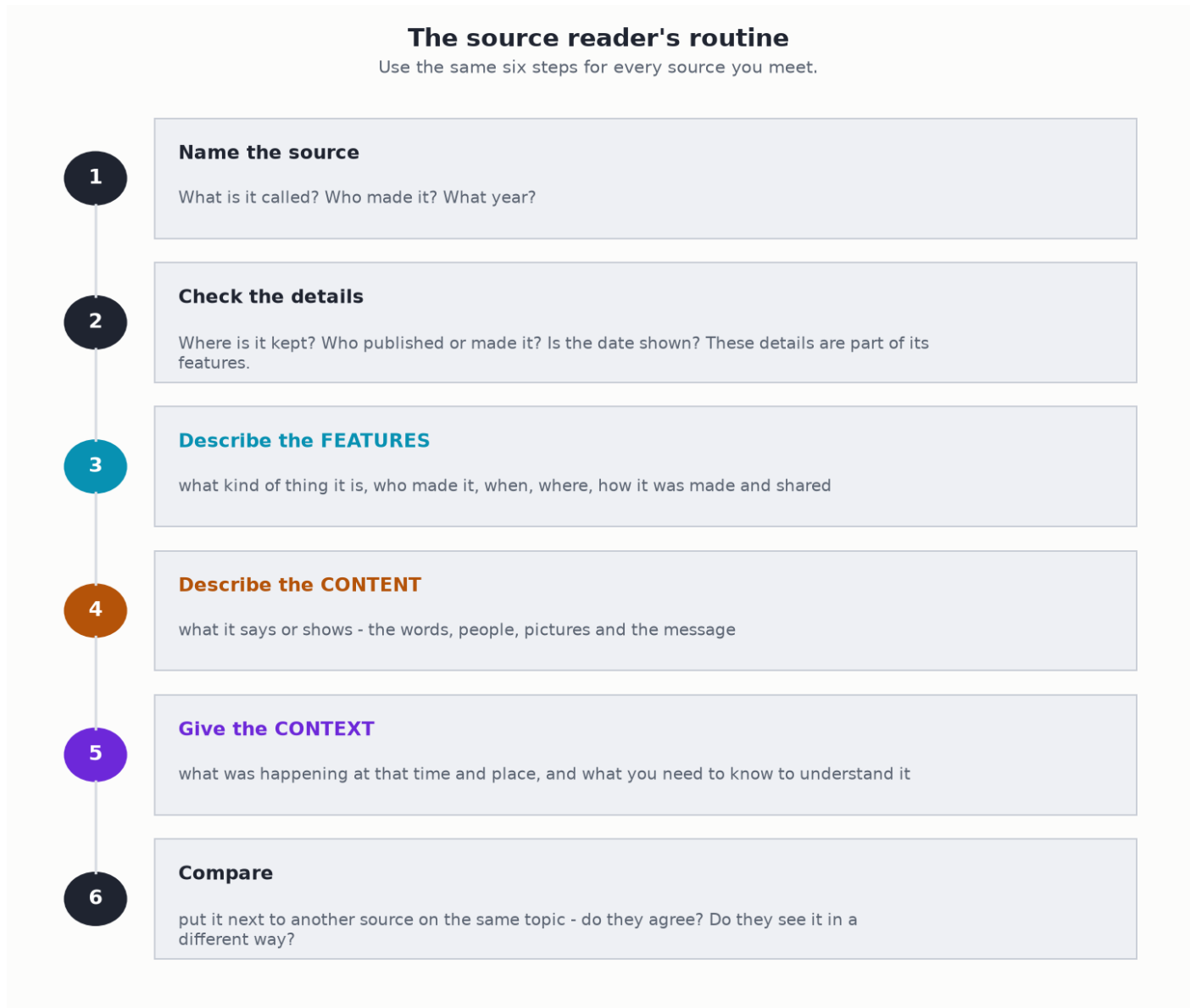
[visit in person or online](#)

Five cards showing the collections that keep this section's sources: Public Record Office Victoria, National Archives of Australia, State Library of Victoria, Trove at the National Library of Australia, and museums and galleries

A habit worth copying: when you use a source, **write down where it lives**. "The Argus, 1 January 1901, State Library of Victoria, read through Trove" is a full source note - anyone can now go and check what you said. Most of these collections have put their treasures online, so a class in any part of Victoria can read Federation Day news or scroll the petition from a screen. (Retrieved online sources carry the date you looked at them - ours here is 24 August 2026.)

Part 7: The source reader's routine

Six steps, every time. The coloured steps are the three questions from Part 3.



Flow chart of the source reader's routine: name the source, check the details, describe the features, describe the content, give the context, compare with other sources

Two closing habits:

- **Keep the three answers separate.** A feature is what kind of thing it is; content is what it shows; context is what was happening. Mixing them up is the commonest source mistake.
- **Name the source and its home.** “A petition” is weak. “The 1891 Women’s Suffrage Petition, Public Record Office Victoria” is strong - and checkable.

Practice questions - with help

Q1. Use the source-types table. (a) Name two types of source that are not made of paper. (b) Which collection keeps the Eureka flag? (c) Which row is a source you can walk around inside?

Q2. Use the sort test. Label each source primary or secondary: (a) the 1891 Women’s Suffrage Petition; (b) a Public Record Office Victoria web page about that petition; (c) a photograph of migrants on a ship’s deck, taken 1949; (d) a film about Federation made in 2001.

- Q3.** Use Worked demonstration 1. Write (a) one feature of the petition; (b) one fact about its content; (c) one fact about its context.
- Q4.** Use the publishing-details table. (a) What was the paper's name? (b) Which city was it printed in? (c) What date is on that issue? (d) Where can you read it online, free?
- Q5.** Use the two views figure. (a) About how many signatures did each petition gather? (b) In what year did Victorian women win the vote? (c) Give one reason, from the figure, that the 1900 writers gave for their view.
- Q6.** Use the summary table. (a) Which source is a painting? (b) Which source is a place? (c) What does the poster tell a historian?
- Q7.** Use the collections figure. (a) Which collection keeps Victorian government records such as the petition? (b) Which collection keeps the migration poster? (c) Which free online doorway leads to old newspaper pages?
- Q8.** Put these six routine steps back in order: describe the content; name the source; give the context; check the details; compare with other sources; describe the features.
-

Practice questions - on your own

- Q9.** Choose the "Australia - Land of Tomorrow" poster. In three sentences - one per question - describe its features, its content and its context. Name the collection that keeps it.
- Q10.** Tom Roberts painted The Big Picture in 1903, two years after the event it shows, using sketches of people he met who had been at the opening. First give the strongest case you can that it is a primary source, then the strongest case that it is a secondary source. Then give your own view with one reason (either view is strong, as long as the reason uses the two facts).
- Q11.** Pick any one source from the source-types table. Describe it in three short paragraphs - features, content, context - and end with its collection, like the note in Part 6.
- Q12.** Choose a topic from Chapters 1 or 2 (gold, migration, Federation or the vote for women). Name one primary and one secondary source a historian could use for it, with the collection where each lives, and say in one sentence why each is the kind you say it is.
-

Evidence-based writing task

Write about 150 words: **Choose one source from this section and describe it for a student who has never seen it.**

Your description must include:

1. the source's name and its type;
2. one sentence for each of the three questions - features, content, context;
3. the collection that keeps it, or the website where it can be read;
4. a closing sentence saying which of the three questions was easiest to answer for this source, and which was hardest, and why.

Check before handing in: every claim comes from this section's sources or figures; the three answers are kept separate; the source is named with its home.

Answers (questions with help)

- Q1.** (a) Any two of: photographs, paintings, objects, places and buildings. (b) The Art Gallery of Ballarat. (c) The Bonegilla migrant camp - the buildings still stand.
- Q2.** (a) Primary. (b) Secondary. (c) Primary. (d) Secondary.
- Q3.** (a) Example: a petition - paper pages joined onto cloth, about 260 metres long, presented 29 September 1891. (b) Example: it asks the Victorian parliament to give women the vote; its content is nearly all names. (c) Example: in the 1890s Victorian women could not vote in parliament elections, and the 1891 bill failed; the vote came in 1908.
- Q4.** (a) *The Argus*. (b) Melbourne. (c) 1 January 1901. (d) Trove (through the State Library of Victoria's copies).
- Q5.** (a) The 1891 petition about 30,000; the 1900 petition 22,978. (b) 1908. (c) Example: they believed voting was not "woman's sphere".
- Q6.** (a) The Big Picture by Tom Roberts. (b) Bonegilla migrant camp. (c) How the government sold the idea of moving to Australia to British families after World War II.
- Q7.** (a) Public Record Office Victoria. (b) National Archives of Australia. (c) Trove, run by the National Library of Australia.
- Q8.** Name the source; check the details; describe the features; describe the content; give the context; compare with other sources.
-

Model responses (point form)

- Q9.** Features: a printed colour poster made by the Australian government and shown in Britain in 1949-1951; kept at the National Archives of Australia. Content: it paints Australia as a bright land of tomorrow and invites British families to come. Context: after World War II Australia wanted more workers, and the assisted passage scheme let British adults come for 10 pounds - the poster was part of selling that idea.
- Q10.** Case for primary: it shows people who were really at the opening, many sketched from life by a painter who met them; it is itself an object made within two years of the event. Case for secondary: it was finished in 1903, after the event, and a painting chooses what to show - the light, the faces, the mood - so it is also a looking-back. Own view: must pick one side (or a balance) with one reason; either view is strong if the reason uses the two facts.
- Q11.** Example (the Eureka flag). Features: a cloth flag made by 1854 and flown at Ballarat, kept at the Art Gallery of Ballarat. Content: white stars and a cross on blue cloth - a symbol the diggers could rally under. Context: made in the weeks of anger on the Ballarat goldfields over the permit fee and the lack of votes, just before the Eureka Stockade of December 1854. Source note: the Eureka flag, Art Gallery of Ballarat.
- Q12.** Example (the vote for women). Primary: the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition, Public Record Office Victoria - made in 1891 by the campaigners themselves, so primary. Secondary: a modern web page about the petition by Public Record Office Victoria staff, written this century looking back - so secondary.

Writing task - model points (petition example). Name and type: the 1891 Women's Suffrage Petition, a petition (written request). Features: paper pages joined onto cloth, about 260 metres long, presented 29 September 1891. Content: a request for the vote, carried by almost 30,000 signatures in many hands. Context: Victorian women could not vote in parliament elections in the 1890s, and the 1891 bill failed; the vote arrived in 1908. Home: Public Record Office Victoria. Closing: features easiest (the size and date are stated); context hardest (it needs the story of the 1891 bill and of 1908, which the petition itself does not tell).

Sources as evidence: value, strengths and limitations; fact, opinion and stereotype

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH6S04 (Historical Concepts and Skills, Using historical sources):

describing how valuable a source is when used as evidence — for judging significance, and for seeing what continued and what changed.

Elaboration linkage (D10 — linkage only, not a teaching order): .E01 (telling fact from opinion in sources; spotting stereotypes and generalisations); .E02 (using sources to find causes, consequences and significance in past events, developments and achievements, and in what continued and changed); .E03 (the strengths and limitations of sources as evidence) (all whole).

Achievement standard coverage: this section serves the standard's sentence on identifying source features, content and context and on describing how valuable the evidence in a source is for a particular investigation.

Features/content/context of sources are taught by 3C (VC2HH6S03); 3D owns value, strengths and limitations, and the fact/opinion/stereotype discrimination work. Perspectives are owned by 3E (VC2HH6S05), interpretations by 3F (VC2HH6S06); 3D may cross-reference but does not teach them. Per D11, the skills here are taught through the Chapters 1–2 knowledge material (gold rushes, Eureka, Federation), never in the abstract.

First Nations disposition (§2A): none required — this section teaches no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content; TOC §3 row disposition for 3D is “none”. No elaboration examples are excluded.

Key subject terms defined at first use (D4): source, evidence, primary source, secondary source, value, strength, limitation, fact, opinion, generalisation, stereotype (operational definitions per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md`: fact = a claim that can be checked against evidence; opinion = a statement of what a person thinks or feels; generalisation = a wide claim that lumps many cases together; stereotype = a fixed, too-simple picture of a whole group, used as if true of every person in it). Symmetry rule applied: the stereotype test is run on a stereotype about Chinese diggers AND mirrored on one about diggers generally. Both contemporary views are presented in their strongest form; assessment marks reasoning (defined terms, named source, strength/limitation explained, judgement tied to the question), not the conclusion reached.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Hook with the Holtermann photo card (Worked demonstration 1): a real photo of a real rock — instantly “strong”, yet posed, one mine, and in New South Wales. Value lands as question-dependent, not a property of the object. 2. Teach the frame early: a source is the thing; evidence is what it shows *for a question*. Run the five-moves routine (Figure 3d_evidence_routine.png) on every source thereafter. 3. Primary/secondary sort (Figure 3d_source_types.png); confront the misconception that primary = true. 4. Value depends on the question (Figure 3d_value_questions.png), then strengths/limitations as guides, not prizes (Figure 3d_strengths_limits.png). 5. Worked demonstration 2 models fact/opinion discrimination inside one real book (Carboni), using Figure 3d_fact_opinion.png; Lalor's letter supplies a second opinion sample. 6. Stereotype check (Figure 3d_stereotype_check.png): fixed cartoon picture vs the records; mirror the test on the “all diggers were wild” stereotype using Chapter 2 evidence. 7. Practice tasks (with help) Q1–Q8, then tasks to try on your own Q9–Q12; close with the evidence-based writing task on Gill's 1852 pictures (Figures 3d_gill_card.png, 3d_model_write.png).

Common misconceptions to address: that a primary source is automatically true and a secondary source automatically wrong (proximity is a strength, not a truth-guarantee); that a limitation makes a source useless (every source has both strengths and limitations; naming them is how we weigh it); that an opinion is automatically wrong (opinions are evidence of what a person thought — the error is using one as a fact); that a stereotype about a group that “was treated badly” does not need checking (the test applies to any group).

What you will learn in this section

Historians were not there when gold was found in 1851. Nobody was filming. Everything we know about the gold rushes and about Federation comes from what people left behind: letters, diaries, newspapers, photos, paintings, objects and government records. These are our **sources**.

In this section you will learn to use sources the way historians do. For every source we meet, we will ask three big questions:

- **What is it, and who made it?**
- **What can it show — and what can it NOT show?**
- **How valuable is it for our question?**

We will also sort what sources say into **facts** and **opinions**, and learn to check **stereotypes** and **generalisations** against the evidence.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **source** - anything left over from the past that we can use to find out about the past: an object, a photo, a letter, a newspaper, a painting, a building, a record.
- **evidence** - what a source shows us *when we ask it a question*. A source only becomes evidence once it is used to answer a question.
- **primary source** - something made at the time, by someone who was there or close to it.
- **secondary source** - something made later, after the event, by someone who was not there.
- **value** - how useful a source is for answering *your* question. The same source can be very valuable for one question and not valuable for another.
- **strength** - what a source is good at showing.
- **limitation** - what a source cannot show, or what we must be careful about.
- **fact** - a statement that can be checked against evidence.
- **opinion** - a statement that shows what a person thinks or feels.
- **generalisation** - a wide claim that lumps many people or cases together into one big statement.
- **stereotype** - a fixed, too-simple picture of a whole group, used as if it were true of every person in the group.

We will also keep using words from earlier sections: **significance** (how important something is, and to whom), **continuity** (what stays much the same), **change** (what becomes different), **cause** and **consequence**.

Key ideas

Part 1: Sources and evidence

A **source** is any trace of the past that survives: an object, a photo, a letter, a newspaper, a painting, a building, a record. Everything in this book about the 1850s comes from sources.

Evidence is different. Evidence is what a source shows us *for a question*. A source sits there doing nothing until a historian asks it something. Then — and only then — it becomes evidence. The same source can be strong evidence for one question and no evidence at all for another. That is why historians always start with a question.

Part 2: Primary and secondary sources

Historians sort sources into two kinds. A **primary source** was made at the time, by someone who was there or close to it: a diary, a letter, a newspaper report from the week, a photo, an object. A **secondary source** was made later, by someone who was not there: a history book, a documentary, a museum website, this workbook.

Two kinds of sources

Primary sources - made at or near the time, by people who were there	Secondary sources - made later, by people using primary sources
Edward Henty's journal, 1834 - written by a settler who made the trip	a history book about the gold rushes written today
Raffaello Carboni's book about Eureka, 1855 - written by a man who saw it happen	the displays at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat - a museum opened in 1970 on the old diggings
The Argus newspaper, 4 December 1854 - printed the morning after the stockade fight	a timeline you make yourself from dates you have read
The gold licence rule in the Government Gazette, August 1851 - the government's own words	this section of your workbook, after you have read the sources
S.T. Gill's printed pictures of the diggings, 1852 - drawn by an artist who was there	

Secondary sources are not useless - they put the pieces together for you. But a historian still goes back to check the primary sources they rest on.

Two panels sorting real examples into primary sources, made at the time, and secondary sources, made later

A primary source has the strength of closeness: it was there. But being primary does **not** mean being true. People at the time got things wrong, exaggerated, and took sides. A secondary source has the strength of looking back: it can compare many sources at once. One kind is not above the other. We judge them the same way — by asking what they can show for our question.

Part 3: The value of a source depends on the question

Look at this source: the Victorian Government Gazette of August 1851, which set out the gold licence and its fee of 30 shillings a month. Is it a valuable source? There is no one answer. It depends on the question.

One source, three questions, three answers

The source

The Victorian Government Gazette, August 1851. The government's own paper said all gold belonged to the Crown, and every digger had to buy a licence costing 30 shillings a month.

Question A

How much did diggers pay for their licence, and when did the rule start?

Very valuable.

The paper gives the exact fee and the exact month. That is just what it was made to record.

Question B

How did diggers feel about paying the licence fee?

Not valuable.

A government paper does not record feelings. For this question you need letters, diaries, meeting notes or newspaper reports from the diggers' side.

Question C

Why did so many diggers join the Ballarat Reform League in 1854?

A little valuable.

The high fee is one cause of the anger, so the paper helps. But one cause is not the whole story - you need more sources to see the rest.

The value of a source is not a mark out of ten. It is an answer to: how much does this source help with MY question?

Diagram showing the same 1851 Government Gazette licence notice judged against three different questions, with a different value judgement for each

For “what did the licence cost, and from when?” the Gazette is **very valuable**: it is the government’s own record, made at the time. For “how did diggers feel about the licence?” it is **not valuable**: it never asked them. For “why did groups like the Ballarat Reform League form?” it is **a little valuable**: it shows one cause of the complaint, but not the whole story.

Value is not a star rating on the source. It is a match between the source and the question.

Part 4: Strengths and limitations

Every source has **strengths** (what it is good at showing) and **limitations** (what it cannot show, or what we must be careful about). Naming both is how we decide how much weight to give a source.

Every source: what it does well, and what it cannot do

Strengths - what the source does well	Limitations - what the source cannot do
● Was it made at the time, by someone who was there? ● Does it show real details - places, faces, tools, exact words? ● Is it the real thing, still unchanged since then? ● Does it match what other sources from the time also show?	● Is it just one person's view? ● Was it made for a purpose - to sell, to please, to win an argument? ● Are parts missing, damaged or lost? ● Is it silent about some people or some groups? ● Was it made long after the event, from memory?

A strength is not a win and a limitation is not a fail. Good history names both, then uses the source for what it CAN show.

Two-column chart of guiding questions for finding a source's strengths and its limitations, with the reminder that a strength is not a win and a limitation is not a fail

A strength is not a win and a limitation is not a fail. The Holtermann photo in Worked demonstration 1 is posed — that is a limitation. It is also a real photo of a real rock with a name and a date — that is a strength. Both are true at once, and together they tell us how much weight to give it.

Part 5: The five moves

Historians run a small routine on every source. Learn it here and use it in every task below.

From source to evidence: five moves

Move 1

What kind of source is it?

a letter, a photo, a painting, an object, a law, a number record



Move 2

Who made it, when, and why?

by a person who was there, or someone looking back later?



Move 3

What can it show you about your question?

this is the evidence it holds



Move 4

What can it NOT show you?

every source is silent about some things



Move 5

So how valuable is it - for your question?

very valuable, a bit valuable, or not very valuable - and say why

Ask the question first. Then choose the sources. The same source can be very valuable for one question and almost useless for another.

Flowchart of the five moves: what kind of source? who made it, when, why? what can it show about your question? what can it NOT show? how valuable is it?

Worked demonstration 1: judging a photo source

Here is a real photograph, described on a source card. We will run the five moves on it.

Photo source card

The biggest lump of gold ever found (1872)

What it is	a photograph of the miner Bernhardt Holtermann standing beside a huge rock of gold
When and where	1872, at Hill End in New South Wales; the rock came out of the Star of Hope Mine on 19 October 1872
How big	the rock weighed 630 pounds - about 286 kilograms - the biggest lump of gold ever found; about 93 kilograms of gold came out of it
Who took it	the American and Australasian Photographic Company; the glass plates are held at the State Library of New South Wales
Strength	a real photo of the real thing, with names and a date - strong evidence of how much gold could be found
Limitation	a posed photo, set up to impress; one mine in one place in 1872 - it shows nothing of daily work underground

Thinking like a historian

Look: what makes this photo strong evidence?

Think: is this photo valuable for the question 'Why was gold so important to the colony of Victoria?' Why, or why not?

Question: what can this photo NOT tell us about ordinary miners' lives?

Source card for the 1872 photograph of Bernhardt Holtermann with the biggest lump of gold ever found, at Hill End in New South Wales, with its strength, its limitation and thinking prompts

Move

What we can say

1. What kind of source?

A photograph — a **primary source**. It was made in 1872, the same year the rock came out of the mine.

2. Who made it, when, why?

A photography company took it at Hill End in New South Wales. Bernhardt Holtermann wanted to show the world how much gold could be found — so it was made to impress.

3. What can it show for our question?

Question: *How much gold could be found on the Australian goldfields?* The photo shows the real rock, with a name, a mine and a date (19 October 1872). The rock weighed 630 pounds — about 286 kilograms — and about 93 kilograms of gold came out of it. That is

4. What can it NOT show?

strong evidence.

It is a posed photo, set up for the camera. It is one mine, in one place, on one day. It shows nothing of the daily work underground. And it is New South Wales, not Victoria.

5. How valuable is it?

Very valuable for “how much gold could be found”.
Not valuable for “what was a miner’s day like?”. And for a question about Victoria, we would want Victorian sources beside it.

What we can say at the end: one photo, three different value judgements. The value was never in the photo. It was in the match between the photo and the question.

Worked demonstration 2: fact and opinion in one source

Raffaello Carboni was at the Eureka Stockade in December 1854. In 1855 he wrote a book about it, *The Eureka Stockade*. Early in the book, writing about himself, he says:

“I undertake to do what an honest man should do, let it thunder or rain.”

Is that a fact or an opinion? It is an **opinion** — Carboni’s own judgement about what he should do. The words *honest* and *should* are clues: they tell us what a person thinks, not something we can check with a ruler or a record.

Now look at a different sentence about the same events: “On 1 December 1854, diggers swore an oath together at Bakery Hill.” That is a **fact claim**. Carboni was there, wrote down what happened and the date, and other accounts agree. We can check it.

Fact or opinion? Sorting real sentences

The sentence	Fact or opinion?	How can you tell?
The gold licence cost 30 shillings a month.	FACT	You can check it against the Government Gazette of August 1851.
On 1 December 1854, diggers swore an oath together at Bakery Hill.	FACT	An eyewitness, Raffaello Carboni, wrote down the oath and the date.
I undertake to do what an honest man should do, let it thunder or rain.	OPINION	Carboni speaks about himself; what an honest man 'should' do is his own judgement.
Honour compels me to justify their conduct.	OPINION	Lalor tells us what he thinks he must do; 'honour' and 'compels' are judgement words.
Victoria's population grew from 77,345 in 1851 to 538,628 in 1861.	FACT	You can check it against population records of the time.

A fact can be checked against evidence. An opinion shows what a person thinks or feels. One source can hold both - so read it carefully.

Table sorting five real sentences from sources in this section as fact or opinion, with a reason for each

The key habit: **one source can hold both facts and opinions**. Carboni's book holds fact claims (dates, places, what people did) and opinions (his judgements). Peter Lalor's 1855 letter "To the Colonists of Victoria" does the same: "Honour compels me to justify their conduct" is Lalor telling us what *he thinks* he must do — opinion, and valuable evidence of how he saw the diggers' cause. So we do not sort whole sources into fact or opinion. We read sentence by sentence.

Checking a stereotype

A **generalisation** lumps many people or cases together into one big claim. A **stereotype** is a fixed, too-simple picture of a whole group, used as if it were true of every person in the group.

Colonial magazines such as *Melbourne Punch* — published in Melbourne from 1855 — printed cartoons about Chinese diggers in which every Chinese person looked the same: same face, same clothes, same joke. That fixed picture was a stereotype. The historian's job is to check it against the records.

Checking a stereotype

A stereotype is a fixed, too-simple picture of a whole group, used as if it were true of every person in the group.

The fixed picture

Colonial magazines such as Melbourne Punch - published in Melbourne from 1855 - printed cartoons about Chinese diggers. In the cartoons, every Chinese person looked the same: same face, same clothes, same joke. One made-up picture stood for a whole people.

The evidence check

- By 1858, about 42,000 Chinese people had come to Victoria - thousands of real people, each with their own story.
- They did many different kinds of work: digging for gold, growing food in market gardens, and running shops.
- Lowe Kong Meng became one of Melbourne's best-known merchants.

The test

Hold the fixed picture up against the records. Where the picture ignores the evidence, the picture is wrong.

The same test works for a stereotype about ANY group. 'All diggers were wild and broke the law' can be checked against the diggers' peaceful meetings and their written list of demands at Bakery Hill in 1854.

Diagram showing how to check a stereotype: the fixed cartoon picture of Chinese diggers in colonial magazines tested against the evidence of the records, with the same test applied to a stereotype about diggers

The check breaks the picture. By 1858 about 42,000 Chinese people had come to Victoria — thousands of real people, each with their own story. They did many kinds of work: digging for gold, growing food in market gardens, running shops. Lowe Kong Meng became one of Melbourne's best-known merchants. Where the fixed picture ignores the records, the picture is wrong.

And the same test works on **any** group. "All diggers were wild and broke the law" is a stereotype too. Check it against what you studied in Chapter 2: the diggers' peaceful meetings, their written list of demands at Bakery Hill in 1854, the oath they swore together. The records break this picture as well.

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Sort these four sources into primary and secondary, with a one-line reason each: (a) a letter written home by a digger at Ballarat in 1853; (b) a history book about the gold rushes, written in 2010; (c) the 1872 Holtermann photograph from Worked demonstration 1; (d) a museum website about the gold rushes, written this year.

Q2. Look again at Figure 3d_value_questions.png. The Gazette notice is **very valuable** for one question and **not valuable** for another. Explain, in your own words, how the *same* source can get two different value judgements.

Q3. In 1854 the colonial government counted the people of Victoria in a census. Judge the value of that census for: (a) “How many people lived in Victoria in 1854?” (b) “What did diggers eat for dinner?” Give a reason for each judgement.

The next two tasks use this real source card. The same card also sets up the writing task at the end of the section.

Image source card A

Sketches of the Victoria Gold Diggings and Diggers As They Are (1852)

What it is	a set of 24 printed pictures showing life on the goldfields
When	August 1852, in the first year of the Victorian gold rush
Who made it	Samuel Thomas Gill, an artist who went from Adelaide to the Mount Alexander diggings in 1851
What it shows	tents, huts, tools, clothes and people at work, drawn from the scenes themselves
Kept today	the State Library of New South Wales holds a set of these printed pictures
Strength	Gill drew what he saw, at the time, in the place itself - strong evidence for what the diggings looked like
Limitation	Gill chose what to draw; he showed the scenes where he stood, not the whole goldfield, and not everything happening there

Thinking like a historian

Look: what kind of source is this, and who made it?

Think: for which questions about goldfields life is this source very valuable?

Question: what can this source NOT show (sounds, feelings, people outside the picture)?

Source card for S.T. Gill's 1852 set of printed pictures of the Victorian diggings, with what it is, who made it, its strength, its limitation and thinking prompts

Q4. Look at the card above (moves 1–2). What kind of source is S.T. Gill's 1852 set of pictures? Who made it, and when?

Q5. Using the same card (moves 3–4), give one strength and one limitation of Gill's pictures, in your own words.

Q6. Look at Figure 3d_fact_opinion.png. Which two of the five sentences are opinions? Which words in each sentence gave them away?

Q7. “The gold licence cost 30 shillings a month.” Which source from this section would you check that fact against, and why is that source strong for this question?

Q8. Look at Figure 3d_stereotype_check.png. The fixed picture said every Chinese digger was the same. Name two pieces of evidence from the figure that break the picture.

Tasks to try on your own

The next three tasks use this second image source card.

Image source card B

The opening of Australia's first Parliament (1901)

What it is	a very large painting, about five metres wide, by the artist Tom Roberts; it is often called The Big Picture
What it shows	the Duke of Cornwall and York opening the first federal Parliament of Australia at the Exhibition Building, Melbourne, on 9 May 1901
When made	1901 to 1903; Roberts made sketches on the day, then worked on the painting for two years
Why made	Roberts was paid to paint it, to record a great national day
Kept today	Parliament House, Canberra
Strength	a careful record of one great day - the building, the guests, the ceremony
Limitation	it was made to celebrate; faces were finished later from sketches; it shows the official story, not how everyone felt about Federation

Thinking like a historian

Look: when was this source made - on the day, or years after?

Think: does it matter that the artist was paid to paint it? Why, or why not?

Question: whose story does this painting tell? Whose story is not there?

Source card for Tom Roberts's painting of the opening of Australia's first federal Parliament in Melbourne on 9 May 1901, with its strength, its limitation and thinking prompts

Q9. Look at the card above — Tom Roberts's painting of the opening of the first federal Parliament. (a) Was it made on the day, or years after? (b) Give one strength. (c) Give one limitation.

Q10. Judge the value of Roberts's painting for these two questions: (a) "What happened at the ceremony in Melbourne on 9 May 1901?" (b) "How did ordinary people feel about Federation?" Give a reason for each judgement.

Q11. Fact or opinion — and how can you tell? (a) "The Big Picture is about five metres wide." (b) "The Big Picture is the finest painting ever made in Australia." (c) "Roberts was paid to paint it."

Q12. “Everyone in Victoria in the 1850s was digging for gold.” Is that a fair generalisation? Check it against what you studied in Chapters 1–2 (think: farms, railways, shops, market gardens) and give your reasons.

Evidence-based writing task

Question: *How valuable is S.T. Gill’s Sketches of the Victoria Gold Diggings and Diggers As They Are (1852) for finding out about life on the Victorian goldfields?*

Study the source card (Figure 3d_gill_card.png), then plan and write one paragraph (5–7 sentences). Use the plan frame and the model paragraph in Figure 3d_model_write.png as your guide — the model shows one good answer; it is not the only good answer.

Plan and write: how valuable is this source?

Question: How valuable is S.T. Gill's Sketches of the Victoria Gold Diggings and Diggers As They Are (1852) for finding out about life on the Victorian goldfields?

Your plan

What is the source?

a set of 24 printed pictures of the diggings

Who made it, and when?

S.T. Gill, an artist at the diggings;
August 1852

One strength

drawn from the scenes at the time - shows
real tents, tools and clothes

One limitation

Gill chose what to draw; one artist cannot
show the whole goldfield

Your answer

very valuable as a starting point, but not
enough on its own

Model paragraph

S.T. Gill's printed pictures (1852) are valuable for finding out about life on the Victorian goldfields. Gill drew the scenes himself, while he was there, so the pictures show real tents, tools and clothes from the time. That is their big strength. But Gill chose what to draw, and one artist cannot show the whole goldfield. So these pictures are very valuable as a starting point, but we should also read letters, diaries and records from the time.

Marks go to the reasoning: source named, strength and limitation explained, clear answer tied to the question. A different answer with good reasons can do just as well.

Planning frame and model paragraph for the writing task on the value of S.T. Gill’s 1852 pictures of the diggings

Success checklist:

- I named the source and said who made it and when.
- I gave one strength and explained why it matters *for this question*.
- I gave one limitation and explained what the source cannot show.
- I gave a clear value judgement tied to the question (not just “it is good”).

- I used my own reasoning — a different answer with good reasons can do just as well.
-

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. (a) primary — written at the time by someone there; (b) secondary — written later by someone not there; (c) primary — made in 1872, the year of the event shown; (d) secondary — written this year about the past.

Q2. Value is a match between source and question. The Gazette is the government's own record of the fee, so for the fee question it is very valuable; it records no diggers' feelings, so for the feelings question it is not valuable. Accept any answer that ties the judgement to what the source can and cannot show.

Q3. (a) very valuable — counting people is exactly what a census does, at the time; (b) not valuable — a census counts; it does not record meals.

Q4. A set of printed pictures (an image source), primary; made by Samuel Thomas Gill, an artist who went to the Mount Alexander diggings in 1851; published August 1852.

Q5. Strength e.g.: drawn from the scenes themselves, at the time — shows real tents, tools, clothes. Limitation e.g.: Gill chose what to draw; one artist in the places he stood cannot show the whole goldfield.

Q6. The Carboni sentence ("honest man should do" — judgement words *honest*, *should*) and the Lalor sentence (*honour*, *compels* — what he thinks he must do). The licence fee, the oath event, and the population figures are fact claims: checkable against the Gazette, against other accounts, and against population records.

Q7. The Victorian Government Gazette of August 1851 — the government's own record, made at the time; the fee is exactly what such a notice records.

Q8. Any two of: about 42,000 Chinese people had come to Victoria by 1858, each with their own story; they did many kinds of work (market gardens, shops, as well as digging); Lowe Kong Meng became one of Melbourne's best-known merchants.

Q9. (a) Years after: sketches on the day (9 May 1901), then the painting made 1901–1903. (b) Strength e.g.: a careful record of one great day — the building, the guests, the ceremony, by an artist who was there. (c) Limitation e.g.: made to celebrate; faces finished later from sketches; shows the official story, not how everyone felt.

Q10. (a) Very valuable — it records the ceremony in detail, by an artist who sketched it on the day. (b) Not valuable (or a little) — it was made to celebrate the official day; it does not show ordinary people's feelings. Accept reasoned judgements.

Q11. (a) fact — width can be measured; (b) opinion — "finest" is a judgement; (c) fact — payment can be checked against records.

Q12. Not fair. Chapters 1–2 show many people farming, building railways, running shops and market gardens (Lowe Kong Meng among them); the population figures include whole towns and cities not on the diggings. Accept any answer that tests the claim against evidence.

Writing task. Mark on the checklist: source named with maker and date; one strength and one limitation, each explained for the question; a clear value judgement tied to the question. The model paragraph is one acceptable answer; different judgements with sound reasons meet the standard (CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 6).

Sources used in this section

Every source examined or quoted here is a real, citable artifact (D6). Verified 24 August 2026.

- **Victorian Government Gazette, August 1851** — proclamation of the gold licence at 30 shillings a month; colonial government record. Used for the licence fee fact and Figure 3d_value_questions.png.
- **Raffaello Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade* (1855)** — eyewitness account; quotation "I undertake to do what an honest man should do, let it thunder or rain." (Chapter I) from the Project Gutenberg text (gutenberg.org/ebooks/3546); oath at Bakery Hill, 1 December 1854, as recorded by Carboni.

- **Peter Lalor, “To the Colonists of Victoria”, *The Argus*, 10 April 1855** — quotation “Honour compels me to justify their conduct.”; Trove article 4806503.
- ***The Argus*, 4 December 1854** — report of the fighting at Eureka (described in the author’s own words, not quoted); Trove.
- **Samuel Thomas Gill, *Sketches of the Victoria Gold Diggings and Diggers As They Are* (1852)** — set of 24 printed pictures of the diggings; a set is held at the State Library of New South Wales. Subject of the writing task and Figures 3d_gill_card.png, 3d_model_write.png.
- **American and Australasian Photographic Company, photograph of Bernhardt Holtermann with the 630-pound (about 286 kg) gold rock, Star of Hope Mine, Hill End, 19 October 1872** — glass plates held at the State Library of New South Wales. Subject of Worked demonstration 1 and Figure 3d_holtermann_card.png.
- **Tom Roberts, *The Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia* (“The Big Picture”), 1901–1903** — Parliament House, Canberra; opening ceremony at the Exhibition Building, Melbourne, 9 May 1901. Subject of Figure 3d_roberts_card.png.
- ***Melbourne Punch***, published in Melbourne from August 1855 — cartoons of Chinese diggers described in the author’s own words, not reproduced.
- **Victorian population returns, 1851 and 1861 (77,345; 538,628) and Chinese arrivals figures (11,493 in 1855; about 42,000 in Victoria by 1858)** — colonial census and immigration records; Lowe Kong Meng named as a merchant of the period.

Perspectives in primary sources: what people believed, valued and thought

Curriculum links (audit metadata).

- Content description VC2HH6S05 (Levels 5–6): describing historical perspectives and identifying what people and groups believed, valued and thought, on the evidence of primary sources.
- Achievement-standard sentence owned by this section: the one on describing perspectives in Australia’s past, with beliefs, values and attitudes evidenced from primary sources.
- Elaboration VC2HH6S05.E01, trimmed per §2A as recorded in TOC.md (one example item cut; see TOC §2A): spotting implied messages, stereotypes and sweeping generalisations in sources and media from the past.
- Elaboration VC2HH6S05.E02, trimmed per §2A as recorded in TOC.md: one comparison sentence and one list item are cut (see TOC §2A for the exact items); the cuts also match the retained cast in the Chapter 3 block notes. Remaining scope: comparing evidence sources to find where accounts and perspectives agree or differ — for example how each group at the goldfields (miners, the Chinese workers, women, children, the leaders) experienced those years, and how Ned Kelly has been represented in publications past and present.
- Elaboration VC2HH6S05.E03, taught whole: discussing the perspectives, beliefs and attitudes tied to developments in Australian history — Federation, women’s suffrage and immigration policy are the examples used here.
- Elaboration ids are assigned in export order; elaborations are linkage only, not teaching order (D10).
- Skills content drawn from the knowledge content of Chapters 1–2 (the Victorian gold rushes; the move to Federation) (D11). The retained cast per §2A — Chinese goldfield workers, businesspeople, miners, women, children, Ned Kelly representations — carries all perspective work.
- Contested terms handled per CONTESTED_TERMS.md: Ned Kelly (positions steered, reasoning marked, conclusions left open); the White Australia policy (defined at first use, historical views attributed, evaluation kept evidence-based).
- Volume: 1 teaching sequence; 2 worked demonstrations with real cited sources; 8 scaffolded practice tasks; 4 unscaffolded; 1 evidence-based writing task.
- Monster Petition organisers per record (student-facing text gives the count and one named society): Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Victoria, Victorian Temperance Alliance, Victorian Women’s Suffrage Society, Australian Women’s Suffrage Society.
- Vocabulary gate record: all student-facing text in this section (parts, questions, answers, figure text, alt text) checked with load_ladder/check_text from vocab_level_check.py at ceiling rank 6. Exemptions, documented in _gate_check_3e.py: suffrage, caricature(s), generalisation(s), over-generalisation(s) — curriculum words from VC2HH6S05.E01/E03 defined at first use (D4). Place and personal names are exempt as proper nouns (policy exemption 3).

Teaching sequence (for the teacher).

1. **Name the four tools** (Part 1, fig 3e_bva_keys.png). Perspective, belief, value, attitude are the working words for the whole section; students sort simple statements before they touch any source.
2. **Model the evidence chain** (Part 2, fig 3e_evidence_chain.png; WD1). Four moves: find a primary source → what does it say or show? → what does that suggest? → what can it not tell us? Work it on the Jerilderie letter in front of the class. Stress that an inference must be tied to words in the source.
3. **Read past media carefully** (Part 3, fig 3e_stereotype_check.png). Define stereotype; define caricature once, then use cartoon. Ground attitudes in dated evidence: the June 1855 Victorian law taxing Chinese arrivals, the Buckland River attack of 1857, and Melbourne Punch’s named 1900 Kelly cartoon “BAIL-UP!”. Point: unfair pictures are not thrown away — they are read as evidence of attitudes.
4. **Compare sources on the goldfields** (Part 4, figs 3e_three_pictures.png and 3e_goldfields_voices.png; WD2). Same place, different makers, different groups. WD2 pairs Rowe’s 1858 painting with the 1855 law to show how comparison exposes a difference in perspective that neither source shows alone.
5. **Track a representation over time** (Part 5, figs 3e_kelly_card.png and 3e_kelly_then_now.png). Newspapers and the reprieve petition in 1879–1880, then the 1906 film and today’s museums. Steelman both Kelly positions; mark the reasoning each rests on; leave the conclusion open.

6. **Perspectives on big changes** (Part 6, figs 3e_federation_vote.png, 3e_petition_card.png, 3e_immigration_views.png). Federation referendums (chart the Yes votes), the Monster Petition (votes for women), the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (named supporters and critics). E03 is carried here.
7. **Separate perspective from interpretation** (Part 7). Perspective = what people at the time thought and felt, read from sources; interpretation = later accounts of what it all meant. This is a bridge to 3F (which pairs with 1F/2E), not a full treatment.
8. **Write with evidence** (writing task, fig 3e_writing_planner.png). One paragraph: evidence → what it suggests → limits, with the source named.

Common misconceptions to correct as they appear: - “A perspective is just an opinion.” — In history, a perspective is something we read off evidence, and we can be asked to show where. - “Stereotypes are wrong, so sources containing them are useless.” — They are wrong, and they are still evidence: of the attitudes of the people who made and bought them. - “One source tells us what a whole group thought.” — That is an over-generalisation; one letter is one voice. - “Kelly was either a hero or a villain.” — The sources hold both questions; we mark the reasoning, not the verdict. - “The 1901 immigration law is too uncomfortable to study.” — It is studied as evidence of beliefs and attitudes; named critics at the time show the policy was argued about, not simply accepted.

What you will learn in this section

In Chapters 1 and 2 you met the people of the gold rushes and the long campaign for Federation. This section gives you the tools to read what those people thought and felt. You will learn to:

- use four key words — **perspective**, **belief**, **value** and **attitude** — and keep them straight
- read a **primary source** (a source made at the time being studied) and say what it suggests about what people believed and valued
- spot **stereotypes** and unfair pictures in media from the past, and read them as evidence of attitudes
- compare sources to see how the same event looked to different people — diggers, Chinese workers, businesspeople, women and children
- follow how Ned Kelly has been shown in his own time and since, and say what changed
- describe perspectives on three big changes: Federation, votes for women, and the first federal migration laws

Part 1: Perspective — a way of seeing

Two people can stand in the same street, watch the same parade, and go home with two different stories. That is because each person sees an event through their own **perspective** — their way of seeing it, shaped by who they are, what they know, and what happens to them.

Historians use three more words to talk about what is inside a perspective:

- A **belief** is something a person holds to be true. (“There is gold in this creek.”)
- A **value** is something a person thinks is important and worth standing up for. (“Everyone deserves a fair go.”)
- An **attitude** is a settled way of feeling or thinking about someone or something. (“I do not trust the government.”)

A perspective is the whole package: the view of the world you get when you put one person’s beliefs, values and attitudes together.

Four words historians use

Every source is made by somebody. These words help us say what the source shows about them.

Word	What it means	Example from this section	Ask the source
perspective	the way one person, or one group, saw something at the time	a digger saw the gold permit as unfair; the government saw it as a fair tax	<i>Who made this source, and how did they see things?</i>
belief	what someone held to be true	the diggers believed they should have a say in the laws they obeyed	<i>What did this person hold to be true?</i>
value	what someone held to be important, and worth standing up for	the diggers valued fairness, and they valued sticking together	<i>What did this person think mattered?</i>
attitude	how someone felt, and how they behaved, towards someone or something	some newspapers were angry towards Ned Kelly; many workers looked up to him	<i>How did this person feel about it?</i>

Keep the four separate: a belief is about what is true, a value is about what matters, an attitude is about how someone feels.

A table of the four words historians use in this section — perspective, belief, value and attitude — each with its meaning, an example from this section, and a question to ask a source

Here is a quick test of the four words. In June 1855, the Victorian parliament passed a law that made every Chinese person arriving in the colony pay a tax of 10 pounds — a huge amount — and it limited the number who could sail in. The parliament clearly believed Chinese arrivals were a problem to be slowed down. The thousands of Chinese diggers already on the goldfields saw the same law in a very different way: to them it was unfair treatment of people who had broken no rules. Same law. Two perspectives. When you can say *why* they saw it that way, you are thinking like a historian.

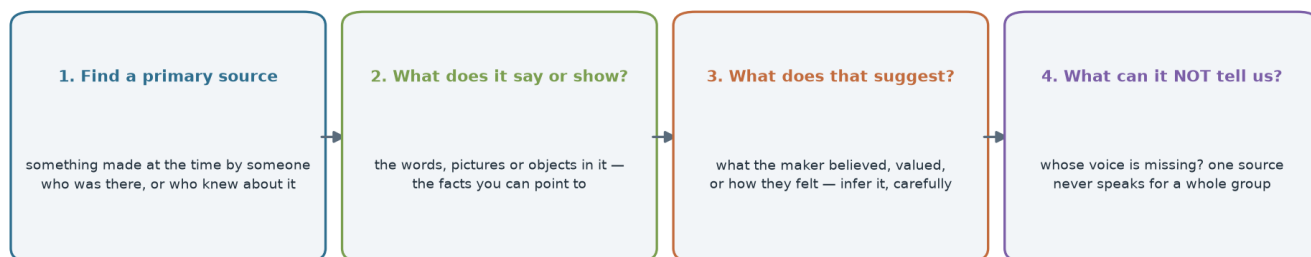
Part 2: Finding beliefs and values in primary sources

Beliefs and values live inside people's heads, where historians cannot see them. Luckily, people leave traces: letters, speeches, laws, petitions, photos, paintings. A **primary source** — one made at the time being studied — is the trace you read closest up.

To move from a trace to a belief, historians follow four steps:

The evidence chain

Perspectives are not printed on the source. You build them, step by step, from evidence.



Worked on one real source — Ned Kelly's Jerilderie letter, 1879



Step 3 is the move that matters: when you infer, you make a careful, evidence-based guess.
If you cannot point to the words or pictures that made you think it, it is not ready yet.

A four-step evidence chain — find a primary source, what does it say or show, what does that suggest, what can it not tell us — with the Jerilderie letter worked along the bottom as an example

1. **Find a primary source** and note who made it, when, and where it is kept.
2. **What does it say or show?** Describe it or quote it, exactly.
3. **What does that suggest?** When you **infer**, you make a careful, evidence-based guess. Tie the guess to the exact words or details you saw. "It says this... so that suggests..."
4. **What can it NOT tell us?** Every source has limits. Who made it? Whose voice is missing?

Watch the word "suggests". A source almost never *proves* what someone believed. It gives you strong or weak reasons to think so. Good historians say "this suggests" and show their evidence, not "this proves".

You will see these four steps again and again in this section. Part 5 works them on a famous letter written by Ned Kelly, and the worked demonstration WD1 does them in full.

Part 3: Stereotypes and unfair pictures in past media

Newspapers and magazines were big business on the goldfields and in the cities that grew from them. They reported news — but they also printed jokes, poems and cartoons that told their readers what to think.

One thing they often printed was a **stereotype**: a fixed, unfair picture applied to a whole group, as if every person in that group was the same. In the 1850s and after, some papers and magazines printed unkind cartoons of Chinese people, drawing them as strange or silly. Papers also printed cartoons mocking politicians, women who wanted the vote, and bushrangers. A drawing that twists someone's features to make them look silly or frightening is called a **caricature**; in this section we will just say cartoon.

Here is the important part. An unfair cartoon is not useless evidence. It is *excellent* evidence — of the attitudes of the people who drew it, printed it, and paid to read it. Historians do not throw these sources away. They ask: what attitude is inside this picture?

Spotting stereotypes in sources from the past

A stereotype is a fixed, unfair picture of a whole group. People in the past made them; historians read them as evidence of attitudes.

1

Who made it — and for whom?

Newspapers and magazines were sold to readers. A cartoon often said what its readers already liked to hear.

2

One person, or a whole group?

A stereotype takes one picture and puts it on everyone in a group. Watch for words like all, always, never.

3

Kind words — or mean ones?

Look at the faces, the clothes, the jokes. Are they there to make a group look silly, weak or dangerous?

4

Does the group's own voice agree?

Compare it with sources made by the group itself — letters, petitions, photos — and see the difference.

5

What was going on at the time?

Laws, gold, jobs, votes. Unfair pictures often grew out of what people were arguing about.

The goal is not to throw these sources away. The goal is to see the attitude inside them — because the attitude is part of the history.

A five-step checklist for spotting stereotypes in sources from the past: who made it and for whom, one person or a whole group, kind words or mean ones, does the group's own voice agree, and what was going on at the time

Use the checklist in the figure whenever you meet a source from past media. Step 4 is the one that changes everything: compare the cartoon with a source made by the group it mocks. When the Chinese diggers are drawn as a joke in one source, and in another source you read that by 1858 there were about 33,000 of them — about one in five of all miners — working claims others had walked away from, you can see the stereotype cracking against the evidence.

Attitudes were not only printed. They were written into law — like the 1855 Victorian law you met in Part 1 — and sometimes they turned violent, as at Buckland River in 1857, when a mob attacked Chinese diggers. Laws, attacks and cartoons together are evidence of how strong anti-Chinese feeling had become among some people in the colony.

Part 4: Same goldfields, different eyes

The Victorian gold rushes changed the colony with amazing speed. But “the goldfields” was not one experience. It looked very different depending on who you were.

First, three pictures, all made at the time by people who were there:

Three pictures of the goldfields, made at the time			
Each is a primary source. Each carries its maker's way of seeing.			
Kind and date	What it is called, and who made it	What it shows	Whose way of seeing?
 A painting, 1858	George Rowe, Bird's-eye view of Ballarat with Chinese gold miners in the foreground	a busy gold town, with Chinese miners working in the front of the picture	the artist's. He put Chinese miners first, so he saw them as part of the town's life
 A photograph, about 1858	Richard Daintree and Antoine Fauchery, A gang of diggers at Forrest Creek, Chewton	real diggers at work, caught by a camera while the gold rush was still on	the camera's eye — but the photographers chose where to stand and what to show
 A sketch, 1853	Eugene von Guerard, sketch of Ballarat's tent town (later painted in oils)	rows of tents on the diggings, in the years just after gold was found	a visiting artist's — one man's view of how the tents looked and sat in the land

Pictures are evidence too — but an artist chooses what to put in, what to leave out, and what to put first. Ask who made it, and why.

A table of three pictures of the goldfields made at the time — George Rowe’s 1858 painting, the photograph by Daintree and Fauchery, and von Guerard’s 1853 sketch — with what each shows and whose way of seeing each carries

Not one of these three is “the true picture”. Each is one person’s way of seeing, shaped by what they chose to put in, leave out, and put first.

Now zoom out from single pictures to whole groups of people:

Same goldfields, different eyes		
One event, many perspectives. Each group left different traces behind.		
Group	What the sources show	Which sources?
 Diggers (most were men)	hard work, tents, a monthly permit fee and no vote	accounts like Raffaello Carboni's 1855 book; Henderson's 1854 sketch of Eureka
 Chinese diggers	about 33,000 by 1858 — one in five miners; paid an extra 10-pound tax; worked claims others had left, and grew vegetables to sell	the 1855 Victorian law; George Rowe's 1858 painting of Ballarat; records of Buckland River, 1857
 Businesspeople	coaches, shops, banks and hotels followed the gold; Cobb and Co carried diggers, mail and gold from 1853	newspapers; company and mail records
 Women	Margaret Kennedy and Mrs Farrell found gold at Bendigo Creek in 1851; women cooked, kept shops and ran places to stay	a committee record said there was 'no doubt' the two women had found gold; newspaper reports of camp life
 Children	John Drane, nine, and his sisters and other children lived in the tent towns from the start	the same committee record; sketches of tent towns like von Guerard's, 1853
Not every group left the same kind of trace. When a group's own words are thin, historians use laws, records and pictures too — and say where the gaps are.		

A table called *Same goldfields, different eyes*, with rows for diggers, Chinese diggers, businesspeople, women and children, each showing what the sources show about that group and which sources show it

Notice two things in that table.

First, every group left different traces. Diggers wrote accounts; Raffaello Carboni's 1855 book about the Eureka Stockade is one. Businesspeople left company and mail records — Cobb and Co, started in Melbourne in 1853, ran coaches carrying diggers, mail and gold to the fields. Women and children are harder to find in their own words, so historians read committee records, laws and sketches instead.

Second, missing voices are a finding, not a failure. In 1851, Margaret Kennedy and Mrs Farrell found gold at Bendigo Creek. A committee record of the time said there was “no doubt that Mrs Kennedy and Mrs Farrell had obtained gold” — and named children like nine-year-old John Drane among the first families on the field. That record is precious evidence that women and children were there from the start, even when few of their own words survive.

Source: Committee record on the discovery of gold at Bendigo Creek, 1851: “no doubt that Mrs Kennedy and Mrs Farrell had obtained gold.” (as recorded in accounts of the Australian gold rushes; verified 24 August 2026)

When a group's own words are thin, use what survives — laws, records, pictures — and say plainly where the gaps are.

Part 5: Ned Kelly, then and since

No person in this book has been shown in more different ways than Ned Kelly. Before you judge him, read what he said about himself.

Source card — a letter from Ned Kelly, 1879

PRIMARY SOURCE

"I am a widows son outlawed and my orders must be obeyed."

One line from the letter, in the words Kelly dictated.

About this source

Who?	Ned Kelly spoke the words; his friend Joe Byrne wrote them down.
When and where?	February 1879, around the Kelly gang's ride into Jerilderie, New South Wales.
How big?	About 8,000 words, across 56 pages.
Where is it now?	The original is held at the State Library of Victoria.

What the source suggests

	Beliefs	Kelly believed the police had treated his family badly for years, and that the courts took the police side.
	Values	He valued loyalty to his family, and he valued standing up for himself when he thought the law was against him.
	Attitudes	His words are proud and angry. He does not ask for kindness — he gives orders.
	Limits	This is Kelly telling his own story. It cannot show how the police, the courts, or the people he robbed saw things. <i>Read like a historian: the letter is evidence about Kelly's own views — not proof that his views were the whole truth.</i>

A source card for the Jerilderie letter of 1879, with a quote from the letter, who made it, when, where it is kept, and rows for the beliefs, values, attitudes and limits it carries

Source: The Jerilderie letter, February 1879. Ned Kelly dictated it and Joe Byrne wrote it down — about 8,000 words over 56 pages. It is kept at the State Library of Victoria. “I am a widows son outlawed and my orders must be obeyed.” (verified 24 August 2026)

Work the four steps on that one line. The words suggest Kelly saw himself as wronged (“outlawed”) but still in command (“my orders must be obeyed”). He wanted his story told his way — that is why the letter exists at all. But step 4 matters too: it is Kelly’s side, dictated to a friend. The police and the families of his victims do not speak in it.

In his own time, people saw him two ways at once:

- Most newspapers were hard on him. After the letter appeared, papers called it the wild talk of a rebel setting class against class, and said he must be caught.
- Yet when he was condemned to die, a petition asking that his life be spared gathered more than 32,000 signatures. Many working people saw him as one of their own.

Both of those are primary evidence of perspectives in 1880. Kelly was hanged at Melbourne Gaol on 11 November 1880. Papers reported his last words as “Such is life”.

Since then, the way Kelly is shown has kept changing:

Ned Kelly: shown then, shown since

The same person, drawn in different ways at different times. Each way tells us about the people who made it.

THEN — in his own time	SINCE — later and today
Newspapers, 1879-1880 Most newspapers were hard on Kelly. They called his big letter the talk of a rebel, and said he must be caught, not just blame.	Film, 1906 The Story of the Kelly Gang is treated as the world's first full-length story film. It shows Kelly with sadness, not just blame.
A petition, 1880 More than 32,000 people signed a letter asking that Kelly's life be spared. Many working people saw him as one of their own.	Museums, today His armour is on show at the State Library of Victoria; his death mask at the National Portrait Gallery; his green sash at Benalla Museum.
Melbourne Punch cartoon, 1900 The magazine Punch printed a cartoon of the gang's hold-up — Kelly as a figure of fear and fun at the same time.	A debate that goes on Was he a criminal, or a man pushed too far? Australians still argue about him — the sources can hold both questions.

Representations change over time. When you compare them, say what changed — and think about why.

A two-column figure — THEN showing newspapers, the petition asking that his life be spared, and a 1900 Melbourne Punch cartoon; SINCE showing the 1906 film, museum objects, and the debate that goes on — about how Ned Kelly has been shown over time

In 1906 came *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, treated as the world's first full-length story film. About 17 minutes of it survives, kept at the National Film and Sound Archive. Where the newspapers of 1879–1880 had called him a monster, the film showed him with sadness — a man brought to a bad end. Today his armour is on show at the State Library of Victoria, his death mask at the National Portrait Gallery, and the green sash he wore at Glenrowan at Benalla Museum.

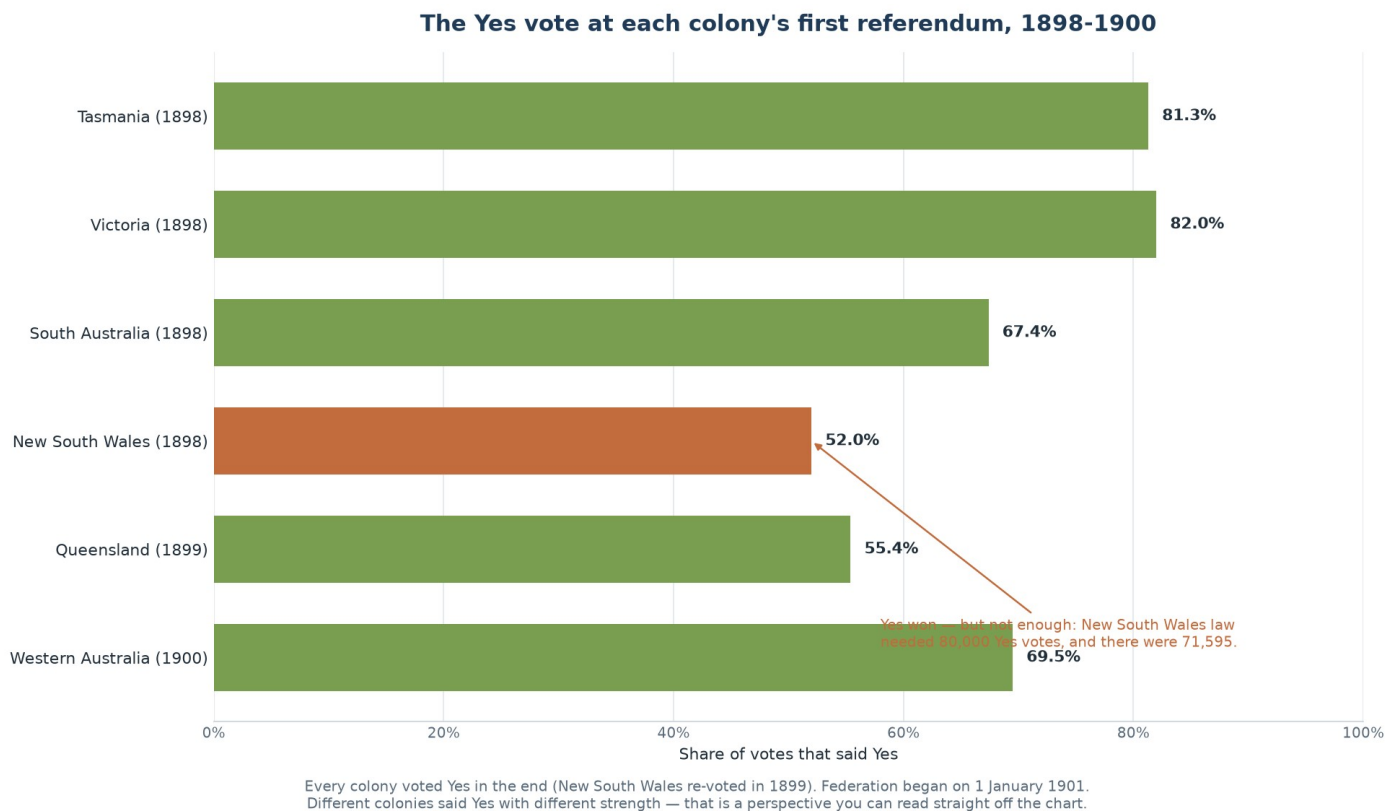
So what was he? Here historians argue, and you should too — carefully. One strong case rests on evidence that Kelly robbed people, hurt people and killed; three policemen died. The other rests on evidence that his family was treated harshly by police and courts, that he tried to have his side heard, and that 32,000 people begged for his life. Both cases use real evidence. Your job is not to deliver a verdict. Your job is to say what each case rests on — and to see that how Australians show Kelly says as much about them as it does about him.

Part 6: Perspectives on big changes — Federation, votes for women, migration laws

In the last decades of the 1800s, Australians argued about three big changes: joining the colonies into one nation, giving women the vote, and deciding who could come and settle. Each change carried many perspectives.

(a) Federation. In October 1889, at Tenterfield in New South Wales, Henry Parkes made a speech calling for the colonies to “unite and create a great national government for all Australia”. He spoke of “the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian government and an Australian parliament” (reported in the Sydney Morning Herald, 25 October 1889, page 8).

The colonies put the question to their voters in referendums — votes where everyone answers yes or no. **Suffrage** means the right to vote in parliament elections, and by the 1890s all men could vote in these referendums. The chart shows how each colony voted at its first try:



A bar chart of the Yes vote at each colony’s first Federation referendum between 1898 and 1900, with Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia each shown as a bar, and New South Wales marked because its Yes vote was below the 80,000 its law required

Read the chart for perspective. Tasmania and Victoria said Yes strongly. New South Wales, the biggest colony, said Yes by a hair — and it still failed, because New South Wales law needed 80,000 Yes votes and there were only 71,595. The smaller colonies feared being pushed around by the big ones, yet they voted Yes most strongly of all; they believed the union would protect them. New South Wales re-voted in 1899 and said Yes, and Federation began on 1 January 1901.

(b) Votes for women. Women could not vote in most colonies, and many thought that was wrong. In 1891, women's groups in Victoria gathered a petition so large it became known as the Monster Petition:

Source card: the Monster Petition, 1891	
"The vote would be the most effective instrument for improving conditions of life." — Annette Bear-Crawford, who helped lead the push for women's suffrage	
What	A petition asking for votes for women in Victorian parliament elections — nearly 30,000 signatures on about 260 metres of paper when unrolled.
Who	Organised by four women's suffrage and church groups, including the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society.
When	Presented to Victorian parliament on 29 September 1891.
Where now	Public Record Office Victoria.
Belief	That women's voices should count in making the law.
Value	Fairness — and making everyday life better for families.
Attitude	Patient and determined: 30,000 signatures took months of knocking on doors and holding meetings.
Limits	The petition speaks for the people who agreed with it. It cannot tell us about people who disagreed, or who could not sign. The petition did not win the vote in 1891. Victorian women won the state vote in 1908 and first used it in 1911; women across Australia won the federal vote in 1902. Historians still use the petition as evidence of what its signers believed and valued.

A source card for the Monster Petition of 1891, with a quote from Annette Bear-Crawford, what the petition was, who organised it, when it was presented, where it is kept, and rows for the belief, value, attitude and limits it carries

Source: The Monster Petition, presented to the Victorian parliament on 29 September 1891 — nearly 30,000 signatures on about 260 metres of paper, now kept at Public Record Office Victoria. Annette Bear-Crawford, who helped lead the push for women's suffrage, put it this way: "the vote would be the most effective instrument for improving conditions of life." (verified 24 August 2026)

A petition is a letter signed by many people asking a parliament to act. This one shows a belief — that women's voices should count in making the law — and a value: fairness. It did not win the vote in 1891. Victorian women won the state vote in 1908 and first used it in 1911; women across Australia won the federal vote in 1902. The petition survives as evidence of what its signers believed and valued, and how patiently they worked for it.

(c) Migration laws. The first federal parliament passed the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 to limit who could settle in Australia. Its famous tool was the **dictation test**: an officer could make an arriving person write out 50 words in a language of the officer's choosing — chosen so the person would fail. The set of laws that began with this Act is now called the **White Australia policy**.

People at the time saw the law in different ways, and all of their views are evidence:

Named views on the Immigration Restriction Act 1901

The first federal parliament passed this law to limit who could settle in Australia. Real people saw it in different ways.

Who	What they said or did	What it shows
Edmund Barton First Prime Minister; brought the law to parliament	Supported it. He argued that the idea of equal treatment was never meant to apply between the British and the Chinese.	Most members of the first parliament agreed.
Senator Harney Senator for Western Australia	Warned that if the word test was "not honestly administered", it would ~~be used to permit people to write off words that is, was called~~ be used to permit people to write off words that is, was called	It could be used to permit people to write off words that is, was called
Norman Cameron Member of the House of Representatives	Opposed insulting a whole people: "no race on this earth has been treated in a more shameful manner than have the Chinese."	He said that the law was unfair to a whole people.

The law let an officer give a 50-word test in a language of the officer's choosing — chosen so the person would fail.

The Immigration Restriction Act was replaced by the Migration Act 1958. The policy it began — now called the White Australia policy — was wound down between 1949 and 1973.

A table of named views on the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 — Edmund Barton supporting it, Senator Harney warning about dishonest use of the word test, and Norman Cameron opposing the insult to a whole people — with what each view shows

Source: Norman Cameron, member of the first federal parliament, speaking against the Immigration Restriction Bill in 1901: "no race on this earth has been treated in a more shameful manner than have the Chinese." (as recorded in accounts of the Act; verified 24 August 2026)

Most members supported the law — Edmund Barton, the first Prime Minister, argued for it by saying the idea of equal treatment was never meant to apply between the British and the Chinese. That view, and the values inside it, were held by many people in 1901. The named critics show it was not the *only* view. Australians later turned against the policy; parliament wound it down between 1949 and 1973. The change itself is evidence of how attitudes can move over time.

Part 7: Perspectives are not interpretations

One last idea before you write. A **perspective** is what people at the time thought and felt — Parkes pushing union in 1889, Kelly insisting on his story in 1879, the 32,000 who signed for his life in 1880. You read perspectives *out of* sources made at the time.

An **interpretation** is different: it is a later account of what those events meant — a film made in 1906 about Kelly, a museum display today, a book written now about Federation. Interpretations are built *from* perspectives and other evidence, but they carry their own maker's view too.

Keep the two separate and you will be ready for the next section, where interpretations take the lead. For now: when a question asks for a perspective, go to a source made at the time, and show your evidence.

Worked demonstrations

WD1 — Reading the Jerilderie letter for beliefs, values and attitudes

Step	Move	What we can say here
1. Source	Name it, date it, say who made it and where it is kept	The Jerilderie letter, February 1879; dictated by Ned Kelly, written by Joe Byrne; about 8,000 words on 56 pages; State Library of Victoria
2. Says/shows	Quote or describe exactly	“I am a widows son outlawed and my orders must be obeyed.”
3. Suggests	Tie a belief, value or attitude to those exact words	Kelly believed he had been made an outlaw unfairly, yet still saw himself as a leader whose word had to be obeyed; the tone suggests pride mixed with anger
4. Limits	Say what the source cannot tell us	It is Kelly’s side only, shaped for his own cause; the police and the families of those he robbed do not speak in it

The point to copy: every claim in step 3 points back to a word in step 2. No floating opinions.

WD2 — Comparing two sources on Chinese diggers

Step	Move	What we can say here
1. Pick two sources	Same people, different makers	George Rowe’s 1858 painting of Ballarat, with Chinese miners in the foreground; the June 1855 Victorian law taxing Chinese arrivals 10 pounds
2. Each alone	What does each say or show?	The painting shows Chinese miners at work, placed first in a busy town; the law treats Chinese arrivals as a problem to be taxed and limited
3. Compare	Similarities and differences	Both show that Chinese people were central to the goldfields — but one presents them as part of the town’s life, the other as people to keep out
4. Perspective	Whose view does each carry?	The painting carries an artist’s eye that counted Chinese miners as part of the place; the law carries the parliament’s hostile attitude of the same years

The point to copy: comparing two sources shows you a difference in perspective that no single source can show on its own. That difference is your finding.

Practice questions - with help

Q1. Sort these three statements into belief, value and attitude: (a) “There is gold in the creek bed.” (b) “Everyone should get a fair go.” (c) “I do not trust the government.” *Hint: a belief is about what is true; a value is about what matters; an attitude is a settled feeling about someone or something.*

Q2. Read Kelly’s words again: “I am a widows son outlawed and my orders must be obeyed.” What do they suggest he believed about how he had been treated — and about himself? *Start with: “The word ‘outlawed’ suggests... The words ‘my orders must be obeyed’ suggest...”*

Q3. The June 1855 Victorian law made Chinese arrivals pay a 10-pound tax that nobody else paid. Using the four-step chain, say what this law suggests the parliament believed, and what it suggests about the parliament’s attitude. *Start with: “The law suggests the parliament believed... It also suggests an attitude of...”*

Q4. Melbourne Punch printed a cartoon in 1900 called “BAIL-UP!”, showing Kelly’s gang holding people up. Apply steps 1–3 of the stereotype checklist: who made it and for whom? Does it show one person or stand for a whole group? Are the pictures kind or unkind — and what attitude do they carry?

Q5. From the three pictures in Part 4, choose one. Name the maker and say one thing they chose to put in. Then say whose way of seeing the picture carries, and why.

Q6. Using the “Same goldfields, different eyes” table, name two groups from the goldfields and, for each, one source that shows something about them.

Q7. Look at the referendum chart. Which colony voted most strongly Yes at its first referendum, and which least strongly? Suggest one reason voters in New South Wales were less sure. *Hint: Chapter 2 notes that the smaller colonies feared being pushed around by the big ones. New South Wales was the biggest colony of all.*

Q8. The Monster Petition gathered nearly 30,000 signatures in 1891. What belief about women does the petition show? And what can the petition NOT tell us? *Hint for the second half: who signed it — and whose views are missing?*

Practice questions - on your own

Q9. Read Norman Cameron’s 1901 words: “no race on this earth has been treated in a more shameful manner than have the Chinese.” In three sentences: what did Cameron believe? Which word tells you most strongly how he felt? Was he speaking with the majority in 1901, or against it — how can you tell?

Q10. Compare how Kelly was shown in the newspapers of 1879–1880 with how he was shown in the 1906 film. Give one clear difference. Then give one reason the picture of him may have changed — think about who made each source, and when.

Q11. Choose one colony from the referendum chart. Write three sentences: how strongly did that colony vote Yes at its first referendum, and what might its voters have valued about Federation — or feared about it?

Q12. Senator Harney warned that the dictation test, if not used honestly, would pull the parliament and its officers into dishonest tricks. What value was Harney asking the parliament to live up to? Use what you know about how the test worked — an officer choosing a language so the person would fail — to say whether you think his worry was well placed, and why.

Evidence-based writing task

Write **one paragraph** (5–8 sentences) about the beliefs, values or attitudes of ONE person or group from this section, using evidence from ONE primary source. You might choose:

- Ned Kelly and the Jerilderie letter
- the Chinese diggers and the 1855 Victorian law (or Rowe’s 1858 painting)
- the women of the Monster Petition and the petition itself
- Margaret Kennedy and Mrs Farrell and the Bendigo committee record
- Edmund Barton or Norman Cameron and the 1901 debates

Plan with the five steps below, then write.

Plan your paragraph in five steps

Use this planner before you write. Each box becomes one or two sentences.

1	Choose Pick ONE person or group, and ONE primary source about them from this section (or one your teacher shows you).
2	Evidence What does the source say or show? Quote it, or describe it, exactly.
3	What it suggests What belief, value or attitude does that suggest? Write: This suggests that...
4	Limits What can the source NOT tell you? Who made it, and whose voice is missing?
5	Write Put it together in one paragraph: evidence, then what it suggests, then limits. Name your source.

Check before you hand in: every point tied to a named source — sources named — your own words.

A five-step writing planner — choose a person and a source, gather the evidence, say what it suggests, name the limits, then write the paragraph

Success checklist — before you hand in, check that your paragraph:

- names your person or group, and names your source
- quotes or describes the source exactly (step 2 of your plan)
- says what the source suggests about beliefs, values or attitudes — with “this suggests” (step 3)
- says what the source cannot tell you (step 4)
- uses your own words, and ties every point back to the source

Answers (questions with help)

Q1. (a) belief — a claim about what is true. (b) value — a statement about what matters and is worth standing up for. (c) attitude — a settled feeling about someone (here, the government).

Q2. “Outlawed” suggests Kelly believed he had been put outside the law unfairly — that something had been done *to* him. “My orders must be obeyed” suggests he still saw himself as a leader with authority, and as someone in command of other people. Together they suggest a man who felt wronged but refused to feel small.

Q3. The law suggests the parliament believed Chinese arrivals were a problem to be slowed down. It also suggests an attitude of hostility, or at least suspicion, towards Chinese people as a group — because the tax was laid on them alone, though they had broken no rules. (Note: the law is evidence of the parliament’s perspective, not of what Chinese diggers thought, who saw the tax as unfair.)

Q4. Step 1: a popular magazine, drawn to amuse and please the readers who bought it. Step 2: it shows Kelly and his gang, but it trades on what readers already felt about bushrangers as a type — fear mixed with fascination. Step 3: it is unkind and mocking — it turns a real, violent crime (holding people up at gunpoint) into a joke. Attitude inside: Kelly as a figure of fear and fun at once. Note the date — 1900, twenty years after his death: by then the magazine could play with him safely.

Q5. Example for Rowe’s painting: George Rowe put Chinese miners working in the foreground of his 1858 view of Ballarat, a busy gold town. The picture carries the artist’s way of seeing — he chose to put Chinese miners first, which suggests he saw them as part of the town’s life, not an add-on.

Q6. Any two valid pairings from the table, e.g.: diggers — Raffaello Carboni’s 1855 book, or Henderson’s 1854 sketch of Eureka; Chinese diggers — the 1855 law, Rowe’s painting, or the records of Buckland River 1857; businesspeople — Cobb and Co company and mail records; women — the Bendigo committee record; children — the same committee record, or sketches of tent towns.

Q7. Tasmania voted most strongly Yes at its first referendum (81.3 per cent in 1898); New South Wales least strongly (52.0 per cent in 1898, and below the 80,000 Yes votes its law required). New South Wales was the biggest colony, so some voters there feared what joining a union might cost them in power or money; the smaller colonies, which feared being pushed around by the big ones, saw union as protection.

Q8. The petition shows the belief that women’s voices should count in making the law — that women belonged in the choosing of a parliament. It cannot tell us about people who disagreed with votes for women, or about women who could not get to a meeting to sign; it speaks only for its signers.

Model responses (point form)

Q9. Cameron believed the Chinese had been treated disgracefully by the law. “Shameful” tells you most strongly how he felt — it is a word about right and wrong, not just policy. He was speaking against the majority: most members supported the Act, as the first Prime Minister himself argued for it; Cameron’s job in his speech was to shame the majority, which only makes sense if he was in the smaller group.

Q10. Difference: the newspapers of 1879–1880 were harsh, calling Kelly a rebel and a monster to be caught; the 1906 film shows him with sadness, as a man brought to a bad end. Reason for change: the film was made 26 years later, after his death had become part of the story Australians told about themselves; it was made to be watched by paying audiences, including people who had signed for his life — so it leaned on pity where the newspapers, written while the fear was fresh, leaned on anger.

Q11. Example (South Australia): South Australia voted Yes with 67.4 per cent at its first referendum in 1898 — a clear majority, though not as overwhelming as Tasmania or Victoria. Its voters may have valued union because a smaller colony could gain strength and a louder voice in a national parliament. They may also have feared that the bigger colonies would dominate the new government, which is why the Yes vote, while strong, was not higher.

Q12. Harney was asking the parliament to live up to honesty — to mean what its law said, and not use a test as a trick. His worry was well placed: the test let an officer choose the language, so it could always be one the person would fail. A rule that can be rigged is not applied equally, and that is exactly the unfairness Harney pointed at — and that Cameron’s words, in the same debates, attacked from another side.

Writing task. Strong responses will mirror WD1’s shape: name person/group and source → exact quote or description → “this suggests...” tied to the words → limits → source named again. Example skeleton for the Monster Petition: the petition (29 September 1891, nearly 30,000 signatures, now at Public Record Office Victoria) asked the Victorian parliament for votes for women; its very size shows the belief that women’s voices should count in law-making and the value its signers placed on fairness; it cannot speak for non-signers or for women who never got to sign; therefore it shows what the suffrage movement believed and valued in 1891 — and names the source.

Sources used in this section

All sources in this section are real and citable. Details verified 24 August 2026.

1. **The Jerilderie letter** (February 1879), dictated by Ned Kelly and written by Joe Byrne; about 8,000 words, 56 pages; State Library of Victoria.
2. **Ned Kelly’s armour** — State Library of Victoria. **His death mask** — National Portrait Gallery. **The green sash he wore at Glenrowan** — Benalla Museum.
3. **The Story of the Kelly Gang** (1906 film), treated as the world’s first full-length story film; about 17 minutes survive; National Film and Sound Archive; added to the UNESCO Memory of the World register in 2007.
4. **Melbourne Punch** (magazine, August 1855 – December 1925), modelled on London’s Punch; its named Kelly cartoon “BAIL-UP!” (1900).
5. **Victorian law of June 1855 restricting Chinese immigration** — a 10-pound tax on each Chinese arrival and limits on shipping; details as recorded in accounts of the Victorian gold rushes.
6. **The attack on Chinese diggers at Buckland River**, 4 July 1857; and the planned expulsion of Chinese diggers from Bendigo, 8 July 1854, stopped by police — as recorded in accounts of the Victorian gold rushes.
7. **Numbers of Chinese diggers**: more than 19,000 by late 1855; about 33,000 by 1858, about one in five of all miners — as recorded in accounts of the Victorian gold rushes.
8. **George Rowe**, *Bird’s-eye view of Ballarat with Chinese gold miners in the foreground* (1858). **Richard Daintree and Antoine Fauchery**, *A gang of diggers at Forrest Creek, Chewton* (photograph, about 1858). **Eugene von Guerard**, sketch of Ballarat’s tent town (1853). **J. B. Henderson**, sketch of the Eureka Stockade (1854) — all as recorded in accounts of art and photography of the Victorian gold rushes.
9. **Committee record on the discovery of gold at Bendigo Creek (1851)**, including “no doubt that Mrs Kennedy and Mrs Farrell had obtained gold” — as recorded in accounts of the Australian gold rushes.
10. **Cobb and Co**, established in Melbourne in 1853; coaches carried passengers, mail and gold to the goldfields; the last horse-drawn coach ran on 14 August 1924.
11. **Henry Parkes, the Tenterfield speech**, 24 October 1889, Tenterfield School of Arts; reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1889, page 8.
12. **Federation referendum results, 1898–1900** — as recorded in accounts of the Federation of Australia.
13. **The Monster Petition**, presented to the Victorian parliament on 29 September 1891; nearly 30,000 signatures, about 260 metres; organised by four women’s suffrage and church groups, including the Victorian Women’s Suffrage Society; Public Record Office Victoria.
14. **Annette Bear-Crawford**, leading figure in the women’s suffrage movement; words on the vote as recorded in accounts of her life.
15. **Immigration Restriction Act 1901** (Commonwealth), including the dictation test; introduced by Edmund Barton; words of Barton, Senator Harney and Norman Cameron in the 1901 debates, as recorded in accounts of the Act; the Act was replaced by the Migration Act 1958, and the White Australia policy was wound down between 1949 and 1973.
16. **Ned Kelly’s death**: hanged at Melbourne Gaol, 11 November 1880; the petition of more than 32,000 signatures asking that his life be spared; reported last words “Such is life” — as recorded in accounts of Ned Kelly.

Explaining different historical interpretations and why they differ

Teacher note — for teachers only (not student text). This section owns History Levels 5–6 skill CD VC2HH6S06 (explaining differing historical interpretations). It also owns the achievement-standard sentence on recognising such interpretations and explaining why they vary.

Elaborations drawn on: **.E02** in whole — comparing and contrasting interpretations of one historical phenomenon (here: what the gold rushes and Eureka meant for Victoria’s development); **.E03** trimmed per §2A — finding where historians read the same significant events or developments differently (migration and Federation here), and why (the colonisation example is cut); **.E01** (interpreting British colonisation as an invasion) is **excluded** per §2A — it must not be taught, mentioned or implied anywhere in student text in this section.

Teaching sequence: (1) separate fact, perspective and interpretation (Figures 1–3); (2) five reasons why interpretations differ (Figure 4); (3) worked demonstration 1 — three readings of Eureka (Figures 5–6); (4) worked demonstration 2 — two readings of federation (Figures 7–8); (5) the migration pair, re-using the two sources taught in Section 1D (Figure 9); (6) practice tasks with help, then tasks on your own; (7) the evidence-based writing task with planning frame and labelled model (Figures 10–11).

Pairings and boundary: interpretations are first met inside the knowledge chapters (Sections 1F and 2E) and are formalised here. Section 3E owns perspectives; this section owns interpretations — Figure 3 keeps the boundary explicit. Per D11, the skill is taught through the knowledge content of Chapters 1–2 (Eureka and the gold rushes, migration, federation). Marking: assess the quality of reasoning and the use of evidence, not the conclusion reached — in every pair used here, both readings are defensible.

Background knowledge

A **historian** is a person who studies the past and writes about it. When a historian tells us what happened in the past **and what it means**, they are giving an **interpretation**. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *interpretation* but does not define it, so this book uses this working definition: *an interpretation is an account of what happened in the past and what it means, built from sources*.

Three words must be kept separate in this section:

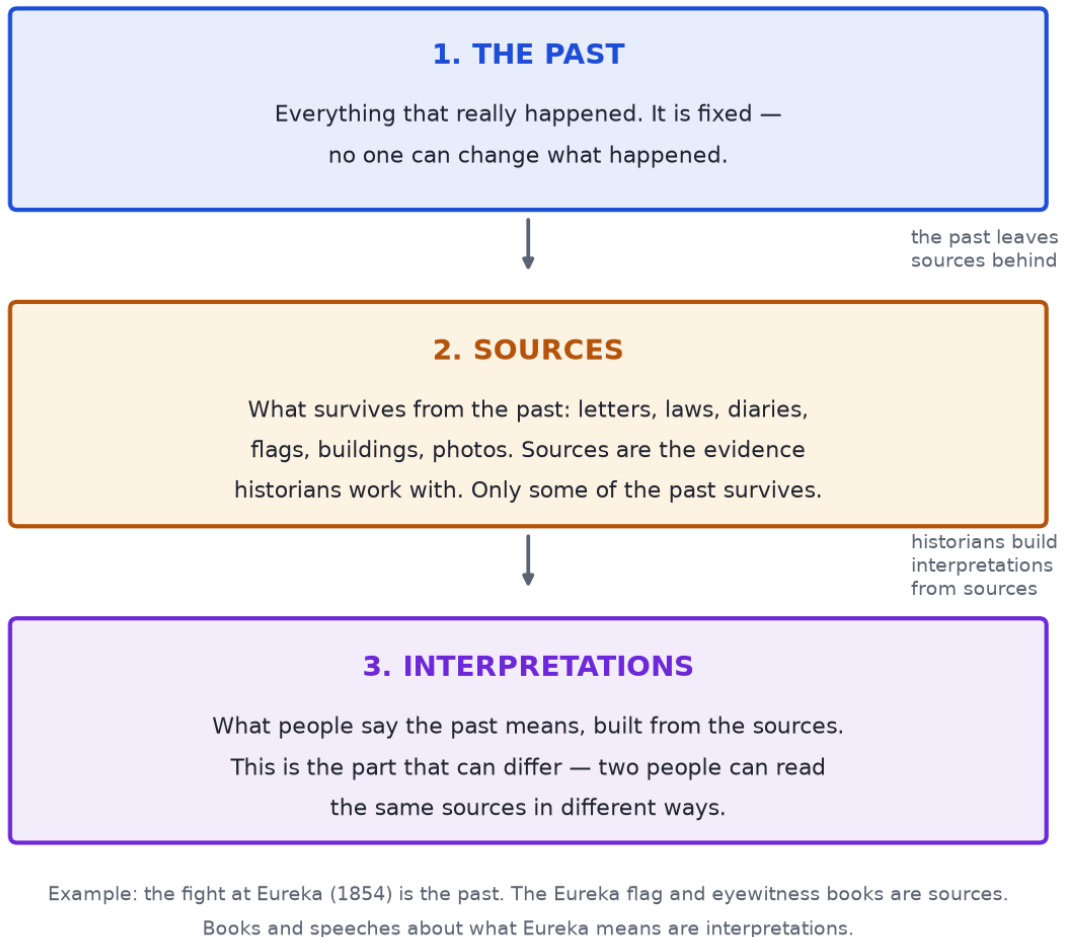
- A **fact** about the past can be checked against sources. *The gold licence cost 30 shillings a month* is a fact.
- A **perspective** is the beliefs, values and point of view of a person or group who lived at the time. You practise reading perspectives in primary sources in Section 3E.
- An **interpretation** is an account of the past and what it means, built from sources. Anyone can give one — people at the time, or historians writing later.

Two more words you will need:

- **Federation** — the joining of the six colonies into one nation, Australia, on 1 January 1901.
- A **referendum** — a vote in which all voters say yes or no to a plan.

You have met the stories this section uses before: Eureka and the gold rushes in Chapter 1 (the Eureka oath and the fight of 3 December 1854 in Section 1C; two views of Eureka in Section 1F), Chinese migration to Victoria in Section 1D, and federation in Chapter 2 (two views of federation in Section 2E). This section does not retell those stories; it uses them to build one new skill.

How history is built — three steps



Three stacked boxes joined by arrows: 1 the past — everything that really happened; 2 sources — what survives from the past; 3 interpretations — what people say the past means, built from the sources.

Figure 1. How history is built. The past is fixed — no one can change it. Only some of it survives, as sources. From those sources, people build interpretations, and this is the part that can differ.

Key ideas

Key idea 1 — a fact can be checked; an interpretation can be argued. Look for judgement words like *finest*, *most important* or *wrong*: they signal an interpretation. Look for things you can check against a source — a price, a date, a vote count: they signal a fact.

Fact or interpretation? Sort the six cards.

A FACT can be checked against sources. An INTERPRETATION says what the past means or how much it matters. Write each card's letter under one heading.

Card A

The gold licence cost 30 shillings a month.

Card B

Eureka was the finest thing in Australasian history.

Card C

Victoria became a separate colony in 1851.

Card D

The diggers at Eureka were right to take up arms.

Card E

In June 1898, 71,595 voters in New South Wales voted yes to federation.

Card F

Federation was the most important event in Australian history.

FACT

can be checked against sources

INTERPRETATION

says what the past means or
how much it matters

Six sorting cards labelled A to F above two empty answer boxes headed FACT and INTERPRETATION.

Figure 2. Sorting cards for Task 1. Cards A–F mix facts and interpretations about the gold rushes, Eureka and federation.

Key idea 2 — a perspective is not the same thing as an interpretation. A perspective lives *inside* a primary source: it is the point of view of someone who was there. An interpretation is an *account* of the past and what it means: you meet it in books, articles, speeches and museum displays. The same source can show a perspective; a historian's account of that source is an interpretation.

Two words with different jobs

	A PERSPECTIVE	AN INTERPRETATION
What it is	The beliefs, values and point of view of a person or group	An account of what happened in the past and what it means, built from sources
Who has it	People who lived at the time	Anyone — people at the time, or historians writing later
Where you meet it	Inside primary sources — a letter, a speech, a law, a pamphlet	In books, articles, speeches and museum displays about the past
Example in this book	The diggers' point of view inside the Eureka oath (Section 1C)	Mark Twain saying what Eureka meant, forty years later
Where you practise it	Section 3E — perspectives in primary sources	This section — why interpretations differ

The same source can show a perspective. A historian's account of it is an interpretation.

Two-column table comparing A PERSPECTIVE (teal) and AN INTERPRETATION (purple) across five rows: what it is, who has it, where you meet it, example in this book, where you practise it.

Figure 3. Two words with different jobs. Section 3E owns the left column; this section owns the right.

Key idea 3 — interpretations differ for reasons, not by accident. When two readings disagree, a historian asks *why*. Five reasons do most of the explaining.

Five reasons why interpretations differ

1. They ask different questions	A writer asking who was to blame sees Eureka in a different way from a writer asking what changed afterwards.
2. They use different sources	The 1855 law and the 1879 pamphlet are two different windows on the same migration.
3. They write at different times	Twain wrote about Eureka in 1897, more than forty years after Carboni wrote in 1855. New evidence can also turn up.
4. They stand in different places	A governor and a digger watched the same stockade with different eyes. What people value shapes what they see.
5. They write for different purposes and readers	A speech made to win a vote reads in a different way from a letter written to tell a friend the news.

Same past — but different questions, sources, times, places and purposes give different readings.

Five numbered purple boxes, each paired with an example: 1 they ask different questions; 2 they use different sources; 3 they write at different times; 4 they stand in different places; 5 they write for different purposes and readers.

Figure 4. Five reasons why interpretations differ. Each example in this figure comes from content you have already met in this book.

Worked demonstrations

Worked demonstration 1 — one event, three readings of Eureka

Three accounts of the stockade of 3 December 1854 sit side by side in Figure 5. The demonstration shows the four moves historians make: name each reading, say what it says, find where the readings agree, then explain why they differ.

One event — three readings of Eureka (3 December 1854)

Reading A — a digger's book	Reading B — the government's	Reading C — a visitor's, years later
Who, and when? Raffaello Carboni, an eyewitness at Ballarat, wrote <i>The Eureka Stockade</i> in 1855, the year after the fight.	The Victorian government treated the stockade as an armed rebellion. Thirteen diggers were put on trial for treason in 1855.	Mark Twain, an American writer, visited Ballarat and wrote about Eureka in 1897 — more than forty years later.
What it says Eureka was Eureka was the diggers' stand for their rights and liberties, forced on them by unfair licence hunts.	Eureka was a rebellion against lawful rule, and its leaders were criminals.	Eureka was 'the finest thing in Australasian history' — a strike for liberty.
Why it sees it that way He was there, on the diggers' side, and wrote to tell their story. (place and purpose)	Its job was to keep law and order. To officials, an armed camp meant rebellion. (place)	He came long after, with no side in the blame, for readers around the world. (time and readers)

All three are about the same event — but each writer's place, time and purpose shape the reading.

Three-column table giving three readings of Eureka: Reading A a digger's book (Carboni, 1855), Reading B the government's (the 1855 treason trials), Reading C a visitor's years later (Mark Twain, 1897); rows give who and when, what it says Eureka was, and why it sees it that way.

Figure 5. One event, three readings. Sources: Raffaello Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade* (Melbourne, 1855); records of the Melbourne treason trials, February–March 1855; Mark Twain, *Following the Equator* (1897), chapter 24 — retrieved 24 August 2026.

Step	What we do	What we find
1	Name each reading: who gave it, and when?	A: Raffaello Carboni, an eyewitness at Ballarat, writing in 1855. B: the Victorian government, in the treason trials of 1855. C: Mark Twain, an American visitor, writing in 1897.
2	Say what each reading says.	A: a stand for rights and liberties, forced on the diggers by unfair licence hunts. B: an armed rebellion against lawful rule; its leaders were criminals to be tried. C: “the finest thing in Australasian history” — a strike for liberty.
3	Find where the readings agree.	All three agree that a fight happened at Eureka on 3 December 1854, that

Step	What we do	What we find
4	Explain why they differ, using the five reasons.	diggers built a stockade, and that it was about the licence and the diggers' rights. Place: Carboni stood inside the diggers' camp; the government's job was to keep law and order. Time: Twain wrote more than forty years after the fight. Purpose and readers: Carboni wrote to tell the diggers' story; the courts wrote to prove a crime; Twain wrote to retell a famous story for readers around the world.

Now read the words of Mark Twain himself in Figure 6. The quotation marks show his exact words.

SOURCE CARD — a book written forty years after

Mark Twain, Following the Equator (1897), chapter 24



'By and by there was a result; and I think it may be called the finest thing in Australasian history. It was a revolution — small in size; but great politically; it was a strike for liberty, a struggle for a principle.'

Who wrote it?
Mark Twain, an American writer, after a visit to Ballarat.

When?
1897 — more than forty years after the stockade of 3 December 1854.

What does he call Eureka?
A revolution, a strike for liberty, a struggle for a principle.

Twain went on to compare the diggers' stand with other famous fights for liberty.

A real quote from a real book. The quotation marks show his exact words.

Cream source card quoting Mark Twain, Following the Equator (1897), chapter 24: 'By and by there was a result; and I think it may be called the finest thing in Australasian history. It was a revolution — small in size; but great politically; it was a strike for liberty, a struggle for a principle.'

Figure 6. Source card: Mark Twain on Eureka. *Source: Mark Twain, Following the Equator (1897), chapter 24; retrieved 24 August 2026 from Project Gutenberg.*

A model explanation, in two sentences: *Carboni was there, on the diggers' side, and wrote one year after the fight to tell their story; Twain came long after, with no side in the blame, and wrote for readers around the world. Same fight — but different place, time and purpose give different readings.*

Worked demonstration 2 — one plan, two readings of federation

In the 1890s each colony was asked to join a plan for one Australian nation. The same plan was read two ways, as Figure 7 shows.

The federation debate — one plan, two sides (1890s)

YES — join the six colonies into one nation • One nation could defend itself with one army and one navy. • Trade and laws would be the same across borders. • People were proud of being Australian, not just colonial.	NO — keep things as they are, or change the plan • Small colonies feared the two big colonies — New South Wales and Victoria — would make all the decisions. • Colonies would lose the money they raised from taxes on goods at their borders. • Some workers feared it would take attention away from wages and fair working hours.
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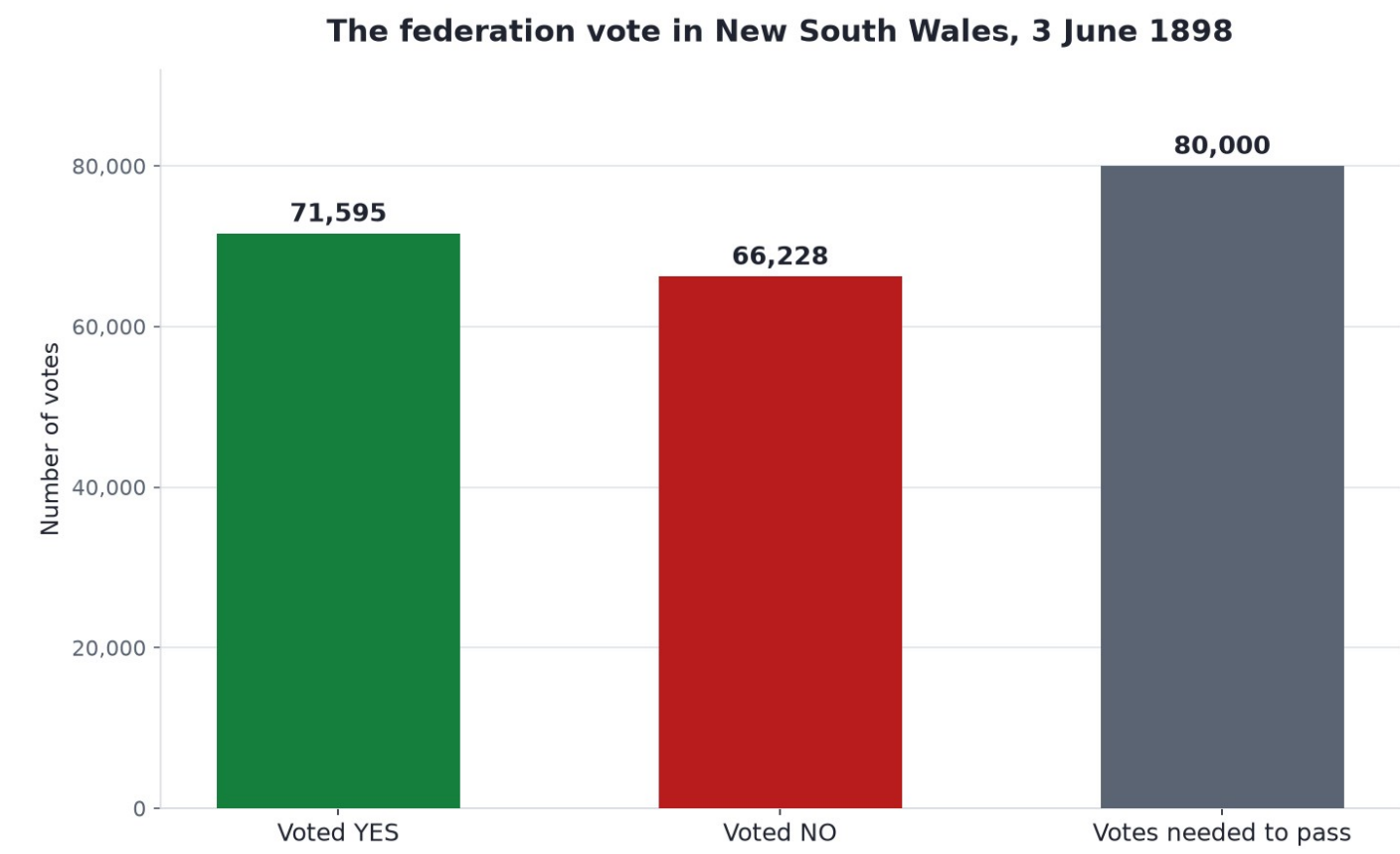
Sir Henry Parkes led the yes side from 1889. Many no voters still wanted federation — they just thought this plan was not fair enough. Both sides gave reasons.

Two-column table of the 1890s federation debate: YES arguments (one army and navy, the same trade and laws across borders, pride in being Australian) and NO arguments (small colonies feared the big colonies would make all decisions, colonies would lose border tax money, some workers feared wages and fair hours would lose attention).

Figure 7. The federation debate: one plan, two sides. Both sides gave reasons; the no side was not against Australia, it thought this plan was not fair enough.

Sir Henry Parkes led the yes side. In a speech at Tenterfield on 24 October 1889 he said the colonies should “unite and create a great national government for all Australia”, and asked why Australians could not bring about in peace what the Americans had done by war. (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1889.)

The numbers in Figure 8 show how close the fight was.



The yes vote won — but the law needed at least 80,000 yes votes, so the plan did not pass.

One year later the plan was changed, and New South Wales voted yes. Source: referendum returns, 3 June 1898.

Bar chart of the New South Wales federation vote of 3 June 1898: voted yes 71,595; voted no 66,228; votes needed to pass 80,000.

Figure 8. The 1898 vote in New South Wales. More voters said yes than no, but the law said the plan needed at least 80,000 yes votes, so it did not pass. Source: referendum returns of 3 June 1898, from ‘Federation of Australia’, Wikipedia; retrieved 24 August 2026.

Step	What we do	What we find
1	Name each reading.	Yes: Parkes and other yes leaders, from 1889 on. No: voters in the smaller colonies, and some workers’ groups, in the 1890s.
2	Say what each reading says.	Yes: one nation means one army and one navy, the same trade and laws across borders, and one Australian people. No: as written, the plan lets the two big colonies make all the decisions, and it costs the colonies their border tax money.
3	Find where the readings agree.	Both readings want what is best for the colonies. Many no voters still wanted federation — a fairer plan, not no plan.
4	Explain why they differ, using the five reasons.	Place: a voter in a small colony and a voter in Sydney stood in different

places, so the same plan looked different. **Purpose and readers:** Parkes spoke to win a vote; a small colony’s leaders spoke to protect their colony.

After the 1898 vote, the plan was changed: the small colonies kept more of their border money, and the new national capital would be in New South Wales but away from Sydney. A year later New South Wales voted yes, and on 1 January 1901 the six colonies became one nation.

A model explanation, in two sentences: *A yes voter in Sydney and a no voter in a small colony read the same plan through different places: one saw safety and pride, the other saw the big colonies making all the decisions. When the plan was changed to meet the no side’s reasons, most colonies accepted it.*

One thing, two readings — Chinese migration to Victoria

Section 1D taught you two real sources about Chinese migration: the Victorian law of 1855, which taxed and limited Chinese arrivals by ship, and the 1879 pamphlet by Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy, Chinese storekeepers in Melbourne, which said Chinese settlers worked hard, obeyed the laws, and were treated unfairly. Figure 9 lines the two readings up.

One thing, two readings — Chinese migration to Victoria

The 1855 law — the government's reading

Made by:
the Victorian Parliament, June 1855

What it did:
put a tax of one pound on each Chinese arrival by ship, and allowed only one Chinese passenger per ten tons of ship weight.

Its reading:
Chinese arrivals were a problem to be limited.

The 1879 pamphlet — the migrants' reading

Written by:
Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy, Chinese storekeepers in Melbourne, 1879

What it said:
Chinese settlers work hard, obey the laws, and came to work as others did. Laws singling them out are unfair.

Its reading:
Chinese settlers were workers treated unfairly.

Same arrivals, same goldfields — two very different readings.

The difference comes from who made each source, and why. You met both sources in Section 1D.

Two side-by-side cards: the 1855 law (the government’s reading — Chinese arrivals were a problem to be limited) and the 1879 pamphlet by Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy (the migrants’ reading — Chinese settlers were workers treated unfairly).

Figure 9. Same arrivals, same goldfields, two readings. The difference comes above all from **place** and **purpose**: a government making a law, and the people that law singled out, stood in different places and wrote for different reasons.

Practice tasks

Tasks with help

Task 1. Sort cards A–F from Figure 2 under FACT or INTERPRETATION. Start with card A and ask: *can I check this against a source?*

Task 2. Cards B and F are interpretations. Circle the judgement word in each (“finest”, “most important”) that told you.

Task 3. Fact or interpretation? Sort these four statements and give one reason each: (a) The fight at Eureka was over in a short time on the morning of 3 December 1854. (b) The fight at Eureka was the bravest moment in Australian history. (c) Thirteen diggers stood trial for treason in Melbourne in 1855. (d) Putting the diggers on trial was the wrong thing to do.

Task 4. Perspective or interpretation? Use Figure 3. (a) A digger at Ballarat in 1854 says, “The licence is unfair.” (b) A historian writing in 2020 says, “The licence fights made Victoria stronger.” (c) Lowe Kong Meng writes in 1879, “Chinese settlers obey the laws.” (d) A museum sign today says, “The gold rushes changed Victoria completely.”

Task 5. Fill each gap with a word from this box: **time, place, purpose, readers.** (a) Carboni wrote in 1855, one year after the fight; Twain wrote in 1897, more than forty years after. This is a difference of _____. (b) Carboni was a digger at Ballarat; Twain was a visitor from America. This is a difference of _____. (c) Carboni wrote to tell the diggers’ side; the courts wrote to prove a crime. This is a difference of _____. (d) One book was for readers around the world; the other was for people who cared about the diggers. This is a difference of _____.

Task 6. Look at Reading A and Reading C in Figure 5. Tick the reasons from Figure 4 that explain why they differ.

Task 7. Match each argument from Figure 7 to the YES reading or the NO reading: (a) “One army and one navy would keep us safe.” (b) “Our colony would lose its border tax money.” (c) “The same laws across all colonies would help trade.” (d) “The two big colonies would make all the decisions.”

Task 8. Look at Figure 9. Circle the reason from Figure 4 that best explains the difference between the two readings, then copy one fact from each source that supports your choice.

Tasks on your own

Task 9. Choose two readings from Figure 5. In two or three sentences, explain why they differ. Use at least two reasons from Figure 4, and include one name and one date.

Task 10. “The gold rushes were the most important event in Victoria’s history.” Fact or interpretation? Write one sentence giving your answer and one sentence giving your reason.

Task 11. A voter in a small colony and a voter in Sydney read the same 1898 federation plan in different ways. In two or three sentences, explain why. Use Figure 7 for evidence.

Task 12. Look at the two readings in Figure 9. Write one sentence saying where they agree, and one sentence saying why they differ.

Writing task — evidence-based paragraph

Why do two people tell the same past in different ways? Choose **one** pair of readings you have met in this section: Carboni and Twain on Eureka; the yes and no sides on federation; or the 1855 law and the 1879 pamphlet on Chinese migration. Write one paragraph (5–7 sentences) that: names both interpretations and says who gave each one and when; says where the two readings agree; and explains why they differ, using at least two of the five reasons from Figure 4. Every claim must have a name, a date or a fact behind it. Plan with Figure 10; Figure 11 shows a model paragraph with its moves labelled. You are marked on how well you use the evidence and the reasons — not on which reading you prefer.

Plan your explanation — writing frame

Step 1 — Name the two interpretations

- Interpretation A: who gave it, and when? What does it say?
- Interpretation B: who gave it, and when? What does it say?

Step 2 — Where do they agree?

- What do both readings get from the same facts?

Step 3 — Why do they differ? Tick the reasons you will use

- different questions different sources different times
- different places different purposes and readers

Step 4 — Plan one sentence for each reason

- They differ because ...

Step 5 — Check: every claim has a fact, name or date behind it

•

Five-step planning frame: 1 name the two interpretations; 2 where do they agree; 3 why do they differ — tick the reasons; 4 plan one sentence for each reason; 5 check every claim has a fact, name or date behind it.

Figure 10. Planning frame for the writing task.

A model paragraph — explaining why two interpretations differ

MOVE 1 — name the two readings

Carboni and Twain both said Eureka was a fight for liberty,
but they told it in different ways.

MOVE 2 — give the evidence: who, when, why

Carboni was at Ballarat during the fighting and wrote his book
in 1855, the next year, to tell the diggers' side of the
story.

MOVE 2 again — for the second reading

Twain came from America as a visitor and wrote in 1897, more
than forty years later, for readers around the world.

MOVE 3 — explain the difference with reasons

The two readings differ because of time and purpose: one is an
eyewitness speaking soon after the fight; the other is a
visitor retelling a famous story.

MOVE 4 — finish with what both rest on

Both accounts rest on real events — but each writer chooses
what to bring out.

Use the same four moves for your own paragraph. Your people, dates and reasons will be different.

Model paragraph with labelled moves: move 1 name the two readings; move 2 give the evidence — who, when, why — for each; move 3 explain the difference with reasons; move 4 finish with what both rest on.

Figure 11. A model paragraph, with its moves labelled.

Answers

Task 1. Facts: A, C, E. Interpretations: B, D, F.

Task 2. Card B: “finest”. Card F: “most important”. Judgement words cannot be checked against a source — they say what the past *means* or how much it matters.

Task 3. (a) Fact — it can be checked against reports of the fight. (b) Interpretation — “bravest” is a judgement. (c) Fact — court records show the thirteen trials. (d) Interpretation — “wrong” is a judgement.

Task 4. (a) Perspective — a person at the time, inside a primary source. (b) Interpretation — a later account of what it means. (c) Perspective — the point of view of a person the law touched, inside a primary source. (d) Interpretation — a museum display is an account built later, from sources.

Task 5. (a) time. (b) place. (c) purpose. (d) readers.

Task 6. Time, place, and purpose and readers. (They also used different sources — a digger’s book and a visitor’s travel book — so “different sources” may also be ticked.)

Task 7. (a) YES. (b) NO. (c) YES. (d) NO.

Task 8. Best reason: different places (and purposes). Supporting facts will vary, for example: from the law — one pound tax on each Chinese arrival by ship; from the pamphlet — Chinese settlers work hard and obey the laws.

Tasks 9–12. See Model answers for samples; your own names, dates and reasons may differ.

Model answers

Task 9 (sample). Reading A was given by Carboni, an eyewitness who wrote in 1855 to tell the diggers’ story; Reading C was given by Twain, a visitor who wrote in 1897 for readers around the world. They differ because of place and time: one man stood inside the fight and wrote soon after, the other stood outside it and wrote long after.

Task 10 (sample). This is an interpretation. “Most important” is a judgement about what the past means, and another historian could argue the Eureka fight or federation mattered more.

Task 11 (sample). The two voters stood in different places. A Sydney voter saw one army, one navy and the same trade laws across borders; a small-colony voter feared the two big colonies making all the decisions and losing the colony’s border tax money. Same plan, different place — different reading.

Task 12 (sample). Both readings are about the same Chinese arrivals on the Victorian goldfields. They differ because of place and purpose: the government made a law to limit arrivals, while the people singled out by that law wrote to show they were workers treated unfairly.

Writing task (model). Carboni and Twain both said Eureka was a fight for liberty, but they told it in different ways. Carboni was at Ballarat during the fighting and wrote his book in 1855, the next year, to tell the diggers’ side of the story. Twain came from America as a visitor and wrote in 1897, more than forty years later, for readers around the world. The two readings differ because of time and purpose: one is an eyewitness speaking soon after the fight; the other is a visitor retelling a famous story. Both accounts rest on real events — but each writer chooses what to bring out.

Sources used in this section

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7. The 1899 changes to the federation plan (the border money clause limited to ten years; the national capital to be in New South Wales, away from Sydney), from 'Federation of Australia', Wikipedia; retrieved 24 August 2026.
8. *An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants* (Victoria, 1855); see Section 1D of this book.
9. Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy, pamphlet (Melbourne, 1879); see Section 1D of this book.