

History Level 8

Chapter 2 — First Nations knowledge: Deep Time to today — EXCLUDED SUB-STRAND (§2A)

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Diverse creation knowledge: Country, Place and people in oral story and art

Scope note — Section 2A. This section owns the curriculum code **VC2HH8K06**, which names the range of First Nations Peoples’ creation knowledge — of Country, Place and people — carried in oral story and art. In line with the front-of-book note — “**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content** has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.” — that First Nations knowledge is not taught on this page. The coverage audit records this section as **ACCEPTED**: an agreed exclusion, never a gap.

What this page teaches instead is a companion study: creation accounts of five ancient societies (Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China). The companion builds the same historical skill — reading an account of beginnings as evidence of belief and value — but it is **NOT coverage of VC2HH8K06**, and nothing on this page claims otherwise.

Section 2A scope record

Section	2A
Owens content description	VC2HH8K06
What the code names	names the range of First Nations Peoples' creation knowledge — of Country, Place and people — carried in oral story and art
Decision	recorded as a section-2A exclusion under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1; coverage audits report it ACCEPTED , never as a gap
Why	First Nations content is excluded from this book; the front-of-book note explains the absence
What this page teaches instead	a neutral-context companion: creation stories of the studied ancient societies (Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China) -- flagged NOT CD coverage everywhere it appears

The CD is recorded, not silently dropped. The companion material on this page does not count as coverage of VC2HH8K06.

*Scope record table for Section 2A, showing the code owned (VC2HH8K06), what the code names, the exclusion decision recorded as **ACCEPTED**, the reason (the front-of-book note), and the companion study taught instead, which is not coverage of the code.*

Theory

What is a creation account?

A **creation account** is a story a society tells about how the world, the land and its people began. In everyday talk some people call such stories myths, but that word can sound like a judgement — as if the story were false. Historians do not judge. They use the neutral word **account**, and they read it as evidence: an account tells us what a society believed and valued, not whether the world really began that way.

Creation accounts reach the historian in two ways: by mouth (oral) or in a fixed record (written).

Two ways a creation account can reach the historian

Oral account	Written record
spoken, remembered, retold from person to person	carved, painted or inked onto stone, clay or other material
What it offers the historian	What it offers the historian
+ can live for thousands of years without writing + many people can share in it, and it can fit its audience + trained reciters (such as those of the Rigveda) held it in memory with great care	+ the words are fixed where we can read them + we can often date the object itself + it can travel far and outlive its makers
What makes it hard to use	What makes it hard to use
- no fixed words: it can change as it is told - it needs living reciters - if the chain breaks, the account can be lost - the historian cannot hold the original in hand	- copies can carry mistakes from one copyist to the next - a record can claim to be older than it really is - in most ancient societies few people could write, so few voices reached the page

Both kinds of source carry beliefs and values - but the historian asks different questions of each.

Two panels comparing an oral account with a written record; each panel lists what that kind of source offers the historian and what makes it hard to use.

For most of the ancient past, accounts were oral long before they were written. The Rigveda of India was composed c. 1500–1200 BCE and kept aloud in memory for many centuries before it was written down. When a record was at last made, it fixed one version of an account that had lived and changed in the telling.

Five societies, five accounts — and more than one voice in each

The companion study on this page looks at five ancient societies.

Five ancient societies and their creation accounts

Society	A creation account	Main figures	Evidence form	First record	Beliefs shown
Egypt	Several accounts: at Heliopolis the god Atum rose from the waters; at Memphis the god Ptah made the world by thought and word	Atum; Ptah	Pyramid writings; carved stone	c. 2300 BCE (pyramid writings); c. 710 BCE (Shabaka Stone)	gods gave order to the land; kings and priests spoke for the gods
Greece	Hesiod's poem Theogony: first came Chaos (a gap of disorder), then Earth (Gaia) and Sky (Ouranos), then the Titans, then Zeus's family	Gaia; Ouranos; Zeus	Long poem	c. 700 BCE	even the gods had a beginning; order is older than any one god
Rome	Ovidius Naso's poem Metamorphoses: a god brought order to one shapeless heap, separating land, sea and sky	an ordering god	Long poem	8 CE	order is a gift of the gods; Rome saw itself inside that ordered world
India	Rigveda Hymn of Creation: a wondering poem asking how the world began and whether anyone can truly know	(no single maker named)	Hymns kept in memory, spoken aloud	composed c. 1500-1200 BCE; written down much later	the beginning is worth asking about, not only retelling
China	Pangu separated sky and earth; the goddess Nüwa made people from clay	Pangu; Nüwa	Stories written down much later	Nüwa named c. 300 BCE; Pangu written c. 220 CE	the world was shaped by labour; people were made with care

Dates are for the oldest records we still hold; most of these accounts were told long before they were written down.

Table comparing the creation accounts of Egypt, Greece, Rome, India and China: a summary of each account, its main figures, the form of the evidence, the date of the oldest record, and the beliefs it shows.

The first thing a historian notices is **diversity** — difference. The five societies did not tell one shared story. Even inside a single society there could be several accounts: in Egypt, the priests of Heliopolis told how the god Atum rose out of the waters of Nun, while the priests of Memphis told how the god Ptah made everything by thought and by the spoken word. Different cities, different knowledge, one society.

Yet different accounts can share themes.

Shared themes in the five accounts on this page

	Egypt	Greece	Rome	India	China
The world began from one first state or thing	●	●	●	●	●
Sky and earth were separated	●	●	●		●
People were made after the world	●		●	●	●
The account asks how anyone can know				●	

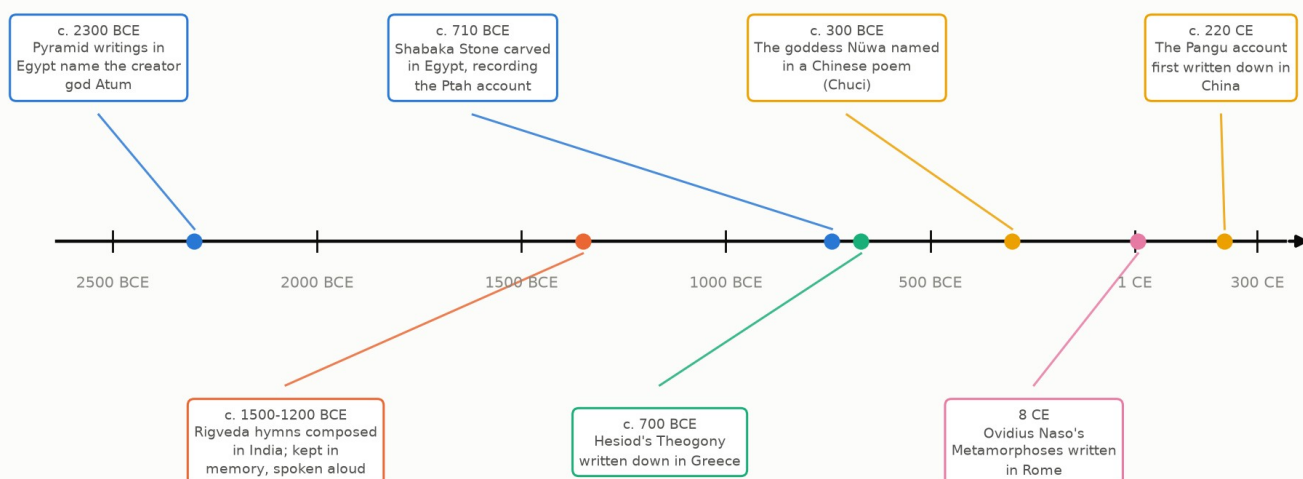
A dot means the theme appears in the account presented on this page. Different societies - and different accounts within one society - answer in different ways.

Dot chart of four themes across the five accounts: that the world began from one first state or thing; that sky and earth were separated; that people were made after the world; and that the account itself asks how anyone can know. Dots show which themes appear in each account.

All five accounts begin from one first state or thing — water, a gap of disorder, a shapeless heap. Most separate sky from earth. The exception is worth noticing too: only the Rigveda's Hymn of Creation stops to ask whether anyone can truly know how the world began. Diversity lives in the questions a society asks, not only in the stories it tells.

When was each record made?

Oldest surviving records of the five creation accounts



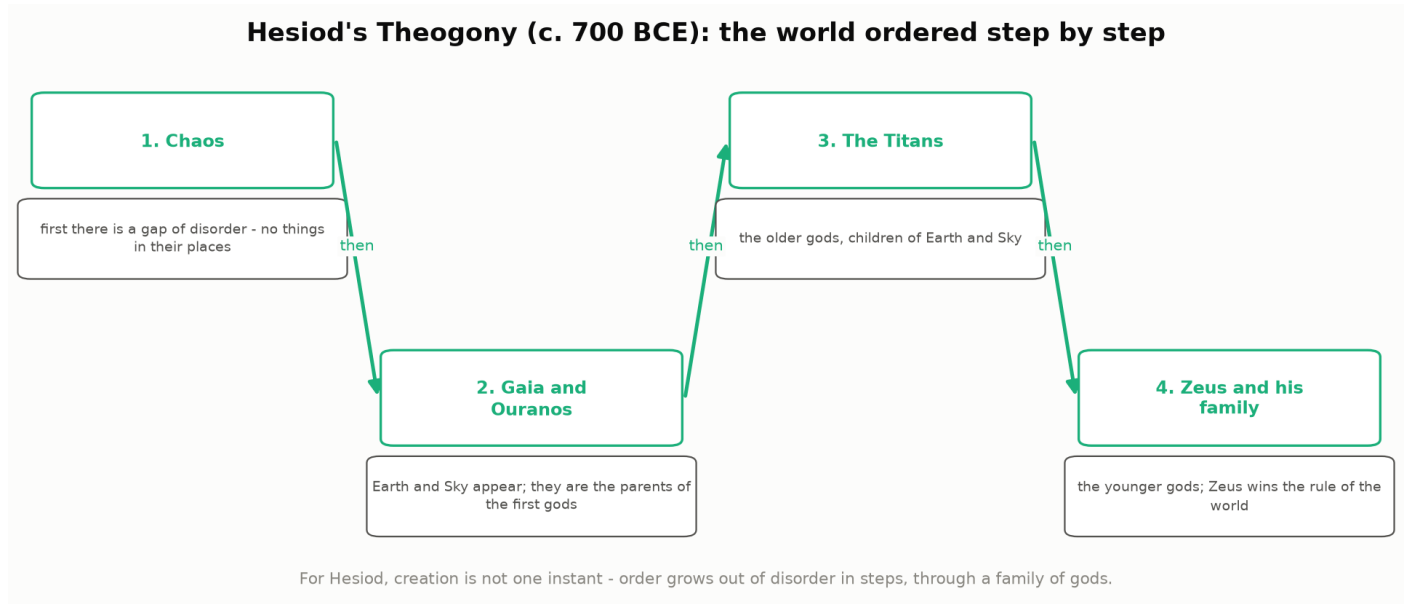
A record's date is the oldest copy we still hold - it is not proof of when the story was first told. The Shabaka Stone and Hesiod's Theogony are close neighbours on this scale.

Timeline from 2500 BCE to 300 CE placing the seven oldest records studied on this page in order: the Pyramid Texts, the Rigveda as composed, the Shabaka Stone, Hesiod's Theogony, the naming of Nüwa in the Chuci, Ovidius Naso's Metamorphoses, and Xu Zheng's writing of Pangu.

Two cautions when reading the timeline. First, the date of a written record is not the date of the first telling: most of these accounts were oral for centuries before they were fixed. Second, two records can sit close together in time yet

belong to different worlds of belief — the Shabaka Stone (c. 710 BCE) and the Theogony (c. 700 BCE) are near neighbours on this scale, but they are not neighbours in anything else.

One account read step by step: Hesiod



Flow diagram of the ordering of the world in Hesiod's Theogony in four steps: first Chaos, a gap of disorder; then Gaia (Earth) and Ouranos (Sky); then the Titans; then Zeus and his family, with Zeus winning the rule of the world.

For Hesiod, creation was not one instant. Order grew out of disorder in steps, through a family of gods — and even the gods had a beginning. The idea that order is older than any one god is a belief a historian can record from the poem.

How a historian reads an account: features, content, context

A historian reads any source with three moves:

- **Features** — what kind of thing it is: a carved stone, a long poem, a hymn kept in memory.
- **Content** — what it says: who made the world, and how.
- **Context** — who made or kept it, when, where and why; and where the object is held today.

The Shabaka Stone from Egypt is the best single object for practising the three moves.

Close study: the Shabaka Stone (Egypt)	
What is it?	A large block of dark stone with Egyptian writing carved into it. It records the Memphis account of creation, in which the god Ptah makes the world by thought and by the spoken word.
Who made it, when and why?	Made about 710 BCE on the orders of Shabaka, a king of Egypt's 25th dynasty. The writing says Shabaka had it carved to save an older text that he found worn and damaged.
Where is it now?	The British Museum in London (object EA 498).
What does it tell the historian?	That at Memphis people believed the god Ptah stood behind everything - gods, towns, food and laws - and that thought and word were seen as creative powers.
The historian's caution	The stone claims to copy a much older text. Historians split: some (such as J. H. Breasted in 1901) argued the ideas are thousands of years older; others say there is no surviving copy older than the stone itself, so the claim cannot be checked directly.
One object, read five ways: features, makers, location, meaning, caution.	

Close-study panel of the Shabaka Stone in five parts: what it is; who made it, when and why; where it is held today (the British Museum, object EA 498); what it tells the historian; and the historian's caution about its claim to copy an older text.

The stone also shows the difference between a **primary source** — an object or record from the time being studied — and a **secondary source** — a later writer’s reading of that evidence. The stone itself (c. 710 BCE) is primary. The American historian J. H. Breasted, writing in 1901, is secondary: he argued that the ideas on the stone were thousands of years older than the stone. Later historians have been more cautious: the stone claims to copy an older, worn text, but no copy older than the stone survives, so the claim cannot be checked. Both sides are arguing from the same object; they disagree about what the evidence can bear. That disagreement is normal in history, and naming it is part of a good answer.

Sources used on this page

- **Shabaka Stone**, c. 710 BCE, carved stone object. British Museum, London, object EA 498; retrieved from the museum’s online collection, 25 August 2026.
- **Pyramid Texts**, c. 2300 BCE, writing carved inside pyramids at Saqqara, Egypt.
- **Hesiod, Theogony**, c. 700 BCE, Greek poem; survives in later written copies.
- **Rigveda, Hymn of Creation (10.129)**, composed c. 1500–1200 BCE; kept aloud in memory, written down much later.
- **Ovidius Naso, Metamorphoses**, 8 CE, Latin poem; survives in later written copies.
- **Chuci (“Heavenly Questions”)**, Chinese poem naming the goddess Nüwa, c. 300 BCE; **Xu Zheng**, first written account of Pangu, c. 220 CE.
- Secondary: **J. H. Breasted** (1901) on the age of the ideas on the Shabaka Stone, and the later historians who answer him.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 (scaffolded) — the three moves on the Shabaka Stone.

Task: complete the three rows for the Shabaka Stone.

Move	Prompt	Your note
Features	What kind of thing is it?	A large block of dark stone with Egyptian writing carved into it.
Content	What does it say?	The god Ptah made everything — gods, towns, food, laws — by thought and by the spoken word.
Context	Who made it, when, and where is it now?	Made c. 710 BCE on the orders of King Shabaka (25th dynasty); held today in the British Museum (EA 498).

Why it works: each move pins down one part of the source, so a claim about belief (“people at Memphis saw the spoken word as a creative power”) rests on evidence a reader can check.

Worked example 2 (scaffolded) — diversity inside one society.

Task: Egypt told more than one account of beginnings. Name the two accounts on this page and one difference between them.

- Heliopolis: the god Atum rose out of the waters of Nun; the god Shu later separated the sky (Nut) from the earth (Geb).
- Memphis: the god Ptah made everything by thought and by the spoken word (the Shabaka Stone carries this account).
- One difference: at Heliopolis the world begins with a god rising out of water; at Memphis it begins in a mind and a voice. Same society, different knowledge — that is the diversity a historian records.

Worked example 3 (unscaffolded) — writing the short answer.

Task: “What can a creation account tell a historian about an ancient society?” (4 marks). Study the model response and its margin notes, then list the four moves it makes.

Model response - with margin notes

Question: What can a creation account tell a historian about an ancient society?

A creation account can tell a historian what a society believed and valued, even when it cannot tell us how the world really began.

— answers the question directly

For example, the Shabaka Stone, made about 710 BCE in Egypt and now in the British Museum, records the belief that the god Ptah made everything by thought and by the spoken word.

— names the source and its date

This suggests that people at Memphis saw the spoken word and the mind as powerful, creative forces - an idea that also gave weight to the words of kings and priests in daily life.

— explains the belief, then links it to values and daily life

The account must be used with care: the stone claims to copy a much older text, a claim that cannot be checked against any older copy that survives.

— shows caution about the evidence

Strong answers name a dated source, explain a belief, link it to values, and show caution - they do not judge the belief as true or false.

Four-paragraph model response to the question, with margin notes naming its four moves: it answers the question directly; it names a dated source; it explains the belief and links it to values and daily life; and it shows caution about the evidence.

The four moves: (1) answer the question directly; (2) name one dated source; (3) explain the belief, then link it to what the society valued in daily life; (4) show caution about the evidence. Note what the model does *not* do: it never judges the belief as true or false.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

S1 (1 mark). Which of the five accounts was kept aloud in memory for centuries before it was written down? *Hint: use the “Evidence form” column of the comparison table.*

S2 (2 marks). Give two features that make the Shabaka Stone a primary source. *Hint: start one with “It was made ...” and one with “It is an object ...”.*

S3 (2 marks). Using the timeline, put these seven records in order from oldest to most recent: the Metamorphoses; the Pyramid Texts; the naming of Nüwa in the Chuci; the Shabaka Stone; the Theogony; the Rigveda as first composed; Xu Zheng’s writing of Pangu.

S4 (2 marks). Compare the Theogony and the Metamorphoses. Write one similarity and one difference. *Hint: look at what each poem begins with, and who does the ordering.*

S5 (2 marks). The Heliopolis account and the Memphis account both come from Egypt. What does that pair show about knowledge of beginnings inside one society? *Hint: would a priest from each city have told the same story?*

S6 (3 marks). (a) What does the Shabaka Stone claim about an older text? (b) Why can historians not check that claim? (c) Name the historian who argued in 1901 that the stone’s ideas were thousands of years older.

Un scaffolded

U1 (4 marks). What can a creation account tell a historian about an ancient society? Use one named account in your answer.

U2 (3 marks). The Rigveda’s Hymn of Creation and Hesiod’s Theogony treat the beginning in different ways. Explain one difference between them.

U3 (2 marks). Explain why the Shabaka Stone is a primary source and why Breasted’s 1901 writing is a secondary source.

U4 (2 marks). Historians use the neutral word “account” and do not rank one society’s story as true and another’s as false. Give one reason why.

Answers

S1. The Rigveda (India).

S2. Any two of: it was carved c. 710 BCE, in the very time being studied; it is an object made in that time that still survives today; it carries the words of the people whose belief it records, not a later writer's reading.

S3. Pyramid Texts (c. 2300 BCE) → Rigveda as composed (c. 1500–1200 BCE) → Shabaka Stone (c. 710 BCE) → Theogony (c. 700 BCE) → naming of Nüwa in the Chuci (c. 300 BCE) → Metamorphoses (8 CE) → Xu Zheng's writing of Pangu (c. 220 CE).

S4. Similarity: both are long poems that begin with disorder and end with an ordered world. Difference: in Hesiod the order grows in steps through a family of gods; in Ovidius Naso one god separates land, sea and sky.

S5. Knowledge of beginnings was diverse inside one society: different cities kept different accounts, so Egypt did not hold one single fixed story.

S6. (a) It claims to copy a much older text that Shabaka found worn and damaged. (b) No copy older than the stone survives, so the claim cannot be checked. (c) J. H. Breasted.

U1. A four-point shape: a direct answer; one named, dated source; the belief explained and linked to values or daily life; a note of caution about the evidence.

U2. The Hymn of Creation asks how the world began and allows that no one may know; the Theogony tells a confident step-by-step ordering of the world.

U3. The stone is an object from the time being studied, so it is primary. Breasted wrote in 1901, reading that evidence from the outside, so his work is a later reading — a secondary source.

U4. Any one: ranking stories as true or false would judge a society's belief instead of reading it as evidence; or: the historian's job is to record what a society believed and valued, not to agree or disagree with it.

Fully-worked solutions

S1. The comparison table's "Evidence form" column shows the Rigveda as "hymns kept in memory, spoken aloud", and its "First record" column adds that it was composed c. 1500–1200 BCE but written down much later. So the account that lived by mouth for centuries is the Rigveda of India. *(1 mark: Rigveda / India.)*

S2. A primary source is an object or record from the time being studied. The Shabaka Stone fits twice over: (1) it was made c. 710 BCE, in the very time whose belief it records, on the orders of a king of that time; (2) it is a physical object from that time that still survives, held today in the British Museum, so the historian can read the words of the people themselves rather than a later writer's reading. *(1 mark per valid feature, max 2.)*

S3. Read the dates off the timeline, oldest first: Pyramid Texts, c. 2300 BCE; Rigveda as composed, c. 1500–1200 BCE; Shabaka Stone, c. 710 BCE; Theogony, c. 700 BCE; naming of Nüwa in the Chuci, c. 300 BCE; Metamorphoses, 8 CE; Xu Zheng's writing of Pangu, c. 220 CE. Common slips: putting the Shabaka Stone after the Theogony (710 BCE is older than 700 BCE), and forgetting that BCE dates count down towards 1. *(1 mark for a fully correct order; 1 mark if one pair is swapped.)*

S4. Similarity: both accounts are long poems, and both move from disorder to order — Hesiod begins with Chaos (a gap of disorder), Ovidius Naso with one shapeless heap, and both end with an ordered world. Difference: the ordering happens in a different way. In the Theogony order grows in steps through a family of gods (Chaos, then Earth and Sky, then the Titans, then Zeus); in the Metamorphoses a single god does the work, separating land, sea and sky. *(1 mark similarity; 1 mark difference.)*

S5. Both accounts are Egyptian, yet they differ: Heliopolis begins with Atum rising out of the waters of Nun, while Memphis begins with Ptah creating by thought and spoken word (the Shabaka Stone). So inside one society, different cities kept different knowledge of the beginning. The pair shows that diversity is not only between societies — a single society can hold several accounts at once. *(1 mark for naming the two accounts with a difference; 1 mark for the point about diversity within one society.)*

S6. (a) The writing on the stone says Shabaka had it carved to save an older text that he found worn and damaged — it claims to be a copy of something much older. *(1 mark)* (b) No copy older than the stone itself survives, so there is nothing to check the claim against; a record can claim to be older than it really is. *(1 mark)* (c) J. H. Breasted, in 1901, argued the ideas were thousands of years older than the stone; later historians answer that the claim cannot be checked. Both sides argue from the same object — they disagree about what the evidence can bear. *(1 mark)*

U1. A strong answer makes four moves. (1) Answer directly: a creation account tells a historian what a society believed and valued, even when it cannot say how the world really began. (2) Name a dated source: for example, the Shabaka Stone, made c. 710 BCE in Egypt and held today in the British Museum. (3) Explain the belief and link it to values: the stone records that Ptah made everything by thought and by the spoken word, which suggests people at Memphis saw the mind and the spoken word as creative powers — an idea that also gave weight to the words of kings and priests in daily life. (4) Show caution: the stone claims to copy a much older text, and no older copy survives, so that claim cannot be checked. A response with these four moves, using any named account from this page, earns full marks. *(1 mark per move.)*

U2. The difference lies in how each text treats the question itself. The Rigveda’s Hymn of Creation is a wondering poem: it asks how the world began and allows that perhaps no one — even the gods — can truly know, so it values the question as much as the answer. The Theogony, by contrast, tells a confident order of events: first Chaos, then Earth and Sky, then the Titans, then Zeus, with no pause to doubt. One account questions; the other narrates. That contrast is itself evidence: the two societies valued different things in their accounts of beginnings. *(1 mark for the Hymn of Creation’s questioning; 1 mark for the Theogony’s confident steps; 1 mark for tying the contrast to what each society valued.)*

U3. A primary source comes from the time being studied; a secondary source is a later writer’s reading of the evidence. The Shabaka Stone was carved c. 710 BCE and carries the words of that time, so it is primary evidence for Egyptian belief. Breasted’s 1901 writing stands outside that time: it is one historian’s argument about the stone (that its ideas are thousands of years older), so it is an interpretation of evidence — a secondary source. A useful check: the two sources can disagree (later historians answer Breasted), and only the primary one was there. *(1 mark per source explained.)*

U4. Historians study accounts as evidence of belief and value, not as true-or-false claims about how the world began. Ranking one society’s story as true and another’s as false would sit in judgement on people’s beliefs, which is not the historian’s job — and it would hide the very thing this section studies, the diversity of knowledge. The neutral word “account” keeps every society’s story in the same frame, so they can be compared with respect. *(1 mark for “read as evidence, not judged true/false”; 1 mark for linking to respect or to diversity.)*

Meeting environmental change in Deep Time

Scope note — Section 2B. This section owns the curriculum code **VC2HH8K07**, which asks how First Nations Peoples met changes in the environment across Deep Time. In line with the note at the front of this book — “**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content** has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.” — that First Nations knowledge is not taught on this page. The coverage audit records this section as **ACCEPTED**: an agreed exclusion, never a gap.

What this page teaches instead is a **companion study**: how four early and pre-modern societies responded to environmental change — the years when the Nile’s floods failed, the breaking of Angkor’s water network, the forest rules of Tokugawa Japan, and the settling of the Pacific islands. The companion builds the same historical skills — reading a change in the environment as a cause, and a society’s answer as its consequence — but it is **NOT coverage of VC2HH8K07**, and nothing on this page claims otherwise.

Section 2B scope record

Section	2B
Owens content description	VC2HH8K07
What the code names	asks how First Nations Peoples met changes in the environment across Deep Time
Decision	recorded as a section-2A exclusion under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1; coverage audits report it ACCEPTED , never as a gap
Why	First Nations content is excluded from this book; the front-of-book note explains the absence
What this page teaches instead	a neutral-context companion: how four early and pre-modern societies responded to environmental change (the Nile's failed floods, Angkor's water network, Tokugawa forest rules, Polynesian island settling) -- flagged NOT CD coverage everywhere it appears

The CD is recorded, not silently dropped. The companion material on this page does not count as coverage of VC2HH8K07.

*Scope record table for Section 2B, showing the code owned (VC2HH8K07), what the code names, the exclusion decision recorded as **ACCEPTED**, the reason (the front-of-book note), and the companion study taught instead, which is not coverage of the code.*

Theory

What counts as an environmental change?

A society’s **environment** is everything around it that it does not control: the weather, the rivers, the soil, the plants and animals, and the shape of the land itself. An **environmental change** is a change in those things — less rain, a river that no longer floods, hills that lose their trees, an island with no good soil.

Societies meet three broad kinds of environmental change:

- **Slow shifts** that build up over centuries: a climate that grows drier, soil that slowly wears out, a forest that shrinks year by year.
- **Sudden shocks**: a single bad flood, a fire, a storm, a season with no rain at all.
- **Pressures people make themselves**: cutting trees faster than they regrow, hunting an animal until none remain, farming the same ground until it gives less back.

The third kind matters most for this page, because it shows that people are not only the victims of their environment — they also change it, on purpose or by accident.

A **response** is what a society does about a change. Two cautions before we look at the cases:

- **A word to handle with care.** People often say a society *collapsed* when its kings lost power and its great building works stopped. In this section the word is used to mean exactly that — central rule ending, often quickly — and no more. It is a contested word: many historians prefer to speak of *change*, because the people and their knowledge did not disappear when the palace did. You will be asked to judge whether the word fits.
- Societies almost never make one single response. They store food **and** move **and** argue about who is in charge. Part of the historian's skill is sorting several responses at once.

Four cases at a glance

The companion study on this page follows four societies across more than three thousand years.

Four societies, four environmental tests

Case	When and where	The environmental change	How people responded
Egypt and the Nile	c. 2181-2055 BCE; the Nile valley in Upper Egypt	Several years of weak or failed floods; the river gave less water and less fertile mud, and food ran short	Local rulers stored and shared grain; people moved along the river; the kingdom split into rival parts, then reunited under one king
The Khmer empire, Angkor	c. 802-1431 CE; the great city and its water network	Long droughts, broken by huge floods, strained the reservoirs and canals that fed the rice fields	The network was repaired and changed; the centre of power moved south toward the great rivers; the temples stayed in use
Japan under the shoguns	c. 1603-1750 CE; forests across the islands	Fast cutting of forests for castles, cities and fuel left hills bare and short of timber	The government made rules: cutting was banned or limited, forests were guarded, and new trees were planted
The Pacific Islands	c. 1500 BCE - c. 1300 CE; island after island, west to east	Every new island was a different test: hot or cool, wet or dry, a large volcanic island or a tiny coral atoll	Settlers changed what they grew and ate, crossed the ocean in double-hulled canoes, and on Rapa Nui faced the loss of their forests

All four cases are companion material for this section -- they do not count as coverage of VC2HH8K07.

Comparison table of the four case studies: Egypt and the Nile, Angkor and the Khmer empire, Japan under the shoguns, and the Pacific islands — each with its dates, the environmental change it faced, and how its people responded.

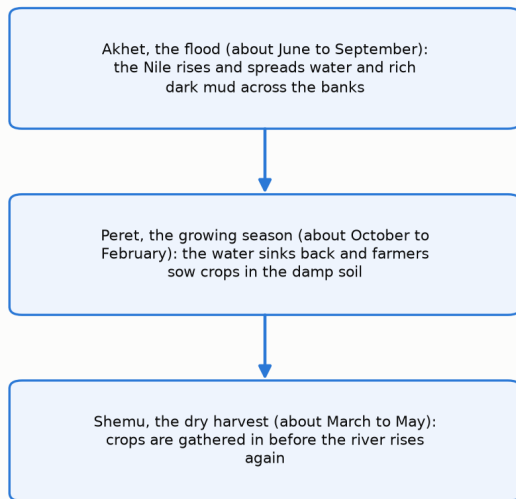
The four cases were chosen to be different in kind. Egypt and Angkor faced changes in water; Japan faced a change in its forests that its own people were causing; the Pacific islanders faced a brand-new environment with every island they landed on. Read them side by side and one question runs through all four: **what did the society do next?**

Case 1 — Egypt: when the river failed

Egypt was a gift of one river. Each year the Nile flooded its banks and left behind water and rich dark mud. Egyptian farmers built their whole year around this. Their calendar had three seasons: **akhret**, the flood (roughly June to September); **peret**, the growing season (roughly October to February), when crops were sown in the wet soil; and **shemu**, the dry harvest time (roughly March to May). Farmers also kept water in low basins and earthen banks between the fields, and they stored grain against harder years.

Egypt lived by the flood: a good year and a failed year

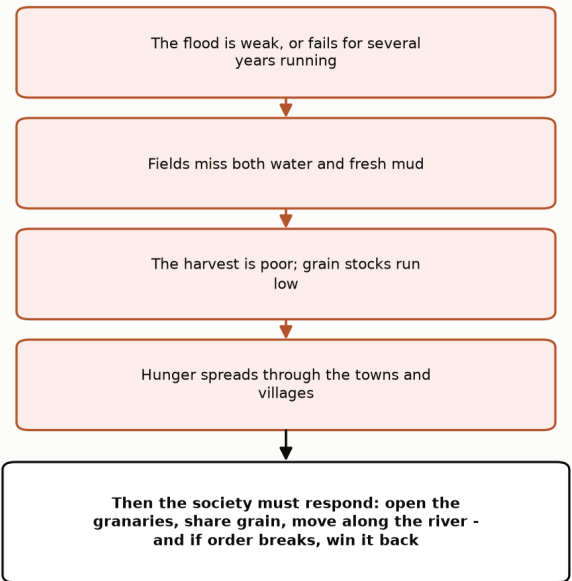
A good Nile year



Farmers also kept water in basins and banks between fields, and stored grain for harder years.

every
year

A failed Nile year



The names of the three seasons come from the ancient Egyptian calendar. Dates of the seasons are approximate.

Labelled diagram of the Nile's year-long flood cycle in three seasons (akhet, peret, shemu) beside the chain of events in a failed-flood year, from a weak flood to hunger and the responses that follow.

The Greek writer **Herodotus**, visiting around 450 BCE, summed it up when he called Egypt the gift of the Nile (Histories, Book 2). Without the flood, there was no farm — and for several generations soon after about 2200 BCE, the flood was weak or it failed. The kingdom of the time, the Old Kingdom, broke apart around 2181 BCE, and about 150 years of divided rule followed: historians call these years the **First Intermediate Period** (about 2181–2055 BCE).

No one knows for certain why the floods failed. Some who study past climates point to signs of a drier time across the region in these years; others stress that the Old Kingdom was already stretched thin before the bad years came. What the failed floods did to people can be read in two primary sources from the time.

Primary source close study: the tomb inscription of Ankhtifi

What it is	Words carved into the rock wall inside a tomb cut into the cliffs at Moalla, beside the Nile in Upper Egypt.
Who made it, when and why	Ankhtifi, the local ruler of the town of Hierakonpolis, had it carved about 2100 BCE - in the divided, hungry years of the First Intermediate Period - to list his deeds for the ages.
What it says	He boasts that he fed his own people when food ran out: he describes hunger across all of Upper Egypt, and claims that in his own district no one went unfed. He also lists his victories over rival towns.
What it tells the historian	Food really did run short at this time, and local rulers took charge of storing and sharing grain as the king's reach grew weak.
The caution	A tomb text is self-praise, not a report. Ankhtifi wants to look strong; he says nothing of his own failures. Historians read it alongside other evidence - and weigh every boast.

The tomb still stands at Moalla. A drawing of the inscription was published in 1950 by the French scholar Jacques Vandier.

Close-study panel of the tomb inscription of Ankhtifi in five parts: what it is; who made it, when and why; what it says; what it tells the historian; and the caution that a tomb text is self-praise, not a report.

The second source is a poem, the **Lament of Ipuwer**, which paints the same years in darker colours: a land turned upside down, with hunger in every district, the river failing, and the low raised over the high. Historians use it with care. The only surviving copy was written centuries after the events it describes, and they disagree about when the poem was first composed and how literally to read a work written to shock. Two sources, one hard time — and two different kinds of caution to go with them.

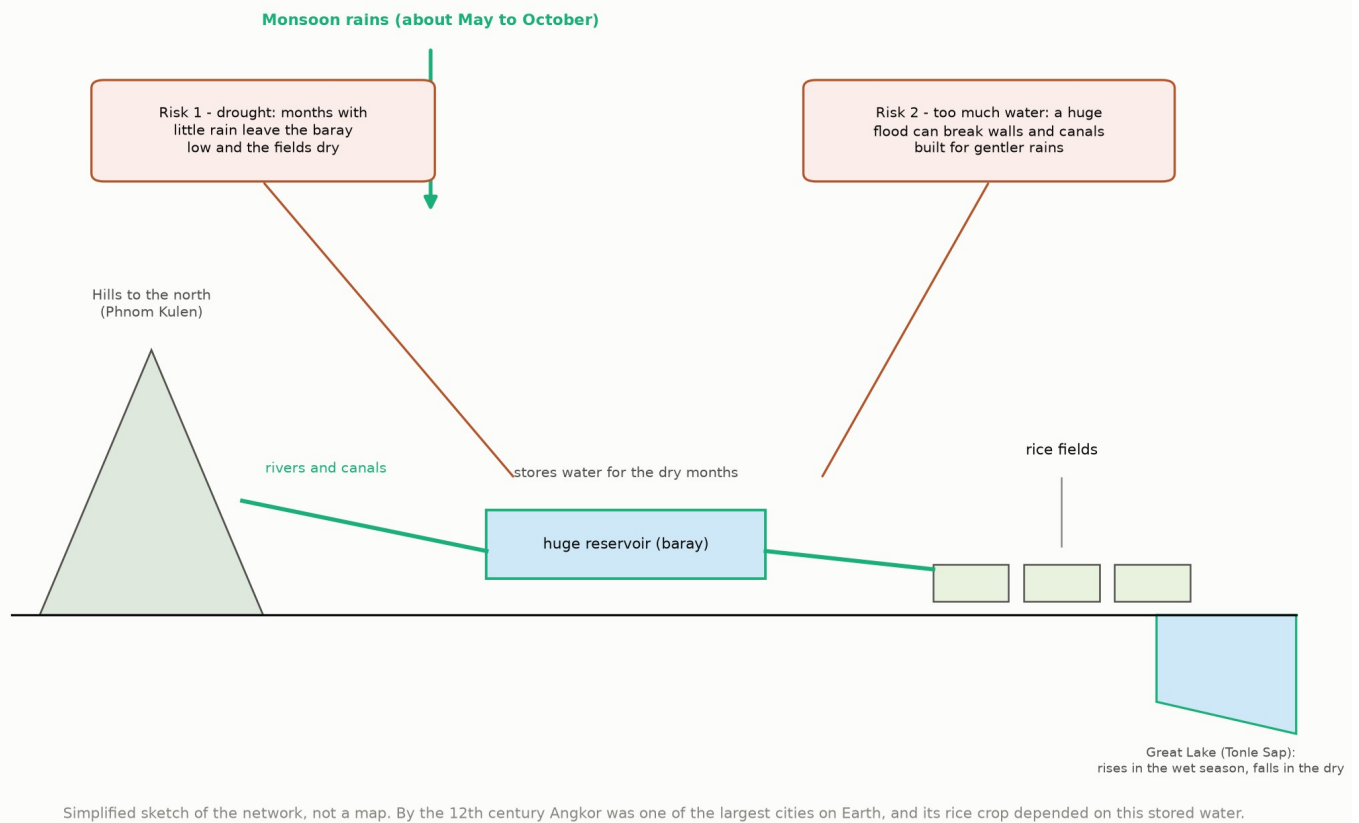
Egypt's responses were several. Local rulers like Ankhtifi took charge of storing and sharing grain while the king's reach grew weak. People moved along the river toward districts that still had food. Order returned only when one ruler, **Mentuhotep II** of Thebes, brought the country back together around 2055 BCE, starting the period historians call the Middle Kingdom. The story of these years — failure, division, reunion — is one of the great turning points of ancient Egypt; Section 3D studies turning points like this one in more depth.

Case 2 — Angkor: a city built on stored water

Move forward more than two thousand years and east to the plains of modern Cambodia. In 802 CE a king named **Jayavarman II** joined the small kingdoms of the region and founded the **Khmer empire**. Over the centuries that followed, its capital region at **Angkor** grew into one of the largest cities on Earth.

Angkor could only exist because of water engineering. The region's rain comes in the **monsoon** — the seasonal rains that fall roughly from May to October — and the river and the great lake (the Tonle Sap) rise and fall with it. Khmer kings built a huge network to catch and hold that water: canals, raised banks, and vast rectangular reservoirs called **barays**. The West Baray, finished by about 1050 CE, stretched roughly eight kilometres long and two kilometres wide. From these works, water fed the rice fields in the dry months. King **Suryavarman II** (ruled about 1113–1150 CE) raised the temple of Angkor Wat above the whole plain — a shrine that still stands and is still in use as a Buddhist temple today.

A city built on stored water: the Angkor network



Labelled sketch of Angkor's water network: hills feeding rivers and canals, a large reservoir (baray) storing monsoon water, canals feeding rice fields, and the great lake, with the two risks of drought and flood marked.

Then the climate turned against the network. Studies of tree rings — the growth rings added year by year in old wood, which record wet years and dry years — published from 2010 onward by teams including the researcher Brendan Buckley show that in the 1300s and 1400s the region suffered droughts lasting decades, broken now and then by floods far bigger than the works were built to carry. The Greater Angkor Project, a long-running research effort studying the city's remains, has mapped how canals broke and silted up in these years.

How did Angkor respond? First, by repair: the network was patched and reworked again and again. But by the 1400s the centre of power was moving south, toward the great rivers and the sea trade, where wealth no longer rested on rice alone. In 1431 an army from the neighbouring kingdom of Ayutthaya took Angkor itself. Yet this was change, not an ending — read the debate panel below before you use a stronger word.

A live debate: why did Angkor's great city days end?

Between the 1300s and the 1400s the heart of the Khmer empire moved south, away from Angkor. Why? Historians argue from the same evidence and reach different weights.

View A - the climate view (stated at its strongest)

Tree-ring records from across South-East Asia show that the 1300s and 1400s brought long droughts, broken by floods far bigger than the network was built for.

Drought would empty the reservoirs and starve the rice; floods would break the canals. Repairing a network that size, again and again, may have been more than any king could manage.

Evidence used: tree-ring dating of old wood; damage found in the canal walls; the dates line up with the move south.

View B - the human-choice view (stated at its strongest)

The change had human causes: trade moved toward the great rivers and the sea, and a capital nearer the river ports was worth more than one built around rice alone.

Rival kingdoms grew stronger, and in 1431 a neighbouring army took Angkor itself. Rulers chose to spend their wealth elsewhere.

Evidence used: records of trade and diplomacy; the new centres that grew south of Angkor in the same decades.

Where both views agree: Angkor was never emptied and left. Angkor Wat stayed a living Buddhist temple, and farmers stayed on the land. The word 'collapse' claims more than the evidence allows - this is a story of change, not of an ending.

Both views are shown in the strongest form their supporters would accept. A good answer can weigh them without picking a side.

Debate panel presenting two views on why Angkor's great city days ended — a climate view resting on tree rings and broken canals, and a human-choice view resting on trade, rivalry and the fall of the city in 1431 — with a note that both agree Angkor was never fully abandoned.

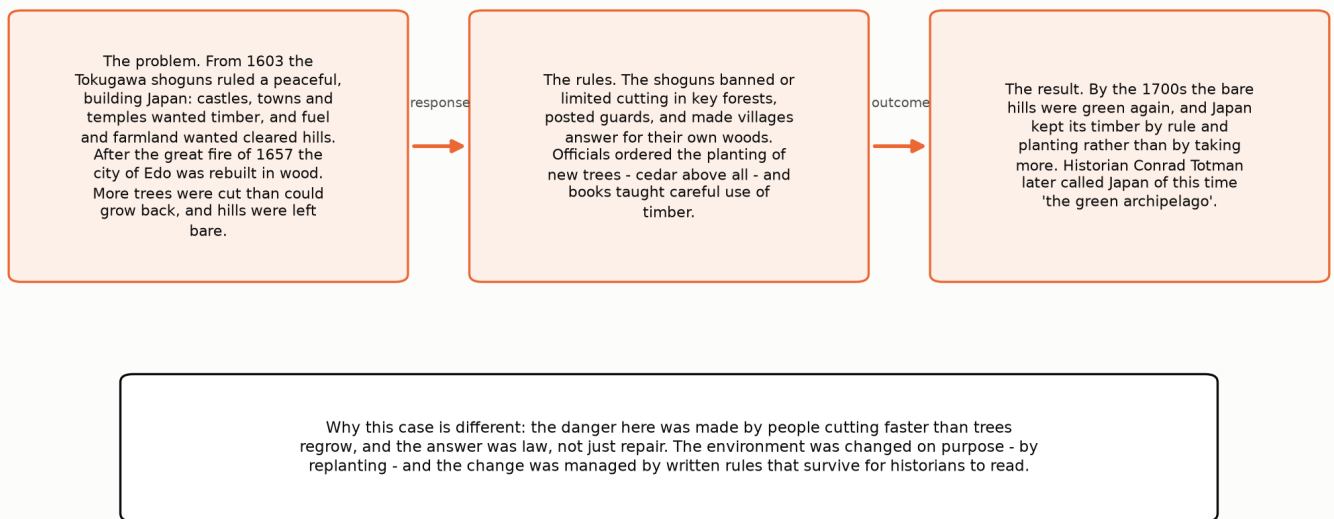
Section 5B studies causes and consequences in the Asia-Pacific region in more depth; Angkor's water works are one of its key cases.

Case 3 — Tokugawa Japan: rules that saved the forests

The third case is different in kind, because the danger was made by people on purpose — or rather, by thousands of separate purposes. In 1603 the general **Tokugawa Ieyasu** became **shogun** (the military ruler of Japan) and his family held that power for more than 250 years. Peace brought building on a huge scale: castles, temples, towns — all of wood. When the great fire of 1657 burned much of the capital city of Edo, the whole city had to be rebuilt in timber. Fuel and new farmland took more trees. More trees were cut than could grow back, and by the late 1600s whole hills stood bare.

The shoguns' answer was not one repair but a system of rules. Cutting was banned or limited in the forests that mattered most; guards were posted; villages were made answerable for their own woods. Officials ordered the planting of new trees — cedar above all — and printed books taught careful use of timber. Shoguns such as **Tokugawa Yoshimune** (ruled 1716–1745) kept pressing the rules. By the 1700s the bare hills were green again.

Japan's answer: rules that saved the forests



Edo is the city now called Tokyo. Dates are approximate; forest rules were added and changed across the whole period.

Three-panel flow diagram: the problem (rapid cutting for building, fuel and farmland after 1603), the rules (limits on cutting, guards, village responsibility and ordered planting), and the result (green hills again by the 1700s), with a note that the answer was law, not just repair.

The historian **Conrad Totman** studied these records and named Japan of this time “the green archipelago” (The Green Archipelago, 1989). His point: a society can face a shortage it created itself and answer it with rules — and the rules survive as written primary sources for historians to read.

Case 4 — The Pacific: settling every kind of island

The fourth case stretches over the longest time. About 3,500 years ago (around 1500 BCE) the first great ocean voyagers, the **Lapita** people, sailed east from islands near New Guinea in double-hulled canoes, navigating by the stars, the winds and the currents. By about 3,000 years ago they had reached Samoa and Tonga. After a long pause, their descendants pushed far into the open Pacific between about 900 and 1300 CE — to Hawai’i, to Rapa Nui (Easter Island), and to Aotearoa, New Zealand, among the last lands on Earth to be settled.

Every island was a new environmental test, and the settlers had to answer each one by changing their crops, their food and their way of life.

Every island was a new test: Polynesian settling and adapting

Island kind	What it offered	How settlers adapted
Large, warm volcanic islands (Samoa, Tahiti, Hawaii)	Rich soil, steady rain, rivers and valleys; familiar tropical crops such as yam, breadfruit, banana and coconut could grow	Families planted orchards and root-crop gardens, fished the reefs, and kept pigs and chickens; villages grew large
Low coral atolls (clusters of tiny reef islands)	Very little soil and little fresh water; no stone and few large trees	Life turned to the sea: fishing, shellfish and seabirds; small groups only, with fresh water saved and shared carefully
A cool, far-south land (Aotearoa / New Zealand)	Cold winters; most tropical crops would not ripen; big flightless birds (moa) and seals at first	The sweet potato (kūmara) became the main crop, grown in summer and kept in storage pits; moa were hunted until none remained, and food came more from gardens and the sea
Rapa Nui (Easter Island), far out in the Pacific	A lone island, far from any neighbour; palm forests at first, then none; gardens of yam and sweet potato	Builders raised the great stone heads; as the palms vanished, gardens were improved with broken rock to hold soil and water (see the debate panel)

Settlers crossed thousands of kilometres of open ocean in double-hulled canoes, reading stars, winds and currents. Dates of settling are approximate.

Table of four island kinds (large warm volcanic islands, low coral atolls, cool far-south Aotearoa, and Rapa Nui) with what each kind offered and how Polynesian settlers adapted to it.

A **atoll** — a low island built on a coral reef — deserves a moment: thin soil, little fresh water, no stone and few large trees. Life there turned to the sea, and only small groups could live at all. On Aotearoa, winters were too cold for most tropical crops, so the sweet potato (the **kūmara**) became the main crop, grown in summer and kept in storage pits through the winter. At first the settlers also hunted the moa — big flightless birds that had no fear of people — until none remained; after that, food came more from gardens and from the sea. The moa are a sharp example of the third kind of environmental change above: a change people made themselves.

The hardest debate belongs to **Rapa Nui**, one of the loneliest islands on Earth. Its settlers found palm forests; by the time the first European ship arrived (the Dutch sailor Jacob Roggeveen, in 1722), the forests were gone. What destroyed them, and what their loss did to the people, is one of history's live arguments.

A contested story: what happened on Rapa Nui?

Rapa Nui (Easter Island) lost its palm forests after people settled it, around 1200 CE. The forests' fate is agreed; the cause and what it did to the people are hotly debated.

View A - self-made ruin (Jared Diamond, 2005)

Diamond argues that the islanders cut the palms faster than the forest could regrow: for gardens, for moving the great stone heads, and for canoes.

Without trees, soil washed away, canoes could not be built and food fell away. He calls this self-made ruin 'ecocide' - a people destroying the environment that fed them.

Evidence used: pollen records showing the palms vanish; dates of statue-building; accounts of the poorer island life seen in 1722.

View B - rats, adapt, and a later disaster (Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, 2011)

Hunt and Lipo argue the palms mainly died because rats, carried by the first settlers, ate palm seeds, so no young trees could grow.

The people did not collapse: they adapted, with gardens covered in broken rock to hold soil and water, and new ways of fishing.

The real disaster came later, after European contact: disease and raids to take islanders away as slaves.

Evidence used: rat-gnawed seeds in digs; tools and gardens from after the palms went; records of contact after 1722.

Testing the views: pollen and charcoal records fix when the palms went, rat-gnawed seeds test the rat claim, and dug-up tools and gardens test whether life fell apart or carried on. The word 'ecocide' belongs to View A's frame - using it as if it were a plain fact would beg the question.

Both views are shown in the strongest form their supporters would accept; each is tested against the same kinds of evidence.

Debate panel presenting two views on Rapa Nui — Jared Diamond's view that the islanders ruined their own environment, and Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo's view that rats killed the palms and people adapted until European contact brought disaster — with a strip on what evidence tests each view.

Notice what both sides share: the palms went, and the evidence for when they went (pollen records from old lake mud) is not the point of dispute. The dispute is about *cause* and about *what happened next* — exactly the two questions a historian asks of any change.

Comparing responses — the historian's move

Lay the four cases side by side and the same families of response keep appearing.

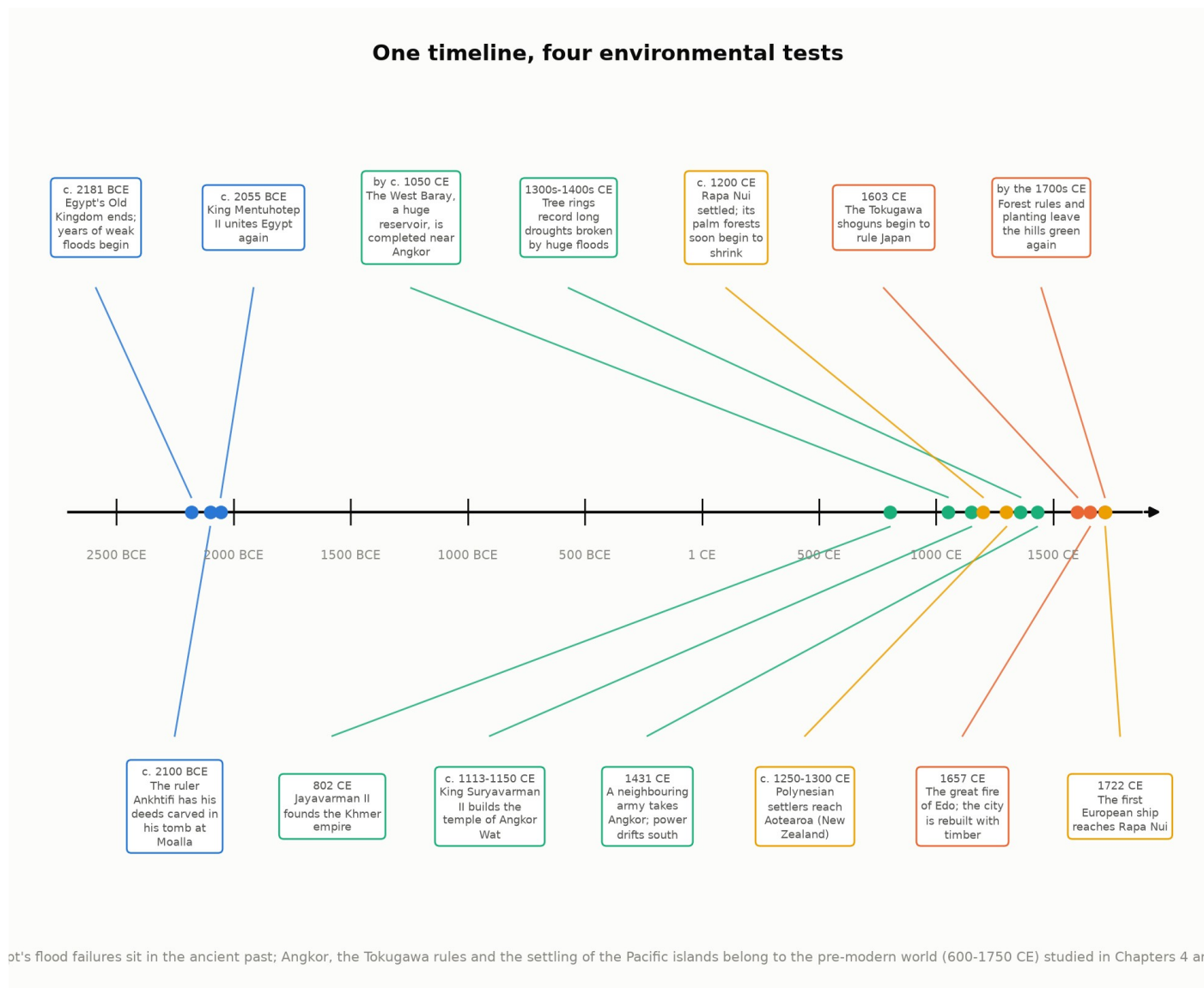
Six families of response, found across the four cases

Family of response	Egypt and the Nile	Angkor and the Khmer empire	Japan under the shoguns	The Pacific Islands
Build and repair works (canals, reservoirs, banks)		●		
Store and share food (granaries, grain handouts)	●			
Make rules about resources (bans, guards, planting orders)			●	
Change crops and food ways (new plants, new storage)				●
Move people, trade or the centre (along rivers, to ports, by canoe)	●	●		●
Record and remember (tomb texts, poems, edicts)	●		●	

One case can use several families at once – societies rarely answer a hard season with a single move.

Dot chart of six families of response — building and repairing works; storing and sharing food; making rules about resources; changing crops and food ways; moving people, trade or the centre; recording and remembering — with dots marking which families appear in each of the four case studies.

And on one shared line of time:



Timeline from 2500 BCE to 1800 CE placing key events of all four case studies: the failed floods and Ankhtifi's inscription in Egypt, the founding and water works of the Khmer empire, the drought centuries and 1431 fall of Angkor, the Tokugawa rules from 1603 and green hills by the 1700s, and the settling of Rapa Nui and Aotearoa and the first European contact in 1722.

Three habits from these cases carry into the rest of this book:

- **Sort cause from consequence.** The failed flood is a cause; the divided kingdom is a consequence; the reunion under Mentuhotep II is a consequence of responses, not of the flood. Section 7B practises this sorting in full.
- **Weigh the evidence.** Ankhtifi boasts; Ipuwer shocks; tree rings measure. Each kind of source has a different strength, and a good answer says which it is using. Section 6D is the evidence engine for that work.
- **Watch the contested words.** *Collapse, ecocide, failure* — each carries a frame. Name whose frame you are using, and say what the other side would answer. The two debate panels on this page are built to train exactly that habit.

One last reminder about this page: everything in this section is companion material, taught in place of the excluded VC2HH8K07. It builds the same skills, but it is not coverage of that code, and no question below may be marked as evidence that the code has been taught.

Sources used on this page

- **Tomb inscription of Ankhtifi,** c. 2100 BCE, carved rock wall of a tomb at Moalla, Upper Egypt (the tomb stands on its site today; first published by the French scholar Jacques Vandier in 1950).

- **Lament of Ipuwer** (Papyrus Leiden I 344), ancient Egyptian poem; held by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden; retrieved from the museum's online collection, 25 August 2026.
- **Herodotus, Histories**, Book 2, written about 450 BCE; survives in later written copies.
- **Tree-ring records of drought in mainland South-East Asia**, research by teams including Brendan Buckley, published from 2010; site mapping by the **Greater Angkor Project** (directed by Roland Fletcher with partners in Cambodia).
- **Conrad Totman**, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry in Pre-Industrial Japan*, 1989 (secondary source).
- **Jared Diamond**, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, 2005 (secondary source).
- **Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo**, *The Statues That Walked: Unraveling the Mystery of Easter Island*, 2011 (secondary source).
- **Records of first European contact with Rapa Nui**: the Dutch voyage of Jacob Roggeveen, 1722.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 (scaffolded) — the three moves on Ankhtifi's tomb inscription.

Task: complete the three rows for Ankhtifi's inscription.

Move	Prompt	Your note
Features	What kind of thing is it?	Words carved into the rock wall of a tomb cut into the cliffs at Moalla in Upper Egypt.
Content	What does it say?	Ankhtifi boasts that he fed his people through the hungry years and lists his wins over rival towns.
Context	Who made it, when, and why?	Ankhtifi, the local ruler of Hierakonpolis, had it carved about 2100 BCE, in the divided First Intermediate Period, to record his deeds for the ages.

Why it works: each move pins down one part of the source, so a claim about the past ("food ran short across Upper Egypt") rests on a named, dated object a reader can check — and the caution (a tomb text praises its owner) is part of the answer, not an extra.

Worked example 2 (scaffolded) — sorting the families of response.

Task: name the family of response (from the dot chart) for each move below.

Move	Family
Khmer kings repairing and reworking the canals after flood damage	Build and repair works
Tokugawa officials ordering the planting of new cedar trees	Make rules about resources
Farmers on Aotearoa storing kūmara in pits for winter	Change crops and food ways
The centre of Khmer power moving south toward the sea trade	Move people, trade or the centre

Why it works: one society makes several responses at once; naming the family first keeps the explanation tidy and makes comparison across cases possible.

Worked example 3 (unscaffolded) — writing the extended answer.

Task: "Choose one case study from this page. Explain the environmental change that tested that society, and how the society responded." (4 marks). Study the model response and its margin notes, then list the four moves it makes.

Model response (4 marks)

Use the case study from this page. Explain the environmental change that tested that society, and how the society responded.

One society tested by environmental change was the Khmer empire of Angkor, in what is now Cambodia. Between about 800 and 1400 CE, Angkor grew into one of the largest cities on Earth, and its rice crop depended on a vast network of reservoirs and canals that stored the monsoon rains.

Move 1
Names the society, its dates and what made it open to change

Tree-ring studies show that in the 1300s and 1400s the region suffered long droughts, broken by floods much bigger than the network was built to carry. These swings strained the water works: channels broke and silted up, and the stored water could not be counted on.

Move 2
Explains the change, using dated evidence (tree rings)

The Khmer response was to repair and rework the network while they could, and then to shift the centre of power south, toward the great rivers and the sea trade. By 1431, when a neighbouring army took Angkor, the old city had already become less central to the kingdom.

Move 3
Describes the responses, in order, with evidence

Still, the change should not be called a total collapse. Angkor Wat remained a living Buddhist temple, and farmers stayed on the land. Historians still debate how much of the change came from climate and how much from trade, war and the choices of rulers - a strong answer weighs both sides.

Move 4
Shows caution: names the limit of the claim and the debate

The four moves are: name and date; explain the change with evidence; describe the responses; show caution about the claim. Marks are for the moves, not for copying this case.

Model four-paragraph response about Angkor, with margin notes naming its four moves: name the society, its dates and its exposure; explain the change with dated evidence; describe the responses in order; show caution about the claim and name the debate.

The four moves: (1) name the society and its dates, and say what made it open to change; (2) explain the change using dated evidence; (3) describe the responses in order; (4) show caution — name the limit of any strong claim and the debate around it. Note what the model does *not* do: it never calls Angkor's change a total ending, and it never treats one side of the debate as settled fact.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

S1 (1 mark). Which case study on this page answered its environmental change mainly with written rules — bans, guards and ordered planting? *Hint: look at the “How people responded” column of the comparison table.*

S2 (2 marks). Define an environmental change, then give one example of a change people made themselves. *Hint: start with “An environmental change is ...”, then use one case from this page.*

S3 (2 marks). Using the timeline, put these five in order from oldest to most recent: the founding of the Khmer empire by Jayavarman II; the fall of Angkor to Ayutthaya's army; Ankhthifi's tomb inscription carved at Moalla; the reunion of Egypt under Mentuhotep II; the first European ship reaching Rapa Nui.

S4 (2 marks). Give two features that make Ankhthifi's tomb inscription a primary source. *Hint: start one with “It was made ...” and one with “It is ...”.*

S5 (2 marks). Name the two risks to Angkor's water network marked on the water diagram, and say what each one did to the works. *Hint: one risk is too little water; the other is too much at once.*

S6 (3 marks). The debate over Rapa Nui's palm forests. (a) What do both sides agree about? (b) Give one point each side uses. (c) Name one kind of evidence that can test between them.

Unscaffolded

U1 (4 marks). Choose one case study from this page. Explain the environmental change that tested that society, and how the society responded.

U2 (3 marks). Compare Egypt's response to its failed floods with the Tokugawa response to bare hills. Give one similarity and one difference. *Hint: think about who was making the rules, and what the rules were about.*

U3 (2 marks). Many historians avoid the word “collapse” for Angkor and for Rapa Nui. Use one named fact from this page to explain why.

U4 (2 marks). Ankhtifi's inscription is full of praise for Ankhtifi. Give one reason historians still use it as evidence, and one reason they weigh it carefully.

Answers

S1. Tokugawa Japan (Japan under the shoguns).

S2. An environmental change is a change in the things around a society that it does not control — weather, rivers, soil, plants and animals, the shape of the land. One self-made example: people on Rapa Nui lost their palm forests; or the moa of Aotearoa hunted until none remained; or Japan's hills stripped bare by cutting for timber.

S3. Ankhtifi's tomb inscription (c. 2100 BCE) → reunion of Egypt under Mentuhotep II (c. 2055 BCE) → founding of the Khmer empire (802 CE) → fall of Angkor to Ayutthaya's army (1431 CE) → first European ship at Rapa Nui (1722 CE).

S4. Any two of: it was carved about 2100 BCE, in the very years it speaks about; it is a physical object made in the time being studied; it carries the words of the person whose deeds it records, not a later writer's reading.

S5. Drought: months with little rain left the reservoirs low and the rice fields dry. Flood: water far bigger than the works were built for could break the walls and canals.

S6. (a) Both accept that the palm forests disappeared after people settled the island. (b) Diamond: people cut the palms faster than they could regrow, and the loss ruined the food supply (he calls it ecocide). Hunt and Lipo: rats brought by the first settlers fed on the palm seeds so no young trees grew, and the people adapted until European contact brought disease and slave raids. (c) Any one: pollen records from old mud; rat-gnawed seeds found in digs; tools and gardens dug up from after the palms went.

U1. A four-point shape: name the society and its dates and say what made it open to change; explain the change with dated evidence; describe the responses in order; show caution about any strong claim and name the debate.

U2. Similarity: both answered with storage and control — grain kept and shared in Egypt; timber saved by rule in Japan. Difference: Egypt's danger came from a river failing, and the answer was led by local rulers sharing food in a time of divided power; Japan's danger was made by its own people's cutting, and the answer was a strong central government making rules about trees.

U3. Any one named fact, well used: Angkor Wat stayed a living temple and farmers stayed on the land, so the place was not emptied and left; or the people of Rapa Nui kept gardening (with rock-covered beds) after the palms went, so life carried on in a changed form.

U4. Use: it is a voice from the very years of hunger, so it shows that food really ran short and local rulers took charge. Weigh: it was carved to praise its owner, so it says nothing of Ankhtifi's failures and may stretch his success.

Fully-worked solutions

S1. The comparison table's response column shows Japan under the shoguns answering bare hills with rules: cutting banned or limited, forests guarded, and new trees planted by order. That is the case where written rules did the main work. (1 mark: Tokugawa Japan.)

S2. An environmental change is a change in a society's surroundings that it does not control — the weather, rivers, soil, plants, animals and the land. The third kind named on this page is the sort people make themselves. Examples: on Rapa Nui the palm forests vanished after people settled the island; on Aotearoa the moa were hunted until none remained; in Japan the hills were stripped bare because cutting ran ahead of growth. Any one of these earns the second mark. (1 mark for the definition; 1 mark for a valid self-made example.)

S3. Read the dates off the timeline: Ankhtifi's inscription, c. 2100 BCE; Mentuhotep II's reunion, c. 2055 BCE; Jayavarman II founds the Khmer empire, 802 CE; Ayutthaya's army takes Angkor, 1431 CE; the first European ship reaches Rapa Nui, 1722 CE. Common slip: putting the reunion before the inscription — 2055 BCE is later than 2100 BCE, because BCE dates count down toward 1. (1 mark for a fully correct order; 1 mark if one pair is swapped.)

S4. A primary source is an object or record from the time being studied. Ankhtifi's inscription fits twice over: (1) it was carved about 2100 BCE, in the very years whose hunger it speaks about, by the order of the man it describes; (2) it is a physical object from that time that still survives, so the historian reads the words of the people themselves rather than a later writer's reading of them. (1 mark per valid feature, max 2.)

S5. The diagram marks two risks. Drought: when months pass with little rain, the reservoirs (barays) run low and the canals cannot feed the rice fields in the dry season. Flood: when rains are far bigger than the works were built for, the walls and canals can break or silt up — damage that took years and great labour to repair. *(1 mark for each risk named with its effect.)*

S6. (a) Both sides agree on the fact: the island's palm forests disappeared after people settled it. The dispute is about cause and outcome, not about that. *(1 mark)* (b) Diamond's view: people cut the palms faster than they could regrow — for gardens and for moving the great stone heads — and the loss ruined soil, canoes and food; he calls this self-made ruin ecocide. Hunt and Lipo's view: rats carried by the first settlers fed on the palm seeds so no young trees could grow, and people adapted with rock-covered gardens; the worst loss of life came later, after European contact, from disease and raids to take islanders away as slaves. *(1 mark for one fair statement of each side.)* (c) Tests: pollen records from old lake mud fix when the palms went; rat-gnawed seeds found in digs test the rat claim; tools and gardens dug up from after the forests went test whether life fell apart or carried on. *(1 mark for any one.)*

U1. A strong answer makes four moves, whichever case it chooses. (1) Name and date: for example, the Khmer empire at Angkor, whose city region grew from about 800 CE on stored monsoon water. (2) The change, with evidence: tree-ring studies show that the 1300s and 1400s brought droughts lasting decades, broken by floods far bigger than the canals and reservoirs were built for. (3) The responses, in order: the network was repaired and reworked while that remained possible, and the centre of power then moved south toward the rivers and the sea trade. (4) Caution: in 1431 Ayutthaya's army took the city, but Angkor Wat stayed a living temple, so this is change, not a total ending — and historians still weigh climate against trade and war. A response with these four moves, using any case from this page, earns full marks. *(1 mark per move.)*

U2. Similarity: both societies answered shortage with storage and control. In Egypt, grain was stored and shared when the floods failed; in Japan, timber was saved by rule, with limits on cutting and ordered planting. Difference: the source of the danger, and who led the answer. Egypt's danger came from outside its control — the river failed — and in the divided years it was local rulers like Ankhtifi, not the king, who fed their districts. Japan's danger was self-made — its own people cutting faster than trees regrow — and a strong central government answered with written rules that survived to be read. *(1 mark for a true similarity; 1 mark for the difference in the danger's source; 1 mark for the difference in who led the answer.)*

U3. The word “collapse” says a society came to a total end. The facts on this page argue against that for both cases. At Angkor, the temple of Angkor Wat stayed a living Buddhist shrine and farmers stayed on the land after the kings' power moved south — the place changed, but it was not emptied. On Rapa Nui, the people kept living after the palms went, improving their gardens with broken rock to hold soil and water; the worst loss of life came from outside forces after 1722, not from the forest's disappearance alone. In both cases the people and their knowledge carried on — which is why many historians speak of change rather than collapse. *(1 mark for a named fact; 1 mark for linking it to the word's meaning.)*

U4. Historians still use the inscription because it is a voice from the very years of hunger: a local ruler, writing about his own time, recording that food ran short and that storing and sharing grain became the work of rulers. That makes it direct evidence of the failed-flood years. They weigh it carefully because it was carved to praise its owner. Ankhtifi lists his wins and his care for his people; he says nothing of his own failures, and a text made to last for the ages may stretch the truth to make its owner look strong. The historian's move is to read the boast alongside other evidence — the poem of Ipuwer, the archaeology of the period — and say where the sources agree and where they do not. *(1 mark for a reason to use it; 1 mark for a reason to weigh it.)*

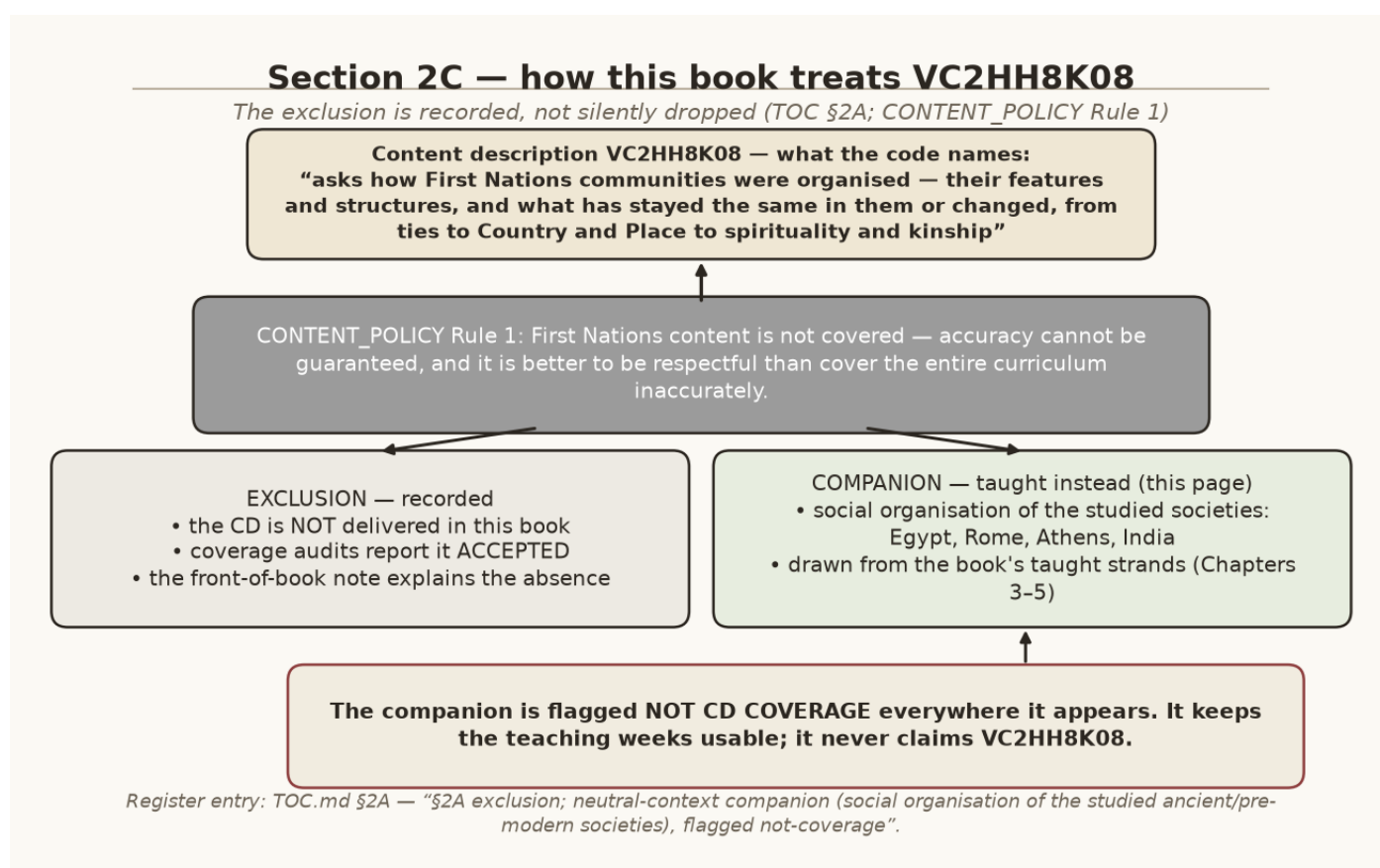
Community structures, continuity and change: Country, Place, spirituality, kinship

Chapter 2 · Section 2C · Owns: VC2HH8K08 · Draws on: none — §2A exclusion · The companion material on this page is flagged **NOT CD COVERAGE** everywhere it appears.

How this section works (read first)

The curriculum's content description VC2HH8K08 asks how First Nations communities were organised — their features and structures, and what has stayed the same in them or changed, from ties to Country and Place to spirituality and kinship.

This book does not teach that content description. Under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content is not covered — accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately. The exclusion is recorded in the book's §2A register (TOC.md), coverage checks report it as **ACCEPTED**, and the note at the front of the book explains the absence to students and families. Nothing on this page teaches First Nations content, and nothing on this page claims VC2HH8K08.



Flowchart showing how this book treats content description VC2HH8K08: what the code names is stated in the book's own words, the exclusion is recorded under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1, and a flagged companion is taught instead

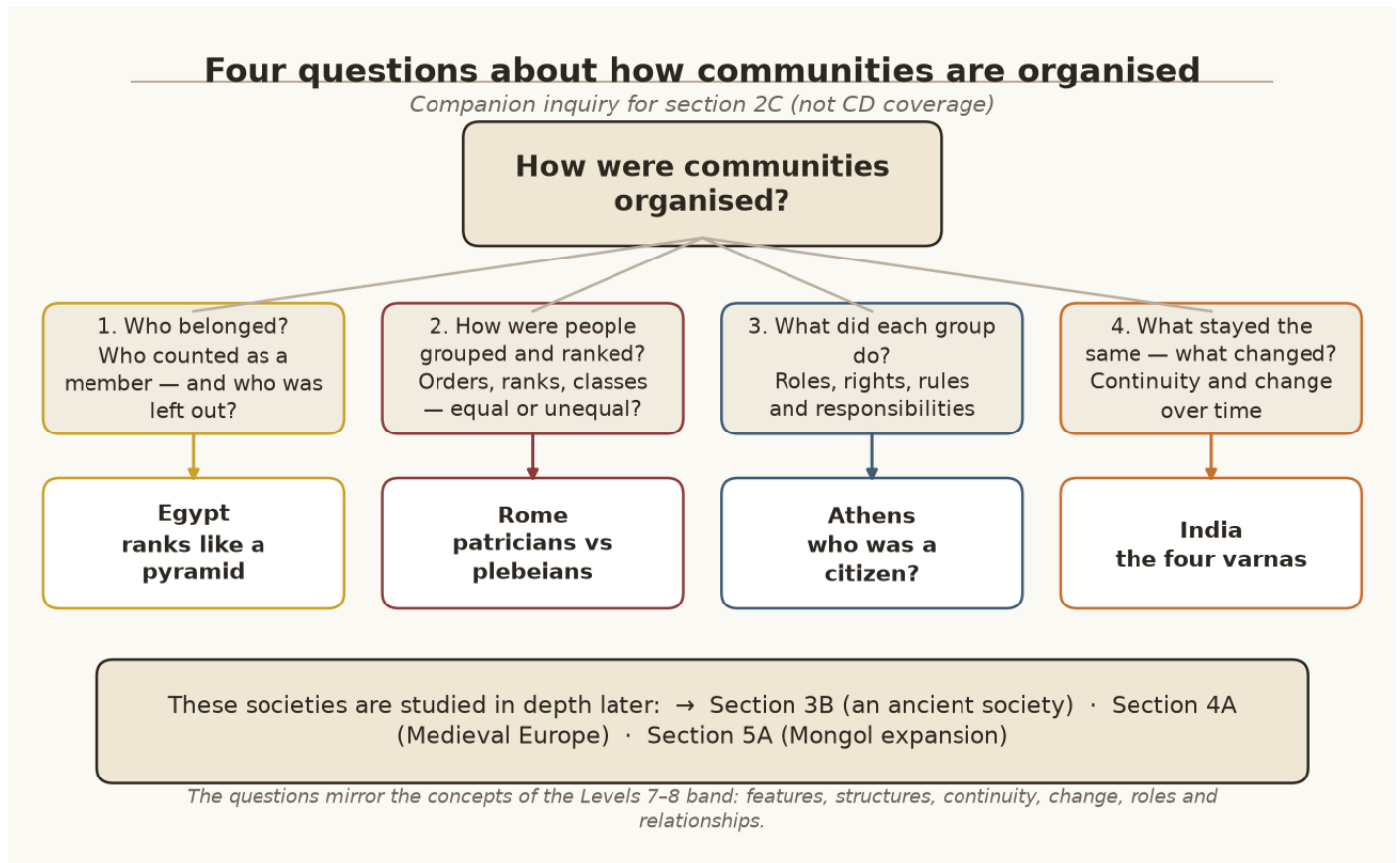
What this page teaches instead — companion material, not CD coverage. To keep the teaching weeks useful, this section runs a neutral companion inquiry: *how were the studied societies organised?* It draws only on societies the book teaches in other chapters — Egypt, Rome, Athens and India (Chapters 3–5) — and on the band's concepts (features, structures, continuity, change, roles and relationships). It joins forward to Section 3B (an ancient society), Section 4A (Medieval Europe) and Section 5A (Mongol expansion), where these societies are studied in depth.

Teacher note (D8). An earlier question bank held six multiple-choice items written against VC2HH8K08's First Nations content. Those items were removed in the §2A purge and are **unusable**: do not re-attach, rewrite or reuse them in this book. Replacement assessment for this teaching slot should draw on the companion tasks below, marked as companion material.

Theory — how were communities organised? (companion; not CD coverage)

Every community sorts its people into groups: who counts as a member, what each group does, and which groups sit above others. Historians call that sorting a society's **social order** — the groups a community is made of and the rank, rights and responsibilities of each. When the ranking puts some groups above others with more power or honour, historians call it a **hierarchy**, a ranked order of groups. These are historians' working terms, not the words every society used for itself.

Four questions organise the companion inquiry:



Concept map of the four organising questions — who belonged; how people were grouped and ranked; what each group did; what stayed the same and what changed — each linked to one case study: Egypt, Rome, Athens and India, with forward joins to Sections 3B, 4A and 5A

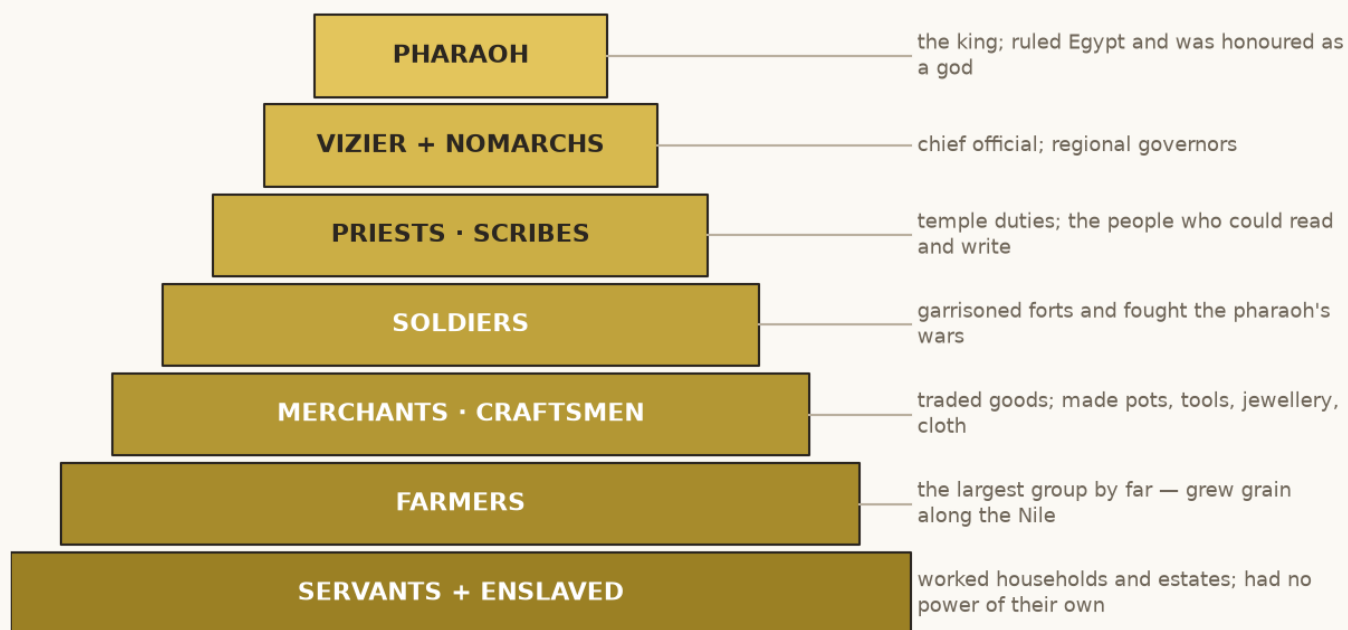
All four case studies are unequal orders, and in all four, people at the time argued about the order. That argument is the history.

Case study 1 — Egypt: a ranked order on the Nile

Ancient Egypt grew up along the Nile, and the river's flood each year watered the grain fields. Historians use a standard set of group names for Egypt — pharaoh, viziers, nomarchs, priests, soldiers, scribes, merchants, craftsmen, farmers, and enslaved people — and the curriculum's elaboration for ancient societies (VC2HH8K13.E04) points to the same set. In this section these terms mean: **pharaoh** — the king, honoured as a god; **vizier** — the king's chief official; **nomarch** — a regional governor; **scribe** — a person trained to read and write.

Ancient Egypt — a historian's model of the social order

Layer width shows rank in the model, not the number of people



Modern model, not an Egyptian document: no ancient Egyptian text draws its society as a pyramid. Groups named in VC2HH8K13.E04; the Nile's flood each year made farming the base of life.

Layered diagram modelling the social order of ancient Egypt as ranked layers, from pharaoh at the top through viziers and nomarchs, priests and scribes, soldiers, merchants and craftsmen, down to farmers and servants and enslaved people, with a note that the pyramid shape is a modern historian's model

Source close study — the Satire of the Trades. A Middle Kingdom writing text (written c. 2000 BCE; the best-known copy, Papyrus Lansing, is held in the British Museum, retrieved 2026) puts one job above all others. Rendered for this workbook, it says:

“There is no job without a boss — except the scribe. He is the boss himself. If you can write, no one can push you about.”

The text is a school exercise in which a father pushes his son towards the scribe's path by mocking every other job — miners smell, smiths burn, farmers toil. As evidence (see Section 6C on reading sources by their features, content and context) it shows two things at once: the high value put on scribes, and a ranked order in which most people worked the land. It is one writer's pitch, not a neutral list — which is itself useful (Section 6D).

Continuity and change. The ranked order lasted well over 2,000 years — a long continuity. Change came inside it: Khufu (ruled c. 2589–2566 BCE) set up the Great Pyramid at Giza with the order behind him; and Hatshepsut (ruled c. 1479–1458 BCE), a woman, ruled as pharaoh — unusual enough that later kings tried to cut her name from monuments. The order stayed; who could sit at its top could still be argued over.

Case study 2 — Rome: patricians and plebeians

After the kings were replaced (traditional date 509 BCE), Rome's citizens were split into two orders. **Patricians** were a small set of old, wealthy landowning families who held the top offices, most senate seats and the priesthoods. **Plebeians** were everyone else in the citizen body — from poor farmers to rich merchants. Both orders were citizens; the fight was about who could hold office and make law. A **consul** was one of the two leaders chosen each year; the **senate** was the council of leading men the consuls consulted.

Rome — two orders of citizens

An unequal start, and two centuries of argument about it

	PATRICIANS	PLEBEIANS
Who were they?	A small set of old, wealthy landowning families	The rest of the citizen body — from poor farmers to rich merchants
Share of power, early Republic	Held the top offices, most senate seats and the priesthoods	Could vote, but shut out of the highest offices
What they gained, 494-287 BCE	Kept their wealth and great status	Tribunes (494 BCE); written laws (c. 450 BCE); the consulship opened (367 BCE); plebiscites bound everyone (287 BCE)
What stayed the same	Rich families still led the senate and won most elections	Most ordinary plebeians stayed poor — office brought wealth, but few could reach it
Both orders were citizens — the fight was about who could hold office and make law.		

Dates are traditional and come from Roman writers working centuries later — see the Livy question in the practice set.

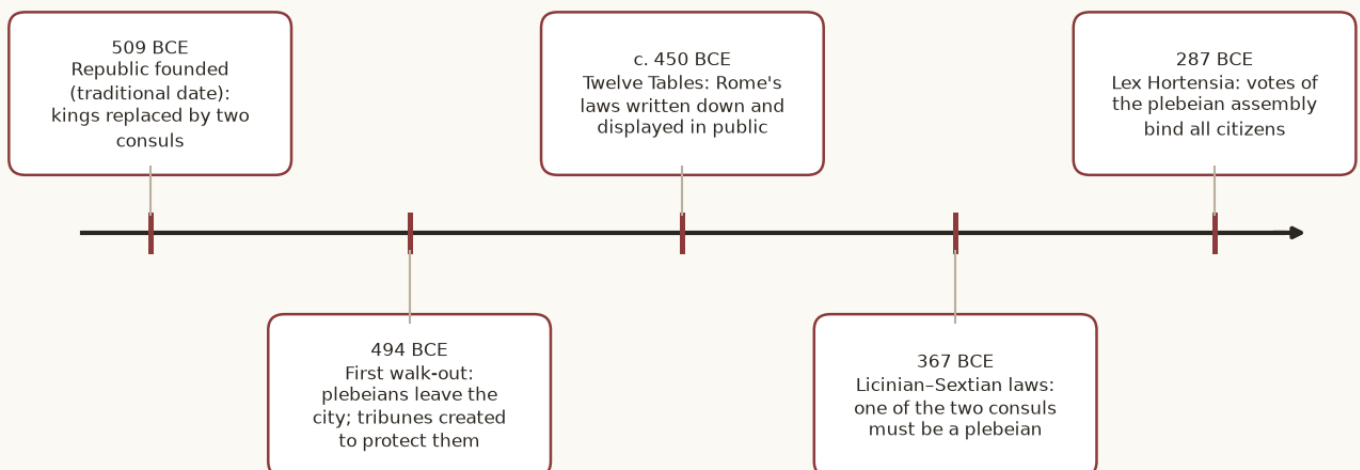
Comparison table of Rome's two orders of citizens: who the patricians and plebeians were, their share of power in the early republic, what the plebeians gained between 494 and 287 BCE, and what stayed the same

The long argument is called the Conflict of the Orders:

Rome — how plebeians won a share of power, 509-287 BCE

Change by protest and law-making, not by civil war

About 220 years of strike, negotiation and new laws — the social order changed step by step.



BCE = before the common era. Traditional dates from later Roman historians (e.g. Livy, writing around the start of the 1st century CE).

Timeline from 509 to 287 BCE with five events: 509 BCE republic founded (traditional date); 494 BCE first walk-out and the tribunes created; c. 450 BCE the Twelve Tables written and displayed; 367 BCE Licinian-Sextian laws open the consulship; 287 BCE Lex Hortensia binds all citizens to the plebeian assembly's votes

A **tribune** was an official the plebeians won in 494 BCE, with power to block acts that harmed them. The **Twelve Tables** (c. 450 BCE) put the law in writing and on public display, so a judge could not simply say what suited the powerful. In 367 BCE one of the two consuls had to be a plebeian, and in 287 BCE the plebeian assembly's votes came to bind all citizens.

Source close study — a fragment of the Twelve Tables. The original tablets are lost; the wording reaches us only in quotations by much later Roman writers. One fragment, attributed to Table VIII, reads *PATRONVS SI CLIENTI FRAVDEM FECERIT, SACER ESTO* — rendered for this workbook: “If a patron deceives his client, let him be accursed.” A **patron** was a powerful protector; a **client** was a person under his care, who gave support and work in return. The fragment shows the order resting on personal ties of duty, and it shows the law naming a penalty for a patron who broke faith — evidence that the tie could be abused.

Source close study — a fragment of the Twelve Tables (c. 450 BCE)

Rome's first written-down laws, displayed in the forum

TABVLA VIII · fragment

**PATRONVS SI CLIENTI FRAVDEM FECERIT
SACER ESTO**

“If a patron deceives his client, let him be accursed.”

patron = a powerful protector; client = a person under his care

How it survives: the original tablets are lost; this wording comes down in quotations by much later Roman writers. A fragment like this is evidence — and it also needs checking.

Fragment attributed to Table VIII of the Twelve Tables; English rendering by the author for this workbook.

Tablet-style panel showing the Latin fragment of the Twelve Tables with an English rendering — if a patron deceives his client, let him be accursed — and a note that the original tablets are lost and the wording survives only in later quotations

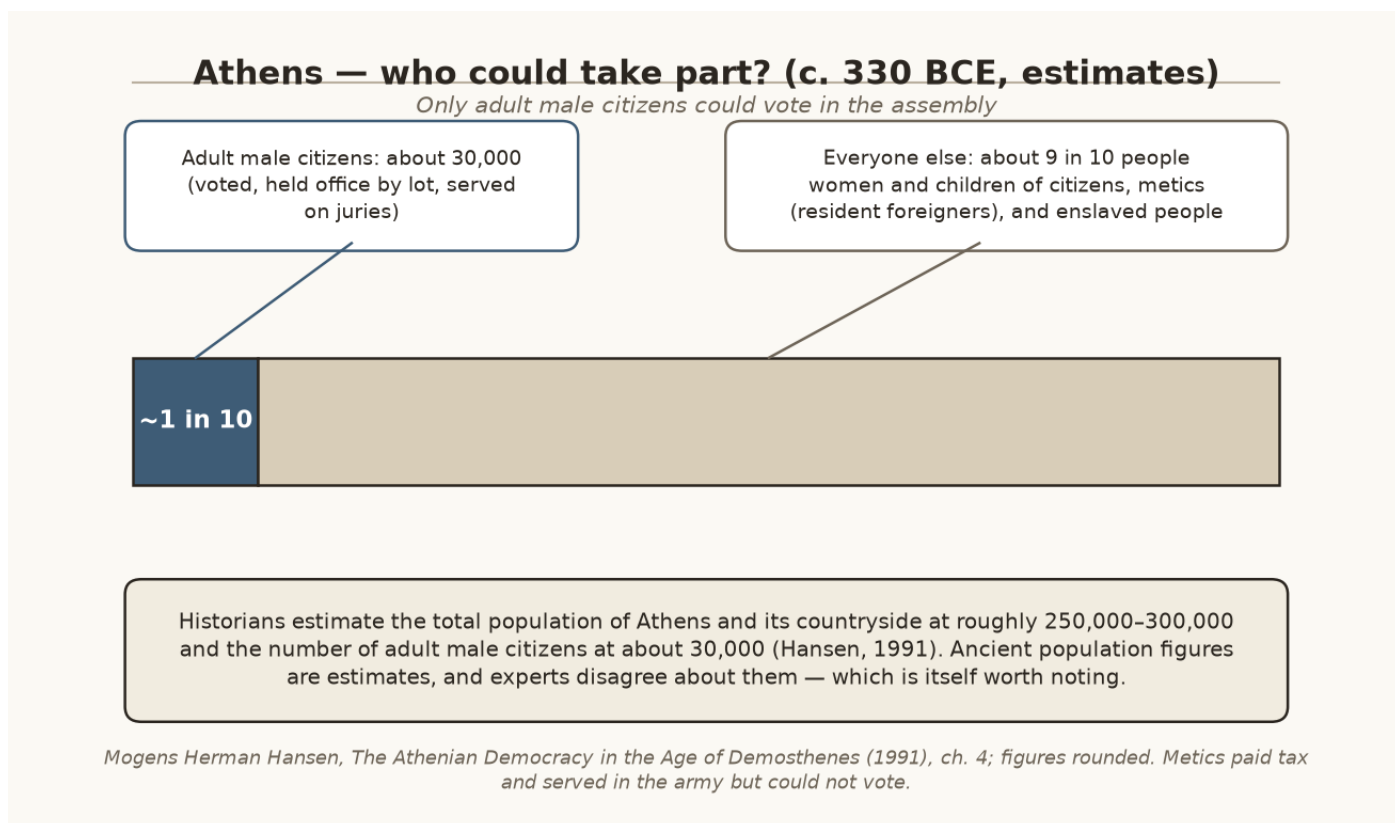
Two views, stated at their strongest. The patrician view: the old families believed the city's safety and the gods' favour rested on their care of the state, and that fast change would bring disorder. The plebeian view: the same unwritten law was read one way for the powerful and another way for the weak, so fairness needed law in public, a veto against harm, and a road to office. Neither side was arguing from nothing — which is why the conflict ran for two centuries by protest and law-making rather than civil war.

Continuity and change. The gains were real and the order still tilted: rich families kept leading the senate and winning most elections, because office brought wealth and few could reach it. Our main storyteller for the walk-outs, Livy, wrote c. 27 BCE–14 CE — a primary source for his own time, but writing about events 500–300 years earlier. Weighing him is exactly the work Sections 6C and 6D teach.

Case study 3 — Athens: rule by citizens — but who was a citizen?

In Athens the word **citizen** has to be defined per society, because each society set its own rule. At Athens a citizen was an adult male with Athenian parents. From 451 BCE, under a law carried by Pericles, both parents had to be Athenian

— citizenship narrowed, not widened. Women of citizen families, **metics** (resident outsiders, who paid tax and served in the army but could not vote), and enslaved people were left out of the assembly.



Bar diagram of the population of Athens around 330 BCE in which adult male citizens — about 30,000 people who voted, held office by lot and served on juries — make up about one in ten of all people, the rest being women and children of citizens, metics and enslaved people; estimates attributed to Hansen 1991 with a note that experts disagree

Source close study — Thucydides and Aristotle. Thucydides, an Athenian writing in the later 400s BCE, puts a speech in the mouth of the leader Pericles (History of the Peloponnesian War, 2.37; read in the open Perseus Digital Library edition, Tufts University, retrieved 2026). Rendered for this workbook: “It is called a democracy, because it is run with a view to the many, not the few.” Aristotle’s *Constitution of the Athenians* (c. 330s BCE; also on Perseus) describes the other side of the same coin: at eighteen, young men were put forward by their home village, which voted on whether they were free-born and of the right parentage, before they could be enrolled as citizens. One source praises the rule; the other records the gate. Read together, they show a community that prized self-rule and policed its edge.

Two views, stated at their strongest. The Athenian view: citizens saw their system as freedom lived out loud — ruling and being ruled in turn, offices by lot, large juries, and a city defended by those who had a stake in it. They pictured the city as a household of families sharing gods and land, and defined the community narrowly on purpose. The modern view: a rule that leaves out nine of every ten people is not democracy as we define the word today. Holding both views in mind at once — pride inside, critique outside — is the perspective work Section 6E teaches.

Continuity and change. The idea that citizens should rule themselves kept its grip for centuries (continuity). The rule for belonging changed twice in living memory — widened at times, then narrowed by the law of 451 BCE (change). Change is not always “more freedom”: at Athens it could also be a narrower gate.

Case study 4 — India: the four varnas

Early Indian texts picture society as four broad groups; the term used in this section is **varna**, the word the sources themselves use. (“Caste” is a much later word, from the Portuguese *casta*, brought to India by European traders; historians use it with care, and this section prefers *varna* when speaking with the sources.) The roles named in the curriculum’s elaboration VC2HH8K13.E07 are the Brahmins — the priests and teachers; the Kshatriyas — the kings and warriors; the Vaishyas — the merchants and artisans; and the Shudras — the labourers and peasants.

India — the four varnas in the Purusha hymn (Rigveda 10.90.12)

A religious text describes society as the body of a cosmic being

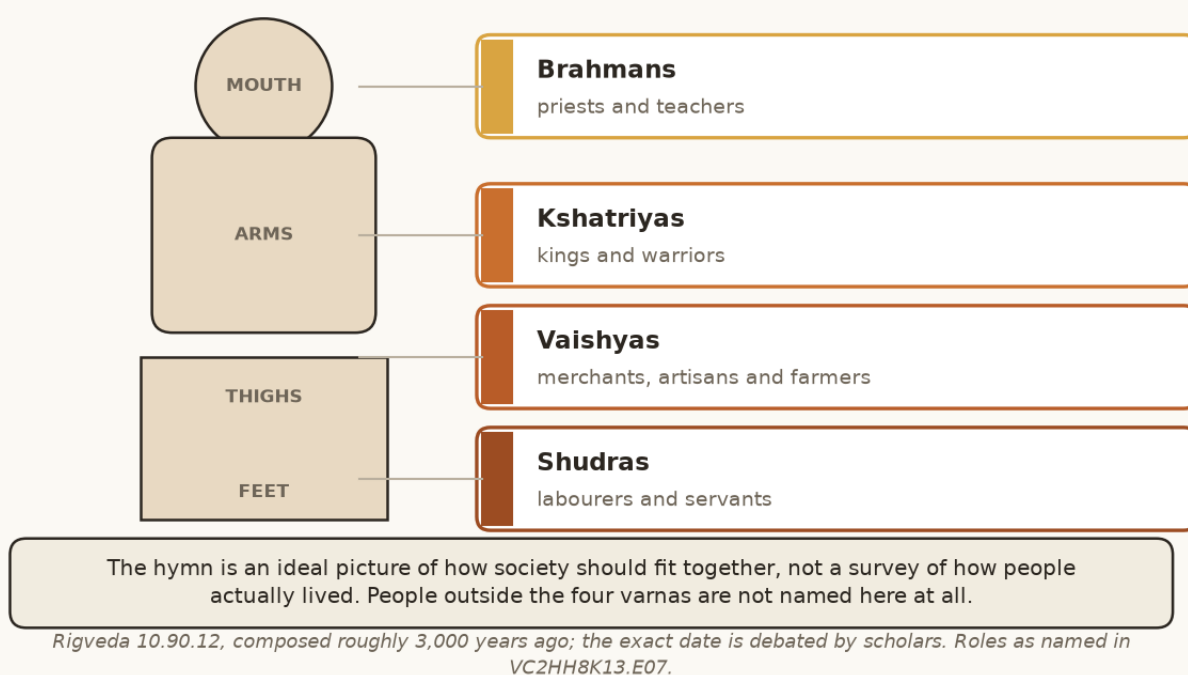


Diagram of the Purusha hymn's picture of society as the body of a cosmic being: the mouth linked to the Brahmins, priests and teachers; the arms to the Kshatriyas, kings and warriors; the thighs to the Vaishyas, merchants, artisans and farmers; the feet to the Shudras, labourers and servants; with a note that the hymn is an ideal picture, not a survey of how people lived

Source close study — the Purusha hymn. The Rigveda (10.90.12), a religious text composed roughly 3,000 years ago (the exact date is debated by scholars; read in an open scholarly translation, retrieved 2026), describes the four varnas as parts of a cosmic being. Rendered for this workbook: “The Brahmins were his mouth; the Kshatriyas, his arms; the Vaishyas, his thighs; and the Shudras were born from his feet.” A religious text is evidence of how a society pictured its order — an ideal, not a census. People outside the four varnas are not named here at all, and the hymn’s silence is also evidence (Section 6E).

Two views, stated at their strongest. The order’s defenders pictured society as a body: each group with its own duty, each part needed, harmony coming from everyone keeping their place — a picture in which rank and duty sit together. Critics inside the tradition answered it: the Buddha (c. 5th century BCE) taught that worth comes from actions, not birth. Centuries later, the Laws of Manu (c. 2nd century BCE–3rd century CE) wrote the rules up harder, tightening who could do what — a change towards a stiffer order. The ideal lasted for millennia; the argument about it lasted just as long.

The sources this section works from

The sources this section works from

Primary = made in the period studied; secondary = made later by people studying the period

Source	Kind	When made	What it shows
Satire of the Trades (Egypt)	primary	written c. 2000 BCE; copies from c. 1200 BCE survive	how Egyptians ranked different jobs; the value put on scribes
Twelve Tables fragments (Rome)	primary	c. 450 BCE; survive only in later quotations	early Roman law, including patron-client duties
Livy, History of Rome	primary*	written c. 27 BCE–14 CE about events 500–300 years earlier	the story of the plebeians' walk-out — told long after
Thucydides, funeral speech of Pericles	primary	written c. 400s BCE	an Athenian praising Athens' rule by citizens
Aristotle, Constitution of the Athenians	primary	c. 330s BCE	how young men proved they were citizens
Rigveda 10.90, the Purusha hymn (India)	primary	composed c. 1500–1000 BCE; date debated	the religious picture of the four varnas
Hansen, The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes	secondary	1991	a modern historian's estimates of Athens' population

*Livy is a primary source for his own time and the only full telling of the early Republic we have — but he wrote about 500 years after the events. Section 6C and 6D teach you how to weigh sources like this.

Table of the primary and secondary sources this section works from — the Satire of the Trades, the Twelve Tables fragments, Livy, Thucydides, Aristotle, the Rigveda Purusha hymn and Hansen 1991 — with the kind of each source, when it was made and what it shows

Every figure and claim above is built from these sources. The primary sources were made in or near the periods studied; the secondary source (Hansen, 1991) is a modern historian's careful estimate. Where originals survive, they are cited with their holding institution or collection and a retrieval date (British Museum; Perseus Digital Library; open scholarly translations, retrieved 2026). English renderings of the quoted lines are the author's, made for this workbook, and are flagged as such. No textbook is used. Sorting primary from secondary, and weighing a source's value, is the work of Sections 6C and 6D.

Continuity and change — the four case studies together

Continuity and change — the four case studies side by side

Same questions, different answers

	Stayed the same (continuity)	Changed	Key evidence
Egypt	the ranked order lasted well over 2,000 years; most people always farmed the Nile's banks	sometimes unusual rulers rose, such as Hatshepsut, a woman who ruled as pharaoh (c. 1479–1458 BCE)	Satire of the Trades; tomb paintings
Rome	wealthy families kept leading the senate; patron-client ties stayed important	plebeians won tribunes, written laws and the consulship (494–287 BCE)	Twelve Tables fragments; Livy
Athens	the idea that citizens should rule themselves kept its grip for centuries	citizenship first widened, then narrowed: from 451 BCE both parents had to be Athenian	Thucydides; Aristotle
India	the varna ideal lasted for millennia and still shapes debate today	critics inside the tradition, like the Buddha (c. 5th century BCE), taught that worth comes from actions, not birth	Rigveda; Laws of Manu; Buddhist texts

Change is not always “more freedom”: Athens narrowed who belonged. And continuity can hide unfairness that people at the time worked to change.

Comparison table setting the four case studies side by side: for each, what stayed the same, what changed, and the key evidence — Egypt's long-lasting ranked order and unusual rulers such as Hatshepsut; Rome's senatorial families and the plebeians' gains of 494–287 BCE; Athens' lasting ideal of citizen rule and the narrowing law of 451 BCE; India's long-lived varna ideal and critics such as the Buddha

Set side by side, the four orders show a pattern: every society ranked its people, and every ranking was argued about by people at the time. Three habits of mind carry the section's skills (taught formally in Chapter 7):

- **Continuity and change** (Section 7A): name what stayed and what shifted, with dates where we have them — and note the rate and extent of the change. Rome's 220 years of law-making is slow, step-by-step change; a single law in 451 BCE is a sharp one.
- **Cause and consequence** (Section 7B): the plebeians' walk-outs caused new offices and written law; the consequence was a shared citizen body that still tilted towards old money.
- **Perspective** (Section 6E): ask who would call a change a gain. The law of 451 BCE narrowed the citizen body: a gain for those kept in, a loss for those shut out.

Worked examples

Companion material — not CD coverage.

Example 1 — scaffolded

Was the creation of the tribunes in 494 BCE a large change for Rome? Answer in three moves: name the change, name what it touched, name what it left alone.

Working

Comment

1. Name the change: in 494 BCE the plebeians won tribunes, officials who could block acts that harmed

Read the date and the gain off the timeline figure.

Working	Comment
them.	
2. Name what it touched: plebeians now had a shield against harm, so power was no longer only patrician.	Touch = who could act on whom.
3. Name what it left alone: patricians kept the top offices and most senate seats; the order stayed ranked.	Continuity matters as much as change.
Verdict: a real change inside an unequal order — large for daily protection, small for who led the state.	A verdict with two sides is stronger than “yes” or “no”.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Use the features–content–context routine (Section 6C) on the Satire of the Trades.

Working	Comment
Features: a school writing text from Egypt’s Middle Kingdom; the copy we use (Papyrus Lansing) is in the British Museum.	Features = what kind of thing it is and where it lives now.
Content: it mocks hard jobs and praises the scribe, telling a son to take up the pen.	Content = what it says.
Context: it was copied by and for trainee scribes, so it praises the scribes’ own rank.	Context = who made it, for whom, and why.
Value: strong evidence of what scribes claimed about themselves; weaker evidence of what farmers felt.	A source’s value depends on the question asked (Section 6D).

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain what the Purusha hymn shows about the varna order, and give one reason people at the time may have accepted the picture.

Model response. The hymn pictures the four varnas as parts of one body — mouth, arms, thighs, feet — so each group looks needed, and rank looks natural rather than chosen. One reason people may have accepted it is that a body picture makes duty and honour go together: every part is honoured for doing its own work, which can make a hard order feel fair from inside.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

“One law can narrow a community.” Show this for Athens in 451 BCE, in two or three sentences.

Model response. Before 451 BCE an Athenian father’s son could be enrolled as a citizen; after the law carried by Pericles, both parents had to be Athenian. The citizen body therefore narrowed by a rule, not by war — a change in who belonged, made by a vote of those already in.

Practice questions

Companion material — not CD coverage.

Scaffolded

Q1. Using the Egypt figure: (a) name the largest group in the order; (b) name the group trained to read and write; (c) the figure’s layers show rank, not head-count — state one clue in the figure that says so.

Q2. Using the Satire of the Trades: (a) is it primary or secondary for ancient Egypt, and why? (b) who is the text speaking to? (c) which group does it value most?

Q3. Using the Rome timeline, match each gain to its date: (a) laws written and displayed; (b) one consul must be a plebeian; (c) plebeian assembly votes bind all citizens; (d) tribunes created.

- Q4.** Using the Twelve Tables fragment: (a) whose duty does the fragment police? (b) the figure says the wording “survives only in later quotations” — give one reason that matters when weighing it as evidence (Section 6D).
- Q5.** Using the Athens figure: (a) about what share of all people were adult male citizens? (b) name two groups shown as left out of the assembly; (c) which law of 451 BCE narrowed the citizen body?
- Q6.** Using the India figure: (a) match each body part (mouth, arms, thighs, feet) to its varna; (b) name the critic inside the tradition who taught that worth comes from actions, not birth.

Un scaffolded

- Q7.** Rome’s plebeians could vote but were shut out of the highest offices; Athens’ metics paid tax and served in the army but could not vote at all. Explain one way the two situations were alike and one way they differed.
- Q8.** Choose one case study. Give one continuity and one change for it, each with a date or a dated figure, and state whether the change was fast or slow.
- Q9.** Whose voices are missing from (a) the Satire of the Trades and (b) the Purusha hymn? Name one group for each, and say how a historian might still reach them (Section 6E).
- Q10.** Is Livy a primary or a secondary source for the plebeians’ first walk-out? Give the short answer and the careful answer (see the asterisk in the sources table).
- Q11. Extended response.** A classmate says: “Every ancient society ranked its people, so no one at the time thought the ranking was a problem.” Agree or disagree, using **two** case studies. Use at least one dated change and one perspective besides the ruling group’s. (6–8 sentences.)
-

Answers

- Q1.** (a) Farmers. (b) Scribes. (c) The figure's own note: layer width shows rank in the model, not the number of people (and the widest layer is the poorest group).
- Q2.** (a) Primary — written in the period studied (c. 2000 BCE), with copies from c. 1200 BCE. (b) A son being pushed towards the scribe's path (trainee scribes). (c) Scribes.
- Q3.** (a) c. 450 BCE. (b) 367 BCE. (c) 287 BCE. (d) 494 BCE.
- Q4.** (a) The patron's duty to the client. (b) A text quoted centuries later may be trimmed or coloured by the quoter, so it needs checking against other evidence.
- Q5.** (a) About 1 in 10. (b) Any two of: women of citizen families, metics, enslaved people (children of citizens also did not vote). (c) The law carried by Pericles requiring both parents to be Athenian.
- Q6.** (a) Mouth — Brahmins; arms — Kshatriyas; thighs — Vaishyas; feet — Shudras. (b) The Buddha.
- Q7.** Alike: both groups carried duties (work, tax, army service) while having less say over the rules. Different: plebeians were citizens with a vote and won offices over time; metics had no road to the vote at all.
- Q8.** Example (Rome): continuity — wealthy families kept leading the senate; change — 287 BCE, plebeian assembly votes bound all citizens; slow change (220 years of steps).
- Q9.** (a) Farmers, craftsmen, enslaved people — reached through archaeology, tools, tombs, pay records. (b) Women and people outside the varnas — reached through household archaeology and later law texts read against the grain.
- Q10.** Short answer: primary (a source from the ancient world). Careful answer: for the walk-out he is doing a secondary source's job — telling events 500 years after them — so he is weighed like a secondary source for those events.
- Q11.** See fully-worked solutions.
-

Fully-worked solutions

- Q1–Q6.** As in Answers; each part is lifted straight from the matching figure, which is the point: the figures are the section's evidence base.
- Q7.** Alike: a plebeian of the early republic and a metic of Athens both lived under rules they could not fully shape — duties without matching say. Different: the plebeian stood inside the citizen body, held a vote, and his order won tribunes, written law and, by 367 BCE, a road to the consulship; the metic stood outside it, with tax and army duty but no road to the assembly. Same pressure, different doors.
- Q8.** Model (Rome): *Continuity* — through the republic, old wealthy families kept leading the senate and winning most elections. *Change* — in 287 BCE the plebeian assembly's votes came to bind all citizens (Lex Hortensia). *Rate* — slow: the change arrived as steps across 494–287 BCE (walk-outs, tribunes, written law, opened offices), not as one sudden break. A model answer names one of each and dates them.
- Q9.** (a) The Satire speaks for scribes; farmers, craftsmen and enslaved people are only mocked or unseen. A historian reaches them through things, not words: tools, village sites, tombs, work records (archaeology, per Sections 6C–6E). (b) The hymn names no women and no one outside the four varnas. Household finds, burials and later law texts read against the grain give traces of those lives. A source's silence is itself a finding.
- Q10.** Livy wrote c. 27 BCE–14 CE. For his own time he is a primary source; for the walk-out of 494 BCE he is our fullest telling but sits 500 years after the event, so for that event he is weighed as we weigh secondary sources: who told him, what did he want the story to do, and what else agrees (Sections 6C–6D)?

Q11. Model response. *Disagree*. Every society in this section ranked its people, but in every one the ranking was a live argument, not a settled fact. In Rome the plebeians walked out in 494 BCE and kept pressing until written law (c. 450 BCE), an opened consulship (367 BCE) and binding plebeian votes (287 BCE) — people who found the ranking a very large problem. In India the Buddha taught that worth comes from actions, not birth, answering the varna picture from inside the tradition. At Athens the argument ran the other way as well: citizens praised rule by the many while the law of 451 BCE narrowed who counted, and metics carried duties with no vote — a ranking at least some people had reason to question. The patrician, Brahman and citizen views each had reasons of their own (order, duty, shared stake), and those reasons deserve a fair hearing; but “no one thought it a problem” reads the silence of the winners as the silence of everyone. The sources that survive were mostly made by people near the top — which is exactly why the question of perspective matters.

Beliefs and values in everyday life — then and now

Read this first. This section owns exactly one content description: **VC2HH8K09**. That content description is about First Nations Peoples’ beliefs and values, and it is **excluded** from this book under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1. This page records the exclusion and offers a **neutral-context companion** in its place. **Nothing on this page counts as coverage of VC2HH8K09.**

The scope record of this section

This section belongs to Chapter 2, the excluded sub-strand. Its content description, **VC2HH8K09**, asks which beliefs and values shaped the everyday life of First Nations Peoples — and go on shaping it today.

Every part of that description names First Nations subject matter, so there is no neutral remainder to teach. The section is recorded as a **§2A exclusion**: coverage audits report it **ACCEPTED**, never as a gap, and it is never silently dropped. The note at the front of this book says exactly why: “**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content** has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.”

In place of the excluded content, this page carries a **companion inquiry** drawn from the societies this book does teach: household religion in Rome, the ancient Olympic Games, the teachings of Confucius, and funerary customs in Egypt, Rome and Greece. The companion keeps this teaching week usable and sharpens the skills of this unit — reading beliefs and values from sources. It is **flagged not-coverage everywhere it appears**, and no question in this section may be marked as evidence that VC2HH8K09 has been taught. The companion joins Section 3C (beliefs and practices of one ancient society) and looks ahead to Section 4A (continuity and change in medieval Europe).

Teacher note (D8). An earlier question bank held six multiple-choice items written against VC2HH8K09’s First Nations content. Those items were removed in the §2A purge and are **unusable**: do not re-attach, rewrite or reuse them in this book. Replacement assessment for this teaching slot should draw on the companion tasks below, marked as companion material.

Section 2D scope record	
Section	2D
Owns content description	VC2HH8K09
What the code names	asks which beliefs and values shaped the everyday life of First Nations Peoples — and go on shaping it today
Decision	recorded as a section-2D exclusion under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1; coverage audits report it ACCEPTED, never as a gap
Why	First Nations content is excluded from this book; the front-of-book note explains the absence
What this page teaches instead	a neutral-context companion: beliefs, rituals and everyday practice in the societies this book does teach (household religion in Rome, the ancient Olympic Games, the teachings of Confucius, funerary customs) - flagged NOT CD coverage everywhere it appears
The CD is recorded, not silently dropped. The companion material on this page does not count as coverage of VC2HH8K09.	

Scope record for Section 2D showing that content description VC2HH8K09 is recorded as an exclusion and the page teaches a neutral-context companion instead

Key ideas for this section

Two words the curriculum uses but does not define. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *beliefs* and *values* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows, and every question here is answerable on these definitions alone:

- A **belief** is something people hold to be true — for example, “the gods watch over our house”, or “the journey of the dead continues after death”.
- A **value** is something people hold to be important — for example, duty to family, respect for elders, or fair play.

Beliefs and values are not the same as actions, but they shape actions. A society that believes the gods watch over the home will pray at home. A society that values respect for elders will teach children how to speak to their grandparents. Historians work backwards from the actions — from sources — to the beliefs and values underneath.

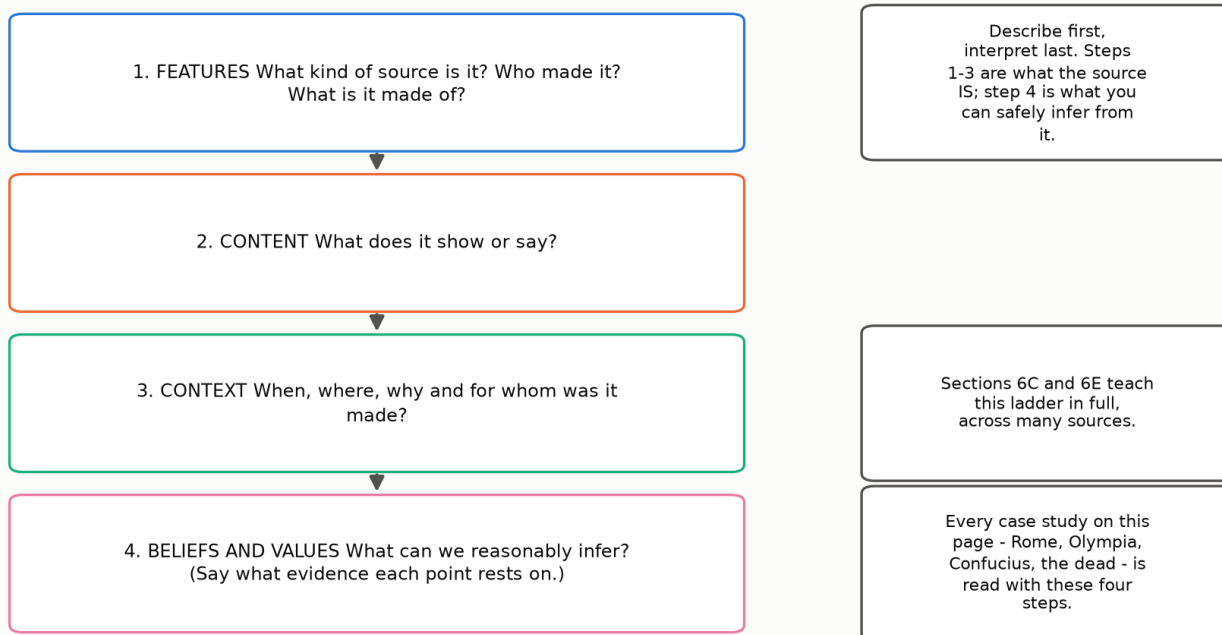
A few terms used in this section, defined at first use:

- A **ritual** is an action done in a fixed, repeated way, with a meaning beyond the action itself.
- A **worldview** is a society’s whole picture of how the world works and how to live in it.
- A **primary source** is an object or text made at the time being studied. A **secondary source** is one made later, by someone describing that time.
- An **inference** is a conclusion you reach from evidence, not a fact the evidence states outright. Saying “the painting shows a snake” is observation; saying “the snake suggests the family hoped for good fortune” is inference.

How we read beliefs from a source. The ladder is always the same four steps, and Sections 6C and 6E teach it in full:

1. **Features** — what kind of source is it, who made it, what is it made of?
2. **Content** — what does it show or say?
3. **Context** — when, where, why and for whom was it made?
4. **Beliefs and values** — what can we reasonably infer from all of the above?

Reading beliefs from a source: the four-step ladder



The same four steps work on a painting, a stone, a papyrus or a saying.

The four-step source-reading ladder used in this section, moving from features to content to context to beliefs and values

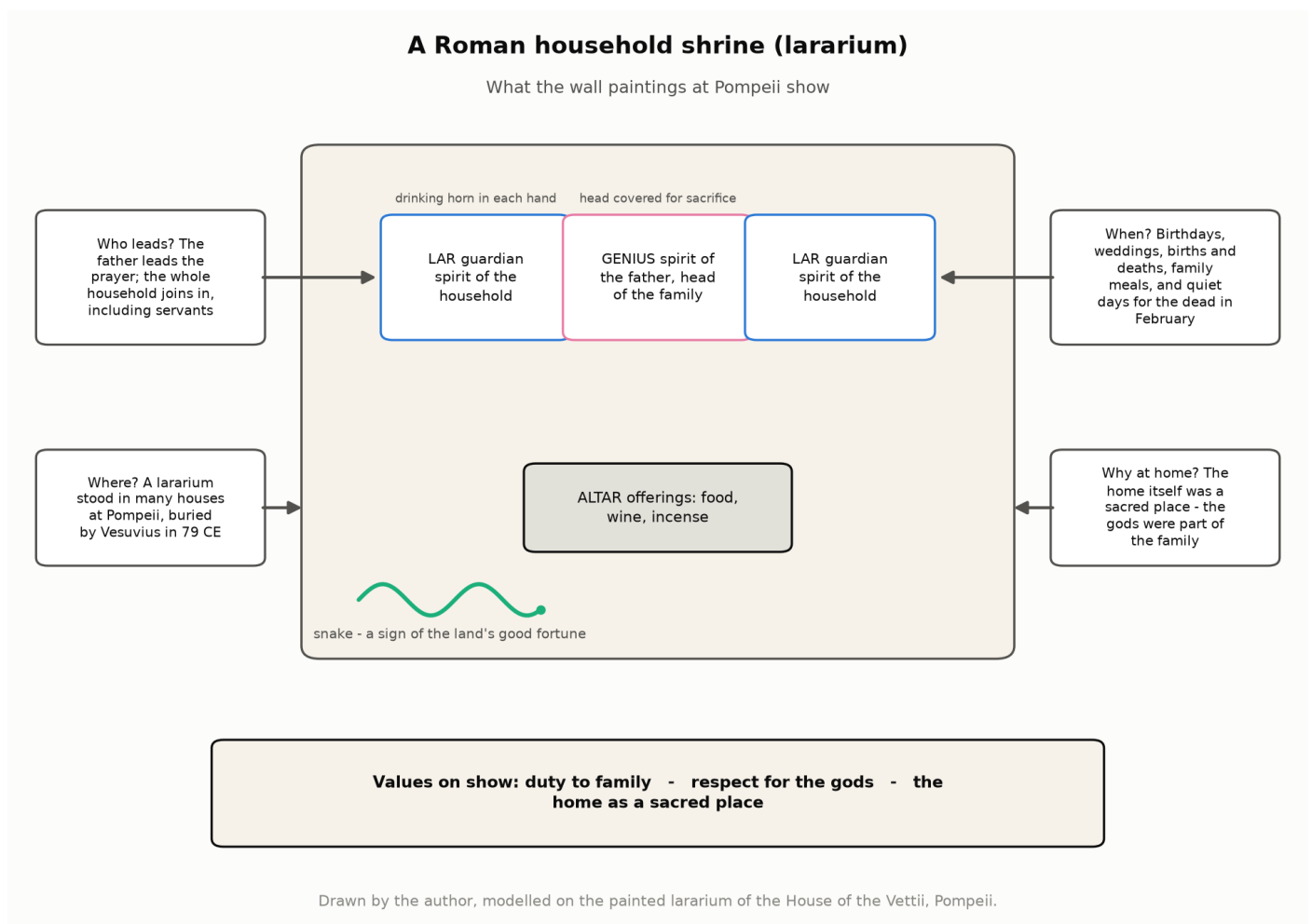
1. Household religion in Rome — the gods at home (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Most Romans believed the gods and spirits were part of daily life, starting at home. The family kept a small shrine called a **lararium**. There the household honoured:

- the **Lares** — guardian spirits of the household;
- the **Penates** — spirits who watched over the food store;
- **Vesta** — goddess of the hearth, the family fire at the heart of the home;
- the **genius** — the guardian spirit of the father as head of the family, and of the family line itself.

The father led the prayers, but the whole household joined in, including servants. Offerings of food, wine and incense were made on birthdays and weddings, at births and deaths, and even at family meals. In February the Romans kept nine quiet days remembering the dead. The message of all this ritual was a set of values: duty to family, respect for the gods, and the idea that the home itself was a sacred place.

The town of Pompeii, buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE, preserves these shrines as they stood. Wall paintings show exactly what a lararium looked like.



Labelled diagram of a Roman household shrine, showing the two Lares, the genius, the altar and the snake, and who led the worship, what was offered and when

Source (primary). Wall painting from the lararium of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii (the town buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE). The painting shows two dancing Lares, each holding a drinking horn, on either side of a central figure with his head covered for sacrifice; below, a snake moves toward a low altar loaded with food. *House of the Vettii, Pompeii Archaeological Park; description checked against the article “Lararium”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

What can we infer? The covered head, the altar and the careful order of the figures tell us worship at home was formal, not casual. The snake, read by Romans as a sign of the land’s good fortune, tells us the family linked its

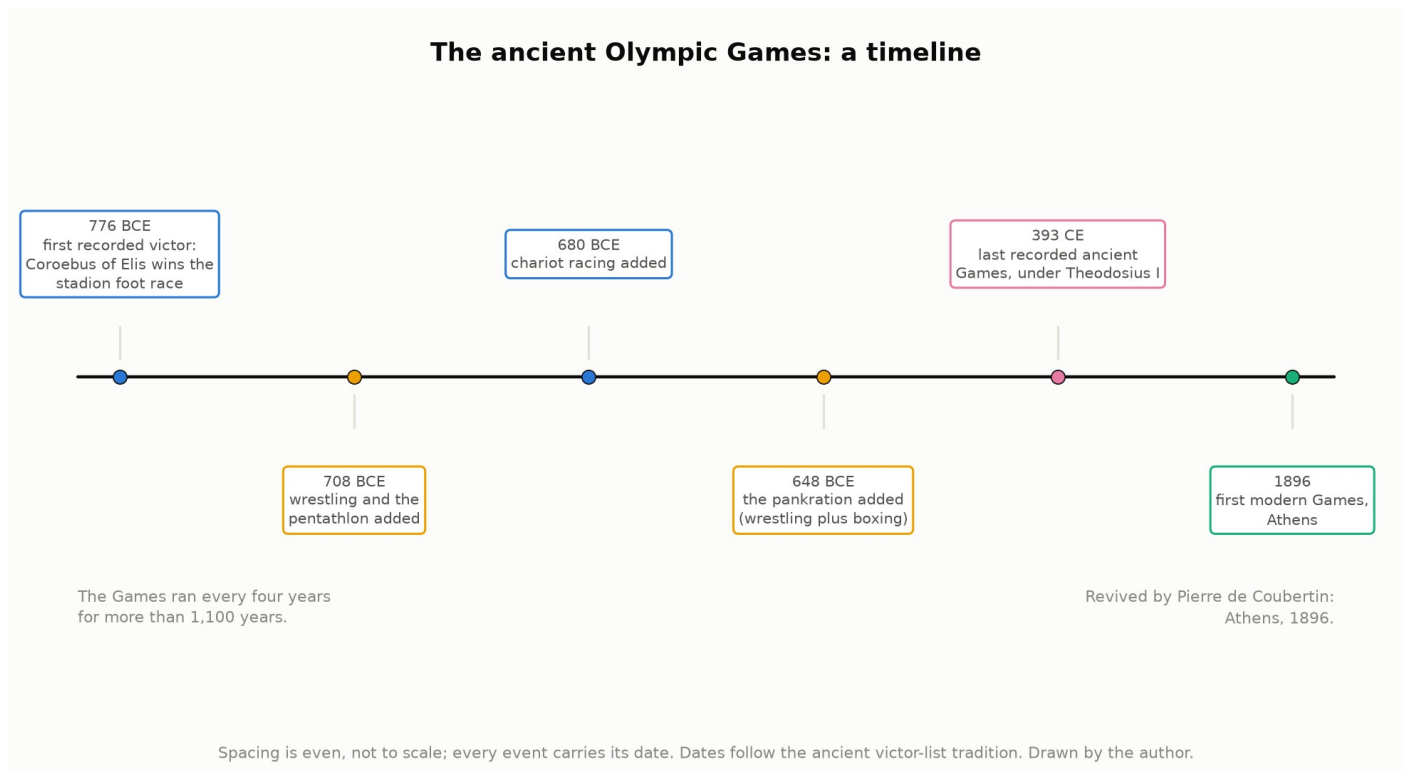
worship to hopes for the house and its food. Household religion was how ordinary Romans said, every day, “this family belongs together and the gods know it”.

2. The ancient Olympic Games — sport as worship (*companion, not CD coverage*)

The ancient Olympic Games began as a religious festival. They were held at **Olympia**, a sacred site in Greece, in honour of **Zeus**, king of the gods. The first recorded victor was **Coroebus of Elis**, a cook, who won the stadion — a short foot race of about one length of the stadium — in **776 BCE**. (BCE means “before the common era”; CE means “common era”.) The Games then ran every four years, without a break, for more than a thousand years.

Sport and worship were mixed together. Before competing, athletes took an oath before Zeus. Judges and victors gave offerings. A huge gold-and-ivory statue of Zeus stood in his temple at Olympia and was counted one of the wonders of the ancient world. A truce was announced before each Games so that athletes and visitors could travel safely. Over time new events were added: wrestling and the pentathlon in 708 BCE, chariot racing in 680 BCE, and the pankration — a hard mix of wrestling and boxing — in 648 BCE. The only prize was a crown of wild olive leaves, but a victor went home to songs, statues, and free meals for life.

The Games show Greek values clearly: honour, bodily strength, fair competition, and duty to the gods. They also show the limits of those values — women could not compete, though one Spartan woman, Kyniska, won the chariot race in 396 BCE because she owned the horses.



Timeline of the ancient Olympic Games from 776 BCE to the modern revival in 1896, with key events marked

Source (primary). Fragments of victor lists survive from the ancient world, including a list of winners written on papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt (Oxyrhynchus Papyri 222, first published 1899). The tradition of recording victors goes back to the Greek historian Hippias of Elis, who drew up an early list in the 400s BCE. It is from this tradition that the date 776 BCE comes.

A debate worth knowing. The last recorded ancient Games were held in **393 CE**, in the reign of the emperor Theodosius I. Many schoolbooks say “Theodosius ended the Games”. But no surviving law of his names the Games. Some historians argue the Games were already fading and simply stopped being recorded; others point to damage at Olympia later, under Theodosius II. Both positions rest on real evidence, and the honest answer is: **393 CE is the last one we can prove, not necessarily the last one there was.** That is the difference between a fact and an interpretation.

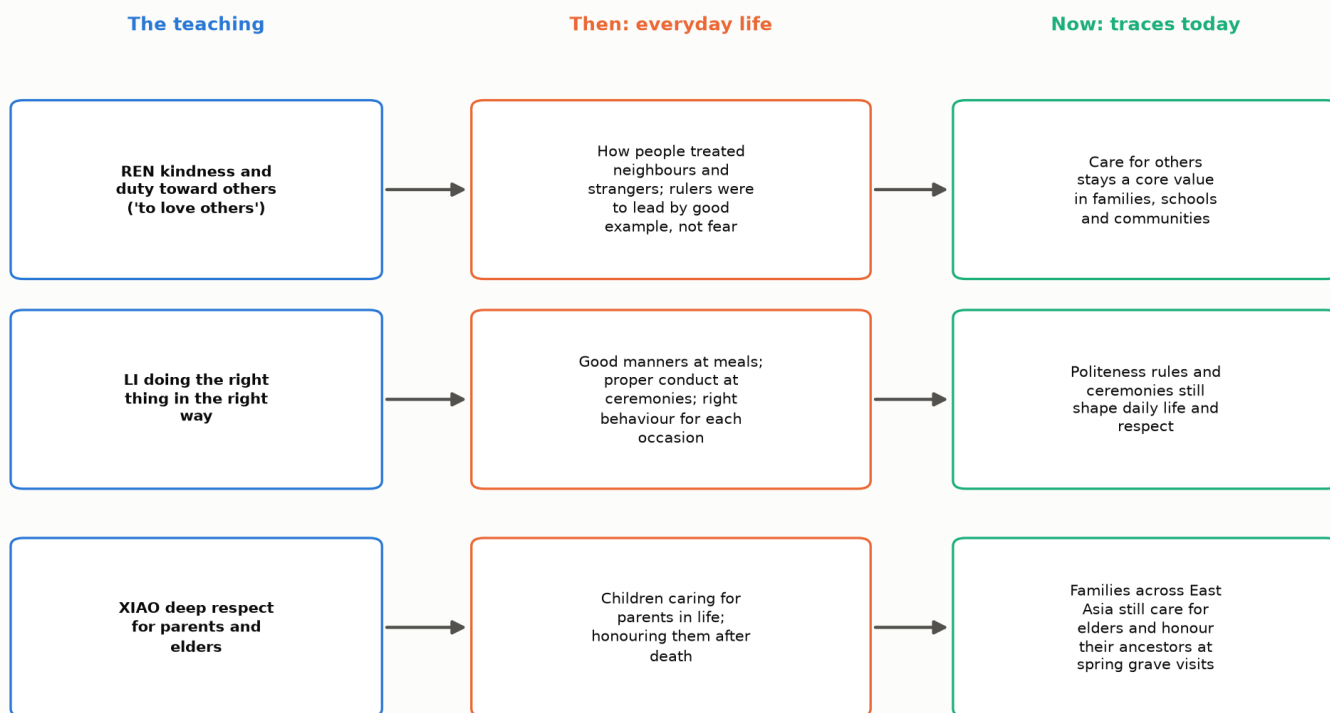
3. The teachings of Confucius — values for daily life (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Confucius (Kong Qiu) was born in 551 BCE in the state of Lu, in what is now China, and died around 479 BCE. He lived in a time of rival states often at war, and he taught that peace would come not from force but from better daily conduct. His sayings were put together by his students after his death into a book called the **Analects**.

Three ideas sit at the heart of his teaching, and each one shaped everyday life:

- **ren** — kindness and duty toward other people. Confucius said ren meant, simply, “to love others”.
- **li** — doing the right thing in the right way: good manners at meals, proper conduct at ceremonies, the right behaviour for each occasion.
- **xiao** — deep respect for parents and elders: caring for them in life, honouring them after death. (In English this idea is often called by a shorter name, but here we keep the Chinese word, *xiao*.)

Confucius: three teachings, and how they shaped everyday life



Confucius (551-479 BCE), state of Lu; his sayings were put together by students after his death, in the Analects.

Model showing the three key teachings of Confucius — ren, li and xiao — how each shaped everyday life in its own time, and traces of each that continue today

Source (primary). Two sayings from the Analects (translated here from the classical text). In Analects 2.5, Confucius answers a question about xiao: serve your parents according to li while they are alive; bury them and honour them according to li when they die. In Analects 12.22, asked what ren is, Confucius answers: “It is to love others.” *Confucius, Analects (Lunyu), a classical text put together by his students after his death (c. 479 BCE); dates and teachings checked against the article “Confucius”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

These teachings shaped how children spoke to parents, how students treated teachers, and how rulers were supposed to rule — by good example, not by fear. A note on the source: the Analects was written down by students years after Confucius died, so historians treat it as a record of his school’s memory of him. That does not make it worthless — but it is worth asking, of any source, *who wrote this down, and when?*

Continuity. Respect for elders and the high value placed on learning remain strong in many East Asian families and schools today. In parts of East Asia, families still visit the graves of their ancestors in spring, cleaning the site and bringing food — a direct echo of xiao, more than two thousand years on.

4. Funerary customs — what the dead tell us about the living (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Funerary customs — the rituals a society performs around death and burial — are among the best evidence historians have for beliefs, because people spend time and care on them only when the meaning is real to them. Three societies, three answers to the same question: what happens next?

Funerary customs: what the sources show, what they suggest

Society	What the sources show	What this suggests people believed
Egypt	Mummification - the careful drying and wrapping of the body. Food, tools and spells placed in the tomb. The Papyrus of Ani shows the heart weighed to judge a life.	The journey of the dead continued, and the next life depended on how this one was lived.
Rome	Epitaphs praising family duty, like Claudia's stone. Nine quiet days each February remembering the dead.	Honouring the dead was a family duty, and a good name lived on after death.
Greece	Coins buried with the dead - pay for the ferryman of the underworld. Painted vases showing the living visiting graves with offerings.	The dead travelled to an underworld, and the living kept visiting and honouring them.

All three societies spent time and care on the dead - strong evidence the beliefs were real to them. Drawn by the author.

Comparison table of funerary customs in ancient Egypt, Rome and Greece, showing what the sources reveal and what each suggests people believed

Source (primary). The Papyrus of Ani, an ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead made around 1250 BCE for a scribe named Ani. In one famous scene, the god Anubis weighs Ani's heart to judge whether he lived a good life, while Ani stands by and watches. *British Museum, London (EA 10470); details checked against the article "Papyrus of Ani", en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

Source (primary). The epitaph of Claudia, a short text carved on stone for a Roman woman named Claudia, from around 100 BCE. An **epitaph** is a text written for the dead, usually placed at the grave. Its closing lines, in translation, run: "She loved her husband with all her heart. She raised two sons ... She was pleasing in speech and graceful in her walk. She kept the house. She worked wool. Enough said. Farewell." *CIL I² 1211 — from the standard scholarly collection of Latin inscriptions; translation by the author.*

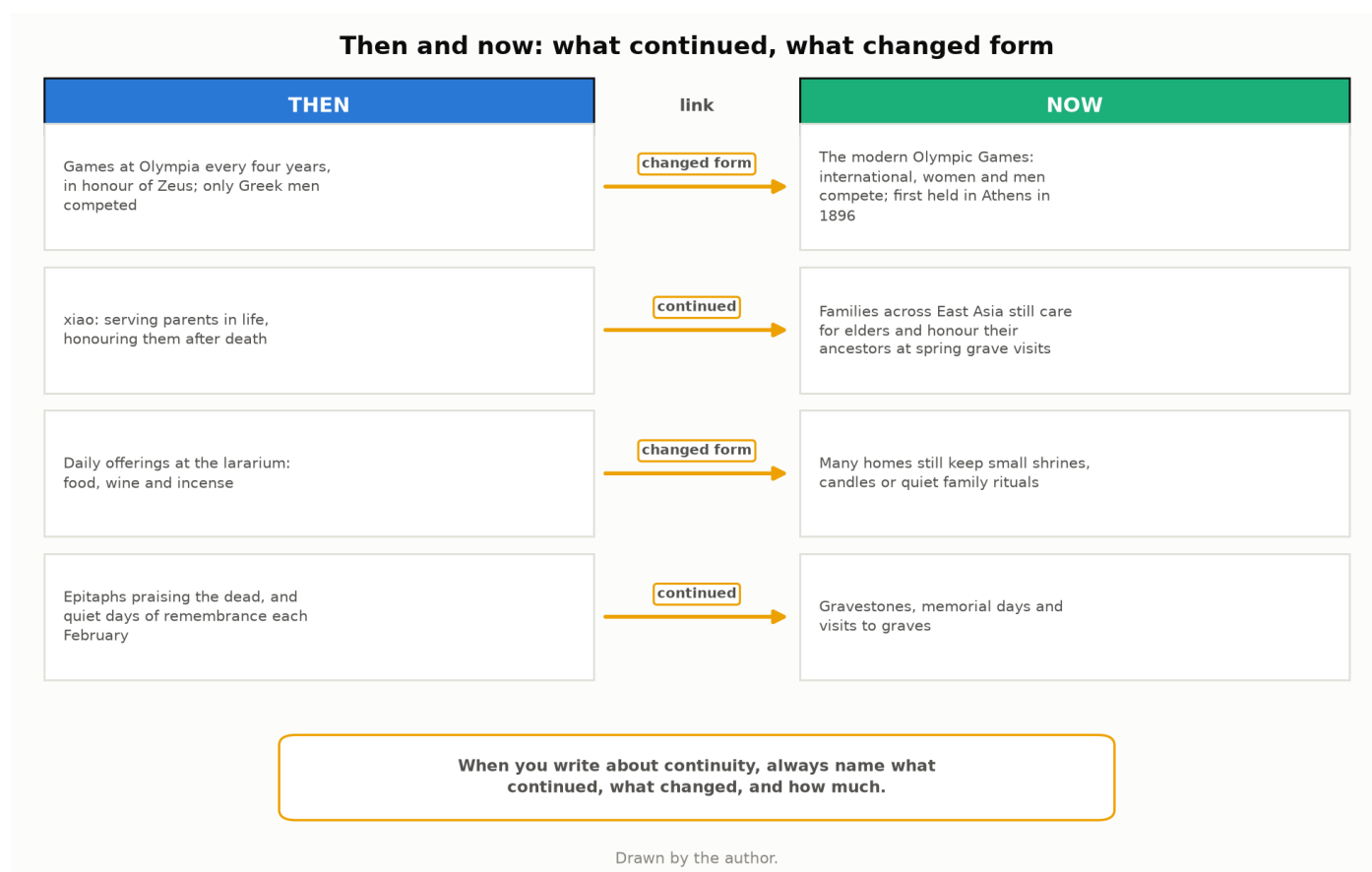
Read Claudia's stone with the four-step ladder. Its features: short, carved, made to last. Its content: a list of what Claudia did well. Its context: Rome, around 100 BCE, where family duty was a public mark of honour. Now the inference — notice what the stone praises. Not wealth, not beauty above all, but duty: love for a husband, care for sons, work at home. The stone tells us as much about the values of the living who cut it as about the woman it mourns.

Egypt's answer was different again. **Mummification** — the careful drying and wrapping of the body — plus food, tools and spells placed in the tomb all point one way: the dead would need their bodies and their belongings on a journey that continued. The weighing of the heart adds a moral point: the next life depended on how you lived this one.

In Greece, archaeologists have found small coins placed with the dead — payment, Greeks believed, for the ferryman who carried souls across the river to the underworld. Painted vases show the living visiting graves with offerings. The message across all three societies is the same: **funerary customs are where a society says out loud what it believes.**

Then and now: continuity and change (*companion, not CD coverage*)

The content description this section stands in for asks which beliefs and values shaped everyday life then — **and still shape it now**. The companion cases do the same. Some beliefs continue almost unchanged, some have changed form, and some have faded:



Then-and-now chart pairing four ancient practices with their modern traces, noting what continued, what changed and what changed form

Use the language of continuity and change carefully. The modern Olympic Games are **not** the ancient Games reborn: they are international, they include women, and they began in 1896 in Athens through the work of Pierre de Coubertin. But the name, the four-year rhythm and the value placed on fair play are threads of continuity back to Olympia. Likewise, xiao is not a museum piece — it is alive in how millions of families speak of and care for their elders. When you write about continuity, always name **what** continued, **what** changed, and **how much**.

Looking ahead. Section 3C studies the beliefs, values and practices of one ancient society in depth (this book's default: Rome). Section 4A picks up the same question for medieval Europe — where the Church set the rhythm of the week, the year and a whole life, from baptism to burial. The skills of this page — features, content, context, inference — are exactly the skills those sections assess.

Modelled answers

Example 1 — scaffolded

Read the wall painting from the House of the Vettii (Source, Part 1). What does it suggest Romans believed about their homes?

Step	Working	Comment
Features	Wall painting; a shrine scene; made for a wealthy house in Pompeii,	Say what it is and who made it.

Step	Working	Comment
	before 79 CE.	
Content	Two dancing Lares, a central figure with covered head, a snake moving toward a loaded altar.	Describe, do not interpret yet.
Context	The lararium stood in the home; the household gathered there to pray.	Place it in its world.
Beliefs	The household believed guardian spirits lived with them; worship at home was formal and daily; the family hoped for good fortune.	Each point is tied to a detail above.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Read the epitaph of Claudia. List the values the stone praises, and the words that show them.

Detail from the stone	Value it praises
“She loved her husband with all her heart.”	Loyalty to family.
“She raised two sons.”	Duty to children.
“She kept the house. She worked wool.”	Hard work at home, and pride in it.
“Enough said. Farewell.”	A plain, modest tone — letting the deeds speak.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

What does the weighing-of-the-heart scene on the Papyrus of Ani suggest about Egyptian beliefs about life after death?

Model answer. The scene shows that Egyptians believed life continued after death, and that the next life had to be earned. The heart — where the Egyptians located a person’s deeds — is weighed in front of the god Anubis while Ani watches. This suggests a belief in a final judgement: how you lived your life decided what happened next. The fact that Ani paid to have this scene painted on a papyrus to be buried with him shows the belief was not a story told to children but a real hope, worth spending on.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

“The emperor Theodosius I ended the ancient Olympic Games in 393 CE.” Is this a fact or an interpretation? Give both sides, then state your own position with a reason.

Model answer. Part of the claim is a fact: the last recorded Games were in 393 CE, in the reign of Theodosius I — that rests on the record of victors. The stronger claim — that Theodosius *ended* the Games — is an interpretation, because no surviving law of his names the Games. One position: the Games stopped because of his rule against non-Christian worship, of which the Games were part. The competing position: the Games were already fading and simply stopped being recorded, with real damage at Olympia coming later, under Theodosius II. Both positions fit the evidence we have. The first is more attractive because it gives a clear cause for a clear date; but a historian should prefer the weaker, safer claim: 393 CE is the last Games we can prove.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (a) Give the definitions of *belief* and *value* used in this section. (b) For each, give one example from any case study on this page.

Q2. Roman household religion. (a) Name two spirits honoured at the lararium and say what each watched over. (b) Who led prayers at the shrine? (c) Give two occasions when the household made offerings.

Q3. Source work: the lararium wall painting. (a) Describe two features of the painting. (b) Choose one feature and say what it suggests about Roman beliefs.

Q4. The ancient Games. (a) Who was the first recorded victor, and what event did he win? (b) Give two religious features of the Games. (c) Name two events added over time, with their dates.

Q5. The teachings of Confucius. Match each teaching — ren, li, xiao — to its meaning, then give one example of how each shaped daily life.

Q6. Funerary customs. Copy the table below and complete it for Egypt, Rome and Greece.

Society	What the sources show	What this suggests people believed
Egypt		
Rome		
Greece		

Un scaffolded

Q7. “A source shows what its makers thought mattered.” Test this claim using the epitaph of Claudia. Use two details from the inscription in your answer.

Q8. Using the weighing-of-the-heart scene on the Papyrus of Ani, explain what the scene suggests about Egyptian beliefs about life after death. Refer to at least one feature of the source.

Q9. “The ancient Olympic Games ended because Theodosius I stopped them.” Present one argument for this claim and one against it, then state which you find more convincing and why.

Q10. Choose one belief or value from this section — duty to family, respect for elders, fair competition, or a belief about the dead. Trace it from its ancient setting to today: what has continued, what has changed, and what has changed form? Give one piece of evidence for each part of your answer.

Answers

Q1. (a) A belief is something people hold to be true; a value is something people hold to be important. (b) Example belief: the gods watch over the home (Rome), or the journey of the dead continues (Egypt). Example value: duty to family (Rome), respect for elders (Confucius).

Q2. (a) Any two of: the Lares — guardian spirits of the household; the Penates — spirits of the food store; Vesta — goddess of the hearth; the genius — guardian spirit of the father and the family line. (b) The father, as head of the family, led prayers. (c) Any two of: birthdays, weddings, births, deaths, family meals.

Q3. (a) Any two of: two dancing Lares holding drinking horns; a central figure with covered head; a snake moving toward a low altar loaded with food. (b) Example: the covered head shows worship was formal and followed a set way; the loaded altar shows the family gave real food to the spirits, expecting their help in return.

Q4. (a) Coroebus of Elis won the stadion, a short foot race. (b) Any two of: held in honour of Zeus; athletes took an oath before Zeus; offerings were made; the great statue of Zeus at Olympia; the truce for safe travel. (c) Any two of: wrestling and the pentathlon, 708 BCE; chariot racing, 680 BCE; the pankration, 648 BCE.

Q5. ren — kindness and duty toward others (“to love others”): shaped how people treated neighbours and strangers. li — doing the right thing in the right way: shaped manners at meals and conduct at ceremonies. xiao — deep respect for parents and elders: shaped how children spoke to and cared for parents, and how the dead were honoured.

Q6. Egypt: mummification, grave goods, spells such as the Book of the Dead (Papyrus of Ani) — the dead continued a journey, and the next life depended on how they lived. Rome: epitaphs praising family duty (Claudia), days remembering the dead in February — honouring the dead was a family duty and a good name lived on. Greece: coins buried with the dead, painted vases showing grave visits — the dead travelled to an underworld and the living kept visiting and honouring them.

Q7. The claim holds. The makers of Claudia’s stone chose to record duty, not riches: “she kept the house” and “she worked wool” name plain home work as what mattered most; “she loved her husband with all her heart” places loyalty to family above all. What a society carves in stone is what it wants remembered — so the stone is direct evidence of Roman values.

Q8. The scene shows Anubis weighing Ani’s heart while Ani watches. The heart stood for a person’s deeds in life, so the weighing suggests a final judgement: a good life earned a good afterlife. The care taken with the papyrus — painted for burial, about 1250 BCE — shows the belief mattered enough to spend on.

Q9. For: the last recorded Games (393 CE) fall in the reign of Theodosius I, whose rule turned against non-Christian worship, and the Games were a festival of Zeus — so it is reasonable to link the end to his rule. Against: no surviving law of his names the Games; the Games may have been fading already, and the record may simply stop; clear damage at Olympia came later, under Theodosius II. A strong answer picks a side and ties it to the evidence — for example: the safer claim is that 393 CE is only the last Games we can prove, because the link to Theodosius is inference, not a written order.

Q10. Awarded for: a clear choice of belief or value; one well-evidenced continuity (for example, respect for elders continuing in East Asian family life and spring grave visits); one well-evidenced change (for example, animal offerings no longer made at home shrines); one change of form (for example, the ancient Games at Olympia for Zeus becoming the modern international Games begun in 1896). Each part should name its evidence.

Skills signpost

This page practises the skills of the Concepts and Skills chapters: the four-step source ladder belongs to Section 6C (features, content, context) and Section 6E (perspectives, beliefs and values); the fact-versus-interpretation work in Part 2 and Example 4 belongs to Section 6F; the continuity-and-change language of Part 5 belongs to Section 7A. The companion content itself joins Section 3C and looks ahead to Section 4A. **Reminder: none of this counts as coverage of VC2HH8K09.**

Caring for Country, Place, ancestral remains and artworks: cultural protocols

Read this first. This section owns exactly one content description: **VC2HH8K10**. That content description is about the cultural protocols First Nations Peoples follow in caring for Country, Place, ancestral remains, artefacts and artworks, and it is **excluded** from this book under **CONTENT_POLICY** Rule 1. This page records the exclusion and offers a **neutral-context companion** in its place. **Nothing on this page counts as coverage of VC2HH8K10.**

The scope record of this section

This section belongs to Chapter 2, the excluded sub-strand. Its content description, **VC2HH8K10**, names the cultural protocols First Nations Peoples keep for caring for Country, Place, ancestral remains, artefacts and artworks — and the shared responsibility for keeping them well, in use and safe.

That description is built from First Nations subject matter. The words **Country** and **Place** — spelt with a capital letter in the curriculum — are First Nations terms the curriculum itself uses, and every example activity listed under the code names First Nations content, so there is no neutral remainder to teach. The section is recorded as a **§2A exclusion**: coverage audits report it **ACCEPTED**, never as a gap, and it is never silently dropped. The note at the front of this book explains the absence and the reason for it — it is better to be respectful than to cover the curriculum without being sure of accuracy.

In place of the excluded content, this page carries a **companion inquiry** into how the past is protected in non-First-Nations settings: how the world agrees on which old places and objects matter, the rules for looking after them once they are protected, how museums do their work, and the live debates about whether objects taken in the past should go back to the lands they came from — above all the debates over the Parthenon sculptures and the Rosetta Stone. The companion keeps this teaching week usable and sharpens the skills of this unit — weighing a debate where both sides rest on real evidence. It is **flagged not-coverage everywhere it appears**, and no question in this section may be marked as evidence that VC2HH8K10 has been taught. The companion joins Section 1C (the heritage line — Stonehenge and Abu Simbel) and looks ahead to Section 6F (interpretations and debates) and Section 7C (significance).

Section 2E scope record	
Section	2E
Owens content description	VC2HH8K10
What the code names	names the cultural protocols First Nations Peoples keep for caring for Country, Place, ancestral remains, artefacts and artworks — and the shared responsibility for keeping them well, in use and safe
Decision	recorded as a section-2E exclusion under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1; coverage audits report it ACCEPTED, never as a gap
Why	the CD is built from First Nations concepts - Country and Place are the curriculum's own First Nations terms and all six elaborations are First Nations content; the front-of-book note explains the absence
What this page teaches instead	a neutral-context companion: heritage protection in non-First-Nations settings - the UNESCO world list, conservation ethics, museum work, and the return debates over the Parthenon sculptures and the Rosetta Stone - flagged NOT CD coverage everywhere it appears

The CD is recorded, not silently dropped. The companion material on this page does not count as coverage of VC2HH8K10.

Scope record for Section 2E showing that content description VC2HH8K10 is recorded as an exclusion and the page teaches a neutral-context companion instead

Key ideas for this section

A word the curriculum uses but does not define. The content description above speaks of *cultural protocols* but does not define the phrase. This section therefore treats a **protocol** as an agreed set of rules for how something must be done. (The word comes from a Greek term for the first sheet glued onto a rolled document — the sheet that carried the rules for how the rest could be read.) Heritage protection runs on exactly such agreed rules, and this page studies them at four levels.

Four terms used in this section, defined at first use:

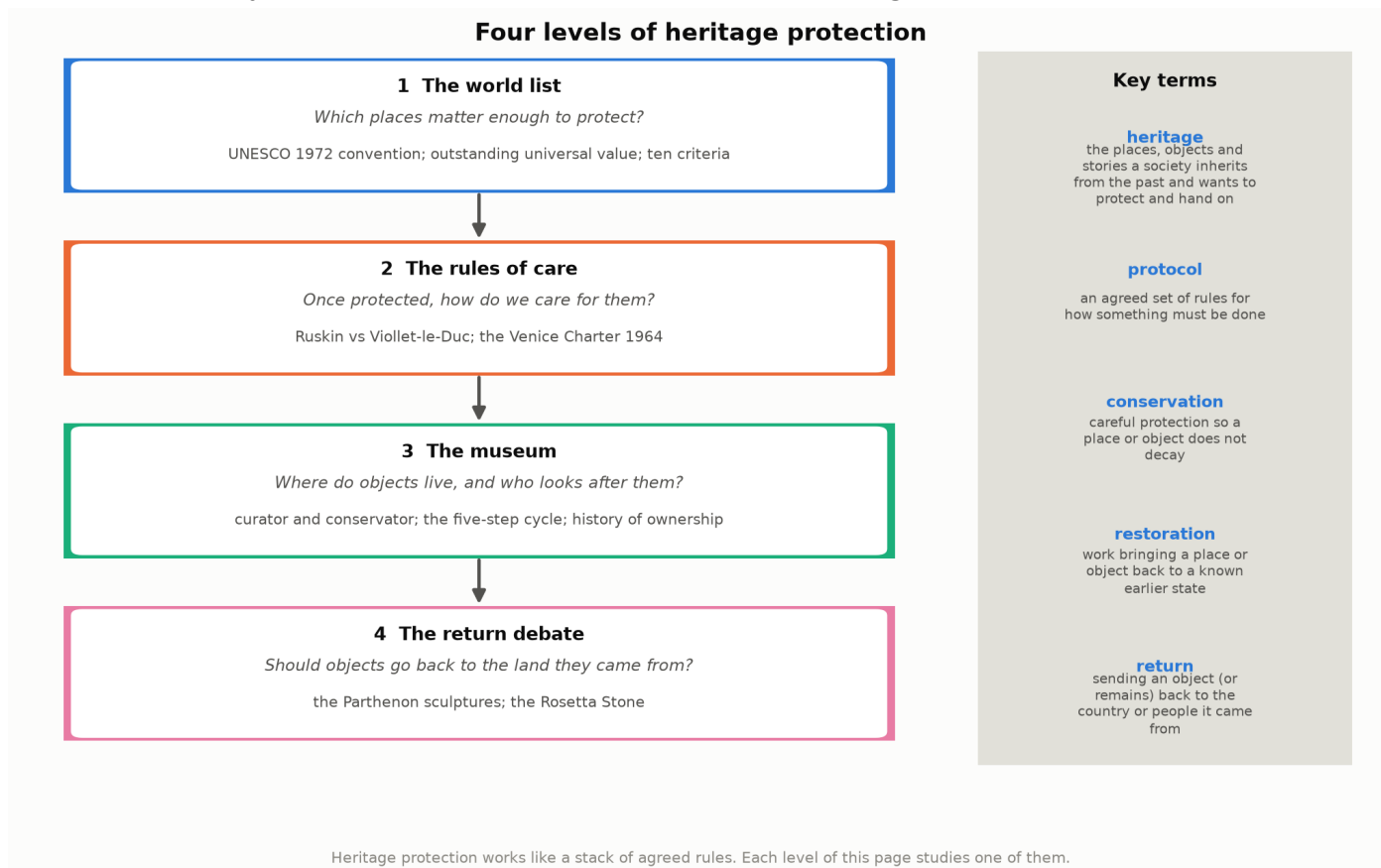
- **heritage** — the places, objects and stories a society inherits from the past and wants to protect and hand on. *Heritage* is a term people argue over: groups often disagree about what counts as heritage, and about who it belongs to. That disagreement is not a side issue — it is part of what this page is about.
- **conservation** — the careful protection of a place or object so that it does not decay or suffer damage, keeping it as close to its true, original state as possible.
- **restoration** — work that brings a place or object back to a known earlier state, sometimes by adding new material. Conservation and restoration are related but not the same: one keeps, the other renews.
- a **return**, in this section — the sending back of an object (or of human remains) to the country or people it came from. Museums and governments have a longer formal word for this; you will meet it outside this book. Here we keep to the plain word, and every question on this page is answerable with it.

Other terms used in this section:

- A **treaty** is a written agreement between countries, binding on those who sign it. A **convention** is much the same: a formal agreement, usually on one subject, agreed by many countries at once.
- A **curator** is the person in charge of a collection in a museum. A **conservator** is the specialist who cleans and strengthens objects by hand so they survive.
- A **primary source** is an object or text made at the time being studied. A **secondary source** is one made later, by someone describing that time.
- An **inference** is a conclusion you reach from evidence, not a fact the evidence states outright. Saying “the stone has writing on it” is observation; saying “the stone was meant to be read by three different groups of people” is inference.

The four levels of this page. Heritage protection works like a stack of rules:

1. **Which places and objects matter enough to protect?** — the world list run by UNESCO.
2. **Once protected, how do we care for them?** — the ethics of conservation.
3. **Where do objects live, and who looks after them?** — the museum.
4. **What if an object sits far from the land it came from — should it go back?** — the return debate.



The four levels of heritage protection studied in this section: the world list, the rules of care, the museum and the return debate, with the key terms defined at each level

1. The world list: heritage gets its first shared rules (*companion, not CD coverage*)

For most of history there were no shared rules about old places. Each ruler or owner did as they pleased. Two world wars, and the damage they did to towns and monuments across Europe and Asia, changed that. In **1972** the cultural body of the United Nations, **UNESCO**, adopted a treaty called the **Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**. As of August 2024, **196 countries** had agreed to it — nearly every country on Earth.

The heart of the convention is one idea: some places have **outstanding universal value** — they matter so much that their loss would hurt all people, not only the country where they stand. The convention's job is to spot those places, put them on a list, and help protect them. Listing decisions are made by the **World Heritage Committee**, made up of representatives of member countries. To be listed, a place must meet at least one of **ten criteria**. Criteria (i) to (vi) are cultural; criteria (vii) to (x) are natural. The figure below gives the sense of each, with examples from the societies this book studies.

The UNESCO world heritage criteria

To be listed, a place must meet at least one of the ten criteria. (i) to (vi) are cultural; (vii) to (x) are natural.

(i)	a masterpiece of human creative genius	cultural
(ii)	an important interchange of human values, shaping buildings, technology or town planning	cultural
(iii)	a unique or exceptional testimony to a civilisation, living or vanished	cultural
(iv)	an outstanding example of a type of building or town showing an important stage in human history	cultural
(v)	an outstanding example of a traditional settlement or land use, especially where it is now at risk	cultural
(vi)	directly linked with events, living traditions, ideas or beliefs of outstanding meaning	cultural
(vii)	superlative natural scenery or natural beauty	natural
(viii)	outstanding examples of the major stages of Earth's history	natural
(ix)	outstanding examples of ecological and biological processes	natural
(x)	the most important natural homes for biological diversity, including threatened species	natural

Five listed sites from the societies in this book

Memphis and its necropolis - the pyramid fields (Egypt)	1979	Ch 3, Egypt topic
Historic centre of Rome (Italy)	1980	Ch 3, Rome topic
Acropolis of Athens (Greece)	1987	Ch 3, Greece topic
Great Wall of China (China)	1987	Ch 3, China topic
Angkor temple complex (Cambodia)	1992	Ch 5, Angkor topic
Archaeological area of Pompeii (Italy)	1997	Ch 3, Rome topic

World Heritage Committee, criteria set in the 1972 convention; years of listing checked 25 August 2026.

The ten UNESCO world heritage criteria: six cultural criteria and four natural criteria, each with its sense in plain words, and five listed sites from the societies studied in this book with their years of listing

Notice what the list does: it turns “this matters to us” into “this matters to everyone, and here is the agreed reason.” Memphis and its pyramid fields, the historic centre of Rome, the Acropolis of Athens, the temple complex of Angkor and the Great Wall of China are all places you will meet in Chapters 3 to 5 — and all are on the list.

Source (secondary). UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, adopted 16 November 1972. As of August 2024, 196 countries are party to it. Listings are decided by the World Heritage Committee against ten criteria, (i) to (vi) cultural and (vii) to (x) natural. *Checked against the articles “World Heritage Convention” and “World Heritage Site”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

Where the convention came from: Abu Simbel. In 1959 the governments of Egypt and Sudan asked UNESCO for help. A new dam at Aswan was going to raise the waters of the Nile and drown a stretch of ancient sites — among them the great rock temples of **Abu Simbel**, cut for the pharaoh Ramesses II about 3,200 years ago. What followed was the largest rescue in heritage history. Between 1964 and 1968, engineers sawed the temples into giant blocks, lifted them 65 metres up the cliff, and rebuilt them on new ground. About 50 countries shared the cost and the work. Section 1C studies this rescue in detail; here the point is the principle it proved — **nations can agree to save the past of another nation, simply because it belongs to human history**. That rescue led straight to the 1972 convention.

One honest limit. The list is not a magic shield. Being listed brings attention and can bring help, but a site can still be damaged by war, by poor upkeep, or by the pressure of visitors. Listing is the start of protection, not the end.

2. How far do we repair? The ethics of conservation (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Once a place is protected, the next question is **how do we care for it?** Every old building decays: rain, frost, fire, pollution, plants and people all wear it down. Sooner or later someone asks whether to repair it — and the moment repair starts, hard choices begin. Two thinkers of the 1800s gave opposite answers that still shape the debate.

John Ruskin (1819–1900) was a British writer on art and buildings. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) he attacked restoration with famous force:

“Restoration means the most complete destruction which a building can suffer.”

Ruskin’s case, in its strongest form: a building’s value includes its age. The marks of time, and the hands of the people who made it, are part of what it *is*. Repair the roof, prop the wall, do what must be done to keep it standing — but replace old stone with new and you have destroyed the real thing and put a copy in its place. A copy, however clever, lies about its own age. Better, Ruskin said, to let a building die honestly than to fake its survival.

Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) was a French architect who restored some of France’s most famous medieval buildings, including Notre-Dame of Paris and the walled town of Carcassonne. His strongest case runs the other way. As he put it, to restore a building is not just to patch it, but to put it back into a complete, working state — even if that exact state never existed at one moment. If the evidence shows what was there, a skilled restorer can honestly replace what is missing, so that visitors can read the building as its makers intended. For Viollet-le-Duc, careful restoration *saves* the meaning that slow decay would otherwise erase.

Neither side won. The modern rule was written in **Venice in 1964**, and it borrows from both.

How far do we repair? Two answers, each in its strongest form

John Ruskin		Eugène Viollet-le-Duc	
Who	John Ruskin, Britain	Who	Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, France
Key work	The Seven Lamps of Architecture, 1849	Key work	Restored Notre-Dame of Paris and the walled town of Carcassonne
His rule	Do not restore. Repair only what keeps the building standing; then let it age honestly.	His rule	Restore a building to a complete, working state, where the evidence allows it.
Strongest reason	A building's value includes its age. New stone is a copy, and a copy lies about how old it is. Better the building dies honestly than survives as a fake.	Strongest reason	Slow decay erases a building's meaning. Skilled repair, based on evidence, lets visitors read the building as its makers intended.
British writer on art and buildings, 1819-1900		French architect and restorer, 1814-1879	

The modern settlement: the Venice Charter (1964) takes repair from Viollet-le-Duc — and honesty about age from Ruskin.

Both cases are stated as their own holders would make them. Section 2 of this page weighs them.

Two-column steelman of the conservation debate: John Ruskin’s strongest case against restoration against Eugène Viollet-le-Duc’s strongest case for it, each tied to a named work and date

Source (primary). The Venice Charter — the international charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites — was completed in Venice on 31 May 1964 by the Second International Congress of Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings. Its rules are still the working backbone of heritage care. Three rules, shortened here from the official translation:

- **Article 1.** A historic monument is not just the single building but also the town or country setting around it, where the evidence of a civilisation is found.
- **Article 9.** Restoration “must stop at the point where conjecture begins” — that is, the moment guesswork starts, the work must stop. Any extra work truly needed must “bear a contemporary stamp”: it must look modern, not fake-old.
- **Article 12.** Missing parts may be added so the whole makes sense, but they must always be recognisable as new, so that the original is never falsely rewritten.

ICOMOS, International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the “Venice Charter”), Venice, 31 May 1964; text checked against the article “Venice Charter”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Read the charter against the two thinkers. It gives something to each: repair is allowed, even expected (that is Viollet-le-Duc’s point) — but never past the edge of evidence, never faked, and always marked as new (that is Ruskin’s). That is what a protocol looks like when it is written down: **a rule everyone can be held to.**

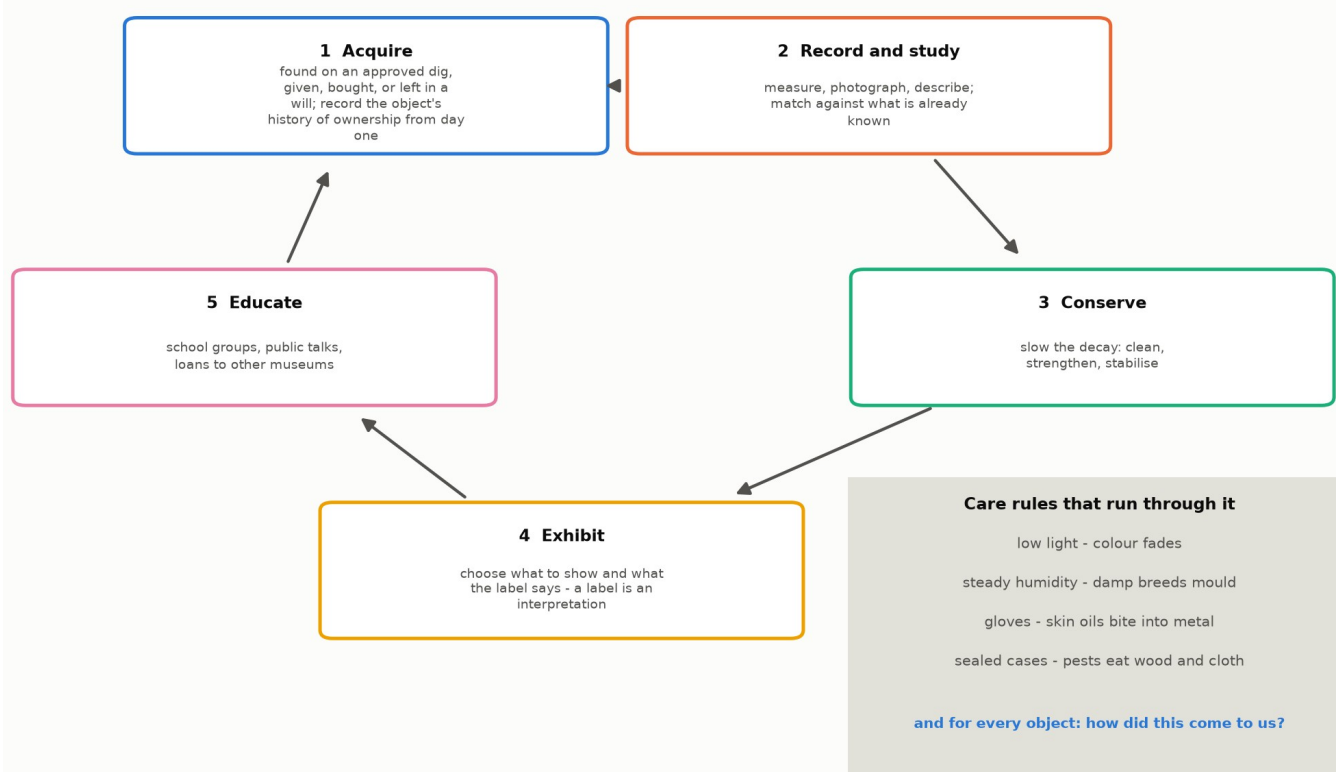
3. Inside the museum: where objects live (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Museums are where a great deal of the past is stored. The word once meant a place of study; today a museum is a building with a job — to gather objects, keep them safe, study them, and show them to the public. The **curator** is in charge of the collection; the **conservator** does the physical work of cleaning and strengthening.

A museum's work runs in a cycle of five steps:

1. **Acquire.** An object arrives: found on an approved dig, given, bought, or left to the museum in a will. From day one the museum must record **where the object has been** — who owned it, when, and how it moved from hand to hand. Museums have a formal word for that written record; here we call it the object's **history of ownership**.
2. **Record and study.** Measure, photograph, describe; match the object against what is already known.
3. **Conserve.** Slow the decay. Light fades colour; damp breeds mould; pests eat wood and cloth; bare hands leave oils that bite into metal. So the rules: low light, steady humidity, gloves, sealed cases.
4. **Exhibit.** Choose what to show, how to light it, what the label says. A label is not a bare fact — it is an interpretation (Section 6F will make much of this).
5. **Educate.** School groups, public talks, loans to other museums.

The museum cycle



Only a small part of a collection is ever on display; the rest waits in storage, safe and listed.

The museum cycle: acquire, record and study, conserve, exhibit and educate, with the care rules that run through it — low light, steady humidity, gloves, sealed cases, and a written history of ownership for every object

Only a small part of a collection is ever on display; the rest waits in storage, safe and listed. And every object carries one question the modern museum must answer: **how did this come to us?** Objects were taken in war, under empire, and by plain theft. An honest museum researches each history of ownership and asks whether it holds its collection in the right way. That question is the bridge to Part 5 — and it is why the two most famous objects in the British Museum are both at the centre of return debates.

4. Source close study: the Rosetta Stone (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Now put the source skills of Sections 6C and 6D to work on one famous object — an object at the centre of its own return debate.

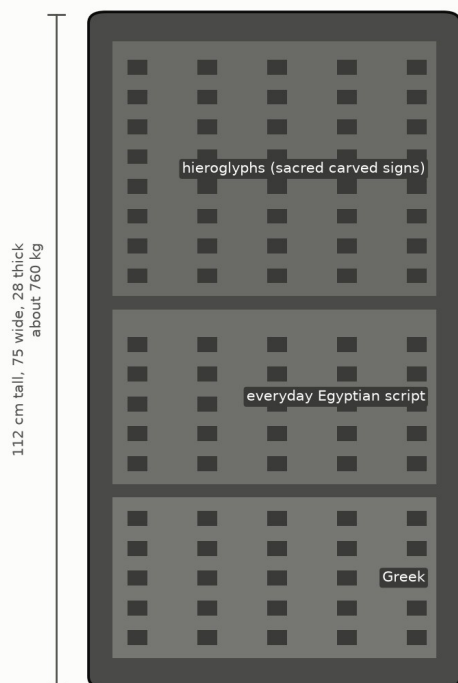
The object. The Rosetta Stone is a slab of dark, granite-like rock (experts call it granodiorite), 112 centimetres tall, 75 wide and 28 thick, weighing about 760 kilograms. Its face carries one text written three times, in three scripts. From top to bottom: the sacred carved signs of ancient Egypt (hieroglyphs), a faster everyday Egyptian script, and Greek. The text itself is a **decree** — an official order — issued in **196 BCE** by a council of priests in honour of King **Ptolemy V**, who ruled Egypt from Alexandria. His family had come to power after the death of Alexander the Great, so the court spoke Greek while the temples still wrote in hieroglyphs.

How it reached a museum. In July **1799**, during France’s campaign in Egypt under Napoleon, a French officer named Pierre-François Bouchard found the stone while soldiers rebuilt a fort near the town of Rashid (known to Europeans as Rosetta). When the French forces surrendered in 1801, the stone passed to the British. In **1802** it entered the British Museum in London, where it has been on display almost without a break since. Its museum number is **EA 24**.

Why it matters. Because the same text appears three times, the stone became the key that unlocked hieroglyphs, which no one had been able to read for about 1,400 years. In **1822** the French scholar Jean-François Champollion announced that he could read them, building on the work of the English scientist Thomas Young. Every hieroglyphic text read since — thousands of years of Egyptian history — stands on that breakthrough.

Source (primary). The Rosetta Stone (slab of granodiorite, museum number EA 24): a decree issued at Memphis in 196 BCE in honour of Ptolemy V, written in three scripts. British Museum, London, since 1802. *British Museum, London (EA 24); details checked against the article “Rosetta Stone”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

Source card: the Rosetta Stone



What it says

One text written three times, in three scripts.

A decree - an official order - issued at Memphis in 196 BCE by a council of priests, in honour of King Ptolemy V.

The court spoke Greek; the temples still wrote in hieroglyphs.

Because the same words appear in three scripts, the stone became the key to reading hieroglyphs in 1822 (Champollion, building on Young).

Where it has been

July 1799

found by French officer Pierre-François Bouchard while soldiers rebuilt a fort near Rashid (Rosetta)

1801

French forces surrender; the stone passes to the British

1802

enters the British Museum, London - on display almost without a break since; museum number EA 24

since 2003

Egypt asks, in a public campaign, for its return

Drawn for this book, not a photograph. Details checked against the British Museum's published record, 25 August 2026.

Labelled diagram of the Rosetta Stone drawn to scale: a dark slab 112 centimetres tall carrying three script bands — hieroglyphs, everyday Egyptian script, and Greek — with the decree’s date and the stone’s journey from Rashid in 1799 to the British Museum in 1802

Reading the stone with the four-step ladder.

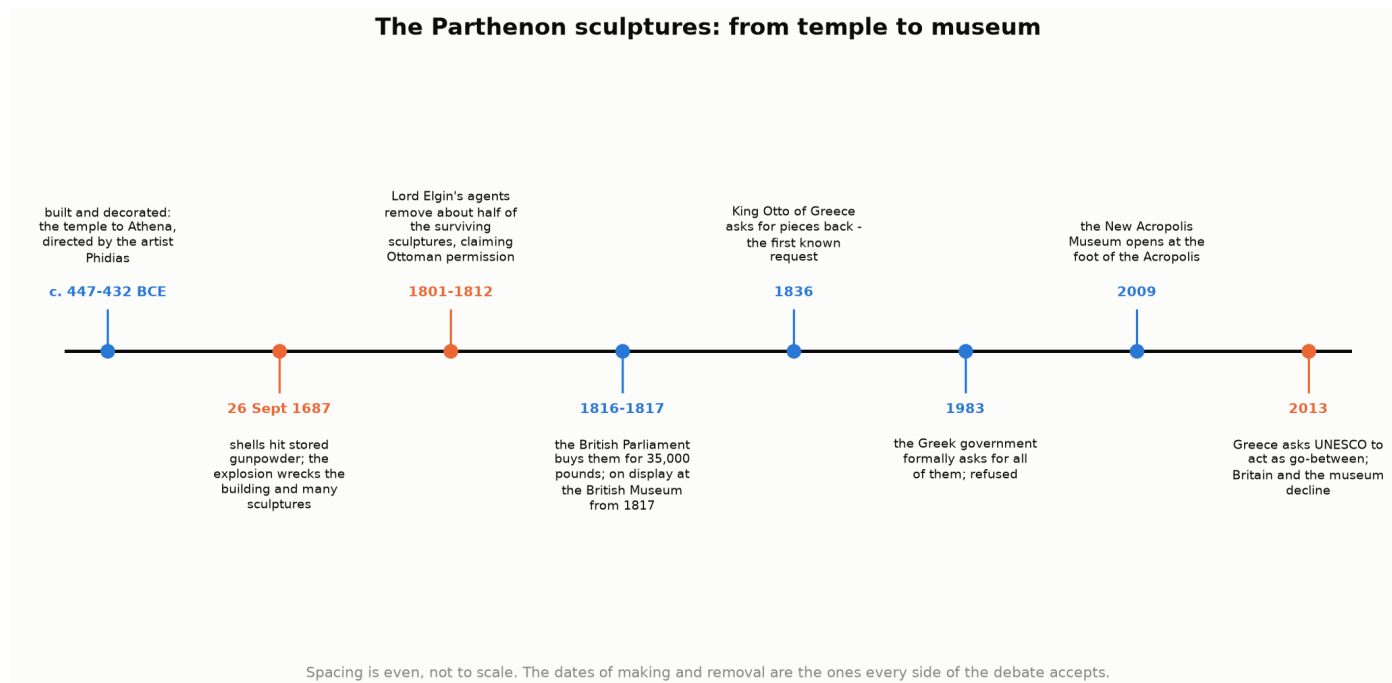
- **Features.** A hard stone slab, carved not written; one text in three scripts; made to last, made to be seen.
- **Content.** A decree honouring King Ptolemy V, listing what he has done for the temples and the people of Egypt.
- **Context.** Memphis, 196 BCE — an Egypt ruled by a Greek-speaking court, where the old temple culture still ran on its own writing. The triple script means three reading publics: priests, officials, and the Greek-speaking court.
- **Inference.** The stone was not just an order but a bridge between three worlds in one kingdom. The same feature — one text, three scripts — is what let Champollion crack the lost script 1,800 years later.

The debate about its future. Since **2003** Egypt has run a public campaign — led for many years by the archaeologist **Zahi Hawass** — asking for the stone's return to Egypt. Egypt's case: the stone is Egyptian, was found on Egyptian soil, and left in the shadow of war and foreign power; Egyptians today should be able to meet their own heritage at home. The British Museum's case: the stone in London is seen each year, free of charge, by millions of visitors from every country, as one part of the story of human writing; and it came to the museum under the terms that ended the 1801 campaign. Neither side lacks evidence. The disagreement is about which value weighs more — the claim of the homeland, or the claim of the world museum. The next part sets out that argument in full, because exactly the same shape of debate surrounds the Parthenon sculptures.

5. The return debate: the Parthenon sculptures (*companion, not CD coverage*)

The clearest version of the debate concerns the sculptures of the **Parthenon** — the great temple to the goddess Athena, built on the **Acropolis** of Athens between **447 and 438 BCE**, its sculptural work directed by the artist **Phidias** and finished by about 432 BCE. The temple carried carved figures on a grand scale: standing statues, a band of carved procession scenes, and panels showing myth and battle.

The story since then is where the debate begins:



Timeline of the Parthenon sculptures from their making around 447 BCE to the New Acropolis Museum in 2009, marking the explosion of 1687, the removal of 1801 to 1812, the British Museum purchase of 1816, Greece's formal request of 1983 and the UNESCO mediation request of 2013

- **c. 447–432 BCE** — the Parthenon is built and decorated.
- **26 September 1687** — during a war between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, shells hit the Parthenon, which was being used to store gunpowder. The explosion wrecked the building and many sculptures.

- **1801–1812** — agents of **Lord Elgin** (Thomas Bruce), Britain’s ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, which then ruled Greece, removed about half of the surviving sculptures. Elgin said he had written permission from Ottoman officials. The document he produced still survives — and historians still argue about what it allowed.
- **1816–1817** — the British Parliament buys the collection for £35,000; the sculptures go on public display in the British Museum from 1817.
- **1836** — King Otto of Greece asks for pieces back; the first known request.
- **1983** — the Greek government formally asks for the return of all the sculptures in London. The request is refused.
- **2009** — the New Acropolis Museum opens at the foot of the Acropolis, with rooms built to show the sculptures as they once stood.
- **2013** — Greece asks UNESCO to step in as a go-between; Britain and the museum decline.

The case for return, in its strongest form:

- The sculptures were made for one building. They are parts of it, not separate works, and their meaning is fullest where the building still stands.
- They were removed while Greece was under foreign rule. The permission Elgin claimed came from the occupying power, not from the Athenians themselves.
- Athens now has a museum built for them, in sight of the temple.
- Reuniting what survives would let visitors read the temple’s story whole.

The case for staying, in its strongest form (as the British Museum states it):

- The museum tells the story of human making in one place, free to all: millions of visitors from every country see the sculptures each year, side by side with the world’s cultures.
- The museum holds that it acquired the sculptures by a legal act of Parliament in 1816.
- British law — the **British Museum Act of 1963** — forbids the museum’s trustees from letting items leave the collection. Only Parliament can change that.
- Returning them would open a flood of claims that would empty the world’s shared museums.

The Parthenon sculptures: the strongest case on each side

The case for return	The case for staying (British Museum)
■ Made for one building: they are parts of the temple, not separate works. ■ Removed while Greece was under foreign rule; the claimed permission came from the occupying power, not the Athenians. ■ Athens now has a museum built for them, in sight of the temple. ■ Reuniting what survives lets visitors read the temple’s story whole.	■ The museum tells the story of human making in one place, free to all; millions from every country see them each year. ■ The museum holds that it acquired them by a legal act of Parliament in 1816. ■ The British Museum Act 1963 forbids the trustees from letting items leave; only Parliament can change that. ■ Return would open a flood of claims that would empty the world’s shared museums.
The value it rests on: a work belongs with the place it was made for	The value it rests on: a great museum holds everyone’s story, together, for free

A collision of values, not of facts: both sides accept the dates on the timeline. The split is about which value should rule.

Each case is stated as its own holders would make it. Marks go to the weighing, not the side chosen.

Two-column steelman of the Parthenon debate: the strongest case for return against the strongest case for the sculptures staying in the British Museum, with the value each side rests on

How to argue this well. Both positions rest on real facts. The split is between two values: that a work belongs with the place it was made for, and that a great museum holds the story of everyone, together, for free. Notice that the museum’s own legal wall — the 1963 Act — is a fact about British law, not an answer to the moral question; and notice that the return side’s strongest emotional claim — the permission of an occupying power — rests on a

document whose meaning historians still dispute. Your job as a historian is not to cheer for a team but to see the shape of the collision, weigh the values, and say which you would give most weight to — and why.

The ground is shifting. In recent years other museums have sent Parthenon fragments back to Greece, among them the University of Heidelberg and the Vatican Museums. And the wider pattern of returns is growing, as the next part shows.

6. Then and now: how the rules changed (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Put the five parts together and a clear pattern of change appears. Two hundred years ago there was no agreed rule about who could move the past, or who was responsible for it. Today there is a web of rules — treaties, charters and museum codes. Five pairs show the swing:

Then and now: how the rules changed	
THEN	NOW
1799-1802: a stone found by soldiers in war travels to the victor's museum	>> 1954: a world treaty binds armies to protect heritage in war
1801-1812: sculptures removed under a permission historians still argue about	>> 1970: UNESCO rules on moved objects - museums must now ask how an object came to them
early 1900s: restorers rebuild old buildings to look complete and new	>> 1964: the Venice Charter - repair stops where guesswork begins; new work must look new
1959: the rising waters of the Nile threaten Abu Simbel	>> 1972: 196 countries agree to the World Heritage Convention and its list
1897: the Benin Bronzes taken in war and scattered to museums across Europe and America	>> 2021-2022: museums in Aberdeen, Cambridge, London, Washington and Germany return works to Nigeria

Change: the rules about who may move the past, and who must answer for it. Continuity: the great museums still hold most of the world's famous objects.

Then-and-now chart of five heritage practices: war prizes becoming protected heritage under the 1954 world treaty that protects heritage in war, unchecked removal giving way to the 1970 UNESCO rules on moved objects, rebuild-and-renew giving way to the 1964 Venice Charter, drowning temples giving way to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, and the Benin Bronzes taken in 1897 being returned by museums in 2021 and 2022

One case in full: the Benin Bronzes. In 1897 British troops burned and looted the royal palace at Benin City, in what is now Nigeria, after British officials were killed. They carried off hundreds of brass and bronze panels, figures and other works from the kingdom of Benin — art of astonishing skill, made over centuries for the royal court. Britain called the attack a punishing expedition; for the people of Benin it was the sacking of their capital and the theft of their art. The works were scattered to museums across Europe and America. Then the rules of the modern world began to bite: in **2021** the University of Aberdeen and Jesus College, Cambridge returned works; in **2022** the Smithsonian in Washington, the Horniman Museum in London and the University of Cambridge followed, and German museums began returns too. The objects are going back to Nigeria.

Use the language of continuity and change carefully here. **Change:** the rules — what armies may touch in war, what museums must ask before they accept an object, how far repair may go, and whether museums will now send objects home. **Continuity:** the great museums still hold most of the world's famous objects; the Parthenon sculptures are still in London, more than two centuries after they arrived; and the debate is the same shape as in 1816. When you write about change, always name **what** changed, **what** stayed, and **how much**.

Modelled answers

Example 1 — scaffolded

The archaeological area of Pompeii was placed on the world heritage list in 1997. Choose two criteria from the figure in Part 1 and show why Pompeii meets each.

Step	Working	Comment
Choose the criterion	Criterion (iii): exceptional testimony to a vanished civilisation.	Say which test you are using.
Match the place to it	Pompeii was buried in 79 CE and preserved as it stood — streets, houses, shops and all — so it testifies to daily Roman life in a way no written account can.	Tie the place to the wording of the test.
Choose a second criterion	Criterion (iv): outstanding example of a type of building or town showing an important stage in human history.	Same move, second test.
Match again	Pompeii is a complete Roman town, frozen at one moment — an unmatched example of how Romans built and lived.	The match must be specific, not general.

Example 2 — scaffolded

State Ruskin's rule and Viollet-le-Duc's rule, then show how the Venice Charter borrows from both.

Thinker or document	The rule	What it insists on
Ruskin (1849)	Do not restore; repair only to keep standing.	The real thing is its age and marks; a copy lies.
Viollet-le-Duc (mid-1800s)	Restore to a complete, working state where evidence allows.	Decay erases meaning; skilled repair saves it.
Venice Charter (1964)	Repair is allowed, but it must stop where guesswork begins, and new work must look new.	Takes repair from Viollet-le-Duc; takes honesty about age from Ruskin.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Use the four-step ladder to explain why the Rosetta Stone is one of the most valuable sources for ancient Egypt.

Model answer. In features, the stone is a hard slab of dark rock, carved to last, with one text written three times. Its content is a decree honouring King Ptolemy V, issued by priests at Memphis in 196 BCE. Its context is an Egypt ruled by a Greek-speaking court, where the temples still wrote in hieroglyphs — which is why the same text had to appear in three scripts. From all of that we can infer its value: the triple script meant that scholars who could read Greek finally had a way into the lost hieroglyphic script, and in 1822 Champollion used the stone to do exactly that. The stone is therefore not just one more record of Egypt — it is the key that opened every other written record.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

“The Parthenon sculptures should go back to Athens.” Present the strongest case on each side, then state your own position with reasons.

Model answer. The case for return: the sculptures were made as parts of one building, and their meaning is fullest with the building that still stands on the Acropolis. They were removed while Greece was under foreign rule, with a permission whose meaning is still disputed; and Athens now has a museum built for them, in sight of the temple. The case for staying: the British Museum holds that it acquired the sculptures by a legal act of Parliament in 1816; it shows them free to millions of visitors from every country, alongside the world's cultures; and it argues that returns would open a flood of claims that would empty shared museums. A strong answer then takes a position and ties it to a value — for example: the sculptures belong in Athens, because a work's first claim is the place it was made for, and the permission of an occupying power is a weak ground to keep it; or: they should stay, because what matters most is that the largest possible public sees them, free, and the law as it stands says Parliament alone can change that. Marks go to the weighing, not the side chosen.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (a) Give the definition of *protocol* used in this section. (b) Choose two of the four key terms — heritage, conservation, restoration, return — and define each.

Q2. The world list. (a) Name the 1972 UNESCO treaty in full, and give the year it was adopted. (b) How many countries had agreed to it as of August 2024? (c) What does *outstanding universal value* mean? (d) How many criteria are there, and how are they split?

Q3. Abu Simbel. (a) What threatened the temples in the late 1950s? (b) Give two things the rescue teams did between 1964 and 1968. (c) What principle did the rescue prove?

Q4. Conservation ethics. Match each thinker — Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc — to his position, then give one reason each held it.

Q5. The Venice Charter. (a) Where and when was it completed, and by whom? (b) State the rule of Article 9 in your own words. (c) Why does the charter insist that new work must look modern, not fake-old?

Q6. The museum. (a) Name the five steps of the museum cycle in order. (b) Give three care rules and say what each protects against. (c) Why does a museum record each object's history of ownership?

Unscaffolded

Q7. “One object can change what the whole world knows.” Test this claim using the Rosetta Stone. Use at least two facts from Part 4 in your answer.

Q8. Apply the four-step ladder — features, content, context, inference — to the Rosetta Stone. One inference must follow from your own observation of the three scripts.

Q9. “The Parthenon sculptures should go back to Athens.” Give the strongest case on each side, then state which you find more convincing and why. Your answer must name at least one fact that both sides accept.

Q10. Choose one then-and-now pair from Part 6 — for example the Benin Bronzes. Explain what changed, what stayed the same, and why the change happened when it did. Give one piece of evidence for each part of your answer.

Answers

Q1. (a) A protocol is an agreed set of rules for how something must be done. (b) Any two of: heritage — the places, objects and stories a society inherits from the past and wants to protect and hand on; conservation — careful protection of a place or object so it does not decay or suffer damage; restoration — work bringing a place or object back to a known earlier state, sometimes by adding new material; a return — sending an object or remains back to the country or people they came from.

Q2. (a) The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in 1972. (b) 196 countries. (c) Value so great that the loss of the place would hurt all people, not only the country where it stands. (d) Ten criteria: (i) to (vi) cultural, (vii) to (x) natural.

Q3. (a) The new dam at Aswan was going to raise the waters of the Nile and drown a stretch of ancient sites, including Abu Simbel. (b) Any two of: sawed the temples into giant blocks; lifted them 65 metres up the cliff; rebuilt them on new ground; about 50 countries shared the cost and work. (c) Nations can agree to save the past of another nation, simply because it belongs to human history.

Q4. Ruskin — against restoration: repair only to keep a building standing, because a building's value includes its age, and replacing old stone with new destroys the real thing and puts a lying copy in its place. Viollet-le-Duc — for restoration to a complete, working state where evidence allows, because slow decay erases a building's meaning, and skilled repair can save it.

Q5. (a) Venice, 31 May 1964, by the Second International Congress of Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings. (b) Restoration must stop at the point where guesswork begins. (c) So that no one is tricked into taking new work for old; the original must never be falsely rewritten.

Q6. (a) Acquire; record and study; conserve; exhibit; educate. (b) Any three of: low light — colour fades; steady humidity — damp breeds mould; gloves — bare hands leave oils that bite into metal; sealed cases — pests eat wood and cloth. (c) Because objects were taken in war, under empire and by theft; an honest museum must know how each object came to it and whether it holds it in the right way.

Q7. The claim holds. The stone carries one text in three scripts, including Greek, which scholars could still read. In 1822 Champollion used the match between the scripts to read hieroglyphs again, after about 1,400 years. From that moment every hieroglyphic text — thousands of years of Egyptian history — could be read. One stone changed what the world knows about a whole civilisation.

Q8. Features: a hard slab of dark rock, carved to last, one text in three scripts. Content: a decree honouring Ptolemy V, issued by priests at Memphis in 196 BCE. Context: an Egypt ruled by a Greek-speaking court, where temples still wrote in hieroglyphs. Inference (from the three scripts): the decree was meant for three reading publics — priests, officials and the Greek-speaking court — and the same triple script is what let scholars crack the lost writing later.

Q9. Awarded for: the strongest return case (made for one building; removed under foreign rule with a disputed permission; a purpose-built museum now exists in sight of the temple); the strongest stay case (legal purchase by act of Parliament in 1816; free access for millions from every country; the 1963 Act forbids the trustees from letting items leave; the precedent worry); at least one fact both sides accept — for example that Elgin's agents removed the sculptures between 1801 and 1812, or that Parliament bought them in 1816; and a stated position tied to a value, not just a side.

Q10. Awarded for: a clear then (in 1897 British troops burned and looted the royal palace at Benin City and carried off hundreds of brass and bronze works, scattered to museums across Europe and America); a clear now (in 2021–22 the University of Aberdeen, Jesus College Cambridge, the Smithsonian, the Horniman Museum, the University of Cambridge and German museums began returns to Nigeria); a continuity (the debate about who owns the past is the same shape as in 1897 — and many objects remain outside Nigeria); and a reason for the timing (modern rules — the 1970 UNESCO rules on moved objects, and museums' own research into each object's history of ownership — made the old excuses hard to keep).

Skills signpost

This page practises the skills of the Concepts and Skills chapters: the four-step source ladder belongs to Section 6C (features, content, context) and Section 6D (the value of a source as evidence); the steelman work in Parts 2 and 5 — and Example 4 — belongs to Section 6F (interpretations and debates); the continuity-and-change language of Part 6 belongs to Section 7A; and the criteria of Part 1 are a first taste of Section 7C (significance). The companion content itself joins Section 1C's heritage line and looks ahead to the interpretation sections of Chapters 3 to 5. **Reminder: none of this counts as coverage of VC2HH8K10.**

The world's oldest living cultures: how evidence and interpretations change

Read this first. This section owns exactly one content description: **VC2HH8K11**. That content description is about the changing evidence and interpretations around First Nations Peoples — the world's oldest living cultures — and it is **excluded** from this book under **CONTENT_POLICY** Rule 1. This page records the exclusion and offers a **neutral-context companion** in its place. **Nothing on this page counts as coverage of VC2HH8K11.**

The scope record of this section

This section belongs to Chapter 2, the excluded sub-strand. Its content description, **VC2HH8K11**, asks how evidence and interpretations keep changing for First Nations Peoples — the world's oldest living cultures.

That description is built entirely from First Nations subject matter. Every example activity listed under the code names First Nations content — creation knowledge of Country and Place that has carried on without a break; comparisons between historians' interpretations from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; the significance of the Mungo Man and Mungo Woman burials (the oldest evidence of a ritual burial of modern humans); and the testing of the categories “pre-history” and “history” against the First Nations past before British colonisation. There is no neutral remainder to teach, so the section is recorded as a **§2A exclusion**: coverage audits report it **ACCEPTED**, never as a gap, and it is never silently dropped. The note at the front of this book explains the absence and the reason for it — it is better to be respectful than to cover the curriculum without being sure of accuracy.

In place of the excluded content, this page carries a **companion inquiry** into the same skill set — how evidence changes, and why historians change their minds — using the societies this book does teach: a re-reading of **Pompeii** (joining Section 3G), the long debate over whether Rome **fell** or was **transformed** (joining Sections 3G and 4E), and the new dating evidence that keeps rewriting the oldest chapters of the human story (joining Section 1A). The companion keeps this teaching week usable and trains the habits of this unit — reading what changed, what stayed, and why. It is **flagged not-coverage everywhere it appears**, and no question in this section may be marked as evidence that VC2HH8K11 has been taught.

Section 2F scope record

Section	2F
Owens content description	VC2HH8K11
What the code names	asks how evidence and interpretations keep changing for First Nations Peoples — the world's oldest living cultures (all four elaborations are First Nations content)
Decision	recorded as a section-2F exclusion under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1; coverage audits report it ACCEPTED , never as a gap
Why	every example activity listed under the code names First Nations content - creation knowledge of Country and Place, Mungo Man and Mungo Woman, historians' interpretations, and the two categories 'pre-history' and 'history'; there is no neutral remainder; the front-of-book note explains the absence
Draws on	none - section 2A exclusion
What this page teaches instead	a neutral-context companion: changing evidence and interpretations of early societies - re-readings of Pompeii, the debate over Rome's end, and new dating evidence - flagged NOT CD coverage everywhere it appears; joins sections 1A, 3G and 4E

The CD is recorded, not silently dropped. The companion material on this page does not count as coverage of VC2HH8K11.

Scope record for Section 2F showing that content description VC2HH8K11 is recorded as an exclusion and the page teaches a neutral-context companion instead

Key ideas for this section

Four terms this section uses, defined at first use:

- An **interpretation** is a historian's account of what the past was like and what it means, built from evidence. Two historians can study the very same evidence and offer two different interpretations. When historians disagree openly about the best reading of the evidence, that disagreement is a **debate** — and the debate itself is part of history.
- **Evidence** is what survives of the past for historians to work from: objects, buildings, bones, written words, dates. Evidence is not the past itself. It is the small part of the past that happened to survive, and it always needs reading.
- A **re-reading** is a new interpretation of evidence that was already known. Not every change comes from a new dig; sometimes the very same object is read in a new way.
- **Dating** means working out when something happened or how old it is. Methods of dating — such as radiocarbon dating, defined in Section 1A — are tools, and like all tools they can be improved. When they improve, dates can move, and stories built on old dates can change with them.

Two more terms, restated from earlier sections: a **primary source** is an object or text made at the time being studied; a **secondary source** is one made later, by someone describing that time. An **inference** is a conclusion you reach from evidence, not a fact the evidence states outright.

The rule for this page. You will meet historians who disagree with each other. Each position is put in its strongest form before you weigh it, and you are expected to weigh both sides with the same care. Marks go to the quality of your reasoning — terms defined, evidence named, limits admitted — never to which side you choose.

Key terms for this section

interpretation	a historian's account of what the past was like and what it means, built from evidence
debate	an open disagreement between historians about the best reading of the evidence - the debate itself is part of history
evidence	what survives of the past for historians to work from: objects, buildings, bones, written words, dates
re-reading	a new interpretation of evidence that was already known
dating	working out when something happened or how old it is - a tool that can be improved, and when it improves, stories can move

Restated from earlier sections: a primary source is made at the time studied; a secondary source is made later; an inference is a conclusion drawn from evidence.

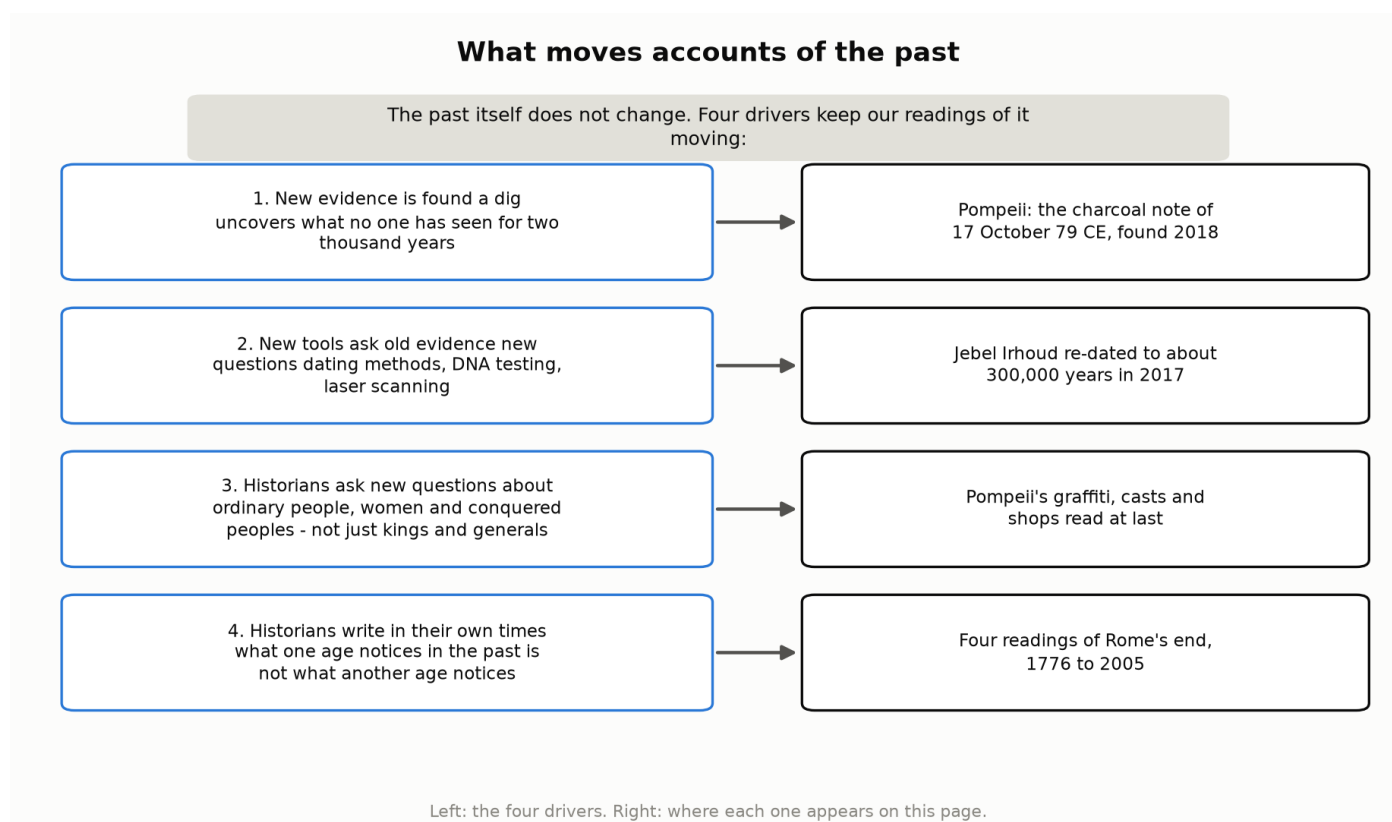
Key terms for Section 2F set out in a table: interpretation, debate, evidence, re-reading and dating, each with its plain definition

1. Why accounts of the past keep changing (companion, not CD coverage)

The past itself does not change. What changes is what we can see of it, and what we ask of it. Four drivers keep accounts moving:

1. **New evidence is found.** A dig uncovers what no one has seen for two thousand years — a street, a coin, a body, a wall with writing on it. One new find can break an old certainty.
2. **New tools ask old evidence new questions.** Dating methods, tests of DNA — the chemical code inside every living thing — and laser scanning let historians squeeze answers out of objects that earlier generations could not read at all. Section 1C studies these tools; Part 5 of this page shows what happens when the dates they give overturn a story.
3. **Historians ask new questions.** Older histories mostly asked about kings, generals and laws. Modern historians also ask about ordinary people, about women, and about conquered peoples — the less audible voices Section 6E studies. New questions pull new parts of the same evidence into the light.
4. **Historians write in their own times.** What one age notices in the past is not what another age notices. A historian in 1776 and a historian in 2005 look at the same fallen empire and see different things, because they live in different worlds themselves. Part 4 is a case study in exactly this.

Every case on this page is one or more of these drivers at work: Pompeii (drivers 1 and 3), the end of Rome (driver 4, and 1 again), and the first humans (driver 2).



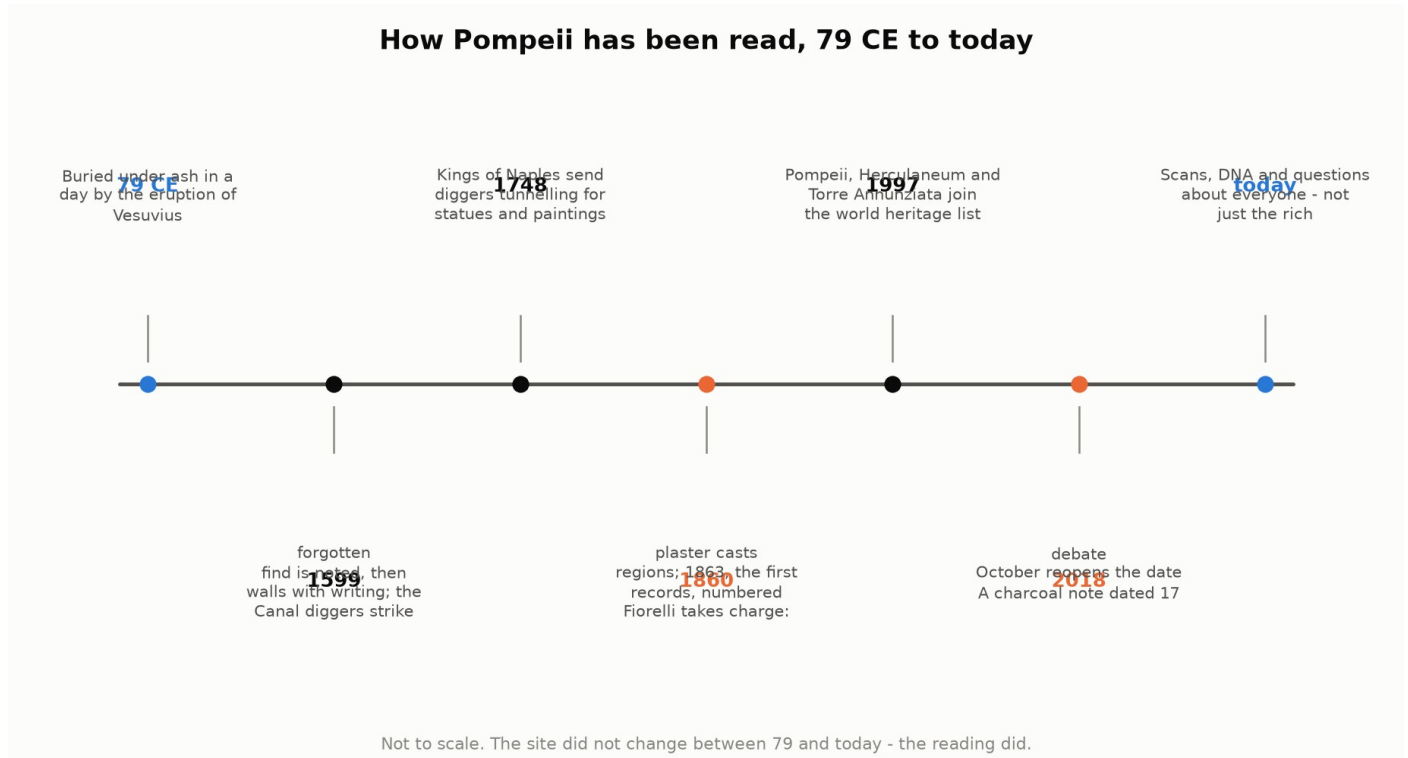
Four drivers of changing interpretations drawn as a map: new evidence is found, new tools ask old evidence new questions, historians ask new questions, and historians write in their own times, each matched to the case study on this page that shows it at work

2. Re-reading Pompeii (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Pompeii is the book's clearest example of a story being re-read. It was a busy Roman town of perhaps 12,000 people on the Bay of Naples, buried in a day by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in **79 CE** (an eruption — a volcano blowing out ash, rock and gas). Hot ash fell so thick and fast that it sealed streets, houses, shops and people before they could escape. Then the story of *how the town was read* began — and it has changed at every stage.

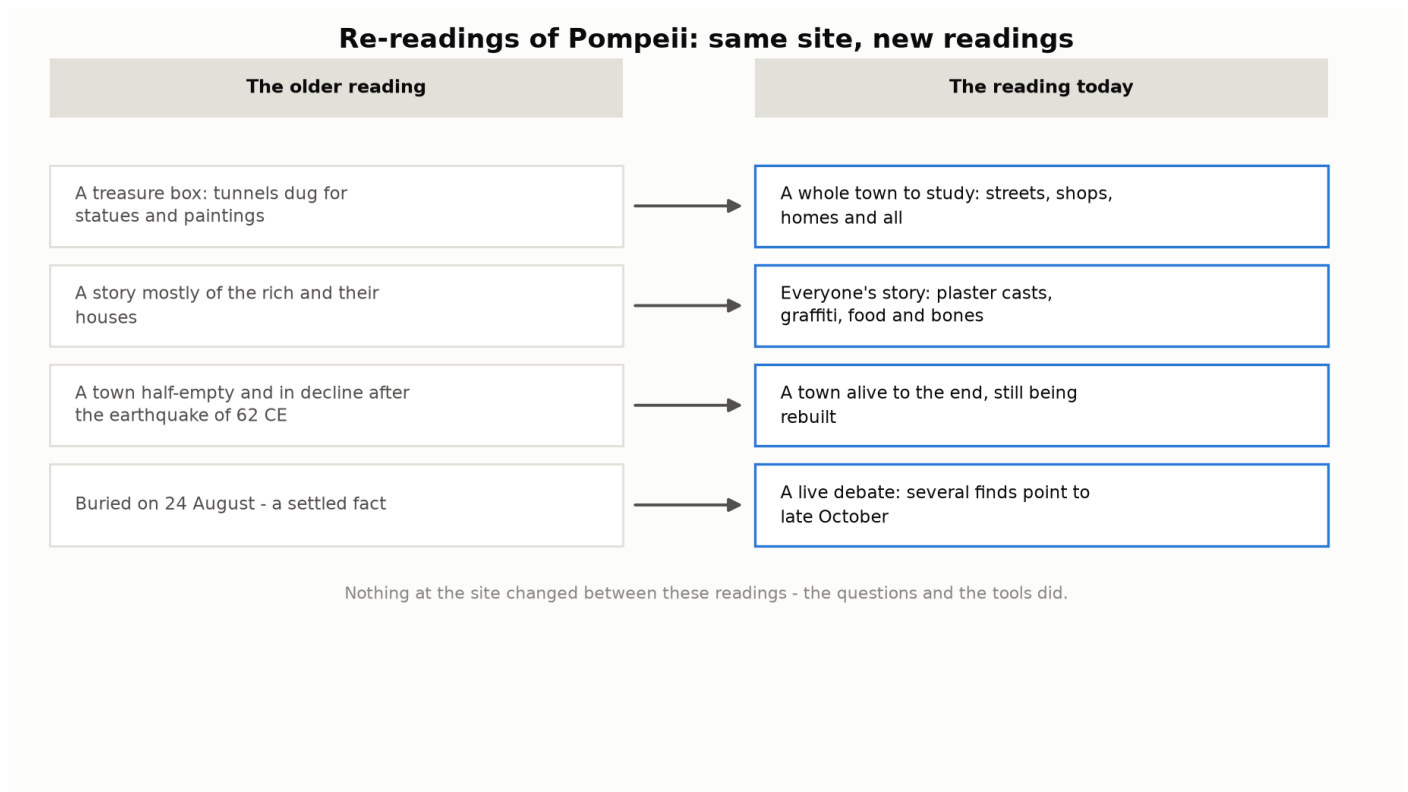
- **1599** — workers digging a canal strike walls with writing on them. The find is noted, then forgotten.
- **1748** — the kings of Naples begin organised digging. Their men tunnel into the town looking for statues and paintings to fill a royal collection. Walls are cut through; the rest is left. The town is treated as a treasure box, not as evidence.

- **1860** — the Italian archaeologist **Giuseppe Fiorelli** takes charge and changes the work itself. He digs from the top down, keeps written records, divides the town into numbered regions, and in **1863** his team begins pouring liquid plaster into the hollows left in the hardened ash where bodies had decayed. The **plaster casts** that result give the eruption a human face: the shape of the people who died, caught at their last moment.
- **1997** — Pompeii, Herculaneum and nearby Torre Annunziata are placed on the world heritage list (Section 2E's list).
- **Today** — historians read graffiti on the walls, food in the shops, bones and casts, and ask about everyone: women, enslaved people, shopkeepers — not just the rich.



Timeline of the readings of Pompeii from the eruption of 79 CE to the 2018 date debate, marking the canal find of 1599, the treasure digging from 1748, Fiorelli's records and plaster casts from 1860, the world heritage listing of 1997 and the modern scans and DNA work

Four pairs show how far the reading has swung:



Then-and-now table of four readings of Pompeii: treasure hunt giving way to the study of a whole town, a story of the rich giving way to everyone's story including the plaster casts and graffiti, an abandoned town giving way to a town still alive at the end, and the fixed date of 24 August giving way to a live debate pointing to late October

Source (secondary). Mary Beard, a historian of ancient Rome at the University of Cambridge, *Pompeii: The Life of a Roman Town* (2008). Beard reads Pompeii not as a quiet town frozen in time but as a busy, ordinary, sometimes rough Roman town that was still being rebuilt after an earthquake in 62 CE — and she points to holes cut after the eruption by Romans who came back to win back their own goods. Her reading is one modern interpretation, not the last word. *Checked against the articles "Pompeii" and "Mary Beard", en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

Even the date of the eruption has been re-read. For centuries the date came from one sentence in the letter you will study in Part 3: **24 August 79 CE**. But several finds point later: autumn fruits such as pomegranates and walnuts preserved in the ash; sealed jars of wine from that year's pressing, which happened in autumn; people wearing heavier clothing; and a coin of the emperor **Titus** struck after an honour he received only in September 79 CE — a coin that could not have reached Pompeii by late August. In **2018**, excavators working in the north of the town found a note in charcoal on a wall — charcoal is light and rubs off easily, so the note was probably fresh — dated to **17 October 79 CE**. The site's director at the time, **Massimo Osanna**, argued it supports an eruption in late October, about two months after the traditional date. The debate is not closed: some scholars keep the August reading, and copies of Pliny's letter do not all agree on the words. That is exactly what a live debate looks like — the same sources, honestly read, still pointing two ways.

3. Source close study: Pliny's letter (*companion, not CD coverage*)

The whole story of the eruption rests, at bottom, on one letter. Now put the source skills of Sections 6C and 6D to work on it.

The writer. **Pliny the Younger** (born about 61 CE) was a Roman lawyer and letter-writer. In 79 CE he was about 17, staying at a villa on the Bay of Naples with his uncle, **Pliny the Elder** — a famous writer and natural observer who commanded the Roman fleet at Misenum, on the far side of the bay.

The letter. Around **100 CE**, the historian **Tacitus** asked Pliny for an account of the eruption and of his uncle's death, to use in his own history of Rome. Pliny's answer — known to us as Letter 6.16 of his collected letters — is the fullest

eye-witness account of the eruption that survives. It was copied by hand through the centuries, like all ancient texts, until print took over.

Source (primary). Pliny the Younger, Letter 6.16, written to the historian Tacitus about 100 CE, about events of August 79 CE. Shortened here and put into plain words from the Latin.

“You ask me to set down how my uncle died, so you can pass it on truly to those who come after ... I will tell you the truth. On 24 August, at about mid-morning, my mother pointed out a cloud of unusual size and shape. It rose from a mountain — later found to be Vesuvius — and of all trees it was most like an umbrella pine: lifted very high on a kind of trunk, then spreading into branches. I guess it was forced up from deep under the ground by a blast, then spread wide as the blast died away. In parts it was white, in parts dark and spotted with ash ... My uncle ordered a ship to be made ready, and offered to take me with him, but I chose to stay with my books ... He set sail, steering straight into the danger, turning his ship toward the homes of the people cut off by the fires.”

Pliny the Younger, Letters 6.16 (c. 100 CE); text checked against the articles “Pliny the Younger” and “Eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Primary source card - Pliny the Younger, Letter 6.16

Form	a letter - one of more than two hundred of Pliny's letters that survive
Who wrote it	Pliny the Younger, a Roman lawyer and letter-writer, born about 61 CE; he was about 17 at the time of the eruption
Written to	the historian Tacitus, who asked for the story for his own history of Rome
When written	about 100 CE, about the events of 79 CE - a memory set down twenty years later
About	the eruption of Vesuvius, and the death of the writer's uncle, Pliny the Elder, commander of the Roman fleet at Misenum
How it survives	copied by hand through the centuries, like all ancient texts, until print took over

The fullest eye-witness account of the eruption that survives - and the source of the traditional date, 24 August.

Source card for Pliny the Younger's Letter 6.16: who wrote it, what form it takes, who it was written to, when it was written, what it is about, and how it has survived

Primary source - Pliny the Younger, Letter 6.16 (about 100 CE)

To the historian Tacitus, about the events of 79 CE

"You ask me to set down how my uncle died, so you can pass it on truly to those who come after ... I will tell you the truth. On 24 August, at about mid-morning, my mother pointed out a cloud of unusual size and shape. It rose from a mountain - later found to be Vesuvius - and of all trees it was most like an umbrella pine: lifted very high on a kind of trunk, then spreading into branches. I guess it was forced up from deep under the ground by a blast, then spread wide as the blast died away. In parts it was white, in parts dark and spotted with ash ... My uncle ordered a ship to be made ready, and offered to take me with him, but I chose to stay with my books ... He set sail, steering straight into the danger, turning his ship toward the homes of the people cut off by the fires."

Shortened here and put into plain words from the Latin.

Pliny the Younger, Letters 6.16 (c. 100 CE); checked against the article "Eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD", en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.

The shortened plain-word extract of Pliny's Letter 6.16, the eye-witness account of the eruption cloud and his uncle's decision to sail into the danger, with its source line

Reading the letter with the four-step ladder.

- **Features.** A letter, written by hand in Latin by one man to another; a private text that we read because Pliny's letters were kept and copied. It is a careful piece of writing, full of exact detail — shapes, times, colours.
- **Content.** The rise of the eruption cloud; the choice his uncle made to sail across the bay toward the danger rather than away from it; the ash and stone falling; his uncle's death two days later at Stabiae.
- **Context.** Written about twenty years after the event, by a man answering a historian's request. Pliny wants to honour his uncle and to give Tacitus something true enough to use — so he is trying to be exact, but he is also remembering, and he has a reason to make his uncle look brave.
- **Inference.** No eye-witness account is a bare record. This one is a memory shaped by love and by the wish to be believed. That does not make it false — it makes it a source to read with care, checking it against the ground itself: the ash layers, the casts, the coins.

Notice how the letter sits inside the section's theme. It is the source that fixed the traditional date of 24 August — and it is also the source whose date modern historians are now re-reading against finds like the charcoal note of 17 October. One letter, two readings, two thousand years apart.

4. The "fall" of Rome — an interpretation that kept changing (*companion, not CD coverage*)

No debate in this book has run longer than the one over what happened to Rome. The event the debate hangs on is small and sharp: in **476 CE** a soldier named **Odoacer**, leader of foreign troops in Rome's own army, removed the last western emperor — a boy called Romulus Augustulus — and sent the marks of the emperor's office away to the eastern emperor at Constantinople, saying the west no longer needed one. For over a thousand years historians have argued about what that moment meant. Four named historians show the swing.

Four readings of Rome's end

Historian and book	The claim	Evidence leaned on
Edward Gibbon, <i>The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i> , 6 volumes, 1776-1789	Rome fell from within: citizens lost their public spirit, and Christianity turned minds and effort toward the next world	written records - Roman and church texts
Henri Pirenne, <i>Mohammed and Charlemagne</i> , 1937 (after his death)	476 was not the real break; the rise of Islam in the seventh century ended the old Mediterranean world and pushed power north	trade and the movement of goods around the sea
Peter Brown, <i>The World of Late Antiquity</i> , 1971	not a fall but a transformation, about 250-800 CE, with much carried over	the age's writings, art and religions
Bryan Ward-Perkins, <i>The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization</i> , 2005	something real broke, in a violent way: daily goods grew fewer and worse	the objects themselves - pottery, bones, roof tiles

Same events, different readings - because each historian leaned on different evidence, and wrote in a different time.

Table of four interpretations of Rome's end: Gibbon in 1776 to 1789, Pirenne in 1937, Brown in 1971 and Ward-Perkins in 2005, each with the book, the claim, and the kind of evidence the historian leaned on

- **Edward Gibbon** (1737–1794), a British historian, wrote *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in six volumes, **1776–1789**. His strongest case: Rome fell when its citizens lost the public spirit that had made it strong. Defence was left to paid armies and outsiders, and Gibbon argued that Christianity helped the fall by turning minds, money and effort away from this world — from the army and public works — toward the next. Gibbon's claim about Christianity was attacked in his own lifetime and is still argued about; the point here is his shape of answer — Rome fell from within.
- **Henri Pirenne** (1862–1935), a Belgian historian, argued in *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (published in **1937**, after his death) that 476 was not the real break. The peoples who settled inside the empire wanted to join it, not end it. What ended the old Mediterranean world, Pirenne said, was the rise of Islam in the seventh century, which cut the sea's trade in two and pushed power north to the Franks — without that break, he wrote, Charlemagne's empire could not be imagined.
- **Peter Brown** (born 1935) gave the age a new name in *The World of Late Antiquity* (**1971**). His claim: “fall” is the wrong word. Between about 250 and 800 CE the Roman world was **transformed** — new religions, new art, new peoples — with much carried over, not broken. Since Brown, most historians of the period work inside his framing.
- **Bryan Ward-Perkins** (born 1949), an archaeologist at the University of Oxford, wrote *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (**2005**) to push back. He reads the objects, not just the books: fine pottery disappears and rougher clay returns; cattle bones get smaller; roofs change from tile to straw; stone building stops. His claim: something real broke, it broke in a violent way, and ordinary people paid for it. “Transformation” is too soft a word.

Source (secondary). Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 volumes (London, 1776–1789). The claim that Christianity helped the fall is Gibbon's own and was contested from the moment it was printed; it is presented here as one interpretation among several, in the form Gibbon's own defenders would recognise. *Checked against the article “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

The debate over Rome's end - each side at its strongest

Something broke - the case for collapse

Bryan Ward-Perkins, 2005

- Fine pottery disappears from the digs; rougher clay returns
- Cattle bones get smaller
- Roofs change from tile to straw; building in stone stops

Rests on: the objects of daily life - and they show loss

Life carried on - the case for transformation

Peter Brown, 1971

- Law, language and belief carried over into the new kingdoms
- The new kings wanted Roman titles, not Rome's end
- Change came slowly, over generations - not in one moment in 476

Rests on: what endured - and it shows life going on

Both sides read real evidence. They read different evidence - and that is why the debate is still open.

Two-column steelman of the debate over Rome's end: the strongest case that something really broke, read from the objects of daily life, against the strongest case that the Roman world was transformed, read from what carried over in law, language, belief and farming

Weigh it, do not pick a team. The two sides are not even reading the same evidence. Ward-Perkins reads the objects ordinary people used — and they show loss. Brown and his followers read what carried over in law, language and belief — and they show life going on. Both can be true at once: the world of things broke while the world of ideas and rules endured, slowly changing shape. Modern historians have added more suspects too — disease, climate, the sheer size of the empire, and pressure on its borders. A strong answer says which evidence convinces you for which part of the claim, and names what each side cannot explain.

5. New dates, new story: the oldest chapters rewritten (*companion, not CD coverage*)

The deepest change of all comes from dating — driver 2 at work. Section 1A told the story of early humans; this part shows why that story keeps moving.

- **Radiocarbon dating.** Every living thing holds a tiny trace of a kind of carbon that breaks down at a fixed, known rate after death. The American chemist **Willard Libby** built the method into a dating tool in **1946–1949** at the University of Chicago, and received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for it in **1960**. It works on anything once alive — bone, wood, charcoal — up to about 50,000 years old. Before radiocarbon dating, deep dates were mostly guesswork from layers and styles. After it, the past had real numbers.
- **Ancient DNA.** Bones can hold traces of the DNA of the person they belonged to. The Swedish scientist **Svante Pääbo** and his team at Leipzig learned to read it: in **2010** they published a first full reading of a Neanderthal's DNA. The surprise: when our ancestors left Africa they met Neanderthals and mixed with them — most people today whose families come from outside Africa carry a small share of Neanderthal DNA. The human story turned out to be a web of meetings, not one clean line of march. Pääbo received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in **2022**.
- **Better dates move the origin story.** For decades the oldest widely accepted fossils of our species came from east Africa and dated to about 200,000 years ago. In **2017** a team led by **Jean-Jacques Hublin** published new dates for fossils from **Jebel Irhoud** in Morocco, found back in 1961: about **300,000 years old**, worked out from the light given off by burnt stone tools at the site. These are the oldest known fossils assigned to our species — with faces and teeth like ours, but longer, lower skulls. And they sit in the north-west of Africa, not

the east. The reading changed with the date: our species did not appear in one corner of one continent, but grew up across the whole of Africa, over a long time.

Three tools that keep rewriting the earliest chapters

Radiocarbon dating	Ancient DNA	Re-dating old finds
Reads the fading trace of a kind of carbon that breaks down at a known rate after death Built by Willard Libby, 1946-1949; Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1960 Changed the deep past gained real numbers instead of guesses; works to about 50,000 years	Reads DNA recovered from old bones Built by Svante Pääbo, first full Neanderthal reading, 2010; Nobel Prize in Medicine, 2022 Changed humans met and mixed with Neanderthals - the story is a web of meetings, not one clean line	Reads burnt stone tools from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, by the light they give off Built by Jean-Jacques Hublin's team, Nature, 2017 Changed oldest known fossils of our species: about 300,000 years old, and across Africa, not one corner of it

New tools do not end debate - they move it. Section 1A's story of early humans keeps moving for exactly this reason.

Three columns of new dating evidence: radiocarbon dating built by Willard Libby, ancient DNA read by Svante Pääbo, and the re-dating of Jebel Irhoud in 2017, each with what the tool reads, the named person and year, and what it changed in the story of early humans

Source (secondary). J.-J. Hublin and others, “New fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco and the pan-African origin of Homo sapiens”, *Nature*, 8 June 2017, with a matching study of the site’s age by D. Richter and others in the same issue. *Checked against the article “Jebel Irhoud”, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 25 August 2026.*

One honest limit. New tools do not end debate — they move it. Radiocarbon dates carry a plus-or-minus range; ancient DNA survives only in some bones and some climates; a re-dated fossil can be argued about again. Section 1A’s debate over how early humans spread is alive for exactly this reason: the evidence is still arriving.

6. Then and now: how the study of the past changed (*companion, not CD coverage*)

Put the three cases together and use the language of Section 7A carefully — name **what** changed, **what** stayed, and **how much**.

What changed. The tools: from treasure digging to dated layers, DNA and scans. The questions: from kings and generals to shopkeepers, enslaved people and whole towns. The readers: more people, from more places, now ask the questions. And the readings themselves: Pompeii’s date, Rome’s end and the origin of our species are all being re-read now, in your lifetime.

What stayed. The past itself is fixed — nothing written here changed 79 CE or 476 CE. The rule of evidence still binds every historian: a claim is only as good as what it can point to. And the argument itself is old: people have disagreed about what the past means for as long as they have written it down.

How much. Enormously in method, not at all in the rule of evidence. A historian of 1776 and a historian of today would agree on almost nothing about Rome’s end — but both would agree that a claim needs evidence, and that an honest reader follows the evidence even when it moves the story.

Modelled answers

Example 1 — scaffolded

Three things changed how Pompeii is read: Fiorelli's plaster casts, the graffiti on the walls, and the charcoal note of 17 October. Match each to the driver of change it shows best, from the four drivers in Part 1.

Step	Working	Comment
Fiorelli's casts	New tools ask old evidence new questions — the plaster method read hollows in the ash that digging alone never read.	A tool changes what the same site can tell.
The graffiti	Historians ask new questions — about ordinary town life, not just rich houses.	The writing was always there; the question is new.
The charcoal note	New evidence is found — it was unknown until 2018 and it moved the date debate.	A new find, not a new idea about an old find.

Example 2 — scaffolded

For each of the four historians of Rome's end, give the claim and the kind of evidence leaned on.

Historian	Claim	Evidence leaned on
Gibbon (1776–1789)	Rome fell from within: lost public spirit, and Christianity turning effort to the next world.	Written records — Roman and church texts.
Pirenne (1937)	476 was not the break; the rise of Islam in the seventh century ended the old Mediterranean world.	Trade and the movement of goods around the sea.
Brown (1971)	Not a fall but a transformation, about 250–800 CE.	The age's writings, art and religions.
Ward-Perkins (2005)	Something real broke, in a violent way; daily goods grew fewer and worse.	The objects themselves — pottery, bones, roofs.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Use the four-step ladder to explain why Pliny's Letter 6.16 is one of the most valuable sources for the eruption of Vesuvius.

Model answer. In features, the letter is a careful piece of writing in Latin from one man to another, kept because Pliny's letters were copied and saved. Its content is the eruption seen from across the bay: the pine-shaped cloud, the falling ash, and his uncle's choice to sail into the danger, which cost him his life. Its context sharpens its value: it was written about twenty years later, by an eye-witness answering a historian's request, so Pliny was trying to be exact — but he was also honouring his uncle, which is a reason to shape the story. From that we can infer both its value and its limit: it is the fullest eye-witness account that survives, and it fixed the traditional date of 24 August — but it is a memory with a purpose, so it must be checked against the ground itself: the ash layers, the casts and the coins.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

“New tools change what historians think more than new questions do.” Discuss.

Model answer. The strongest case for the tools: they let historians read what earlier generations could not read at all. Radiocarbon dating gave the deep past real numbers instead of guesses; DNA showed that humans met and mixed with Neanderthals, which no text and no question could have found; the re-dating of Jebel Irhoud moved the oldest known fossils of our species back by about 100,000 years and across a continent. The strongest case for the questions: the same objects sat unread until someone thought to ask about ordinary people — Pompeii's graffiti was always on

the walls, and Fiorelli's casts were waiting in the ash for anyone to pour plaster in. A strong answer holds both: tools and questions work together, because a new question without a tool to answer it stays a wish, and a tool without a question has nothing to say. Marks go to the weighing, with named cases on each side — not to which side is chosen.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (a) Give the definition of *interpretation* used in this section. (b) What is a *re-reading*? (c) What is the difference between evidence and the past itself?

Q2. The four drivers. Name the four drivers that keep accounts of the past changing, and give the case study from this page that shows each at work.

Q3. Pompeii's story. (a) In what year was Pompeii buried, and by what? (b) What did the diggers from 1748 treat the town as? (c) Give two things Fiorelli changed when he took charge in 1860. (d) What do his plaster casts show us?

Q4. The date debate. (a) Where does the traditional date of 24 August come from? (b) Give two finds that point to a later date. (c) What is the charcoal note found in 2018, and why does it matter? (d) Is the debate closed?

Q5. Rome's end. (a) What happened in 476 CE? (b) Match each historian — Gibbon, Pirenne, Brown, Ward-Perkins — to one word for their answer: *decline*, *break at Islam*, *transformation*, *collapse*. (c) Give the kind of evidence Ward-Perkins leans on.

Q6. New dates. (a) What does radiocarbon dating measure, and who built it into a tool? (b) What did Pääbo's reading of Neanderthal DNA show? (c) What changed in 2017 about the oldest known fossils of our species — how old are they, and where are they?

Unscaffolded

Q7. "One letter can carry a whole story — and then be re-read." Test this claim using Pliny's Letter 6.16. Use at least two facts from Part 3 in your answer.

Q8. Apply the four-step ladder — features, content, context, inference — to Pliny's Letter 6.16. Your inference must say something about the letter as a memory with a purpose, not just repeat its content.

Q9. "Rome did not fall — it was transformed." Present the strongest case on each side, then state which reading you find more convincing and why. Your answer must name at least one piece of evidence both sides would accept.

Q10. Choose one of the four drivers of change from Part 1. Using two case studies from this page, explain how that driver changed what historians say, and name one limit of the new reading.

Answers

Q1. (a) An interpretation is a historian's account of what the past was like and what it means, built from evidence. (b) A re-reading is a new interpretation of evidence that was already known. (c) The past itself is fixed and mostly gone; evidence is the small part of it that survived — objects, buildings, bones, words, dates — and it always needs reading.

Q2. New evidence is found — Pompeii's finds, such as the charcoal note; new tools ask old evidence new questions — radiocarbon dating, DNA and scans, including Jebel Irhoud; historians ask new questions — the modern reading of Pompeii's ordinary life; historians write in their own times — the four historians of Rome's end.

Q3. (a) In 79 CE, by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. (b) As a treasure box — tunnels for statues and paintings for a royal collection. (c) Any two of: digging from the top down; keeping written records; dividing the town into numbered regions; the plaster-cast method. (d) The shape of the people who died, caught at their last moment — the human face of the eruption.

Q4. (a) From one sentence in Pliny's Letter 6.16. (b) Any two of: autumn fruits preserved in the ash; sealed jars of wine from the autumn pressing; heavier clothing; the coin of Titus struck after an honour of September 79 CE. (c) A note in charcoal on a wall, dated 17 October 79 CE; because charcoal rubs off easily, it was probably fresh, which points to life going on in October — after the traditional date. (d) No — some scholars keep the August reading, and copies of Pliny's letter do not all agree on the words.

Q5. (a) Odoacer, leader of foreign troops in Rome's army, removed the last western emperor, the boy Romulus Augustulus, and sent the marks of the emperor's office to Constantinople. (b) Gibbon — decline; Pirenne — break at Islam; Brown — transformation; Ward-Perkins — collapse. (c) The objects of daily life — pottery, cattle bones, roof tiles, stone building.

Q6. (a) The fading trace of a kind of carbon that breaks down at a fixed rate, held in anything once alive; Willard Libby, 1946–1949, Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1960. (b) That when our ancestors left Africa they met Neanderthals and mixed with them — most people whose families come from outside Africa carry a small share of Neanderthal DNA. (c) They were re-dated to about 300,000 years old — older than the about-200,000-year east African fossils — and they are at Jebel Irhoud in Morocco, north-west Africa.

Q7. The claim holds. The letter carried the whole story of the eruption for centuries — the cloud, the ash, Pliny the Elder's death — and it fixed the traditional date of 24 August. Then it was re-read: finds such as autumn fruits, the Titus coin and the charcoal note of 17 October now point to a later date, so the very source that set the story is now the centre of the debate about changing it.

Q8. Features: a careful letter in Latin, one man to another, surviving because Pliny's letters were copied and saved. Content: the pine-shaped cloud, the falling ash, and his uncle's choice to sail into the danger. Context: written about twenty years later, by an eye-witness answering the historian Tacitus's request. Inference: it is a memory with a purpose — Pliny was honouring his uncle and trying to be believed — so it is a source to read with care and check against the ash layers, the casts and the coins.

Q9. Awarded for: the strongest transformation case (much carried over in law, language and belief; new kingdoms wanted Roman titles; change came slowly, over generations, not in one moment in 476 — Brown); the strongest collapse case (fine pottery disappears, cattle bones get smaller, roofs change from tile to straw — Ward-Perkins); at least one fact both sides accept — for example that Odoacer removed Romulus Augustulus in 476 CE, or that the western empire stopped having its own emperor from that point; and a stated position tied to a piece of evidence, not just a side.

Q10. Awarded for: one driver named from Part 1; two case studies from this page showing it at work — for example new tools shown through radiocarbon dating, DNA and the Jebel Irhoud re-dating, or new questions shown through Pompeii's graffiti and casts; a clear statement of what changed in what historians say; and one honest limit — dates carry a plus-or-minus range, DNA survives only in some bones, a re-reading can be argued again.

Skills signpost

This page practises the skills of the Concepts and Skills chapters: the four-step source ladder of Part 3 belongs to Section 6C (features, content, context) and Section 6D (the value of a source as evidence); the steelman work of Part 4 — and Example 4 — belongs to Section 6F (interpretations and debates); the then-and-now language of Part 6 belongs to Section 7A; and the weighing in Parts 4 and 5 is a first taste of Section 7C (significance). The companion content itself joins Section 1A's dating line, Section 3G's interpretations of Rome and Section 4E's debates. **Reminder: none of this counts as coverage of VC2HH8K11.**