

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 7 — Historical concepts and skills: questions, chronology and sources

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Asking good questions about the past

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 - History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10S01. Elaborations drawn on: .E01, .E02, .E03, .E04, .E05.

The words we must define first. The curriculum uses *investigation* - and its twin, *inquiry* - without defining either. In this section, an **investigation** is a piece of research in which you use questions, sources and evidence to work out what happened, why it happened, and what it meant. An **inquiry** is an investigation treated as one connected job: one key question, a set of related questions, the sources you gather, and the answer you build. Every task in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

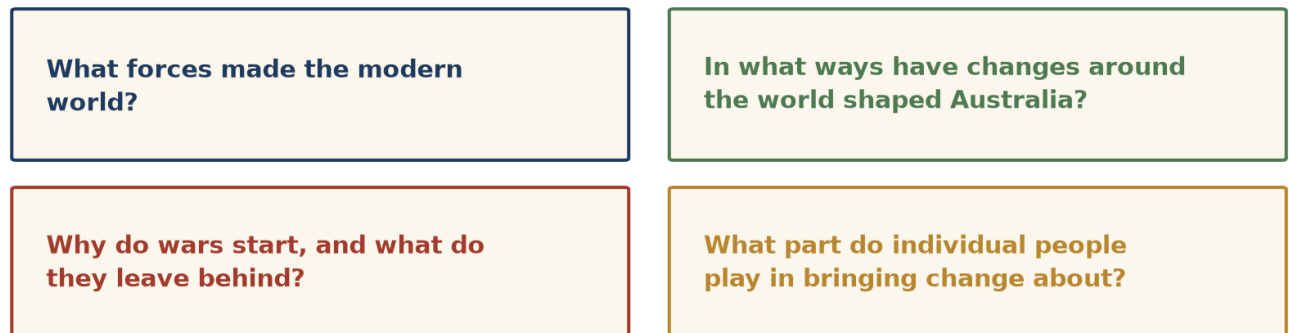
Historians do far more than collect facts. Facts do not organise themselves. Without a question, a pile of sources is just a pile. A good question decides what to read, what to ignore, what counts as evidence, and when you can stop. This section teaches you to build questions, sharpen them as your research grows, and use them to run an investigation from a blank page to a finished answer.

Part 1 - Why questions come first

The curriculum makes questions the starting point of every historical investigation. It also gives example key questions for this band; in this book's words, they ask:

- What forces made the modern world?
- In what ways have changes around the world shaped Australia?
- Why do wars start, and what do they leave behind?
- What part do individual people play in bringing change about?

Four key questions, adapted from the curriculum's examples



*The curriculum's example questions are a starting point only,
and every chapter of this book gives you content to turn into questions of your own.*

Four key questions, adapted from the curriculum's examples, shown as cards, each with a short note on what kind of investigation it opens

Figure 1. Four key questions, adapted from the curriculum's examples. Each one is big enough to hold a whole study - and each one needs sharpening before any real research can begin.

Notice what these four have in common. None of them can be answered with a date or a name. None of them has one right answer printed at the back of the book. Each one forces you to weigh factors, judge importance, and argue a case with evidence. That is what separates a **historical question** from a quiz question.

The figure below sorts out the words this section lives on.

The working words of this section

Inquiry / investigation A sustained attempt to answer a historical question using sources. The curriculum uses these words without defining them; this section uses this card's definition.	Source Anything that carries evidence about the past: letters, laws, photographs, objects, statistics, and later accounts of events.
Key question The main question an investigation is built to answer. Everything in the inquiry is chosen to serve it.	Evidence What a source shows or suggests that helps to answer a question.
Related questions Smaller questions that split the key question into parts you can actually research.	Suitability How well a source fits the question asked: does it exist, can you get it, and does it speak to the question?
Refine To improve a question as you learn: narrow it, sharpen it, or change its direction. Refining is a sign of progress, not failure.	Historical concept A lens historians think with: cause, consequence, continuity, change, significance, perspective.

A chart of key terms - key question, related questions, historical concepts, source, evidence, suitability and refine - each with a short definition

Figure 2. The working words of this section. Keep them separate in your mind: sources carry evidence, evidence answers questions, and refining is the act of making a question sharper.

A **key question** is the main question your investigation is built to answer. **Related questions** are the smaller questions you must answer along the way. **Refining** a question means improving it - cutting what is too broad, adding what is missing, redirecting it when your sources send you somewhere new. You will refine every question you write in this book. First drafts of questions are almost never good enough, and that is normal, not a failure.

Question formats. Historical questions come in a few shapes:

- *Descriptive*: What happened? (What demands did Austria-Hungary make on Serbia in July 1914?)
- *Causal*: Why did it happen? What caused it? (Why did Britain declare war in August 1914?)
- *Consequential*: What were the results? (What did the Victorian law of 1855 change for Chinese miners?)
- *Evaluative*: How significant was it? How far is it true? (How significant was the assassination at Sarajevo in causing the war?)
- *Perspectival*: How did people see it? (How did miners on the Ovens diggings view the new tax?)

Notice that most of these shapes carry a **historical concept** - cause, consequence, significance, change, perspective - inside them. Part 3 returns to this.

Part 2 - The anatomy of a strong historical question

A strong historical question passes five tests. The figure below sets them out.

Five tests for a strong historical question

The test	Weak: fails the test	Strong: passes it
1. Open Not answerable with yes or no, or with one fact.	Did a world war begin in 1914?	How did a quarrel in the Balkans become a world war?
2. Answerable from sources Sources exist, and you can get to them.	What did Queen Victoria dream in 1850? (No source records it.)	What did the Melbourne paper The Argus say about Chinese arrivals in April 1855?
3. Uses a concept It uses cause, consequence, continuity, change, significance or perspective.	What happened at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914?	What were the consequences of the assassination at Sarajevo?
4. Contestable Historians can disagree; there is a weighing to do.	In what year did World War I begin?	Which mattered more in 1914: the alliance system or the assassination?
5. Right size Narrow enough to research, broad enough to matter (Figure 10).	What happened in the 20th century?	How did one month in 1914 grow into a world war?

Failing a test is not failure. It tells you how to refine the question.

A five-row chart: each row names one test of a strong historical question - open, answerable with sources, uses a concept, right-sized, checks its own assumptions - with a short explanation

Figure 3. The five tests. Work down the list whenever you draft a question. A question that fails one test needs refining, not defending.

- 1. Open.** It cannot be answered with yes, no, or a single date. It invites argument.
- 2. Answerable with sources.** There must be sources you can actually reach that carry evidence relevant to it. A question nobody left evidence for is a question you cannot investigate.
- 3. Uses a historical concept.** Cause, consequence, continuity, change, significance, perspective - these words give the question its engine.
- 4. Right-sized.** Not too broad for the task, not too narrow to need any investigation at all. Part 6 deals with this test on its own.
- 5. Checks its own assumptions.** Every question presupposes something. "Why did the alliance system cause the war?" presupposes that the alliance system did cause the war. Before you research, list what your question takes for granted - then treat those points as claims to test, not facts to assume.

One more word you will need. A question is **contested** when informed people can genuinely disagree about the answer - when historians argue the case both ways using the same evidence. "When did the war start?" is not contested. "What caused the war?" is. Strong questions at this level are usually contestable: they have room inside them for more than one defensible answer, and your job is to weigh both sides. When you meet a contested question, you will be asked to **steelman** each side - that is, to state each side in its strongest form before you judge between them.

Worked check. Take the question: *How significant was the assassination at Sarajevo in causing World War I?*

- Open? Yes - it asks for a weighing, not a date.
- Answerable with sources? Yes - diplomatic records, speeches and newspapers from 1914 survive in large numbers.
- Uses a concept? Yes - significance and cause.
- Right-sized? Yes - one event, one war, one judgement.
- Assumptions checked? The question presupposes that the assassination had *some* causal role. That is fair, but the deeper causes (alliances, the arms race, imperial rivalry) must still be weighed against it, not assumed away.

All five tests passed - so this question is ready to drive an investigation.

Part 3 - Refining with concepts: the lenses of history

Elaboration .E03 asks you to reshape a question by looking at it through a historical concept — cause, continuity, consequence or change. Concepts work like lenses on a camera. The same topic looks different through each one - and each lens brings different sources into view.

One topic, four concept lenses (VC2HH10S01.E03)

One topic: Australia goes to war, 1914		
Cause and consequence	What led Australia into the war, and what did the war cost it?	Looks backward to causes and forward to effects.
Continuity and change	What changed in Australian life during the war years, and what stayed the same?	Splits the period into what moved and what held.
Perspective	Whose voices supported the war, and whose questioned it?	Asks who is speaking, and who is silent.
Significance	Why do Australians still remember 1914 so strongly?	Asks why something matters, and to whom.

One topic, four investigations. The concept you choose steers the question.
(These concepts are taught in depth in Sections 8A, 8B and 8C.)

Four concept lenses over one shared topic - cause and consequence, continuity and change, perspective and significance - each producing a different question shape

Figure 4. Concept lenses over one topic: “Australia and World War I, 1914-1918”. Change the lens, and you change the question - and therefore the whole investigation.

Take one topic, **Australia and World War I, 1914-1918**:

- **Cause:** Why did Australia enter the war in 1914?
- **Consequence:** How did the war change Australian life at home?
- **Continuity and change:** What stayed the same for Australian workers during the war, and what changed?

- **Significance:** How significant was the war for Australian identity?
- **Perspective:** How did Australian soldiers view the war, and how did those views change?

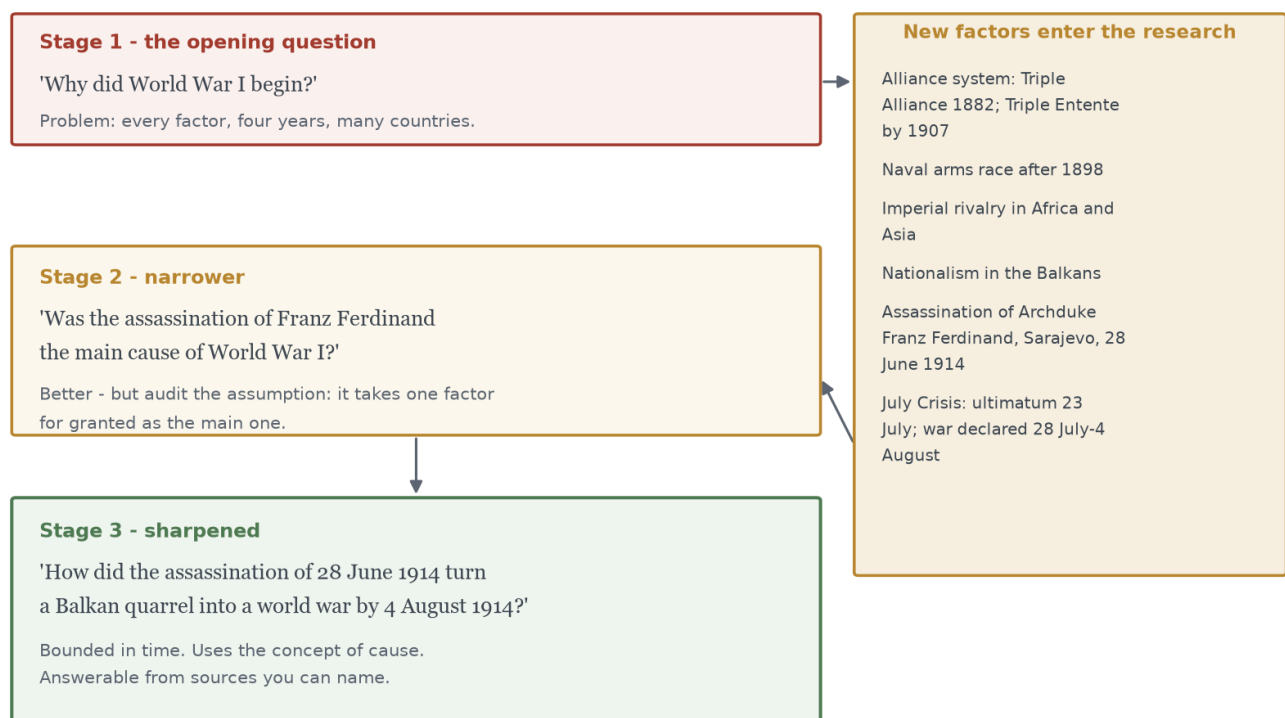
Five questions, five different investigations, one topic. (Figure 4 merges cause and consequence into one lens, since one question often looks both backward to causes and forward to effects.) If your question stalls, the fastest fix is often to change the lens: turn a cause question into a perspective question, or a change question into a consequence question, and see what opens up. (Chapters 8A to 8C teach these concepts in full; here you only need them as tools for sharpening questions.)

Part 4 - Refining as the research deepens

Elaboration .E02 gives the model example: an inquiry question — *Why did World War I begin?* — refined as further factors enter the research. Watch that happen in three stages.

Stage 1 is the question you start with. Stage 2 appears when your research shows the topic is bigger than one sentence can hold. Stage 3 is the question that survives contact with the sources.

Worked refinement: why World War I began (VC2HH10S01.E02)



Each stage keeps what the last stage learned. Refining is not starting over.

Three stages of refining the World War I question: a broad first draft, a stage two draft naming alliance system, arms race and imperialism, and a final sharpened question weighing the assassination against deeper causes

Figure 5. Refining the World War I question across three stages. Each stage is driven by a new factor entering the research - not by personal taste.

- **Stage 1:** *Why did World War I begin?* A sound start - but it could fill a library, and it gives no hint which causes will matter most.
- **Stage 2:** Research introduces named factors. The **alliance system** - the web of agreements binding countries to defend one another. The **arms race** - the rivalry in building up armies and navies. **Imperialism** -

competition between empires for territory and trade. **Nationalism** - intense pride in one's nation, and in 1914 the desire of peoples such as the Serbs to rule themselves. The question widens to hold them: *How did the alliance system, the arms race and imperial rivalry make war more likely in 1914?*

- **Stage 3:** Further research brings the immediate trigger into view - the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 by Gavrilo Princip, one of six conspirators. Now the question must weigh trigger against deeper causes: *How significant was the assassination at Sarajevo compared with the alliance system in causing World War I?*

Each move is traceable: a new factor entered the research, so the question changed to hold it. That is the standard your own refinements will be judged on.

Source inquiry A - What can this source bear?

Source A. Extract from the ultimatum delivered by Austria-Hungary to Serbia, 23 July 1914. An ultimatum is a final set of demands backed by a threat. After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, Austria-Hungary blamed the Serbian government and delivered this ultimatum to Belgrade, demanding a reply by 6 pm on 25 July. The translation below is abridged.

“The Serbian Government shall suppress all publications which excite hatred and contempt of the Austrian Monarchy ... It shall dissolve all societies and associations which carry on propaganda against Austria-Hungary ... It shall accept the collaboration in Serbia of representatives of the Austrian Government in suppressing the subversive movement ... It shall open a judicial inquiry against the accomplices in the plot of 28 June, and delegates from Austria-Hungary shall take part in the investigation ...”

Source A - the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia

[The Royal Serbian Government shall] tolerate no publication that stirs up hatred or contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy ... dissolve immediately all societies directed against Austria-Hungary ... accept the cooperation in Serbia of representatives of the Imperial and Royal Government for the suppression of the subversive movement ... initiate a judicial inquiry against the participants in the plot of 28 June ... organs delegated by the Imperial and Royal Government will take part in the investigations.

Abridged translation of four of the ten demands. Delivered at Belgrade on 23 July 1914; a reply was required by 6 o'clock on 25 July 1914.

An ultimatum is a final demand backed by a threat. Serbia's reply of 25 July accepted most demands but refused the joint inquiry; Austria-Hungary declared war on 28 July 1914.

A source card presenting the abridged ultimatum text with provenance and caption

Figure 6. Source A. Abridged extract from the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, delivered 23 July 1914. Public record; abridged for this section.

What can this source bear? The five tests apply to questions asked *of a source*, not just questions asked of a topic.

What questions can Source A carry?

What the source is One government's demands to another, July 1914 - one side's voice, not both.	Questions it can answer What did Austria-Hungary demand of Serbia? Why did those demands make war more likely?
Questions it cannot answer Why did Serbia reply as it did? Why did Russia mobilise on 30 July? What did ordinary people think?	Related questions it raises Did Serbia accept any demands? What had Germany promised Austria-Hungary?
What you would need next Serbia's reply of 25 July; Russian and German records; newspapers from each country.	The judgment One source cannot carry a whole investigation. Split the question so every part has sources to meet it.

This is the test of E05 in action: is the question too broad for this one source?

A three-column chart sorting questions into ones Source A can answer, ones it can answer in part, and ones it cannot answer

Figure 7. Sorting questions against Source A. The middle column matters most: partial answers are where careful historians earn their keep.

- **Can bear:** What did Austria-Hungary demand, and what does the wording reveal about how it viewed Serbia? The language of the demands is direct evidence of this.
- **Bears in part:** Why did the July Crisis end in war? The ultimatum shows one government's posture, but the crisis ran from Sarajevo (28 June) through Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia (28 July), Russia's general mobilisation (30 July), Germany's declarations of war on Russia (1 August) and France (3 August), the German invasion of Belgium and Britain's declaration of war (4 August). One document from one capital cannot carry that whole story.
- **Cannot bear:** What were Serbia's reasons for replying as it did? Source A contains no Serbian voice at all. Serbia's reply - which accepted most demands but refused the one allowing Austrian delegates inside its own judicial inquiry - is a separate source, and the investigation cannot do without it.

Worked inquiry. Put the five tests over the question *What does the ultimatum reveal about Austria-Hungary's view of Serbia?*. It is open (it asks for interpretation, not a date). It is answerable from this source - the wording of the demands is the evidence. It uses the concept of perspective: the document lets you see how one government framed another. It is right-sized for a single-document study. And it checks its assumptions: the question must not presume the Austrian case was correct - the ultimatum is one side of a contested dispute, and the Serbian reply must be read before any verdict. All five tests pass. But the original key question - *Why did World War I begin?* - is plainly **too broad** for this one source. That is the cue to change the question, which is exactly what elaborations .E01 and .E05 ask of you.

Part 5 - Refining when the sources push back

Elaborations .E01 and .E04 cover the same hard truth from two directions: sometimes the sources you can reach are not suitable for the question you brought. **Suitability** means fit for purpose - a source is suitable when it actually

carries evidence that can help answer your question. A source can be genuine, accurate and still unsuitable for *your* question.

Source B. Summary of the Victorian Act of 1855 limiting Chinese immigration. In June 1855 the Victorian parliament passed “An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants” (18 Vict. No. 39; royal assent 12 June 1855). It placed a tax of £10 on every Chinese passenger brought by sea into Victoria, and limited their number to one per ten tons of the ship’s burthen - that is, its carrying capacity.

Source B - An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants (Victoria)

Every vessel carrying Chinese passengers to Victoria paid a tax of £10 for each Chinese passenger landed. No vessel was allowed to carry more than one Chinese passenger for every ten tons of the ship's burthen - that is, its carrying capacity.

18 Vict. No. 39; royal assent 12 June 1855. A summary of the Act's two main rules, in plain words.

The title never names Chinese people, but the rules applied to them alone. The Act did not stop arrivals: many landed at Robe in South Australia and walked more than 400 km to the Victorian goldfields.

A source card summarising the 1855 Victorian Act with its key terms: £10 tax per passenger, one per ten tons burthen

Figure 8. Source B. Summary of “An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants”, Victoria, 1855. The £10 tax and the one-per-ten-tons limit are drawn from the Act’s long title and provisions.

Source B is a fine source for some questions and useless for others. The Act tells you what the Victorian government chose to do in 1855. It does not tell you what Chinese miners thought of the law, how it changed their lives, or whether it worked as intended. By the end of 1855 more than 19,000 Chinese people had reached Victoria; by 1858 the number stood near 33,000, about one in five diggers on the goldfields. Many arrived by landing at Robe in South Australia and walking more than 400 km to the Victorian diggings to avoid the tax - evidence the Act reveals nothing about on its own.

So the question must move to fit the evidence:

When sources answer back: suitability drives refinement (E01, E04)

When sources stay silent	When sources flood in
Question: 'What was life like for Chinese miners on the Victorian goldfields?' Problem: The 1855 Act speaks for the government, not the miners. The Argus (14 April 1855) calls arrivals an 'invading army' - evidence of hostility, not of daily life. Two honest moves: (1) Narrow the question to what these sources can answer: 'How did Victoria's parliament respond to Chinese immigration, 1855-1862?' (2) Keep the question and widen the evidence: reports by Rev. William Young, mining records, surviving campsites, family letters.	Question: 'Why did World War I begin?' Problem: Thousands of sources, four years of war, many countries. The question drowns in evidence. The honest move: Narrow by place, time and concept - one month, one path from Sarajevo to the declarations of war (see the worked refinement, Figure 5).

Questions and evidence adjust to each other. That adjustment is refinement.

A suitability flowchart: a question meets Source B, fails the fit test, and branches into two honest moves - refine the question to what the source can bear, or seek other sources

Figure 9. The suitability move. When a source cannot bear your question, you have two honest moves. "Pretend the source says more" is not one of them.

- **Move 1 - refine the question** to what Source B can bear: *What does the 1855 Act reveal about how the Victorian government viewed Chinese immigration?* The Act's own terms - the £10 tax, the passenger limit - are the evidence.
- **Move 2 - keep the question and seek other sources:** reports by Rev. William Young on conditions at Buckland and on the Ovens diggings; newspaper accounts, such as the *Argus* of 14 April 1855 describing arrivals in Melbourne as an "invading army"; records of the Buckland riot of 4 July 1857, in which about 100 attackers drove around 2,500 Chinese miners from the field; and surviving campsites and the memorial at Buckland today.

The second question is worth keeping - so you keep it, and change your source list. The first question is answerable now - so you refine and move on. Both moves are legitimate; choosing between them is a judgement you must explain.

Later history shows the question stayed alive. In November 1857 Victoria replaced the arrival tax with a residence tax of £1 per two months; the tax was reduced in February 1859 and repealed in 1862. New South Wales passed restrictions of its own in 1861, and by 1888 every colony had laws against Chinese immigration. Each of these facts opens a fresh refinement - for example, a continuity and change question: *What changed for Chinese miners in Victoria between 1855 and 1862, and what stayed the same?*

Part 6 - Too broad, too narrow, or right-sized

Elaboration .E05 asks you to judge whether a key question, or the sub-questions under it, is out of scale — too broad or too narrow — for the investigation at hand. Size matters as much as wording.

Right size? The scope gauge (VC2HH10S01.E05)

Judgment	The question	How you know
TOO BROAD	'What happened in the 20th century?'	Every source is relevant; nothing can be covered in depth; the answer must be a list, not reasoning.
RIGHT SIZE	'How did the assassination of 28 June 1914 turn a Balkan quarrel into a world war by 4 August 1914?'	You can name the sources you need; the answer takes reasoning, not just one date.
TOO NARROW	'How old was Gavrilo Princip on 28 June 1914?'	One fact settles it (he was 19). Fine as a supporting detail; too small to carry an investigation.

The test is the task: a right-size question fits the time, the sources and the length you have.

A scope gauge with three zones - too broad, right-sized, too narrow - showing example questions placed along it for the World War I topic

Figure 10. The scope gauge. Too broad: you drown in sources. Too narrow: nothing to investigate. Right-sized: enough evidence to weigh, a real judgement to make.

- **Too broad:** *Why did World War I begin?* for a two-week class inquiry. Hundreds of books exist; no student investigation can weigh them all. Refine by limiting the factor, the place or the time.
- **Too narrow:** *Did Austria-Hungary deliver its ultimatum on 23 July 1914?* One fact settles it. There is nothing to weigh and no argument to build - it is a quiz question wearing a costume.
- **Right-sized:** *How significant was the assassination at Sarajevo compared with the alliance system in causing the war?* Two factors to weigh, a judgement to reach, and sources a student can actually reach.

Two practical checks:

- If you cannot list your related questions, the key question is probably too broad.
- If your related question already answers the key question on its own, the key question is probably too narrow.

Related questions should sit beneath the key question like steps beneath a door: each one smaller, each one answerable from reachable sources, and together leading to the answer.

Part 7 - Using the question: from blank page to plan

Questions are not just for the start. A good question does three jobs through the whole investigation:

1. **It selects sources.** Every source you gather must earn its place by carrying evidence relevant to the question. If a source answers nothing in your question set, set it aside without guilt.

2. **It structures notes.** File each piece of evidence under the related question it answers, not under the source it came from. Your notes then assemble themselves into paragraphs.
3. **It frames the answer.** The final response should open by restating the key question and close by answering it directly - in the language of the concepts it carries (cause, consequence, change, significance, perspective).

The figure below is the inquiry plan used in this book. Every inquiry task in Chapter 7 is built on it.

Your inquiry plan

1. Topic	One line: the ground your investigation stands on.
2. Key question	Your best version after at least three stages of refining.
3. Related questions	Three questions that split the key question into researchable parts.
4. Concepts	Which lenses you used: cause, consequence, continuity, change, significance, perspective.
5. Sources	At least two kinds. Write beside each which question it speaks to.
6. Suitability check	Where could the sources fail you? What would you do then - narrow the question, or widen the evidence?
7. Prediction	Your answer so far - held lightly, ready to change with the evidence.

Copy this plan and fill it in for the inquiry task at the end of this section.

An inquiry plan flowchart: topic and key question, then related questions, then source gathering with a suitability check, then evidence filing under related questions, then a final answer that restates and answers the key question

Figure 11. The inquiry plan. Five stages, each driven by the question above it. The suitability check at stage 3 is where questions get refined - expect it.

The loop at stage 3 is deliberate. When a source fails the suitability test, you return to the question - refine it (Part 5, Move 1) or redirect your search (Part 5, Move 2) - and continue. A plan that never needed refining is usually a plan that never really researched.

Practice - scaffolded

1. Sort the lenses. For each question below, name the historical concept doing the work: cause, consequence, continuity and change, significance, or perspective. (VC2HH10S01.E03)
 - a. Why did Australia enter World War I in 1914?
 - b. What stayed the same for Chinese miners in Victoria between 1855 and 1862?
 - c. How did miners on the Buckland diggings view the residence tax of 1857?
 - d. How significant was the arms race in making war more likely in 1914?
2. Judge the size. Tag each question too broad, right-sized, or too narrow for a two-week class inquiry, and give one reason. (VC2HH10S01.E05)
 - a. What was World War I?
 - b. Did Gavrilo Princip fire the shot that killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand?

- c. How did the Victorian government respond to Chinese immigration between 1855 and 1862?
3. Trace the refinement. In Figure 5, each stage of the World War I question changed because a new factor entered the research. Name the factor that forced the move from stage 1 to stage 2, and the factor that forced the move from stage 2 to stage 3. (VC2HH10S01.E02)
4. Name the moves. Figure 9 shows the two honest responses when a source fails the suitability test. Name both moves, and give one example of each from Part 5. (VC2HH10S01.E01, VC2HH10S01.E04)
5. Change the lens. Using Figure 4 as your model, write one cause question and one perspective question about the topic “Australia at war, 1939-1945”. Then say which of the two would be easier to answer from sources, and why. (VC2HH10S01.E03)
6. Run the tests. The question *How many ships carried Chinese passengers to Victoria in 1855?* fails one of the five tests from Figure 3. Name the test and explain why it fails. Then rewrite the question so that it passes. (VC2HH10S01.E05)

Practice - unscaffolded

7. Refine a migration question. Take the first draft: *Why do people move?* Refine it in three stages into a sharp question about migration to Australia since 1945 (see Chapter 6). At each stage, say what you learned from your research that forced the change, and check your final question against the scope gauge in Figure 10. (VC2HH10S01.E02, VC2HH10S01.E05)
8. Interrogate Source B. Using Source B (Figure 8): write two related questions the Act can answer, and one important question it cannot. For the question it cannot answer, name two kinds of source you would seek instead and say what each would let you check. (VC2HH10S01.E01, VC2HH10S01.E04)
9. Steelman both sides. Two historians argue: “The assassination at Sarajevo was the main cause of the war” and “The alliance system was the main cause of the war.” State each side in its strongest form, using at least one dated factor for each, then give your own weighed judgement. (VC2HH10S01.E02, VC2HH10S01.E03)

Marking note for all tasks: marks follow the quality of your reasoning - the fit between question, source and evidence - not the conclusion you reach. On contested questions, a well-argued answer either way earns full marks.

Inquiry task

Choose ONE topic:

- The July Crisis, 28 June - 4 August 1914
- Chinese miners and Victorian law, 1855-1862
- Australia and the causes behind World War I

Then complete both parts:

Part 1 - the plan. Fill in the inquiry plan from Figure 11 for your topic: one key question (passed through the five tests of Figure 3), three related questions, a list of at least four sources with a suitability note for each, and the related question each source will answer. Where a source fails the suitability test, show your refinement move and explain it in one sentence. (VC2HH10S01.E01, VC2HH10S01.E02, VC2HH10S01.E04, VC2HH10S01.E05)

Part 2 - the write-up. Write a short account of your inquiry, 6-8 sentences, tracing how your questions changed as your research grew. Use the five moves shown in Figure 12 as your checklist - but trace your own topic, not the model’s. Include at least one moment where your sources pushed back and forced a change. (VC2HH10S01.E02, VC2HH10S01.E03)

Marking note: marks are awarded for the quality of reasoning shown in your plan and write-up - the fit between questions, sources and evidence, and the honesty of your refinements - not for the conclusion reached.

Answers

1.
 - a. Cause. b. Continuity and change. c. Perspective. d. Significance.
 2.
 - a. Too broad - the whole war, in every theatre, cannot be weighed in two weeks. b. Too narrow - one fact settles it; there is nothing to weigh. c. Right-sized - one colony, one policy area, a bounded span, reachable sources.
 3. Stage 1 to stage 2: the deeper factors (the alliance system, the arms race, imperial rivalry) entered the research. Stage 2 to stage 3: the assassination at Sarajevo entered as the immediate trigger, forcing a weighing of trigger against deeper causes.
 4. Move 1: refine the question to what the source can bear - e.g. *What does the 1855 Act reveal about how the Victorian government viewed Chinese immigration?* Move 2: keep the question and seek other sources - e.g. Rev. William Young's reports and the *Argus* account for what Chinese miners experienced.
 5. Sample answers: Cause - *Why did Australia enter World War II in 1939?* Perspective - *How did Australian soldiers view the war in the Pacific?* The cause question is usually easier to answer: declarations of war and official statements survive in large numbers, while soldiers' private views must be rebuilt from fewer, more scattered sources such as letters and diaries.
 6. It fails test 3 (uses a historical concept) - a count alone carries no cause, consequence, change, significance or perspective, so there is nothing to investigate. Sample rewrite: *What caused the sharp rise in Chinese arrivals to Victoria in 1855?* (Answers may also be accepted if they fix the question a different defensible way and explain it.)
 7. Sample path: Stage 1 *Why do people move?* Stage 2 *Why did people migrate to Australia after 1945?* (research narrows place and time). Stage 3 *How significant were government schemes compared with family networks in bringing migrants to Australia, 1945-1975?* (research introduces two competing factors to weigh). Final check against Figure 10: two factors to weigh, a bounded span, reachable sources - right-sized.
 8. Can bear: sample - *What tax did the Act place on Chinese passengers arriving by sea?* and *How did the Act limit the number of Chinese passengers per ship?* Cannot bear: sample - *How did Chinese miners respond to the Act?* Other sources: sample - reports by Rev. William Young (conditions and responses on the diggings); newspaper accounts such as the *Argus* (public attitudes and events like arrivals and the Buckland riot); surviving campsites and the Buckland memorial (material evidence of settlement).
 9. Marks follow reasoning, not conclusion. A full answer states each side in its strongest form with dated factors - e.g. the assassination alone cannot explain why a Balkan crisis became a general war, yet the alliance system only turned crisis into war once the assassination gave Austria-Hungary its occasion - and reaches a weighed judgement that engages with both sides rather than asserting one.
-

Model response

The inquiry task above asked for a traced refinement. The model below traces the model topic from Figure 5. Read it for the shape of the reasoning: every change of question is tied to something the research brought in.

Question: Trace how your key question changed as your research into the causes behind World War I deepened.

Model. My inquiry began with the topic "the causes behind World War I" and the first-draft key question *Why did World War I begin?* (Figure 12, stage 1). The question passed the tests for openness and concept, but it failed the scope gauge: it was too broad for a two-week inquiry. As my research introduced the deeper factors - the alliance system, the arms race, imperial rivalry and nationalism - I refined the question to *How did the alliance system, the arms race and imperial rivalry make war more likely in 1914?* (stage 2). This was better, but it left out the event the sources kept returning to: the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. When my reading showed that Austria-Hungary used the assassination as its occasion to deliver the ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July 1914, I sharpened the question to weigh trigger against deeper causes: *How significant was the assassination at Sarajevo compared with the alliance system in causing World War I?* (stage 3). Each refinement was forced by a factor entering the research, not by preference, and the final question is right-sized: two factors to weigh, a judgement to reach, and sources a student can reach.

The model response for the inquiry task, with its moves labelled

Topic and key question	My topic is the response of Victoria's parliament to Chinese immigration. My key question is: 'How did Victoria respond to Chinese immigration between 1855 and 1862, and why did its response change?'
The refining move	I began with 'What was life like for Chinese miners?' but the sources I found first - the 1855 Act and The Argus - speak for the government and for hostile onlookers, not for the miners. So I narrowed the key question to what those sources can answer.
The suitability move	I kept the miners' experiences as a related question and listed the sources that could speak to it: reports by Rev. William Young, mining records, surviving campsites, and the memorial at Buckland today.
The concept move	I used cause and consequence for the laws of 1855 and 1857, and continuity and change for the repeal of the residence tax in 1862.
The judgment move	My prediction is that Victoria's response shifted from taxing arrivals to taxing residence, and then to repeal. It is a claim ready to be tested against the records.

Steal the moves, not the topic: the same five moves work for any investigation.

The model response shown as five labelled moves: topic and key question, first tests and scope check, refine as factors enter, sharpen as the trigger enters, final right-sized question - with short notes on each move

Figure 12. The model response as labelled moves. Your own write-up should show the same five moves, traced on your own topic.

Looking back. Questions are the engine of every inquiry in this book. Chronology and sequencing (Section 7B) decide the order your questions travel in; locating, analysing and evaluating sources (Sections 7C and 7D) is where the suitability test of Part 5 is applied in full; recognising perspectives (Section 7E) feeds the perspective lens of Part 3; and interpretations and contestability (Section 7F) is where contested questions get their final hearing. The concept lenses of Part 3 become the subject of Chapters 8A to 8C, and sustained interpretations in Chapter 8D are built from questions refined exactly as shown here. The worked examples above draw on content from Chapter 3 (the gold rush era) and Chapter 5 (World War I).

Sources for this section

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Putting the past in order

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 9 and 10

Owns VC2HH10S02

Draws on — VC2HH10S02.E01, VC2HH10S02.E02, VC2HH10S02.E03

Builds on — section 7A (VC2HH10S01) and the knowledge chapters of this book, which supply the events, people, ideas and movements that this section puts in order.

Chapters 1 to 6 of this book have given you a large cast of events, people, ideas and movements: the Industrial Revolution beginning in Britain around 1760; the People’s Charter (1838); the revolutions of 1848; the gold rush in Victoria from 1851; Federation on 1 January 1901; two world wars; the founding of the United Nations in 1945; the Moon landing of 1969; the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989. This section is about the **order** in which those things happened, and how to use that order.

A **narrative** is an account of the past — a story built out of events, ideas and developments. A **historical narrative** is one built from evidence. **Chronology** is the order in which things happened, from first to last, and to **sequence** (verb) means to put those things into that order. Chronology is the skeleton of every historical narrative: until the order is fixed, nothing else can be said safely, because claims about cause and consequence, and about continuity and change, all rest on knowing what came first.

This section gives you a method for sequencing, a model timeline of the modern world, the patterns of change to look for once things are in order, and a way to use the order of primary sources to build an argument. Every date used here is one you have already met in this book.

Theory

1. Why order comes first (VC2HH10S02)

The content description for this section joins ordering to analysis: you put events, ideas, movements, individuals and developments *in order* — that is, in sequence — and use that order to analyse continuity and change, along with causes and consequences. The order is not decoration; it does work.

Order grounds cause. A cause must come before its consequence. If someone claimed that the Moon landing of July 1969 was caused by the first Earth Day of April 1970, the chronology alone would disprove it: April 1970 is later than July 1969, and a later event cannot cause an earlier one. Sequencing is the first test every causal claim must pass.

Order grounds change and continuity. To say that something changed, you must point to at least two dated moments that differ. To say that something continued, you must point to what stayed the same across a dated stretch of time. Women in South Australia could vote and stand for parliament from 1895 (taught in section 1F); no woman could sit in the federal parliament until the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 gave women the right to stand at federal level; Edith Cowan became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament in 1921. Those three dates, in that order, are the evidence for the claim “women’s place in parliament changed across this period”. Without the order, the claim has no legs.

So sequencing is a skill you use *on* the knowledge chapters. The rest of this section builds the skill in seven steps: the language of time, a five-step method, a model timeline, the patterns to read from it, the use of sources in order, and the mistakes to avoid.

2. The language of time (VC2HH10S02)

Historians keep a small kit of time-words, and each word in this section keeps one fixed meaning. Figure 1 lists the kit.

The language of time: key terms used in this section

Keep these meanings fixed while you work; each term is defined again at its first use in the section.

Term	Meaning used in this section	Example
Chronology	The order in which things happened; arranging events from first to last	Placing 1914 before 1918
Sequence (verb)	To place events, individuals, ideas or developments in chronological order	Sequencing five laws: 1901, 1902, 1958, 1975, 1984
Timeline	A diagram that places events along a line in the order they happened	The model timeline in Figure 4
Period	A stretch of time studied as one unit	The period 1750 to 1914
Turning point	An event that marks an important change of direction	The Berlin Wall opened, 9 November 1989
Periodisation	The way historians divide the past into periods; the divisions are argued about	This book starts the modern world at c. 1750
Circa (c.)	A Latin word meaning 'around'; used when a date is not known exactly	c. 1760 means 'around the year 1760'
Primary source	A source made at the time being studied	A law, speech, letter or photograph from the time
Secondary source	A source made later by someone studying the time	A book or article written about the past later

Figures 2 and 3 build on these terms; Figures 4 to 9 put them to work.

Table titled 'The language of time: key terms used in this section' with nine rows — *Chronology*, *Sequence (verb)*, *Timeline*, *Period*, *Turning point*, *Periodisation*, *Circa (c.)*, *Primary source*, *Secondary source* — each with the meaning used in this section and a worked example.

Figure 1. The language of time: key terms used in this section (source: section 7B, parts 2 and 6; each term is defined again at its first use in the body text).

Two of the terms need a little more care.

A **period** is a stretch of time studied as one unit, such as “the period 1750 to 1914” used in section 2B. Decades and centuries are the standard measuring sticks inside a period. A **decade** is a run of ten years: “the 1960s” means 1960 to 1969. A **century** is a run of one hundred years, and centuries are named one ahead of their first two digits — the **+1 rule** in Figure 2.

Reading centuries and decades

Years, decades and centuries are the historian's measuring tools.

The +1 rule

To name the century of a year like 1750: take the first two digits (17) and add one. $17 + 1 = 18$, so 1750 sits in the eighteenth century.

Years	Century name	Also called
1500 to 1599	the sixteenth century	the 1500s
1600 to 1699	the seventeenth century	the 1600s
1700 to 1799	the eighteenth century	the 1700s
1800 to 1899	the nineteenth century	the 1800s
1900 to 1999	the twentieth century	the 1900s
2000 to 2099	the twenty-first century	the 2000s

* A decade is a run of ten years: 'the 1960s' means 1960 to 1969.

* c. (circa) means 'around': c. 1760 means 'around the year 1760'.

* BCE (before the Common Era) and CE (the Common Era) label years in the same calendar frame; this book counts in CE unless it says otherwise.

Table titled 'Reading centuries and decades' with an accent box stating the +1 rule (take the first two digits and add one, so 1750 sits in the eighteenth century), a mapping table from '1500 to 1599 is the sixteenth century' through to '2000 to 2099 is the twenty-first century', and notes on decades, circa, and BCE and CE.

Figure 2. Reading centuries and decades (source: section 7B, part 2; the +1 rule is applied in Q2 and in Figure 9).

When a date is not known exactly, historians write **circa**, shortened to **c.**, a Latin word meaning "around". Section 1A dates the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to c. 1760: the change was a process spread over years, so a single exact year would be false precision. You will meet c. again in the method (part 3) and in the practice questions.

Defining the term. Periodisation is the way historians divide the past into periods. The divisions are not handed down by the past itself; they are chosen and argued about, so periodisation is a contested tool. This book follows the curriculum's Levels 9–10 band, which begins the modern world at c. 1750 (the opening of the Industrial Revolution, section 1A). Other periodisations exist — some writers begin the modern period around 1500, others at 1914 — and each picks out different turning points. Every question in this section is answerable on this book's periodisation alone: the modern world runs from c. 1750 to the present.

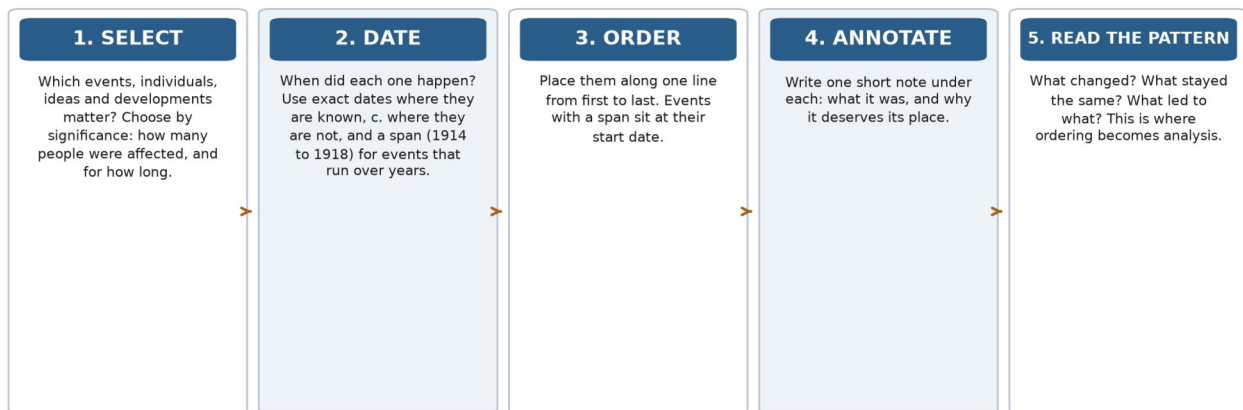
One last frame note. This book labels years **CE** (the Common Era) and, for years before year 1, **BCE** (before the Common Era). You may also meet the older labels AD and BC in other books; they attach to the same years in the same calendar frame. The labels are frame-dependent — they say nothing about *when* anything happened, only which naming system is being used — so this section treats them as a convention, not a claim.

3. A five-step method for sequencing (VC2HH10S02, VC2HH10S02.E02)

Figure 3 sets out the method this section uses. Steps 1 to 3 build the order; steps 4 and 5 make the order do historical work.

A five-step method for sequencing

Ordering is the easy half. Reading the pattern is where the history happens.



Steps 1 to 3 build the order; steps 4 and 5 make it do historical work (continuity and change, causes and consequences).

Labelled diagram titled 'A five-step method for sequencing' showing five boxes joined left to right by arrows: 1. **SELECT** (choose events, individuals, ideas and developments by significance), 2. **DATE** (exact dates where known, c. where not, a span for events that run over years), 3. **ORDER** (one line, first to last, spans at their start date), 4. **ANNOTATE** (one short note under each: what it was and why it deserves its place), 5. **READ THE PATTERN** (what changed, what stayed the same, what led to what).

Figure 3. A five-step method for sequencing (source: section 7B, part 3; steps 4 and 5 connect to sections 8A and 8B).

Step 1, select. You cannot sequence everything, so you choose by **significance**: how many people were affected, and for how long. (Section 8C treats significance in full; here the two criteria are enough.) From the cast of chapters 1 to 6, Figure 4 below selects twenty items.

Step 2, date. Use exact dates where they are known (9 November 1989 for the opening of the Berlin Wall), c. where they are not (c. 1760 for the Industrial Revolution's beginning), and a **span** for events that run over years (1914 to 1918 for World War I, as taught in section 3A).

Step 3, order. Place the items along one line from first to last. An event with a span sits at its **start** date: World War I sits at 1914, not 1918. This is the book's rule for spans, and every timeline in this section follows it.

Step 4, annotate. Under each item, write one short note: what it was, and why it deserves its place. A line of dates with no notes is a list; a line of dated notes is a timeline.

Step 5, read the pattern. Ask what changed, what stayed the same, and what led to what. This is where ordering turns into the analysis the content description asks for — continuity and change (section 8A), causes and consequences (section 8B).

4. Building a timeline of the modern world (VC2HH10S02 . E01)

Figure 4 is the model timeline for this section: twenty dated and annotated items drawn from chapters 1 to 6, from c. 1760 to 2020, each coloured by theme. (The line ends in 2020 with the coronavirus **pandemic** — a disease outbreak that spread across the world; taught in section 1C.)

Model timeline: the making of the modern world, c. 1750 to 2020

Each event is dated and annotated; equal spacing keeps crowded decades readable. Events that run over years (the world wars) are placed at their start.



Model annotated vertical timeline titled 'The making of the modern world, c. 1750 to 2020' with twenty dated items from 'c. 1760 Industrial Revolution begins in Britain' to '2020 Coronavirus pandemic declared', each with a coloured dot, and a four-theme legend: politics and rights; war and conflict; science, technology and environment; economy and society.

Figure 4. Model timeline: the making of the modern world, c. 1750 to 2020 (source: sections 1A–1D, 1F, 2C, 2D and 3F; every date is taught in this book).

Read two things off the model, one change and one continuity, exactly as step 5 says:

- **A change.** In c. 1760 the most powerful machines on Earth turned thread and pumped water (section 1A). By 1957 a human-made object was orbiting the Earth (Sputnik 1, section 1C), and by 1969 people were standing on the Moon (Apollo 11, section 1C). The sequence c. 1760 → 1957 → 1969 is the evidence for the change.
- **A continuity.** Ordinary people kept organising to demand rights across the whole period: the People’s Charter (1838, section 1B), the March on Washington of 1963 (section 1D), and the movements of sections 1D–1F in between. The demand did not stop; that is the continuity.

Elaboration VC2HH10S02.E01 makes this a group task: together, build *your own* timeline running from a chosen point in the past to today, then read off what changed and what stayed the same. The inquiry task (Q12) at the end of this section is exactly that: a group builds one timeline, pools its research, and reads change and continuity off it.

Figure 4 is the model for what your group’s timeline should look like.

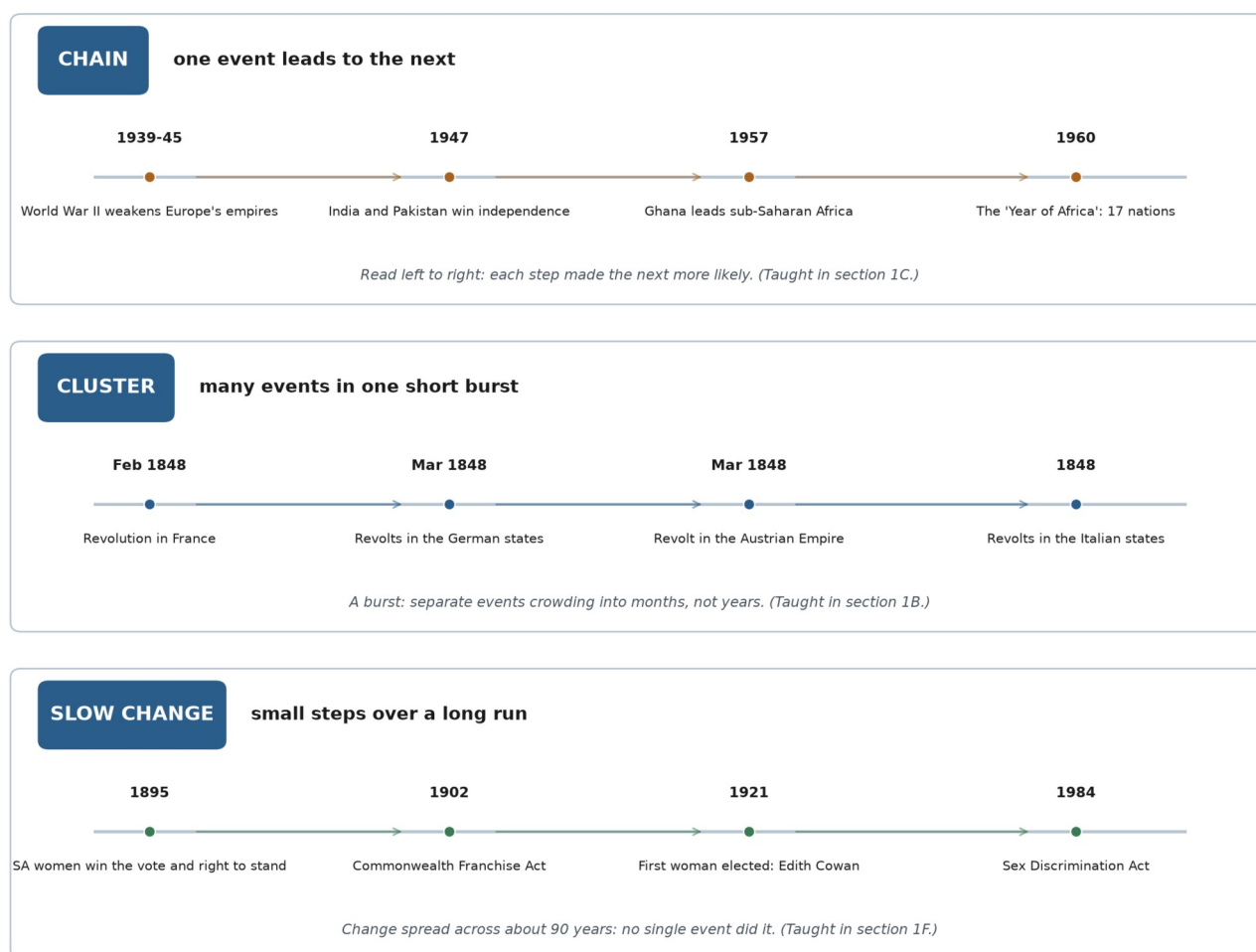
5. Reading patterns: chain, cluster, slow change (VC2HH10S02.E02)

Once events are in order, the same timeline can show different shapes of change. Figure 5 gives the three patterns this section uses.

- A **chain** is a pattern in which one event leads to the next.
- A **cluster** is a pattern in which many separate events crowd into one short burst.
- **Slow change** is a pattern in which small steps accumulate over a long run, so that no single event can be named as “the” change.

Three patterns of change to look for on a timeline

Sequencing first, then asking: what shape does the change make?



One set of events can carry several patterns: 1848 is a cluster of revolts, and each revolt had its own chain of causes.

Labelled diagram titled 'Three patterns of change to look for on a timeline' with three stacked panels: **CHAIN** (1939-45 World War II weakens Europe's empires, 1947 India and Pakistan win independence, 1957 Ghana leads sub-Saharan Africa, 1960 the 'Year of Africa': 17 nations); **CLUSTER** (Feb 1848 revolution in France, Mar 1848 revolts in the German states, Mar 1848 revolt in the Austrian Empire, 1848 revolts in the Italian states); **SLOW CHANGE** (1895 SA women win the vote and right to stand, 1902 Commonwealth Franchise Act, 1921 first woman elected: Edith Cowan, 1984 Sex Discrimination Act).

Figure 5. Three patterns of change to look for on a timeline (source: sections 1B, 1C and 1F; the patterns are defined in part 5).

The chain panel uses the wave of independence that followed World War II (taught in section 1C): the war weakened Europe's empires, and within fifteen years the map of Asia and Africa had been redrawn. The order is part of the argument — each step made the next more likely — but notice that the *connection* (the war weakened the empires) is supplied by evidence studied in 1C, not by the order alone. That distinction matters, and part 5 returns to it below.

The cluster panel uses 1848 (taught in section 1B): revolutions and revolts broke out in France, the German states, the Austrian Empire and the Italian states within months of one another. The cluster is itself a historical fact worth naming — something made 1848 a year of revolt across separate states.

The slow change panel uses the long campaign for women's rights in Australia (taught in section 1F): from South Australia's 1895 start to the Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 is about ninety years, and no single date in between can carry the whole change.

One set of events can show more than one pattern at once: 1848 is a cluster of revolts, and each revolt had its own chain of causes. Naming the pattern is a way of *describing* the shape of change before you try to explain it.

Where in the world? Elaboration VC2HH10S02.E02 also asks you to identify which parts of the world were caught up in a significant event, or affected by one. Sequencing an event therefore includes mapping its reach. Figure 6 does this for three events you have studied.

Where in the world?

Regions involved in and affected by three significant events (dates and facts from sections 1C and 3F).

Event	Where and when it began	Parts of the world involved	Parts of the world affected
World War I, 1914 to 1918	Europe, 1914	The Allies (including Britain and its empire, France, Russia, the United States from 1917) against the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire)	Europe (the Western Front in France and Belgium), English coastal towns, and empires worldwide - Australia served as part of the British Empire
World War II, 1939 to 1945	Europe, 1939	The Allies (including Britain and its empire, the USSR, China, the United States) against the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan); Australia against Germany from 1939, against Japan from 1941	Europe, Asia and the Pacific - the war ended with atomic bombs dropped on Japan in August 1945
Global Financial Crisis, 2007 to 2008	The United States, 2007	Banks and markets across the world as lending froze and trade fell	Worldwide: unemployment rose across the rich world and recovery was slow

A significant event is rarely local: sequencing it also means mapping where it reached.

Table titled ‘Where in the world?’ with three rows — World War I (1914 to 1918), World War II (1939 to 1945), and the Global Financial Crisis (2007 to 2008) — and columns for where and when each began, the parts of the world involved, and the parts of the world affected.

Figure 6. Parts of the world involved in and affected by three significant events (source: sections 1C and 3F; the Global Financial Crisis is taught in section 1C).

All three began in one place (Europe; Europe; the United States) and reached far beyond it. World War I’s affected parts include the Western Front in France and Belgium and empires worldwide, with Australia serving as part of the British Empire (section 3F); World War II reached Europe, Asia and the Pacific, ending with the atomic bombs of August 1945 (sections 1C and 3F); the Global Financial Crisis raised unemployment across the rich world (section 1C). A significant event is rarely local: sequencing it also means saying how far it travelled.

A warning about cause. Sequencing is a test of order, not a proof of connection. The mistake has a nickname: “*after this, so because of this*” — the habit of reading a cause out of nothing but an order. The Moon landing (July 1969) came before the first Earth Day (April 1970), but the order alone does not make the Moon landing a cause of Earth Day. To be fair to the habit, sequencing does real work in the *other* direction: a later event can never cause an earlier one, so order can rule a claimed cause **out**. It can never rule one **in**. To rule a cause in, you need evidence of a connection — like the evidence studied in section 1C that World War II weakened Europe’s empires, which is what turns the 1945 → 1947 → 1957 → 1960 order into a chain rather than a coincidence. Keep the two claims apart: *sequence* is a claim about order; *cause* is a claim about connection.

6. Sequencing sources for an argument (VC2HH10S02.E03)

A **primary source** is a source made at the time being studied — a law, a speech, a letter, a photograph from the time. A **secondary source** is a source made later by someone studying the time — a book or article written about the past afterwards. (Section 7C analyses sources in depth: purpose, features, content and context. Here the skill is narrower and just as important: putting sources in chronological order so that the order itself can support an argument.)

The rule is simple: **order sources by the date they were made**. Figure 7 applies it to five primary sources — five laws of the federal parliament — that you studied in sections 1F and 2D. The 1901 Act worked through a **dictation test**: a written test in a language chosen by the officer, used to exclude people the government wanted to keep out (taught in section 1F).

Five federal laws in chronological order

Primary sources from sections 1F and 2D, arranged to show change and continuity.

Order	Source	Year	Kind	What it shows
1	Immigration Restriction Act	1901	Primary source (a law of the time)	Arrivals sorted by race: the dictation test
2	Commonwealth Franchise Act	1902	Primary source (a law of the time)	Women won the federal vote and the right to stand
3	Migration Act	1958	Primary source (a law of the time)	The dictation test abolished
4	Racial Discrimination Act	1975	Primary source (a law of the time)	Race-based discrimination made unlawful
5	Sex Discrimination Act	1984	Primary source (a law of the time)	Discrimination on the basis of sex made unlawful

Read down the order column: the sequence itself is the evidence. The law moved from sorting people by race at the border (1901), to giving women a place in choosing the parliament (1902), to abolishing the race test (1958), to making race-based and sex-based discrimination unlawful (1975, 1984). One thing continued: the same federal parliament made every one of these laws.

Table titled ‘Five federal laws in chronological order’ with five rows numbered 1 to 5 — Immigration Restriction Act 1901; Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902; Migration Act 1958; Racial Discrimination Act 1975; Sex Discrimination Act 1984 — each labelled a primary source (a law of the time), with a ‘what it shows’ column, and an accent note: read down the order column, the sequence itself is the evidence, and one thing continued, the same federal parliament made every one of these laws.

Figure 7. Five federal laws in chronological order (source: the Acts themselves, as taught in sections 1F and 2D; retrieval details in ‘Sources for this section’).

Read down the order column. The sequence itself is the evidence: federal law moved from sorting people by race at the border (1901), to giving women a place in choosing the parliament (1902), to removing the race test (1958), to making race-based and sex-based discrimination unlawful (1975, 1984). And one thing continued through all five: the same federal parliament made every one of them. Change and continuity, read off an order.

Figure 8 shows what an argument built on that order looks like: one model paragraph, and a checklist of why it works.

Model: using chronological order to support an argument

One paragraph, built from the sequence in Figure 7.

Model paragraph	Why it works
Between 1901 and 1975, Australian federal law changed the way it treated race. In 1901 the Immigration Restriction Act let officers sort arrivals by race, using the dictation test. In 1958 the Migration Act abolished that test. In 1975 the Racial Discrimination Act made race-based discrimination unlawful. The order of these laws is the argument: the law moved from sorting people by race, to stopping the sorting, to making it unlawful. One thing continued through all three: the same federal parliament made each law.	✓ Dates in order, first to last ✓ Sequence words link the steps (in 1901, in 1958, in 1975) ✓ Every claim names a dated source ✓ States what changed (the legal role of race) ✓ Names what continued (the same parliament)

The sequence is the evidence; the argument says what the sequence shows. (Model built from content taught in section 1F.)

Model text titled ‘Using chronological order to support an argument’: on the left, a model paragraph tracing federal law from the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 through the Migration Act 1958 to the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, stating what changed and what continued; on the right, a five-point checklist — dates in order, first to last; sequence words link the steps; every claim names a dated source; states what changed; names what continued.

Figure 8. Using chronological order to support an argument (source: section 7B, part 6; the model is built from the sequence in Figure 7, taught in section 1F).

Notice what the paragraph does *not* do: it does not claim that the 1901 Act caused the 1958 Act, or that 1958 caused 1975. The order shows a direction of change, not a chain of causes. The argument is about **continuity and change** — exactly the analysis VC2HH10S02.E03 names — and the chronological order of the sources is what holds the argument up.

7. Common sequencing mistakes — and the fix (VC2HH10S02)

Figure 9 collects the four mistakes this section most often meets. Each fix is a rule you have already seen in parts 2 to 6.

Common sequencing mistakes - and the fix

Four habits that break an argument, and the correction for each.

Mistake	Example	The fix
Slipping a century	Writing that 1851 sits in the eighteenth century	Take the first two digits and add one: $18 + 1 =$ the nineteenth century
'After this, so because of this'	The Moon landing (1969) came before the first Earth Day (1970), so the Moon landing must have caused Earth Day	Order alone never proves a cause; look for evidence that one event actually led to the other
Guessing dates	A photograph with no date is placed by guess	Look for clues (clothes, vehicles, words); if there are none, say 'date unknown' and say why
Treating a gap as empty	A timeline jumps from 1918 to 1939, so nothing happened between the wars	A gap in the record is not proof that nothing happened; say what is recorded, and mark the gap

Sequence is a claim about order; cause is a claim about connection. Keep the two apart.

Table titled 'Common sequencing mistakes - and the fix' with four rows: slipping a century (writing that 1851 sits in the eighteenth century; fix: the +1 rule); 'after this, so because of this' (the Moon landing 1969 before the first Earth Day 1970 does not make it a cause; fix: order alone never proves a cause); guessing dates (an undated photograph placed by guess; fix: look for clues or say 'date unknown' and say why); treating a gap as empty (a timeline jumping from 1918 to 1939 does not mean nothing happened; fix: say what is recorded and mark the gap).

Figure 9. Common sequencing mistakes — and the fix (source: section 7B, part 7; the fixes restate the +1 rule of Figure 2, the cause warning of part 5, and the dating rules of Figure 3).

The last two rows are worth a sentence each. An undated source is not useless — photographs carry clues (clothes, vehicles, words in the background) — but when the clues run out, the honest move is to write “date unknown” and say why, not to guess a date into the record. And a gap in your timeline is a fact about your record, not about the past: between the armistice (the agreed ceasefire) of 11 November 1918 and the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 (taught in section 3F) banned poison gas in war, among much else. The gap in the record is not proof that nothing happened.

Sources for this section

Retrieval date for all online sources: **26 August 2026.**

1. Federal Register of Legislation, legislation.gov.au — *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (No. 17 of 1901; the dictation test), *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902* (women's federal vote and right to stand), *Migration Act 1958* (dictation test abolished), *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (enacted 11 June 1975), *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*; the five laws sequenced in Figure 7 and used in Figures 8, worked example 2 and Q11.
2. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations* (signed 26 June 1945, in force 24 October 1945) and *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (adopted 10 December 1948), un.org; the 1945 and 1948 items on the Figure 4 timeline.
3. This book's knowledge sections, which supply every other date used in the figures and questions: 1A (Industrial Revolution, c. 1760), 1B (People's Charter 1838; revolutions of 1848), 1C (UN 1945; Sputnik 1957; Moon landing 1969; Berlin Wall 9 November 1989; Global Financial Crisis 2007–08), 1D (March on Washington, 28 August 1963), 1F (suffrage dates 1895/1902; Edith Cowan 1921; Sex Discrimination Act 1984), 2C (gold rush 1851), 2D (Federation, 1 January 1901), 3F (World War I 1914–18; armistice 11 November 1918; Geneva Protocol 1925; World War II 1939–45).

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with help

Question. Four events from section 1C are listed below out of order. Sequence them chronologically, give the gaps between neighbours in years, and say which neighbouring pair is connected by a cause taught in this book.

- The Moon landing (Apollo 11), July 1969
- The United Nations founded, 24 October 1945
- The Berlin Wall opened, 9 November 1989
- Sputnik 1, the first satellite, 4 October 1957

Working	Comment
Step 1: Date each item. All four carry exact dates: 24 October 1945; 4 October 1957; July 1969; 9 November 1989.	Step 2 of the method: exact dates where they are known.
Step 2: Order from first to last. 1945 (UN founded) → 1957 (Sputnik 1) → 1969 (Moon landing) → 1989 (Berlin Wall opened).	Step 3: one line, first to last. No spans here, so no start-date rule needed.
Step 3: Measure the gaps. 1945 to 1957 is 12 years; 1957 to 1969 is 12 years; 1969 to 1989 is 20 years.	Gaps are part of the annotation (step 4): they tell you how the events are spaced.
Step 4: Test for a taught cause. Sputnik 1 (1957) → Moon landing (1969): section 1C teaches the space race — Sputnik's launch set off the contest that Apollo won. Order and connection.	A chain needs both: order (1957 before 1969) and a taught connection (the space race).
Step 5: Test another pair. UN founded (1945) → Berlin Wall opened (1989): the order is right, but this book teaches no claim that the UN's founding caused the Wall to open. Order without connection.	This is the warning from part 5: order can rule a cause out, never rule one in.

Answer: the order is UN founded (1945), Sputnik 1 (1957), Moon landing (1969), Berlin Wall opened (1989); gaps 12, 12 and 20 years; the 1957 → 1969 pair is connected by the space race taught in section 1C.

Worked example 2 — with help

Question. Sequence the five federal laws of Figure 7, then write one sentence of change and one sentence of continuity that the sequence supports.

Working	Comment
Step 1: Order by the date each law was made. 1901 Immigration Restriction Act → 1902 Commonwealth Franchise Act → 1958 Migration Act → 1975 Racial Discrimination Act → 1984 Sex Discrimination Act.	The rule of part 6: sources are ordered by the date they were made.
Step 2: Annotate each (Figure 7, 'what it shows'). 1901 sorts arrivals by race; 1902 gives women the federal vote and right to stand; 1958 removes the race test; 1975 makes race-based discrimination unlawful; 1984 makes sex-based discrimination unlawful.	Step 4 of the method: a dated note under each item.
Step 3: Read the change. The legal role of race moved from a lawful ground for sorting people (1901) to a ground on which discrimination is unlawful (1975).	A change needs two dated moments that differ: 1901 and 1975.
Step 4: Read the continuity. The same federal parliament made all five laws, using the same law-making power.	A continuity names what stayed the same across the dated stretch.

Answer: order 1901, 1902, 1958, 1975, 1984. Change: federal law moved from sorting people by race to making race-based discrimination unlawful. Continuity: the same federal parliament made every one of the five laws.

Practice questions

With help

- Q1.** Using Figure 1, name the term that means: (a) a stretch of time studied as one unit; (b) an event that marks an important change of direction; (c) a source made at the time being studied.
- Q2.** Using the +1 rule (Figure 2), name the century for each taught year: (a) 1838, the People's Charter (1B); (b) 1918, the armistice that ended World War I (3F); (c) 2015, the Paris Agreement on climate (1C); (d) c. 1760, the Industrial Revolution's beginning (1A).
- Q3.** Apply steps 2 and 3 of the method (Figure 3) to these four items: Federation (1 January 1901, 2D); the gold rush begins in Victoria (1851, 2C); the People's Charter published (1838, 1B); World War I begins (1914, 3A). Write the ordered line of years.
- Q4.** Using the model timeline (Figure 4): (a) how many years passed between the start of World War I and the start of World War II? (b) which theme of the legend does Sputnik 1 belong to?
- Q5.** Which pattern of Figure 5 does the year 1848 show, and what evidence in the panel supports your answer?
- Q6.** Using Figure 7: which law sits second in the order, and what does its row say it shows?

On your own

- Q7.** Sequence the following seven items in chronological order, using the rules of Figure 3 (c. where a date is approximate; a span sits at its start date): the Migration Act; the Berlin Wall opened; c. 1760, the Industrial Revolution begins; the People's Charter; World War II (1939 to 1945); the Apollo 11 Moon landing; Federation.
- Q8.** A student sees a timeline that jumps from 1918 to 1939 and concludes that nothing happened between the wars. Use the fourth row of Figure 9 and one dated fact taught in this book (section 3F teaches the Geneva Protocol of 1925) to answer the student in two or three sentences.
- Q9.** Two claims are offered about the sequence 1969 → 1970 and the sequence 1939–45 → 1947 → 1957 → 1960: (a) "The Moon landing (July 1969) came before the first Earth Day (April 1970), so the Moon landing caused Earth Day." (b) "World War II (1939–45) weakened Europe's empires, which made independence more likely — India and Pakistan in 1947, Ghana in 1957, seventeen nations in 1960." Using the cause warning of part 5, say which claim is better supported and why. In doing so, give claim (a) its strongest defence before you reject it.
- Q10.** Using Figure 6, write three sentences on World War II: where and when it began; the parts of the world involved; the parts of the world affected.
- Q11.** Compare the first and fourth laws in Figure 7 (1901 and 1975). Write one paragraph that states one change and one continuity between them, using the model paragraph of Figure 8 as your guide.
- Q12. Inquiry task** (VC2HH10S02 .E01). In a group of three or four, build one shared, annotated timeline of the big world developments — and the movements that pushed for change — from a chosen moment in the past to today. (1) Agree on a starting moment studied in this book (for example 1851, 1901 or 1945). (2) Each member researches four to five dated developments between that moment and the present, using the chapters of this book and recording where each date came from. (3) Pool the items, sequence them on one line, and annotate each with one short note. (4) Mark two continuities and two changes on the timeline, and present it to the class. (5) As a group, choose one item you judge to be a turning point and defend your choice in two or three sentences, naming your criterion (for example, how many people it affected, or for how long).

Answers

Q1. (a) Period. (b) Turning point. (c) Primary source.

Q2. (a) Nineteenth century (18 + 1). (b) Twentieth century (19 + 1). (c) Twenty-first century (20 + 1). (d) Eighteenth century (17 + 1).

Q3. 1838 → 1851 → 1901 → 1914.

Q4. (a) 25 years (1914 to 1939). (b) Science, technology and environment.

Q5. A cluster: four separate revolts (France, the German states, the Austrian Empire, the Italian states) crowding into the months of one year, February to March 1848 and the wider year.

Q6. The Commonwealth Franchise Act, 1902; women won the federal vote and the right to stand.

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. c. 1760 (Industrial Revolution begins) → 1838 (People's Charter) → 1901 (Federation) → 1939 (World War II, span placed at its start) → 1958 (Migration Act) → 1969 (Apollo 11 Moon landing) → 1989 (Berlin Wall opened). Three rules were in play: c. dates order by their best estimate (c. 1760 is still clearly the first); a span sits at its start (World War II at 1939, before the 1958 Act even though the war ran to 1945); and exact dates order straight off the calendar.

Q8. A gap in a timeline is a fact about the record, not about the past. The book itself fills part of this gap: the Geneva Protocol of 1925, taught in section 3F, banned poison gas in war between the two world wars. So the honest reading is “our line records 1918 and 1939; the years between were not empty — they are marked by at least the 1925 Protocol — and the gap should be marked, not treated as silence.”

Q9. Claim (b) is better supported. Steelman for (a): the two events sit close together in time and in theme — a new technological age and a new public awareness of the planet — so it is not silly to look for a link; and sequencing does its job of ruling out the *reverse* (Earth Day cannot have caused the Moon landing). But the defence stops there: order alone supplies no connection, and this book teaches no link from Apollo to Earth Day (section 1C instead roots environmental awareness in works like *Silent Spring*, 1962). Claim (b), by contrast, has both ingredients the cause warning demands: the right order (1939–45 before 1947, 1957 and 1960) **and** a taught connection (section 1C: the war weakened Europe's empires, making independence more likely). (b) is a chain; (a) is an order wearing a chain's clothes.

Q10. World War II began in Europe in 1939. The parts of the world involved ran from the Allies (including Britain and its empire, the USSR, China and the United States) against the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan), with Australia at war against Germany from 1939 and against Japan from 1941. The parts of the world affected stretched across Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the war ended with the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in August 1945.

Q11. *Change*: in 1901 the Immigration Restriction Act let officers sort arrivals by race using the dictation test; in 1975 the Racial Discrimination Act made it unlawful to treat a person worse because of race — the legal role of race flipped from a ground for sorting to a ground protected against discrimination. *Continuity*: both were made by the same federal parliament using the same law-making power, so the institution continued while its choices changed. (Compare the model paragraph, Figure 8: dates in order, sequence words, every claim tied to a dated source, one change and one continuity named.)

Q12. There is no single correct timeline; the marks sit in the method. A strong response: (1) names a starting moment studied in this book; (2) pools dated developments with the source of each date recorded; (3) sequences them on one line, with c. dates and span-at-start handled by the rules of Figure 3; (4) annotates each item and marks two continuities and two changes that genuinely follow from the dated items; (5) defends one turning point with a named criterion (for example “how many people it affected” or “for how long”), as section 8C will develop. A weak response lists dates without sources, or reads a cause out of order alone, or calls an item a turning point without saying why.

Key terms

Term	Meaning used in this section
Chronology	The order in which things happened, first to last
Sequence (verb)	To place events, individuals, ideas or developments in chronological order
Narrative	An account of the past built out of events, ideas and developments; historical when built from evidence
Timeline	A diagram that places events along a line in the order they happened
Period	A stretch of time studied as one unit
Decade / century	A run of ten years / a run of one hundred years (century named by the +1 rule)
Circa (c.)	“Around”; used when a date is not known exactly
Periodisation	The (contested) way historians divide the past into periods; this book begins the modern world at c. 1750
Turning point	An event that marks an important change of direction
Span	A dated run over years (1914 to 1918); placed at its start date on this book’s timelines
Primary source	A source made at the time being studied (a law, speech, letter, photograph)
Secondary source	A source made later by someone studying the time
Chain / cluster / slow change	One event leading to the next / many events in one short burst / small steps over a long run
Continuity	What stays the same across a period of change
Change	What becomes different across a period
Cause / consequence	Why something happened / what flowed from it; order can rule a cause out, never rule one in

Reading a source closely: who, why, what and when

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 9 and 10

Owns VC2HH10S03

Draws on — VC2HH10S03.E01, VC2HH10S03.E02, VC2HH10S03.E03, VC2HH10S03.E04, VC2HH10S03.E05, VC2HH10S03.E06. **§2A note:** E06 is retained with its worked source substituted; per the notice at the front of this book, the skill shape of E06 — explaining when and why a source was made, and how that background shaped the different ways people responded to it — is taught here through a neutral source from this book's taught content, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948).

Builds on — section 7A (VC2HH10S01), section 7B (VC2HH10S02) and the knowledge chapters, which supply every source this section reads.

Scope note: this section teaches the content description as set out in the notice at the front of this book. Elaboration VC2HH10S03.E06 lists the Bringing Them Home report (1997) as an example source; under that notice, that source is not taught here. The skill E06 teaches — explaining when and why a source was made, and how that background shaped people's responses to it — is taught instead through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which sections 1C, 4D and 6B of this book teach in full.

Every claim in this book — the Industrial Revolution beginning around 1760, Federation on 1 January 1901, the vote of 10 December 1948 — came to you through a **source**: something made by someone, somewhere, at some time. So far this book has mostly given you the claims. From here on, the skill is to read the thing behind the claim.

This section teaches a check of four questions that works on any source, of any type, from any part of this book: **purpose** (what did the maker want it to do?), **features** (what is it, who made it, when and where?), **content** (what does it say or show?) and **context** (what was happening around it?). The check is small, but it does a lot of work: it turns a source from a picture on a page into evidence you can question, and it prepares you for the three skills built on top of it — judging a source's value as evidence (section 7D), reading perspectives (section 7E) and evaluating interpretations (section 7F).

Theory

1. Sources and interpretations (VC2HH10S03.E01, VC2HH10S03.E02)

A **source** is any trace of the past we can study. Section 7B gave you the two big kinds: a **primary source** was made at the time being studied; a **secondary source** was made later, by someone studying that time. Elaboration E01 spells out how broad the family of sources is — written, oral and visual — and Figure 1 sorts that family into groups, using only real sources you have met, or will meet, in this book.

The family of historical sources

Written sources <i>diaries · letters · speeches · newspapers · laws · government reports</i> · Frank Hurley's wartime diary — National Library of Australia · Andrew Fisher's Colac speech, 31 July 1914 — section 3B · The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 — section 1F · Official counts such as the 1954 census — section 1F	Oral records <i>interviews · accounts · stories</i> · Recorded interviews with veterans of World War I — the Keith Murdoch Sound Archive, Australian War Memorial · Migrants telling their stories — the National Library of Australia's oral history collection
Visual sources <i>photographs · cartoons · paintings · film and video</i> · The Bulletin cartoon of 21 August 1886, artist Phil May — part 5 · Frank Hurley's World War I photographs — Australian War Memorial · Tom Roberts, Shearing the Rams, 1890 — section 2D · Film of Federation celebrations, 1901	Interpretations made later <i>textbooks · historians' writings · documentaries · films · fiction</i> · This book · C. E. W. Bean's <i>Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918</i>, published 1921 to 1943 · The War That Changed Us — ABC documentary series, 2014 · The film <i>Gallipoli</i> (1981) · the novel <i>Fly Away Peter</i> (1982)

A source is any trace of the past we can study (section 7B). The source family follows VC2HH10S03.E01; interpretations follow VC2HH10S03.E02.

Table titled 'The family of historical sources' with four blocks — written sources (diaries, letters, speeches, newspapers, laws, government reports), oral records (interviews, accounts, stories), visual sources (photographs, cartoons, paintings, film and video) and interpretations made later (textbooks, historians' writings, documentaries, films, fiction) — each with a named real example from this book and where it is held.

Figure 1. The family of historical sources (source: section 7C, part 1; every example is a real source named in 'Sources for this section').

Two of those groups carry a trap.

The first is **film**. Moving pictures *from* the time are primary sources; moving pictures made *about* the time later are interpretations. Film of Melbourne crowds celebrating Federation in 1901 is a primary source; the film *Gallipoli* (1981), which tells a story set in World War I, was made more than sixty years after the war began and is an interpretation — a later telling, built from the past. The same rule sorts photographs from a painting made years after an event.

The second is **oral records**. An interview with a person who lived an event is a source *for* that event even when it is recorded long after it — the words are the person's own, spoken rather than written. The voices of World War I veterans, recorded for the Keith Murdoch Sound Archive at the Australian War Memorial, work this way: recorded decades after 1918, but carrying the voice of someone who was there.

E02 adds a second family: **interpretations**. An interpretation is an account of the past built later from sources — the writings of historians, this textbook, documentaries, films and fiction. C. E. W. Bean's *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (published 1921 to 1943, from sources gathered at the front), the ABC documentary series *The War That Changed Us* (2014), and David Malouf's novel *Fly Away Peter* (1982), set in World War I, are all interpretations: each selects sources and builds a story from them. Sources are the raw material; interpretations are what people build from it. Section 7F teaches you to evaluate those buildings. This section teaches you to read the raw material.

2. The four words of this section (VC2HH10S03)

The content description uses four words — purpose, features, content, context — without defining them.

Defining the terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *purpose*, *features*, *content* and *context* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as fixed subject terms with the meanings in Figure 2, and every question in this section is answerable on those meanings alone. Other books sometimes draw the lines slightly differently — some fold “features” into “content”, for example — and those differences matter when you compare books, but they do not matter for any task set here.

The four words of this section

PURPOSE What the maker wanted the source to do — inform, persuade, record, govern, honour. <i>Test: what did the maker want this to achieve?</i> Example: Menzies' broadcast of 3 September 1939 — to tell Australians the nation was at war, and to steady them.	FEATURES What the source is: kind, maker, date, place, form, audience. <i>Test: what kind of source is it, and who made it, when and where?</i> Example: a radio speech by the prime minister, on the evening Britain declared war, heard across the whole nation.
CONTENT What the source says and shows. <i>Test: what is in it?</i> Example: the words 'it is my melancholy duty' — and the news that Australia is at war.	CONTEXT The world around the source: what was happening when and where it was made. <i>Test: what was happening around it?</i> Example: Germany's invasion of Poland; Britain at war two days later; Australia remembering the cost of 1914 to 1918.

Features and context are checked against the world. Purpose and content are read out of the source itself.

Four definition cards titled 'The four words of this section': *Purpose* — what the maker wanted the source to do; *Features* — what the source is, who made it, when, where and for whom; *Content* — what the source says and shows; *Context* — the world around the source: what was happening when and where it was made. Each card carries its test question and a worked example.

Figure 2. The four words of this section (source: section 7C, part 2; each term is defined again at its first use in the body text).

Keep the lines sharp, because each word does different work:

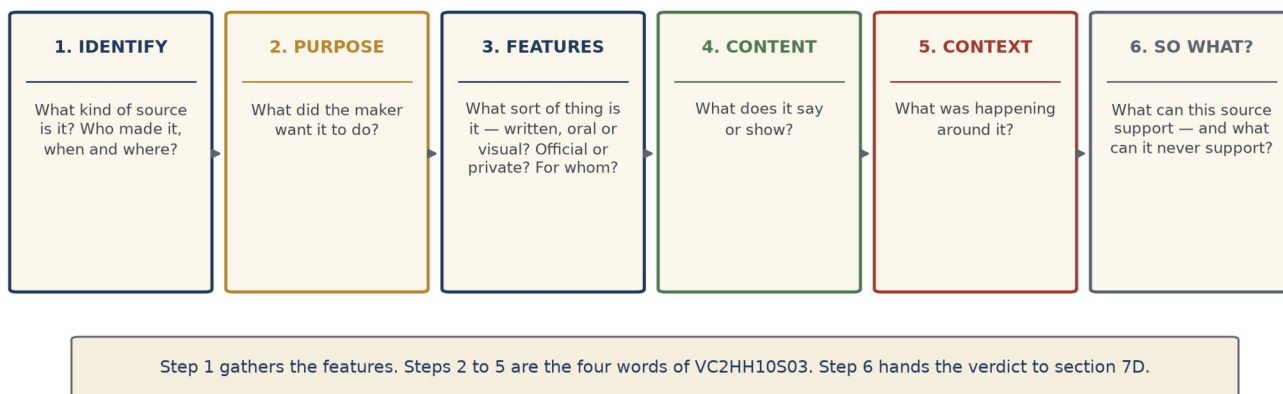
- The **purpose** of Menzies' radio broadcast of 3 September 1939 (quoted in section 3B) was to tell Australians the nation was at war and to steady them. That is what its maker wanted it to *do*.
- The **features** of the same broadcast are that it is a radio speech, made by the prime minister, Robert Menzies, on the evening Britain declared war, transmitted to the whole nation. That is what the source *is*.
- The **content** is what it actually says — including the words “it is my melancholy duty”. That is what it *carries*.
- The **context** is what was happening around it: Germany's invasion of Poland, Britain's declaration of war two days later, and an Australia that remembered the cost of 1914–18 (section 3B). That is the *world the source stands in*.

A source's features and context are checked against the world; its purpose and content are read out of the source itself. Part 3 turns the four words into a method.

3. The four-question check (VC2HH10S03)

Figure 3 is the method this section teaches. It runs the four questions in order, between two bookends: first you identify the source, and at the end you ask what it can support.

The four-question check



Labelled diagram titled 'The four-question check' showing six boxes joined left to right by arrows: 1. IDENTIFY (what kind of source is it? who made it, when, where?), 2. PURPOSE (what did the maker want it to do?), 3. FEATURES (what sort of thing is it — written, oral or visual; official or private; for whom?), 4. CONTENT (what does it say or show?), 5. CONTEXT (what was happening around it?), 6. SO WHAT? (what can this source support — and what can it never support?).

Figure 3. The four-question check (source: section 7C, part 3; step 1 gathers the features the four questions then use; step 6 hands the skill to section 7D).

Two notes on how to run it.

Order helps, but the questions lean on each other. You can barely state a source's purpose until you know its features, and its context often changes how you read its content. Run the check in order the first few times; after that, expect the answers to correct each other as you go.

Step 6 is the payoff. The four questions are not a form to fill in. They exist so you can say, at the end: *because of this purpose, these features, this content and this context, the source is strong for telling us X — and it can never tell us Y.* Section 7D takes over from there, turning that judgement into an evaluation of the source's value as evidence.

4. Source types: strengths and limitations (VC2HH10S03.E03)

Elaboration E03 asks you to prepare a table of the source types used to study modern history, with the strengths and limitations of each. Figure 4 is that table. Read it as a habit, not as a list to memorise: for every type, ask what the type is *good for* and what it *cannot give*.

Source types: strengths and limitations

Type	One strength	One limitation
Diaries and letters	The voice and feeling of someone who was there, from the time itself	One person's view; feeling colours it; often incomplete
Speeches	Show what leaders promised, and the mood they appealed to	Made to move listeners, not to report facts
Newspapers	Dated reports of events and public feeling	Editors choose what to print; papers take sides
Laws (legislation)	Show exactly what a government did and made lawful, with firm dates	Show what governments did, not how the law felt to people
Government reports and official counts	Numbers and facts gathered at the time, such as a census	Count only what officials chose to count
Interviews and recorded stories	Spoken memory; voices the written record often lacks	Recorded later than the events; memory changes over time
Photographs	Show people, places and moments as they looked	The photographer chooses the angle and the moment; some are built, not taken
Cartoons	Show attitudes — how one side saw things	Made to persuade or mock; may lean on stereotypes
Paintings	Show how a time pictured itself	The artist selects and shapes the scene; few people ever had one made
Film and video from the time	Movement and sound of events	Footage is chosen and cut; sometimes staged
Interpretations made later (textbooks, historians' writings, documentaries, films, fiction)	Built from many sources; can compare and explain	Carry the maker's choices and emphases (section 7F)

The table asked for in VC2HH10S03.E03: strengths and limitations stated for the type, before any one source is checked.

Table titled 'Source types: strengths and limitations' listing eleven source types — diaries and letters, speeches, newspapers, laws, government reports and official counts, interviews and recorded stories, photographs, cartoons, paintings, film and video from the time, and interpretations made later — each with one strength and one limitation.

Figure 4. Source types: strengths and limitations (source: section 7C, part 4; the strengths and limits are stated for the type, before any one source is checked).

Three things to notice about the table.

First, **no type is simply good or bad**. A diary is strong for experience and weak for numbers; official counts are strong for numbers and weak for experience. The type tells you what questions the source can answer before you have read a word of it.

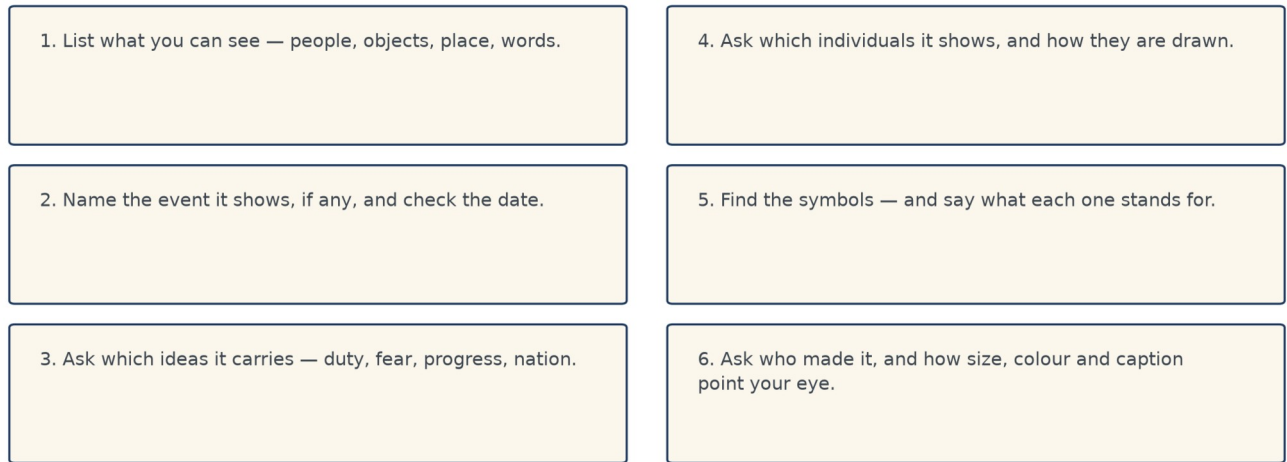
Second, **strengths and limits are not the same as truth**. A speech can state true facts and still be built to move a crowd; a letter can get a date wrong and still be first-rate evidence for how an event felt. Section 7D takes this further when it weighs accuracy against purpose.

Third, **the strongest picture comes from mixing types** — a law beside the newspaper that reported it beside the letter of the person it affected. Historians call this checking sources against each other; section 7D teaches it as corroboration.

5. Reading a visual source (VC2HH10S03.E04)

Visual sources — photographs, cartoons, paintings, film and video — are read, not just looked at. E04 names what to look for: the **events, ideas, people and symbols** a visual source represents. Figure 5 gives the reading order.

Reading a visual source



From VC2HH10S03.E04: the events, ideas, people and symbols a visual source represents.

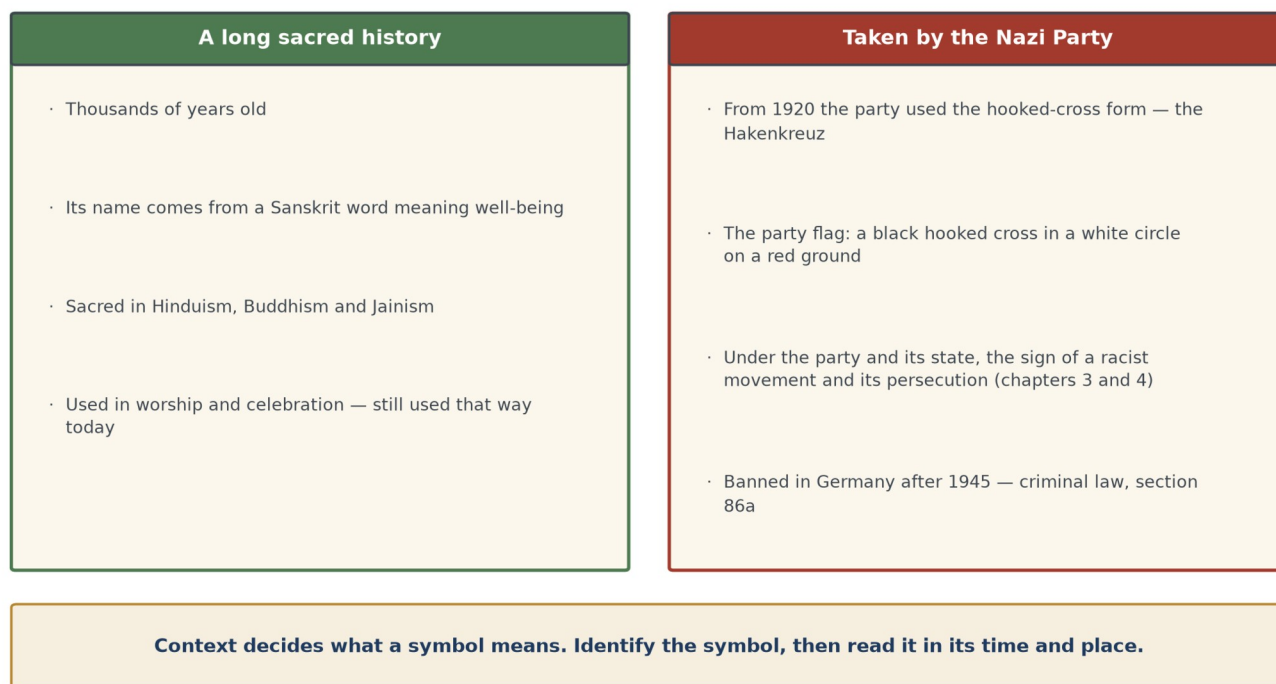
Checklist diagram titled 'Reading a visual source' with six steps: 1. List what you can see — people, objects, place, words; 2. Name the event it shows, if any, and check the date; 3. Ask which ideas it carries — duty, fear, progress, nation; 4. Ask which individuals it shows and how they are drawn; 5. Find the symbols and say what each stands for; 6. Ask who made it and how the design — size, colour, caption — points your eye.

Figure 5. Reading a visual source — a six-step checklist (source: section 7C, part 5; applied to a symbol in Figure 6 and to cartoons in Q8 and Q9).

Step 5 is where visual sources do things no other type can, because **symbols** pack a whole idea into one shape. And because symbols do that, their meaning comes from their history, not from the shape itself. There is no sharper case than the swastika.

The swastika is thousands of years old, and its name comes from a Sanskrit word meaning well-being. It is a sacred sign in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, used in worship and celebration, and it is still used that way today. Around 1900 it was also common in Europe as a good-luck sign. Then the Nazi Party took it. From 1920 the party used a hooked-cross version — in German, the **Hakenkreuz** — on a flag of its own design: a black hooked cross in a white circle on a red ground. Under the Nazi Party, and the state it took over in 1933, the same shape became the sign of a racist movement and of the persecution that grew into the Holocaust (chapters 3 and 4). After 1945 Germany banned the public display of Nazi signs, including the Hakenkreuz, in its criminal law (section 86a) — while in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain hands the same shape kept its sacred meaning. One shape, two histories.

One shape, two histories: the swastika



Two-panel diagram titled ‘One shape, two histories: the swastika’: the left panel gives the symbol’s long sacred history — thousands of years old, a name from a Sanskrit word meaning well-being, sacred in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, still used in worship today; the right panel gives its use by the Nazi Party — adopted from 1920 as the Hakenkreuz on a red, white and black flag, made the sign of a racist movement, banned in Germany after 1945 — with a banner reading ‘context decides what a symbol means’.

Figure 6. One shape, two histories: the swastika (source: section 7C, part 5; the Nazi record the symbol served is taught in chapters 3 and 4; this figure teaches how its meaning was made).

The lesson for E04 is general: when a visual source uses a symbol, identify the symbol, then ask what it stood for *at that time, in that place, for that maker*. A symbol read without its history is misread.

E04 also names **stereotypes** — fixed, oversimplified images applied to a whole group, so that the group is seen as a type rather than as people. Cartoons of the gold-rush decades leaned on them heavily. On 21 August 1886, the Sydney magazine *The Bulletin* printed a cartoon by the artist Phil May, “The Mongolian Octopus — its grip on Australia”, which drew Chinese immigration as a giant octopus seizing a figure of Australia. Section 2C taught the history behind it: the entry taxes on Chinese arrivals from 1855, the violence at Buckland River and Lambing Flat, and the prejudice that drove them. A cartoon like this is real evidence — but evidence of *the fear and racism of its makers and its audience*, not of the people it mocks. That is the rule for reading stereotypes in any source: analyse them as evidence of attitudes, and never accept them as a picture of the people they attack.

6. Context and purpose: Frank Hurley’s composite photographs (VC2HH10S03.E05)

E05 asks you to explain why a source’s context matters — and uses the photographs of **Frank Hurley** in World War I as its case. Hurley was appointed official photographer to the Australian Imperial Force in 1917 and sent to the Western Front, where he photographed the fighting of the Third Battle of Ypres — the battles around Passchendaele taught in section 3C. His diary of the war is held at the National Library of Australia; his prints are held at the Australian War Memorial.

Some of Hurley’s best-known images are **composite photographs** — pictures assembled from several separate negatives, joined into one print. Figure 7 sets out one of them and the disagreement it caused.

Source card: a composite photograph, and the two views of it

SOURCE CARD · FIGURE 7 *The battle of Zonnebeke — composite photograph, c. 1917–18*

A scene of the fighting country near Ypres — broken ground, advancing troops, a dramatic sky — built from several separate negatives joined into one print. The image itself is held by the Australian War Memorial and is not reproduced here.

Frank Hurley, official photographer to the Australian Imperial Force from 1917. His wartime diary is held by the National Library of Australia; his prints by the Australian War Memorial.

HURLEY'S PURPOSE

One photograph could not hold the scale of modern war; the composite was built to show its reality and to move audiences at home —

BEAN'S OBJECTION

the composite was built to show what one camera saw at one moment — and that a built picture distorts it.

The arrangement reached: Hurley's composites for exhibitions at home; the official record kept to single-shot photographs.

Source card for Frank Hurley's composite photograph 'The battle of Zonnebeke' (c. 1917–18, Australian War Memorial), describing how the scene was built from several negatives, above two voice panels: Hurley's purpose — one photograph could not hold the scale of modern war, and the composite was built to show its reality and to move audiences at home — and C. E. W. Bean's objection — a record must show what one camera saw at one moment, and a built picture distorts it.

Figure 7. Source card: Frank Hurley's composite photograph, and the two views of it (source: section 7C, part 6; the card describes the photograph — the image itself is held by the Australian War Memorial).

The context explains both men. Hurley was working in 1917, when photographs from the front were sent home to exhibitions to keep support for the war; he believed a single shot could not hold the scale of what he saw, and built his composites to carry it. Bean — Australia's official war correspondent, later the editor of the official history — held that a record must show exactly what one camera saw at one moment, and called built pictures distortions. The two reached an arrangement: Hurley's composites could be exhibited at home to support the war effort, but the official record would keep to single-shot photographs.

Run the four-question check on the source and see what context does. Without the context, the composite is just a dramatic war scene. With it — 1917, Passchendaele, exhibitions at home, the split between record and persuasion — the same image becomes evidence of *how the war was shown to Australians*, and of a real argument about what a photograph is for. That is E05's skill: the context is not background; it is what makes the source significant.

7. Context explains responses: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (vc2HH10S03. E06, substituted source)

E06 asks you to explain a source's context — and why that context matters for the **responses** the source drew, including responses that differ. Section 6B taught the source this section uses: the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948. Figure 8 gathers it as a single source card.



Source card for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: adopted by the UN General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as resolution 217 A (III), under the presidency of Australia's Dr H. V. Evatt; drafted by a committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt of the United States, with Australia's William Roy Hodgson among its members; thirty articles; a declaration, not a binding treaty — followed by the exact text of Article 1 and a note explaining its harder words.

Figure 8. Source card: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (source: sections 1C, 4D and 6B; Article 1 reproduced word for word from un.org; the harder words are explained beside the quote).

The four-question check runs cleanly on it. Its **features**: a declaration of thirty articles adopted as a United Nations resolution — a formal statement, not a binding treaty (section 6B defined that difference). Its **purpose**: to state, after the war, the rights every person should hold. Its **content**: the thirty articles, opening with Article 1's claim that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Its **context**: the world of 1945 to 1948 — the Holocaust, the war's dead, and the people driven from their homes, the new United Nations, and the first divisions of the Cold War (all taught in sections 1C, 4A–4D and 6B).

Now the E06 skill: the context is what makes the **responses** to the source understandable. Section 6B gave you the vote — 48 in favour, none against, eight abstentions, two states not voting. Figure 9 sorts those responses and ties each one to its context.

Context explains responses: the vote of 10 December 1948

The response	The context that explains it
48 states vote in favour; none against	A world that had just seen the Holocaust and the war wanted a shared standard of what every person is owed.
The Soviet bloc abstains (six of the eight abstentions)	It says the text does not go far enough, while guarding its own governments' power — the Cold War split already opening in 1948.
South Africa abstains	Its new government is building a system of racial separation; several articles strike at exactly that plan.
Saudi Arabia abstains	It objects to Article 18 (freedom of religion) and Article 16 (marriage) — its own frame on those questions.

Even a yes vote carried an argument: Australia's William Roy Hodgson voted in favour but insisted the Declaration should have been binding law, with a court behind it (section 6B).

Table titled 'Context explains responses: the vote of 10 December 1948' with four rows — the 48 states voting in favour, the Soviet bloc's six abstentions, South Africa's abstention, and Saudi Arabia's abstention — each with the response and the context that explains it; and a banner noting that William Roy Hodgson of Australia voted in favour but argued the Declaration should have been binding law.

Figure 9. Context explains responses: the vote of 10 December 1948 (source: section 6B, part 3; the vote was 48 in favour, none against, eight abstentions, two states not voting).

Read down the context column. The 48 yes votes came from a world that had just seen what governments could do to their own people and wanted a shared standard — that context explains the support. The Soviet bloc abstained, saying the text did not go far enough while guarding its own governments' power — a response shaped by the Cold War split already opening in 1948. South Africa abstained because its new government was building a system of racial separation, and several articles struck at exactly that plan — a response shaped by South Africa's own politics in that year. Saudi Arabia abstained over Articles 18 and 16 — freedom of religion and marriage — a response shaped by its own frame on those questions. And notice that even a yes vote came with an argument inside it: Australia's William Roy Hodgson voted for the Declaration but insisted words were not enough — rights belonged in binding law with a court behind them (section 6B).

None of those responses can be explained from the text of the Declaration alone. That is the point of E06: **to understand how a source was received, you must know the world that received it.** The same skill applies to every source in this book: the response to the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* differs between the officer choosing the test and the arrival facing it (section 1F); the response to a recruiting poster differs between the recruiter and the man it targets (section 3B). Responses live in context.

8. Common mistakes — and the fix (VC2HH10S03)

Figure 10 collects the four mistakes this section most often meets. Each fix is a rule from parts 2 to 7.

Common mistakes — and the fix

The mistake	The fix
Reading a symbol without its history	Identify the symbol, then ask what it stood for at that time and place (Figure 6).
Mixing up content and context	Content is in the source; context is the world around it.
Treating purpose as the same as truth	A source made to persuade can still state true facts — and can still be evidence of attitudes (section 7D develops this).
Judging a past source only by today's standards	Context first — explain what the time and place made possible before you give your verdict. Context explains; it does not excuse.

Understanding is not excusing: a source can be explained from its time and still be named as wrong.

Table titled 'Common mistakes - and the fix' with four rows: reading a symbol without its history (fix: identify the symbol, then ask what it stood for at that time and place — Figure 6); mixing up content and context (fix: content is in the source, context is the world around it); treating purpose as the same as truth (fix: a source made to persuade can still state true facts, and can still be evidence — of attitudes; section 7D develops this); judging a past source only by today's standards (fix: context first — explain what the time and place made possible before you give your own verdict; context explains, it does not excuse).

Figure 10. Common mistakes — and the fix (source: section 7C, part 8; the fixes restate the rules of Figures 2, 3, 5 and 6).

The last row needs care. Context first means *understanding* a source inside its own time before judging it — and understanding is not the same as excusing. The cartoon of 1886 can be explained from the racism of its age without that racism being accepted; the laws of 1901 can be placed in their context and still be named as wrong. Explaining why people held a view is one job; deciding what you think of it is another, and good history keeps the two in order.

Sources for this section

Retrieval date for all online sources: **26 August 2026**.

1. Victorian Curriculum F–10 v2.0, History Levels 9–10: content description VC2HH10S03 and elaborations E01–E06 (VCAA export, via this build's `_hh910_raw.json`).
2. Federal Register of Legislation, legislation.gov.au — *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Commonwealth), Act No. 17 of 1901, s 3(a) as enacted (the dictation test; Source 1 and Worked example 1).
3. Australian War Memorial, awm.gov.au — Frank Hurley, official photographer to the Australian Imperial Force from 1917; his composite photograph *The battle of Zonnebeke* (c. 1917–18); the Keith Murdoch Sound Archive, including recorded interviews with World War I veterans; soldiers' letters of the world wars.
4. National Library of Australia, nla.gov.au — Frank Hurley's wartime diary and papers; the Library's oral history collection of recorded interviews and stories.

5. United Nations, un.org — *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, General Assembly resolution 217 A (III), adopted 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris (Article 1 in Figure 8; the vote in Figure 9).
6. C. E. W. Bean (editor), *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (published 1921 to 1943; Bean wrote six volumes and edited the set), held by the Australian War Memorial.
7. ABC Television, *The War That Changed Us* (2014), a four-part documentary series on Australians in World War I.
8. *Gallipoli* (1981), feature film directed by Peter Weir, set in World War I.
9. David Malouf, *Fly Away Peter* (1982), a novel set during World War I.
10. *The Bulletin* (Sydney), 21 August 1886 — the cartoon “The Mongolian Octopus — its grip on Australia”, artist Phil May (described in part 5, not reproduced); copies held in Australian public collections.
11. “Roll Up” banner, Lambing Flat, c. 1860–61 — National Museum of Australia, nma.gov.au (used in Q9).
12. Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Swastika” — the symbol’s ancient origins and its sacred uses in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.
13. German Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch*), section 86a — the ban on the public display of the signs of unconstitutional organisations, including the Hakenkreuz.
14. This book’s knowledge sections, which supply the taught content drawn on here: 1C, 4D and 6B (the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), 1F (the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* and the dictation test), 2C (Chinese arrivals on the goldfields; Lambing Flat), 2D (Tom Roberts, *Shearing the Rams*, 1890), 3B (Andrew Fisher’s Colac speech, 31 July 1914; Robert Menzies’ broadcast, 3 September 1939), 3C (the Third Battle of Ypres and Passchendaele, 1917), 4A–4B (the Nazi Party’s rise and the Holocaust).

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with help: the dictation test, checked four ways (VC2HH10S03, VC2HH10S03.E03)

Question. Apply the four-question check to Source 1, section 3(a) of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*.

SOURCE 1

Section 3(a) of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* — the dictation test

‘Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in an European language dictated by the officer ...’

Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Commonwealth), Act No. 17 of 1901, s 3(a) as enacted — words defining a ‘prohibited immigrant’. Passed by the first federal parliament. Federal Register of Legislation, legislation.gov.au. The same words are reproduced in section 1F, Figure 5.

Source 1 card: the exact words of section 3(a) of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Commonwealth) as enacted — ‘Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in an European language dictated by the officer ...’ — with the origin note naming the first federal parliament and the date.

Figure 11. Source 1: section 3(a) of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (source: Federal Register of Legislation; the same words are reproduced in section 1F, Figure 5).

Working	Comment
Step 1: Identify. A law of the new federal parliament — s 3(a) of the <i>Immigration Restriction Act 1901</i> — a primary source, made at the time it governed.	Features first: kind, maker, date (parts 2 and 3).
Step 2: Purpose. To keep non-European arrivals out — without naming any race in the words of the law. The design of the test did the work: the officer chose the passage and the language, so any arrival could be failed.	Purpose lives in the design, not just the words.

Working	Comment
Step 3: Features. Written; legislation; applies at the border to every arrival; s 3(a) defines a “prohibited immigrant”.	Features say what the source is and whom it binds.
Step 4: Content. Any person who fails to write out and sign a dictated passage of fifty words, in a European language chosen by the officer, can be excluded.	Content is what the source itself says.
Step 5: Context. Federation had taken effect on 1 January 1901; the colonies had already restricted Chinese arrivals — Victoria taxed them from 1855 (section 2C) — and the new parliament made a national version one of its first acts (section 1F).	Context is checked against what the knowledge chapters teach.
Step 6: So what? Strong evidence of what the new parliament did and how; it cannot show how excluded people experienced the test — for that, other sources (letters, community records) are needed.	Every check ends with what the source can and cannot support.
Answer: the <i>Immigration Restriction Act 1901</i> , s 3(a), is a written primary source whose purpose was to exclude non-European arrivals without naming race in its words; its content is the dictation test; its context is Federation and the colonies’ earlier restrictions; it supports claims about the law and its design, not about the experience of those it excluded.	

Worked example 2 — with help: Hurley’s composite, checked four ways (VC2HH10S03.E05)

Question. Apply the four-question check to the composite photograph in Figure 7, then write one sentence on what it can support.

Working	Comment
Step 1: Identify. <i>The battle of Zonnebeke</i> , a composite photograph by Frank Hurley, official photographer to the Australian Imperial Force, c. 1917–18; held by the Australian War Memorial.	Identify names kind, maker, date and place of keeping.
Step 2: Purpose. Hurley believed one photograph could not hold the scale of modern war; he built composites to carry it — and they served the exhibitions that kept the war supported at home.	E05’s question: the purpose of the composite is argued from Hurley’s own position and the exhibitions.
Step 3: Features. A print assembled from several negatives — a constructed picture, not one camera’s single view.	The feature that matters most is named, because it shapes everything else.
Step 4: Content. A scene of the fighting country near Ypres — broken ground, advancing troops, a dramatic sky — as Hurley assembled it.	Content describes what the image shows, without claiming it is one real moment.
Step 5: Context. The Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), September to October 1917 (section 3C); photographs sent home to exhibitions; the split between record and persuasion that Bean drew and Hurley worked within.	Context is the 1917 front and the home-front audience.
Step 6: So what? Strong evidence of how the war was shown to Australians; not evidence of a single moment as one camera saw it.	The limit is part of the verdict.

Answer (model paragraph): *The battle of Zonnebeke* (c. 1917–18) is a composite photograph by Frank Hurley, official photographer to the Australian Imperial Force, held by the Australian War Memorial — a print built from several separate negatives. Hurley’s purpose was to show the scale of modern war, which he believed a single

photograph could not hold, and his composites served the exhibitions that kept the war supported at home. The image shows the fighting country near Ypres: broken ground, advancing troops and a dramatic sky. Its context is the Third Battle of Ypres of 1917 and the split between record and persuasion that the official correspondent C. E. W. Bean drew when he objected to built pictures. The source is therefore strong evidence of how the war was presented to Australians — and, being built from several negatives, it can never be evidence of one moment as a single camera saw it.

The paragraph is Figure 12's model with the blanks filled: every one of the four questions is answered, the context is tied to dated history taught in this book, and the last sentence names what the source cannot do.

A four-question analysis in one paragraph

Model paragraph	The checklist
[IDENTIFY + FEATURES] The battle of Zonnebeke (c. 1917–18) is a composite photograph by Frank Hurley, official photographer to the Australian Imperial Force, held by the Australian War Memorial — a print built from several separate negatives. [PURPOSE] Hurley's purpose was to show the scale of modern war, which he believed a single photograph could not hold, and his composites served the exhibitions that kept the war supported at home. [CONTENT] The image shows the fighting country near Ypres: broken ground, advancing troops and a dramatic sky. [CONTEXT] Its context is the Third Battle of Ypres of 1917 and the split between record and persuasion that the official correspondent C. E. W. Bean drew when he objected to built pictures. [SO WHAT] The source is therefore strong evidence of how the war was presented to Australians — and, being built from several negatives, it can never be evidence of one moment as a single camera saw it.	✓ Names kind, maker and date ✓ Answers all four questions ✓ Ties context to dated history taught in the book ✓ Keeps purpose and truth apart ✓ Ends with what the source can and cannot support

Model text titled 'A four-question analysis in one paragraph': on the left, a model paragraph analysing Frank Hurley's composite photograph, with its moves labelled — identify with kind, maker and date; purpose; features; content; context tied to dated history; verdict on what it can and cannot support; on the right, a five-point checklist — names kind, maker and date; answers all four questions; ties context to what the book teaches; keeps purpose and truth apart; ends with what the source can and cannot support.

Figure 12. A four-question analysis in one paragraph (source: section 7C, worked example 2; the paragraph is the worked example's own answer, with its moves labelled).

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Using Figure 1, classify each item as a written primary source, an oral primary source, a visual primary source, or an interpretation made later: (a) Frank Hurley's wartime diary; (b) the film *Gallipoli* (1981); (c) the *Immigration*

Restriction Act 1901; (d) a recorded interview with a returned soldier; (e) the cartoon “The Mongolian Octopus” (1886); (f) Bean’s *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*.

Q2. Match each question to one of the four words — purpose, features, content, context: (a) what does the source say or show? (b) what was happening around the source when it was made? (c) what did the maker want the source to do? (d) what kind of source is it, and who made it, when and where?

Q3. Using Figure 4, give one strength and one limitation for each type: (a) diaries and letters; (b) newspapers; (c) photographs.

Q4. Using Figure 6: (a) what does the swastika mean in its oldest uses? (b) give two facts about its use by the Nazi Party; (c) what does this case teach you about reading symbols in visual sources?

Q5. Using Figure 7: (a) what purpose did Hurley give for making composite photographs? (b) what did C. E. W. Bean object to? (c) what arrangement did the two reach?

Q6. Using Figure 9, name the three directions the eight abstentions in the Declaration’s vote came from, and the reason each gave or had.

On your own

Q7. Below is the opening of Prime Minister Robert Menzies’ radio broadcast on the evening of 3 September 1939 (Source 2). Apply the four-question check and write a paragraph of five to eight sentences, following the model in Figure 12.

Source 2. “It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of the persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.” — Robert Menzies, prime minister, radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939. Transcript and recording held by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia and the National Archives of Australia.

Q8. The cartoon described in part 5 — *The Bulletin*, 21 August 1886, “The Mongolian Octopus — its grip on Australia”, by Phil May — drew Chinese immigration as a giant octopus with a Mongolian face seizing a figure of Australia. (a) Identify the stereotype the cartoon carries. (b) State what the cartoon is real evidence of, using what section 2C teaches. (c) Complete and explain in your own words: “Historians read such images as evidence of ..., not as an accurate picture of ...”

Q9. The “Roll Up” banner (Lambing Flat, c. 1860–61; National Museum of Australia) carries the words “Roll Up Roll Up Roll Up No Chinese” and was carried by mobs that attacked Chinese camps. Apply the four-question check: what kind of source is it, what was its purpose, what is its content, and what is its context (use section 2C)? Then name whose perspective it carries, and whose is missing.

Q10. In five or six sentences, explain why the responses to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights differed in 1948, using Figure 9 and what section 6B teaches about the Declaration’s context. Your answer must name at least two of the three abstaining directions and the context behind each.

Q11. “A source made to persuade can never be used as evidence.” Test this claim with Hurley’s composite photograph (Figures 7 and 8’s source): give the strongest case for the claim, then the strongest case against it, and end with your own verdict and a reason. Marks go to the reasoning, not the side you land on.

Q12. Inquiry task (VC2HH10S03.E01, VC2HH10S03.E03). In a group of three or four, choose one question the content of this book can answer — for example, “Why did Australians fight in World War I?” (section 3B), “How did the gold rushes change the colonies?” (section 2C) or “How did federal law treat arrivals in the twentieth century?” (section 1F). Then: (1) collect four to six sources from the book’s sections — at least one written source, one visual source and one interpretation; (2) build a table like Figure 4 giving each source’s type, one strength and one limitation; (3) write one paragraph stating what your set can support for your question, and what it cannot; (4) present your table and paragraph to the class, and say which single source in your set you trust most for your question, and why.

Answers

Q1. (a) Written primary source. (b) Interpretation made later. (c) Written primary source (a law). (d) Oral primary source. (e) Visual primary source. (f) Interpretation made later (a historian's writing).

Q2. (a) Content. (b) Context. (c) Purpose. (d) Features.

Q3. (a) Strength: the voice and feelings of a person who was there, from the time itself. Limitation: one person's view, coloured by feeling, and often incomplete. (b) Strength: dated reports of events and of public feeling at the time. Limitation: editors choose what to print, and papers take sides. (c) Strength: shows people, places and moments as they looked. Limitation: the photographer chooses the angle and the moment — and some photographs, like Hurley's composites, are built, not taken.

Q4. (a) Well-being; it is a sacred sign in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. (b) Any two of: the Nazi Party used the hooked-cross form, the Hakenkreuz, from 1920; it appeared on the party's red, white and black flag; under the Nazi state it became the sign of a racist movement; Germany banned its public display after 1945. (c) A symbol's meaning comes from its history, not its shape — identify the symbol, then read it in its time and place.

Q5. (a) He believed one photograph could not hold the scale of modern war, and built composites to carry it. (b) Bean held that a record must show what one camera saw at one moment, and that built pictures distort. (c) The composites could be exhibited at home to support the war effort, while the official record kept to single-shot photographs.

Q6. The Soviet bloc — said the text did not go far enough, while guarding its own governments' power. South Africa — its new government was building a system of racial separation, which several articles struck at. Saudi Arabia — objected to Articles 18 and 16 (freedom of religion and marriage).

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. Model points, in the order of Figure 12: **identify/features** — a radio speech by the prime minister, Robert Menzies, on the evening of 3 September 1939, transmitted to the whole nation; a primary source, made at the moment it describes. **Purpose** — to tell Australians officially that the nation was at war, and to steady them; the word “melancholy” shows the tone he chose: grave, not stirring. **Content** — Britain has declared war on Germany because Germany persisted in invading Poland, and Australia is therefore at war too. **Context** — Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939; Britain declared war two days later; Australia entered because Britain was in, and did so remembering the cost of 1914 to 1918 (section 3B). **So what** — the broadcast is strong evidence of how the government announced the war and of the mood it struck; it cannot by itself show how ordinary Australians responded — for that, letters, diaries and newspapers are needed.

Q8. (a) The cartoon treats all Chinese arrivals as one threatening type — a monstrous sea creature — rather than as people; that is a racial stereotype, and the label “Mongolian” was itself a way of marking a whole group as foreign and less welcome. (b) It is real evidence of the fear and racism that section 2C places in history: the entry taxes on Chinese arrivals from 1855, the violence at Buckland River and Lambing Flat, and the public mood that pressed governments to restrict them. (c) Example completion: “Historians read such images as evidence of *the attitudes of their makers and their audience*, not as an accurate picture of *the people they attack*.” The sentence earns its marks when the student explains that the image shows its maker's fear, not the migrants' character.

Q9. Identify/features: an object — a cloth banner, c. 1860–61, made and carried at Lambing Flat; a primary source from the time, now held by the National Museum of Australia. **Purpose:** to gather and fire up the European diggers who attacked Chinese camps — to make a crowd into a mob with one demand. **Content:** the demand itself, in its own words — “Roll Up Roll Up Roll Up No Chinese”. **Context:** the gold-rush competition and racism section 2C teaches — the entry taxes from 1855, and the violence at Buckland River (1857) and Lambing Flat (1860–61). **Perspective carried:** the hostile European diggers'. **Perspective missing:** the Chinese miners' — the people the banner was aimed at had their camps attacked, yet the banner tells us nothing of how they saw the goldfields; for that, other sources must be found.

Q10. Model points: the Declaration was adopted into a world shaped by the war and the Holocaust, and its context produced divided responses. Most states — 48 — voted for it, because a world that had just seen the Holocaust wanted a shared standard of what every person is owed. The Soviet bloc abstained, saying the text did not go far

enough while guarding its own governments' power — a response shaped by the Cold War split already opening in 1948. South Africa abstained because its new government was building a system of racial separation, and several articles struck at that plan. Saudi Arabia abstained over Articles 18 and 16. So the same text drew different responses because each state read it from inside its own politics — which is exactly why context must come before we explain a response.

Q11. For the claim: Hurley's composite was built to move an audience — assembled from several negatives, it shows no single moment as it happened, and a source shaped to persuade is weak evidence for what actually occurred. Against the claim: the composite is still evidence — of *how the war was shown to Australians in 1917–18*, and of what show-makers believed would move them; its persuasion is the very thing a historian of the home front wants to study, and section 7D will state the rule plainly: a source with a strong slant can reveal the attitudes of its time. Verdict (example): the claim is right about one question and wrong about evidence as such — a persuasive source is poor evidence for the facts it shapes, but it can be first-rate evidence for the attitudes behind them, and throwing it away loses the second half. Any verdict earns its marks if the two cases are each stated at full strength first.

Q12. There is no single correct set; the marks sit in the method. A strong response: (1) chooses a question the book really answers and collects four to six sources from the book's own sections, spanning written, visual and interpretation types; (2) builds a table in which every strength and limitation is about the *type as used for that question* (a poster is strong for attitudes and weak for numbers — for *this* question, which does it need?); (3) writes a paragraph that answers the question from the set and names at least one thing the set cannot support; (4) defends a choice of most-trusted source with a reason tied to purpose and features — for example, trusting a law for what the government did, but an interview for how the law felt. A weak response lists sources without types, or states strengths and limits as fixed labels without tying them to the question.

Key terms

Term	Meaning used in this section
Source	Any trace of the past we can study
Primary source	A source made at the time being studied
Secondary source	A source made later by someone studying the time
Interpretation	An account of the past built later from sources — a textbook, a historian's writing, a documentary, a film, fiction
Purpose	What the maker wanted the source to do — inform, persuade, record, govern, honour
Features	What the source is: kind, maker, date, place, form, audience
Content	What the source says and shows
Context	The world around the source: what was happening when and where it was made
Four-question check	This section's method: identify, then purpose, features, content, context, then "what can it support?"
Composite photograph	A picture assembled from several separate negatives into one print (Hurley's World War I images)
Symbol	A shape or image that stands for a whole idea; its meaning comes from its history, not the shape
Hakenkreuz	The hooked-cross form of the swastika used by the Nazi Party from 1920
Stereotype	A fixed, oversimplified image applied to a whole group; read as evidence of attitudes, never as a picture of the group
Dictation test	The tool of the <i>Immigration Restriction Act 1901</i> : a

Term	Meaning used in this section
Abstain	fifty-word passage chosen by the officer, which any arrival could be failed In a vote, to choose not to vote for or against (defined in section 6B)

What is a source worth as evidence?

Everything we know about the past comes to us through sources: letters, posters, photographs, speeches, official records, newspapers, objects. But a source sitting on a desk proves nothing by itself. It is information. For information to do the work of history, it has to become *evidence* — and that only happens when someone checks it, compares it with other sources, and judges it against a question. This section teaches that judgement. A simpler check asks of a source: is it accurate, is it useful? Here you take the next step: you *evaluate* the value of a source as evidence — for a question, for a claim about continuity and change, for a cause or a consequence.

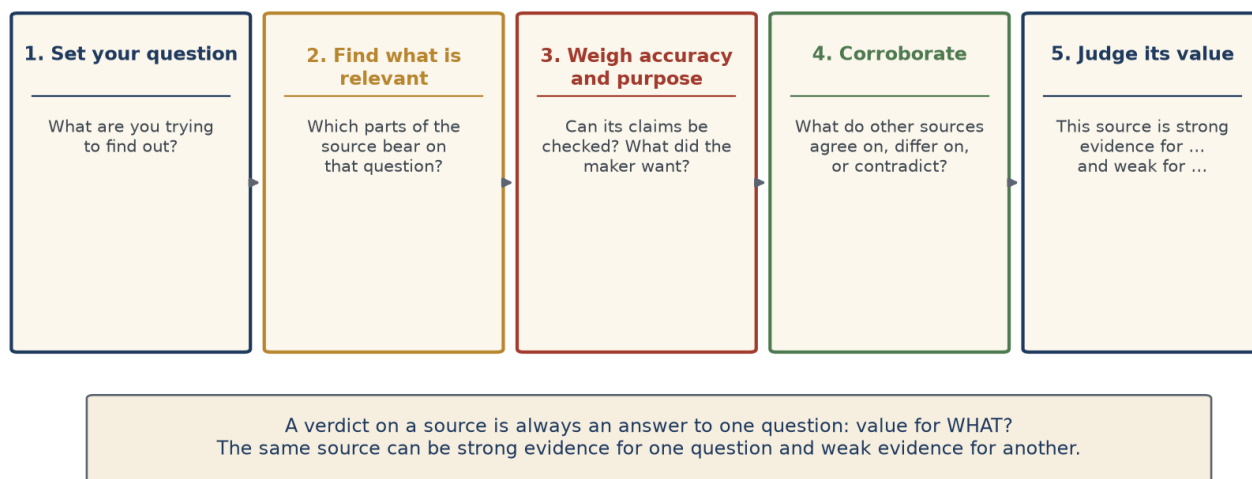
Curriculum key — This section owns VC2HH10S04. It draws on VC2HH10S04.E01, VC2HH10S04.E02, VC2HH10S04.E03, VC2HH10S04.E04, VC2HH10S04.E05 and VC2HH10S04.E06. By the end of the band, students are expected to judge sources by checking their accuracy and their value as evidence — this section builds that skill.

Theory

1. Sources, information, evidence. A *source* is any trace of the past that we can study. The *information* in it is what it says or shows. *Evidence* is information that has been judged useful for answering a particular historical question. The same piece of information can be evidence for one question and not for another, so the judging is the skill. Historians sort sources into two kinds. A **primary source** was made at the time of the events it shows, or soon after, by someone who was there or close to them: a letter, a diary, a poster, a photograph, a law, a newspaper report, an object. A **secondary source** was made later, looking back at the events: a historian's book, a documentary, a film. Both kinds can be good evidence; both kinds can mislead. The Victorian Curriculum sets out four jobs in working with sources — features, content and context (Section 7C); perspectives (Section 7E); interpretations (Section 7F); and the job of this section, evaluation as evidence. Evaluation leans on the other three: you cannot judge a source's value until you know what it is, who made it, and why.

2. The method: five steps. The figure below is the method this section teaches. Every step matters, and step 1 comes first on purpose: a source can only be judged once you know the question.

Evaluating a source: five steps to a judgement



Draws on VC2HH10S04.E01, E02, E04 and E05.

Five labelled step boxes in a row: set your question, find what is relevant, weigh accuracy and purpose, corroborate, judge its value

Step 4 names two moves the achievement standard expects. To **verify** a claim is to check it is true — to test a date, a name or a number against something else that knows the facts. To **corroborate** a source is to set it beside other sources: when two or more independent sources point the same way, each one backs the others up, and the claim is stronger than any single voice.

3. Value depends on the question. This is the single most important idea in evaluating sources. A source is not simply “good” or “bad”: its reliability and its usefulness turn on which questions you ask of it. An account that leans hard towards one side may be poor evidence for what happened — but it may be excellent evidence for the attitudes that were common at the time, because it shows what some people believed and how they argued. The curriculum states this directly in VC2HH10S04.E01.

Words to watch: reliability, usefulness, bias. *Reliable* and *useful* are frame-dependent words here. In everyday speech, “reliable” can mean “always tells the truth”. In this section they are used in the sense the Victorian Curriculum gives them in VC2HH10S04.E01: a source’s reliability and usefulness depend on which questions you ask of it. A source can be trustworthy for one question and worthless for another, and saying which is your job. *Bias* is the most misused word in source work. In this section, bias means a slant — the source leans towards one side because of who made it and what they wanted. A biased source is not automatically useless: the slant itself is evidence of how its maker saw the world. To be fair, the dismissive use of the word has a real point too — a source that leans hard one way is weak evidence for what happened, and it is right to handle it with care. What it is strong evidence for is attitudes, and VC2HH10S04.E01 says exactly that. The British historian E. H. Carr made the deeper point in *What Is History?* (1961): historical facts never reach us pure, but always come through the mind of the person who recorded them. So the question is never “is this source biased?” — every human source leans somewhere. The questions are: where does it lean, and what is it still good evidence for?

4. Accuracy and purpose. A source’s **accuracy** is how true its claims are: do its dates, names and numbers stand up when checked? Its **purpose** is what its maker wanted it to do — inform, persuade, honour, govern, sell. The two must be weighed together, and two mistakes are common. The first is to throw a source away because it is not accurate: a diary that gets a date wrong can still be first-rate evidence for how an event felt to the person living it. The second is to trust a source because it is accurate: a poster can state true facts and still be built to persuade, and its purpose shapes what it leaves out. So before using a source, ask: can its claims be checked against something else, was its maker in a position to know, and what did the maker want to happen? A source made to persuade is not automatically false; a source that is accurate is not automatically useful for your question.

5. Comparing sources: corroboration. No source is judged alone. Set sources side by side and look for three things. **Agreement** — where independent sources say the same thing, the claim is stronger. **Difference** — where sources stress different things, the difference usually points to a difference in position or purpose, and explaining it is where the history happens. **Mismatch** — where sources flatly disagree about a fact, flag it, check it against further sources, and do not silently pick the version you prefer. Agreement strengthens; difference explains; mismatch flags. The curriculum’s own words for these three (VC2HH10S04.E05) are *similarities*, *differences* and *inconsistencies*.

6. Absent voices. Sources survive unevenly, and the record of any event is missing whole groups. People who could write, who had the time to write, and whose papers were kept are over-represented; people who could not, or whose words were never asked for, are hard to find. For the First World War, the record is full of officers’ diaries and government papers, and thin on ordinary soldiers, and thinner still on women and children at home, on workers, and on recent migrants who spoke other languages. Asking whose voices are missing is part of evaluation, because a picture built only from the voices that survived is a partial picture — and knowing that is knowing how far your evidence reaches.

7. Causes and consequences from sources. Sources do not just tell you what happened; compared well, they help you sort causes and consequences. A **short-term cause** acts close to the event; a **long-term cause** builds over years. An **intended consequence** is what the actors aimed at; an **unintended consequence** is what followed without being planned. Sources dated at different moments let you watch consequences unfold. The two sources below both concern the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 — and notice the dates: one was written as the crisis unfolded, one years later.

Tracing causes and consequences with two sources: the fall of Singapore, 1942

SOURCE D *a secondary source - written years later*

'The worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history.'

Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime prime minister, writing after the war in his memoirs (*The Second World War*, volume 4, 1950) about the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942.

SOURCE E *a primary source - written at the time*

'Without any inhibitions of any kind, we look to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.'

John Curtin, prime minister of Australia, in the *Melbourne Herald*, 27 December 1941, as Japan's advance moved down through Malaya.

What the comparison shows

An intended consequence. Japan aimed to take the British base at Singapore; by 15 February 1942 it had.

An unintended consequence. The defeat shook trust in British power. Source E, written before Singapore fell, shows Australia already turning to America for its defence.

Reading the timing. Curtin wrote ahead of the fall: comparing the two sources shows the change in trust beginning in real time, ahead of the final event.

Draws on VC2HH10S04.E06.

Two source cards - Churchill's verdict on the fall of Singapore and Curtin's turn to America - above a panel sorting consequences into intended and unintended, with the timing of the change

Churchill's word *capitulation* means surrender. In Curtin's sentence, *inhibitions* means hesitations, *pangs* means feelings of guilt or regret, and *kinship* means family ties. Read together, the two sources show the intended consequence (Japan took the base it aimed at) and the unintended one (the defeat shook trust in British power, and Australia began to look to America) — and the timing detail is itself evidence: Curtin's turn began before Singapore fell. The same pair reads for continuity as well as change: even as the new turn began, the old habit of looking to Britain did not vanish at once, and naming both is the historian's job.

Worked source analyses

The two worked examples below put the five-step method to work on real sources.

Worked example 1 — Source A: a recruiting poster, judged for two questions

SOURCE A

A recruiting poster, 1915

'DADDY, WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE GREAT WAR?'

The picture shows a father at home with his two children, faced with that question.

Recruiting poster issued by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, London, 1915, urging men to enlist in the British armed forces. Held by the Imperial War Museum. Posters carrying the same appeal were put up across the British Empire, including in Australia.

Source A card: the headline of the 1915 recruiting poster, with a description of the picture and its origin note

The table applies steps 2 and 3 of the method, and shows why the verdict on a source is always “for what?”.

Source A asked two different questions - and valued differently

Question asked of Source A	Verdict	Why
Q1. How many men enlisted during the war?	Little value	The poster carries no numbers. Official records and statistics are the place to look for that answer.
Q2. What attitudes to enlistment were common in 1915?	Strong value	The appeal itself is the evidence: it shows duty, pride and shame being used to move men to join.
Q3. Is the poster 'accurate'?	The wrong kind of question	It was made to persuade, not to report. Judge it by its purpose, not as a set of facts.

Value is not fixed inside the source. It depends on the question you ask of it.

Three-row table judging Source A against three different questions: little value for numbers, strong value for attitudes, and the accuracy question as the wrong kind of question

Question	Model answer	Why the answer works
What kind of source is this?	A recruiting poster issued in London in 1915 by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee; a primary source, made during the war to persuade men to enlist.	It names kind, maker, date and purpose in one breath.
What is it worth for Q1 (numbers)?	Little. A poster carries no figures; official records hold the numbers.	It refuses to squeeze a source for what it cannot give.
What is it worth for Q2 (attitudes)?	Strong. The appeal itself is the evidence: duty, pride and shame were the feelings recruiters believed would move men.	It uses VC2HH10S04.E01: a source with a strong perspective helps reveal the attitudes that prevailed at the time.
Is it “accurate”?	The wrong kind of question. It was made to persuade, not to report; judge it by its purpose and by what it reveals.	It applies VC2HH10S04.E02: purpose, not accuracy alone, sets the value.

Worked example 2 — Sources B and C: two views of the Christmas Truce

In December 1914, along parts of the Western Front, British and German soldiers stopped shooting, met in the ground between the trenches, and exchanged gifts. Two sources on that event are set out below.

SOURCE B

A soldier remembers the Christmas Truce, 1914

'I wouldn't have missed that unique and weird Christmas Day for anything you could have offered me.'

Bruce Bairnsfather, a British officer on the Western Front, on the days in December 1914 when British and German soldiers met in the ground between the trenches. Published in his 1916 book of war sketches, *Bullets and Billets*.

Source B card: Bruce Bairnsfather's words on the Christmas Truce, with the origin note naming him and his 1916 book

SOURCE C

A commander forbids the truces, 1915

'Friendly intercourse with the inhabitants encourages the soldiers, discourages the initiative of commanders, and destroys the offensive spirit.'

General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commander of the British II Corps, in an order of January 1915 forbidding truces and friendly contact with the enemy. Wording as quoted in Stanley Weintraub, *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce* (2001). 'Intercourse' here means contact or dealings.

Source C card: the January 1915 order of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien forbidding friendly contact with the enemy, with its origin note

The table runs steps 4 and 5 — corroborate, then judge.

Sources B and C side by side: what agreement - and disagreement - tell us

Where they agree	Both show that truces happened on the Western Front in December 1914. Two independent voices back each other up: the truce is corroborated.
Where they differ	Bairnsfather remembers the day with wonder. Smith-Dorrien's order treats such meetings as a danger to the army.
Why they differ	Different positions: a soldier who lived through the day, and a commander who never wanted such a day to happen. Same event, different perspectives.
Whose voices are missing	No German voice appears in either source. Most written accounts come from officers; ordinary soldiers are thinly recorded, and women and children at home are silent here.

Agreement strengthens a claim. Disagreement does not kill it - it asks to be explained.

Four-row table comparing Sources B and C: where they agree, where they differ, why they differ, and whose voices are missing

Question	Model answer	Why the answer works
Do the sources corroborate each other?	Yes, on the fact. A soldier's published account and a general's order are independent; both show the truces happened. Two independent voices agreeing makes the fact strong.	It uses agreement to strengthen a claim.
Where do they differ?	Bairnsfather remembers the day with wonder; Smith-Dorrien treats such meetings as a danger to the army that must be stopped.	It separates the two perspectives instead of averaging them.
Why do they differ?	Different positions: a junior officer who lived the day, and a corps commander responsible for keeping his men fighting. The difference is evidence of where each man stood.	It explains difference from position and purpose, as step 3 requires.
Whose voices are missing?	No German voice sits in either source; ordinary soldiers are thinly recorded, and women and children at home not at all. The record of the truce leans towards officers who could write.	It applies VC2HH10S04.E03, and states how far the evidence reaches.
Overall verdict?	As evidence that the truces happened, the pair is strong. As	It gives a verdict "for what?", with a limit attached.

Question	Model answer	Why the answer works
	evidence of how the truce was seen, it shows two real and opposed views — and it warns that other views survive only thinly.	

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (VC2HH10S04.E01) In your own words, what does it mean to say that a source's value turns on the question you ask of it?

Q2. (VC2HH10S04.E01) A classmate says, "Source A is useless." Using step 1 of the method, what is the first thing you should ask them?

Q3. (VC2HH10S04.E02) Source A was made to persuade, not to report. Give one reason it is still useful to a historian, and one reason it must be handled with care.

Q4. (VC2HH10S04.E02) A diary entry gets a date wrong. Explain how it can still be strong evidence, and name what it is strong evidence *for*.

Q5. (VC2HH10S04.E04) Which step of the five-step method tells you which parts of a source to keep and which to ignore? Explain with Source A and the question "What attitudes to enlistment were common in 1915?"

Q6. (VC2HH10S04.E05) Define *corroborate* as this section uses it, and say why two independent sources agreeing make a claim stronger.

Q7. (VC2HH10S04.E05) Sources B and C disagree about the Christmas Truce. Does one of them have to be lying? Explain using the idea of position and purpose.

Q8. (VC2HH10S04.E03) Name two groups whose voices are hard to find in the First World War record described in this section, and give one reason each is hard to find.

Q9. (VC2HH10S04.E06) According to the panel that sets Sources D and E side by side, what did Japan intend to gain by taking Singapore, and by when had it gained it?

Q10. (VC2HH10S04.E06) Using Sources D and E, give one unintended consequence of the fall of Singapore.

Un scaffolded

Marking note: marks are awarded for the quality of reasoning — terms defined, evidence used, both sides given fair treatment, a conclusion that follows from your evidence. Two students may reach opposite conclusions and both earn full marks.

Q11. (VC2HH10S04.E01, VC2HH10S04.E02) "A biased source tells us nothing." Test this claim with Source A: give the strongest case you can for it and the strongest case against it, then say which is stronger and why.

Q12. (VC2HH10S04.E05) In about six sentences, explain what Sources B and C together show about December 1914 on the Western Front, and what the agreement between them adds to each one alone.

Q13. (VC2HH10S04.E03) "The story of the Christmas Truce we can tell from Sources B and C is a partial story." Do you agree? In about six sentences, say whose views the record carries well, whose it carries thinly, and how that should shape a historian's claims.

Q14. (VC2HH10S04.E06) Using Sources D and E, sort one short-term and one long-term consequence of the fall of Singapore for Australia, and say which source is your evidence for each.

Q15. (VC2HH10S04.E02, VC2HH10S04.E06) "For the question 'how did the fall of Singapore change Australia's alliances?', Source E is more valuable than Source D." Do you agree? Write about eight sentences, weighing accuracy, purpose and timing for each source.

Q16. (VC2HH10S04.E01, VC2HH10S04.E02, VC2HH10S04.E03, VC2HH10S04.E04, VC2HH10S04.E05, VC2HH10S04.E06) Sustained response (10-12 sentences): evaluate how well Sources A to E work **as a set** as evidence for the question “How did people see and respond to war between 1914 and 1942?” Use the five-step method, name at least one place where the set corroborates itself, and at least one voice the set does not carry.

Inquiry task

Skills chapters carry one inquiry task per section. Work with the planning frame below (drawn from the five-step method), then write.

Inquiry task: planning frame

Step	What to record
1. My research question	What am I trying to find out?
2. My sources (at least three)	Which sources will I use - for example, a poster, official statistics and a personal account?
3. Relevant information	What in each source bears on my question? (Step 2 of the method.)
4. Value for my question	How well does each source help me answer it? Consider accuracy, purpose and corroboration.
5. Missing voices	Whose voices are absent from my sources, and how does that shape my answer?

Keep your question small enough to be answered from three sources.

Planning frame table: research question, sources, relevant information, value for the question, missing voices

Your task. Choose one question about attitudes to war in 1914-45 — for example, “How did governments persuade people to support the war?”, “How did ordinary people respond to the outbreak of war?”, or “How did the war’s setbacks change how Australians saw their protectors?”. Then:

1. Complete the planning frame using at least three sources, drawn from this section (Sources A-E) and from other sections of this book (for example, Section 3B’s Fisher pledge and Menzies broadcast, and its recruiting chart, or Section 3G’s home-front sources). Include at least one primary and one secondary source.
2. For each source, record the relevant information (step 2) and your verdict on accuracy and purpose (step 3).
3. Write 10-12 sentences that answer your question from your sources, using the method: state where your sources corroborate each other, explain one difference between them, and end with a verdict on the value of your set as evidence — including one group whose voice your set does not carry, and how that limits your answer.

Answers

Q1. A source is only ever valuable *for* something: judged against one question it may give strong evidence, judged against another it may give none. So you cannot call a source valuable or useless until you say what it is being used to find out.

Q2. “Useless for what question?” A source that is useless for one question may be strong for another; the verdict needs the question first.

Q3. Useful: its appeal shows the attitudes recruiters believed would move men (duty, pride, shame) — evidence of the public mood. Handled with care: it was built to persuade, so it shows what recruiters wanted people to feel, not a full or fair picture of the war.

Q4. The wrong date does not destroy what the diary is best at: showing how events felt to the person living them, and what they noticed and valued. It is strong evidence for experience and attitudes, weak evidence for exact facts.

Q5. Step 2, find what is relevant. For the attitudes question, the relevant parts of Source A are the appeal itself — the question put to the father, the use of duty and shame — not anything factual it might claim.

Q6. To corroborate is to set a source beside other sources so they back each other up. Two independent sources agreeing make a claim stronger because the same fact now rests on two separate witnesses, not one.

Q7. No. They differ because of position and purpose: Bairnsfather lived the day as a junior officer and remembers wonder; Smith-Dorrien commanded a corps and wanted such days stopped. Both can be sincere.

Q8. Any two of, with a reason: ordinary soldiers (many left few written records, and papers that survive lean towards officers); women and children at home (the record was made about the front, and their words were rarely asked for or kept); workers and recent migrants who spoke other languages (less time, access or habit of writing, and fewer papers kept).

Q9. Japan aimed to take the British base at Singapore; by 15 February 1942 it had.

Q10. The defeat shook trust in British power and pushed Australia to look to America for its defence — a result neither Britain nor Japan planned.

Q11-Q16. See the fully-worked solutions below.

Fully-worked solutions

Q11. For the claim: a poster built to persuade tells us what its makers wanted people to feel, not what was true, and trusting it for facts would mislead; a source leaning hard one way is weak evidence for what happened. Against the claim: the slant itself is information — Source A shows that in 1915 recruiters reached for duty, pride and shame, which is direct evidence of the attitudes that were common enough to appeal to; and the curriculum’s own framing (VC2HH10S04.E01) says a source with a perspective helps reveal the attitudes people held at the time. Weighing both: the claim is right about facts and wrong about evidence. A biased source tells us little about what happened and a great deal about how some people saw things — and “tells us nothing” throws the second half away. The case against is stronger.

Q12. Taken together, Sources B and C show that truces really happened on parts of the Western Front in December 1914: a soldier who was there and a general’s order forbidding the meetings are independent witnesses, and independent agreement is corroboration. They also show that the truce was seen in two opposed ways at the time — wonder below, alarm above — so “how it was seen” has no single answer. What the agreement adds is confidence in the fact: either source alone might be one man’s story or one paper’s rule, but the pair anchors the event from both ends of the army. The record still leans towards officers who could write.

Q13. Agree. The record carries well the views of a junior officer who lived the truce and of high command that feared it; it carries thinly the ordinary soldiers on both sides, and not at all the women and children at home. So a historian can say with confidence that the truce happened and that it divided opinion between the trenches and the top, but must

be careful with words like “everyone” or “the army felt”, because whole groups sit outside the record. Stating that limit is part of the verdict on the evidence, not an apology for it.

Q14. Short-term: the shock of defeat and the loss of the base that had been Australia’s regional shield — Source D gives the scale of the blow (“the worst disaster”), and the fall itself is dated 15 February 1942. Long-term: a change in alliance, as Australia turned to America for its defence — Source E is the evidence, written by the prime minister as the crisis unfolded. Source D is evidence for the size of the shock; Source E is evidence for the turn it set in motion.

Q15. Agree, for this question. Source E is a primary source written at the moment of the turn: Curtin’s words are the change happening, so for “how did the fall change alliances” they are the closest possible evidence — even dated a few weeks before the final fall, they show the turn beginning. Source D is a secondary source, written years later to judge and to justify; it measures the disaster but from outside and after, and memoirs shape the past to serve their author’s account of it. That does not make D worthless: for the question “how big was the blow?”, D is strong, and set beside E it corroborates that something fundamental broke in 1942. For the alliance question specifically, E’s timing and position (the man making the change) outweigh D’s hindsight, so E is the more valuable source.

Q16. As a set, Sources A to E give strong evidence for how war was seen and responded to across 1914-42, because the set spans kinds, positions and moments: a poster made to persuade (A), a soldier’s memory (B), a commander’s order (C), a leader’s later verdict (D) and a leader’s words at the time (E). Step 1 first: for the question set, every source earns a place. The set corroborates itself in at least one clear spot — B and C independently anchor the truce, and D and E independently anchor the shock of 1942. Differences are handled as evidence, not noise: A shows the public appeal to duty and shame, B and C show the same war producing wonder and alarm in the same month, and D and E show pride in Empire giving way to a new alliance. Accuracy and purpose are weighed throughout: A and E were made to move people, B to remember, C to command, D to judge — and each is valued for what its purpose can give. The set’s limit is its voices: it carries leaders and one officer well, carries ordinary soldiers thinly, and does not carry women, children, workers or recent migrants at all. The verdict follows: strong evidence for attitudes at the top and in the recruiting public, and for two turning moments; a partial picture of the war’s whole society — and knowing that is what evaluating the value of sources means.

Sources

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Whose view? What sources reveal about people's beliefs

VC2HH10S05

VC2HH10S05.E01

VC2HH10S05.E02

VC2HH10S05.E03

VC2HH10S05.E04

Scope note: this section teaches the content description as set out in the notice at the front of this book. Matters listed in that notice are outside this section and are not assessed here.

Two fleets sailed the same route from England to Australia, three years apart. The first lost about one convict in thirty at sea; the second lost better than one in four. Yet both voyages were written about by educated men on board, and every one of those writers saw the same sea differently. This section teaches the skill that turns those differences into history: **analysing perspective** — working out what the people and groups of the past believed, valued and felt, from the evidence their sources leave behind.

Theory

Part 1 — The four words of this section

Perspective analysis uses four words with exact meanings. Learn them as a set, because each one leads to the next.

The four words of this section

Beliefs and values sit underneath a perspective; attitudes show them in action; sources are the evidence.

PERSPECTIVE

The point of view from which a person or group sees events and issues. It is shaped by who they are - age, sex, class, job and what they have lived through.

From the First Fleet: The First Fleet's departure in May 1787 looked different to a marine officer on deck and to a convict in irons below.

BELIEF

Something a person accepts as true, about the world or about other people.

From the First Fleet: Britain's rulers believed sending convicts far away would make the streets at home safer.

VALUE

What a person or group holds to be important, worth having, or right.

From the First Fleet: Governor Arthur Phillip valued order - and he also valued humane treatment of convicts.

ATTITUDE

A settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, shown in how a person speaks and acts.

From the First Fleet: Tench's words show pity for ordinary convicts - and a hard view of the few he called villains.



How the four words connect: what people believe and value shapes their perspective, which shows up as attitudes in what they say, write and do.

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

A few things to notice about the four words:

- A **perspective** is not an opinion you pick; it grows out of where a person stands. An officer on the quarterdeck and a convict in the hold of the same ship do not see the same voyage, even before either writes a word.
- **Beliefs** and **values** are usually the *reasons* behind a perspective. People who believe crime is caused by wickedness, and value harsh punishment, will see a convict fleet as justice doing its work.
- **Attitudes** are what you can actually find in a source — the tone, the chosen words, the praise and the blame. Historians cannot see inside a dead person's mind; they can only read attitudes in what survives. That is why this CD ends by asking you to work from evidence in many kinds of source.

Contested and stipulated terms. *Perspective, beliefs, values* and *attitudes* are words the Victorian Curriculum uses but does not define. In this book they are used as **stipulated** subject terms with the meanings in Figure 1. Two rules keep perspective analysis honest. First, **analyse, don't judge**: some past views — for example, that hanging or transportation was a fitting punishment for theft — shock most Australians today. Explaining why people held a view is not agreeing with it; condemning it is not explaining it. Second, **symmetry**: the method is the same for views we dislike and views we share. A good analysis of Phillip's kindness must be as careful as a good analysis of a harsh judge's cruelty.

Part 2 — Where perspectives live: six kinds of sources (E02)

E02 points to six kinds of source that carry people's beliefs, values and attitudes: letters, diaries, laws, propaganda, oral accounts and popular culture. Each kind shows a different face of the past.

Where perspectives live - six kinds of sources

From VC2HH10S05.E02: beliefs, values and attitudes are expressed in sources of many kinds.

Source type	An example from this book's content	What it can reveal
Diaries and journals	John Hunter's journal of HMS Sirius, published 1793	Daily decisions at sea: winds, discipline, keeping a convoy together.
Oral accounts	Words spoken in court and written down: the trial of Thomas Barret, February 1788, as the court recorded it and Tench retold it	What people said and admitted when questioned; the court's own view of them.
Letters	Governor Arthur Phillip's letters to Lord Sydney (section 2A)	Official reports to the minister who sent him - and the wish to be thought well of.
Laws	The Hulks Act 1776, sending convicts to floating prisons (section 2A)	What rulers valued enough to command; what they feared.
Propaganda	Recruiting posters of World War I (section 3B)	The attitudes a state wanted its people to hold - duty, loyalty, courage.
Popular culture	Songs, sport, films and advertising of the time (sections 2D, 6A)	How ordinary people saw and enjoyed their own world.

A source is not a window - it is a voice. Every voice has a speaker, an audience, and a reason for speaking.

Figure 2. Six kinds of sources, from VC2HH10S05.E02.

One kind needs care because it is easy to misunderstand. An **oral account** is spoken, not written, by its maker. Most convicts of the 18th century left no writing — but some left *spoken* words that others wrote down: answers in court, words at a trial, things said to an official. Those records are double-edged: they preserve a convict's voice, yet the voice arrives filtered through the court or the officer who held the pen.

That brings us to the great uneven fact about the 18th-century record: who got to leave a record at all.

The voyage of 1787-88: who left a record?

The same fleet, six different positions in it - and very unequal chances of being heard.

People	Position	Record left	Perspective it shows
John Hunter	Naval captain of HMS Sirius	A journal, published 1793; the ship's logs	Discipline, sailing, keeping a convoy together.
Watkin Tench	Marine officer	A book published 1789, written from his notes	Sharp observation; pity and judgement side by side.
John White	Chief surgeon of the fleet	A journal, published 1790	Sickness, deaths, and which treatments helped.
Arthur Phillip	Governor-designate	Official letters to Lord Sydney in London	Orders, values, and the news chosen for home.
Convict men, e.g. Thomas Barret	Under sentence of transportation	Court records; their words through officials	Crime and punishment, as the courts saw them.
Convict women, e.g. those who arrived on the Lady Juliana, 1790	Under sentence of transportation	Almost nothing in their own words	Seen, counted and described - but rarely heard.

Officers left books and letters; most convicts left only marks in official files. The record is not the whole past.

Figure 3. The voyage of 1787–88: who left a record?

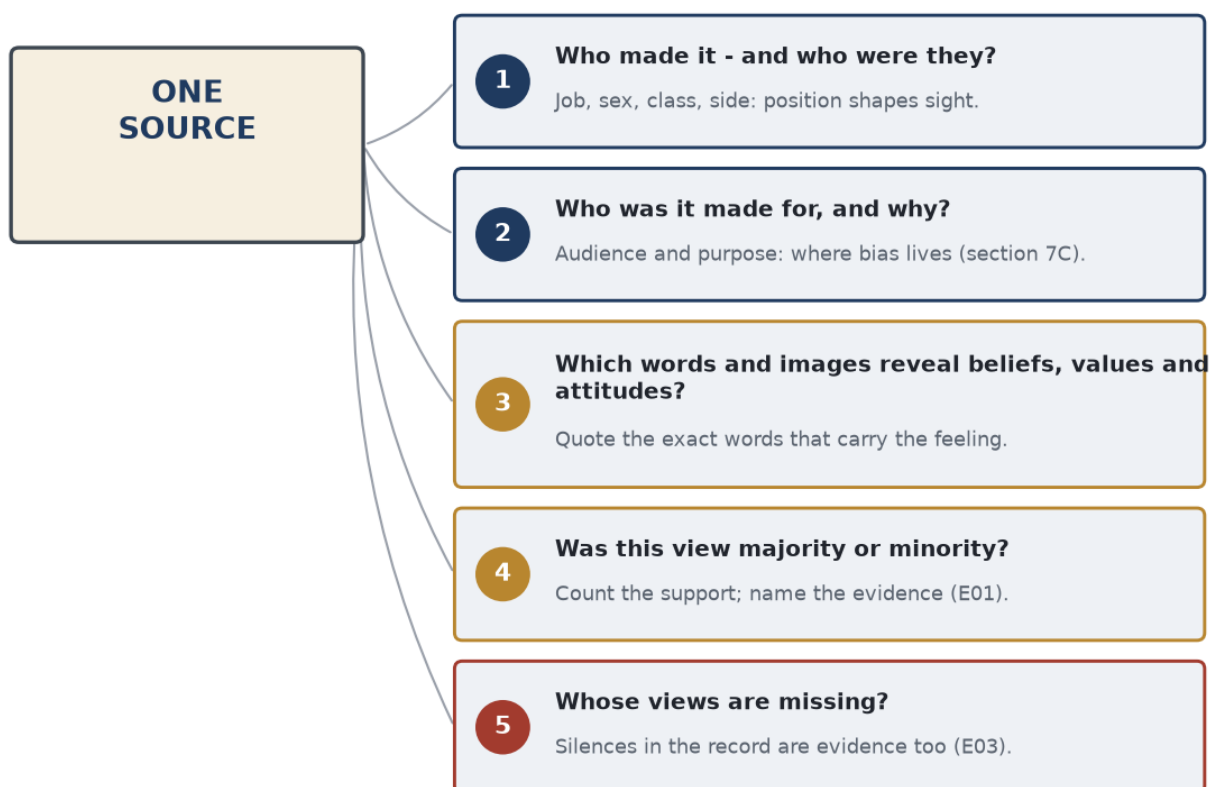
Read Figure 3 slowly. Four officers left books, journals or letters. Convict men survive mainly as marks in court and ship records. Convict women — 192 by Tench's count in 1787 — are counted, examined and described by men, and are almost never heard in their own words. **The record is not the whole past; it is the part of the past that could write.** E03 asks you to explain why that is so.

Part 3 — The lens: five questions for any source

Section 7C teaches you to check a source's purpose, features, content and context. This section adds the perspective layer. Run any source through the five-question lens in Figure 4.

Reading a source for perspective - five questions

Work down the lens for any source you analyse in this section.



Questions 1 and 2 extend section 7C (purpose, features, content, context). Question 4 is elaboration E01; question 5 is elaboration E03.

Figure 4. Reading a source for perspective — five questions.

The lens is a habit, not a worksheet. Questions 1 and 2 place the speaker; question 3 finds the evidence; questions 4 and 5 are the two big elaborations of this section, E01 and E03. They get their own parts next.

Part 4 — One voice is not a crowd: majority and minority views (E01)

A source proves what *one* person or group thought. E01 asks the next question: was that view **representative** — shared by most people at the time (a majority view) — or was it a minority view? The only honest way to answer is with further evidence: numbers, laws, meetings, publications, what other sources say.

One voice is not a crowd - majority and minority views

VC2HH10S05.E01: is one person's perspective representative of the time? Two worked tests.

Australia, 1914 - attitudes to war (section 3B)	Britain, 1780s - attitudes to punishment (section 2A)
MAJORITY VIEW Most Australians saw the war in favourable terms: noble, heroic, a test of courage. Both major political parties pledged full support.	MAJORITY VIEW Most people in power accepted harsh punishment: English law carried the death penalty for over 200 offences, and transportation was routine.
MINORITY VIEW Some church groups, some women's organisations and parts of the labour movement argued against it: a European quarrel, they said, paid for in Australian lives.	MINORITY VIEW A minority of reformers, such as John Howard, argued that prisons should discipline and change people, not simply hold or remove them.
<i>Evidence to weigh: recruiting numbers and public meetings in 1914; the louder arguments of the later conscription debates.</i>	<i>Evidence to weigh: the laws themselves record the majority view; Howard's book <i>The State of the Prisons</i> (1777) records the minority's.</i>

A surviving voice is evidence of one person's view, not of a whole society's. Ask: how many shared it - and whose views got recorded?

Figure 5. Testing whether a view is majority or minority — two worked examples from earlier chapters.

Both panels use content you have already studied, on purpose: E01 is a skill you apply *across* the book's content, not a fact to memorise. Notice the shape of the skill in each panel:

1. State the view found in a source.
2. Ask how many people shared it.
3. Bring in **other** evidence — laws, numbers, organised groups — before answering.

A view can be loud without being majority, and majority without being loud. The 1780s reformers printed books and won laws eventually, but in their own decade the harsh view ruled the statute book.

Part 5 — Silences in the record (E03)

E03 is the mirror image of E01. E01 asks what a surviving voice represents; E03 asks **why some voices never survived at all**.

Why some perspectives never reached the record

VC2HH10S05.E03: the archive has gaps, and the gaps have causes.

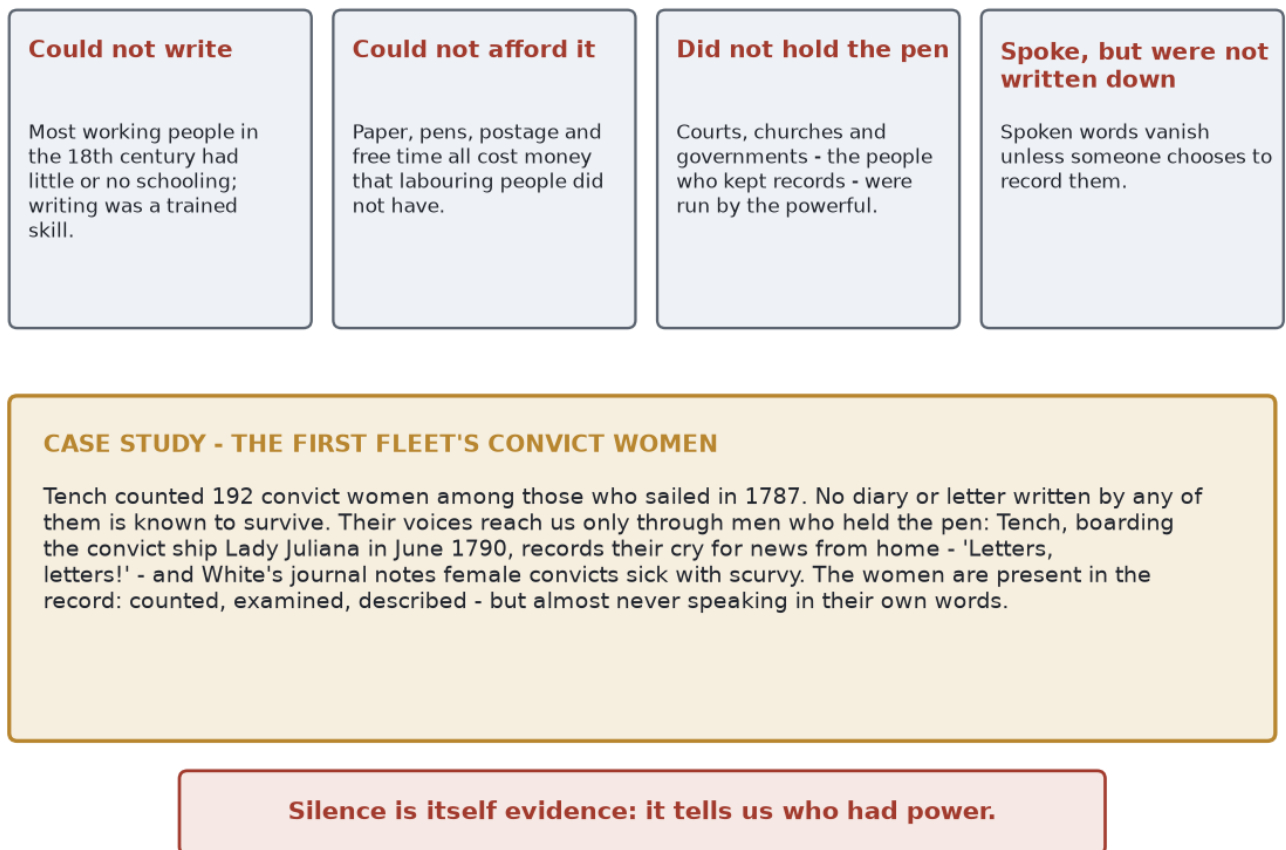


Figure 6. Why some perspectives never reached the record.

The case study in Figure 6 is the sharpest example this book offers. The women of the First Fleet crossed the world in 1787–88, and not one diary or letter by any of them is known to survive. Yet they are not absent from the record — Tench counts them, White examines them, and when the *Lady Juliana* reached Port Jackson in June 1790 with 225 women, Tench records their first cry for news of home: “Letters, letters!” The women speak for one instant, in a man’s book, in his spelling, inside his story.

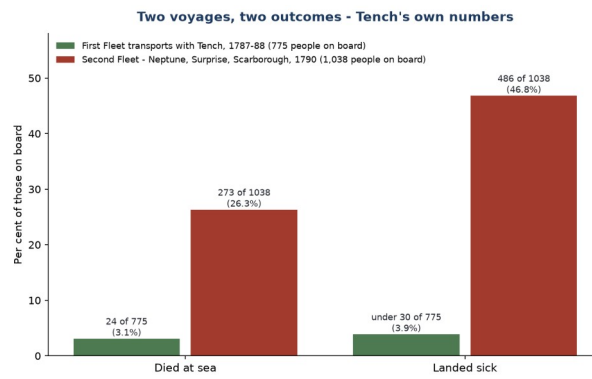
That is what E03 wants you to be able to explain: absence from the record is not an accident. It follows from who could write, who could afford to, and who kept the records. And a silence, read carefully, is itself evidence — evidence about power.

Part 6 — Two voyages, different eyes (E04)

E04 sends you to the first-hand records of 18th-century voyages to Australia — ships’ logs, diaries, and what convicts and officers testified — and asks you to explain how differences in point of view lead historians to different interpretations. This book’s anchor case is the contrast between the First Fleet (1787–88) and the Second Fleet (1790).

The First Fleet, as its officers recorded it. The fleet left Portsmouth on 13 May 1787 with about 1,500 people on board, including 775 convicts (of whom 192 were women) and 212 marines, and reached Botany Bay in January 1788 after calls at Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope (see section 2A). By the officers’ own counts, the voyage was a success: Tench records that of his 775 convicts only 24 died at sea (Source A), and White records that of 1,030 people landed, only 72 had died after twenty-one months (Source C).

The Second Fleet, 1790. Three transports — the *Neptune*, the *Surprise* and the *Scarborough* — brought the next convoy of convicts. Tench, now at Sydney, counted the results: of 1,038 people who sailed, 273 died at sea and 486 landed sick; a further 124 of the sick died in hospital at Sydney.



Computed from the return printed in Watkin Tench, A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson (London, 1793); Project Gutenberg ebook no. 3534, retrieved 26 August 2026. A further 124 of those landed sick from the Second Fleet died in the hospital at Sydney. 'Under 30': Tench wrote that 'not thirty were landed sick' from his own fleet.

Figure 7. Two voyages, two outcomes — computed from Tench's own printed return.

Now the sources. Three officers' accounts anchor this part; all three appear again in the source task at the end of the section.

SOURCE A - Watkin Tench, marine officer, writing in 1789

'Of two hundred and twelve marines we lost only one; and of seven hundred and seventy-five convicts, put on board in England, but twenty-four perished in our route. To what cause are we to attribute this unhopd for success? ... some of the necessary articles allowed to ships on a common passage to West Indies, were withheld from us; that portable soup, wheat, and pickled vegetables were not allowed ...'

'I beg leave, however, to say, that the provisions served on board were good, and of a much superior quality to those usually supplied by contract.'

Watkin Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany-Bay* (London, 1789). Text verified against the Project Gutenberg edition, ebook no. 3535, retrieved 26 August 2026. Punctuation lightly modernised.

Figure 8. Source A — Watkin Tench, 1789.

SOURCE B - John Hunter, captain of HMS Sirius, writing in 1793

'... a report was made from one of the transports ... that a discovery had been made of an intended insurrection [armed rising] amongst the convicts in that ship ...'

'Captain Phillip had very humanely, a few days previous to this scheme, directed that the irons with which most of the male convicts had hitherto been confined, should be taken off them generally, that they might have it more in their power to strip their cloaths [clothes] off at night when they went to rest ... and have the farther advantage of being able to wash and keep themselves clean.'

John Hunter, *An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* (London, 1793). Text verified against the Project Gutenberg edition, ebook no. 15662, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Figure 9. Source B — John Hunter, 1793.

SOURCE C - John White, chief surgeon, writing in 1790

'20th. Wind variable ... I visited the Prince of Wales, where I found some of the female convicts with evident symptoms of the scurvy, brought on by the damp and cold weather we had experienced.'

'Of one thousand and thirty people who were landed, many of whom were worn out by old age, the scurvy, and various disorders, only seventy-two have died in one and twenty months.'

John White, *Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales* (London, 1790). Text verified against the Internet Archive's copy of the first edition, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Figure 10. Source C — John White, 1790.

How variations in perspective become different interpretations. Read Sources A, B and C against Figure 7 and watch two interpretations grow from the same events.

- **Interpretation 1 — “a triumph of care and management.”** A historian reading Tench and White closely will write that the First Fleet voyage was very well run by the standards of the 18th century: low deaths, good food, irons removed on Phillip’s order (Source B), a surgeon who noticed scurvy in women on one ship and recorded it (Source C). The evidence is real, and the interpretation is defensible.
- **Interpretation 2 — “a system that gambled with lives.”** A historian reading the Second Fleet’s numbers, and the reported *insurrection* [armed rising] plot that followed Phillip’s kindness (Source B), will write that transportation was a harsh system in which convicts were cargo, kindness was a gamble officers took, and the Second Fleet’s death rate shows what happened when contractors, not naval officers, ran the voyage. This evidence is real too.

The two historians are not simply disagreeing about facts. They **select** different sources (officers’ pride vs. contractors’ disaster), **emphasise** different numbers (24 of 775 vs. 273 of 1,038), and **weigh** values differently (humane intention vs. human cost). That chain — position, selection, emphasis, judgement — is exactly E04’s point: differing perspectives can lead historians to differing interpretations. The skill is to show the chain, not to declare one historian the winner. If you must choose, choose on the strength of the evidence — and say what further evidence would change your mind.

Part 7 — A model analysis, and a checklist

Figure 11 works Source A through the lens of Figure 4, end to end. Study the *shape* of the analysis — identify, describe, interpret, test, ask what is missing — before you attempt your own.

A model perspective analysis of Source A

The shape to copy: identify - describe - interpret - test - ask what is missing.

What is it?	A printed book by Watkin Tench, a marine officer who sailed with the First Fleet. Published in London in 1789, within two years of the voyage - a primary source turned into a published account.
Who was it made for?	Readers in Britain. Tench wanted the voyage known - and judged - at home. An audience shapes what a writer praises and what he blames.
Which beliefs, values and attitudes does it reveal?	He counts every death ('we lost only one ... but twenty-four perished'): lives are worth counting. He praises good food and blames poor planning: careful management saves lives, and governments can get it wrong. Quote the words; name the value.
Was this view majority or minority?	His criticism of the colony's supplies was shared by other officers, but official reports to London carried better news. A view can be real without being most people's.
Who is missing?	No convicts speak in their own words. Women appear as numbers (192) or through men's eyes. The book records what officers saw - and that limit is part of its meaning.

Marks are won on the reasoning chain, not on reaching a particular conclusion.

Figure 11. A model perspective analysis of Source A.

Before you hand in - a perspective-analysis checklist

Run through it on every perspective task in this section.

☐	I named the source, its maker, and when and where it was made.
☐	I quoted the exact words that reveal beliefs, values or attitudes.
☐	I said whether the view was majority or minority - and gave evidence.
☐	I named who is missing from the record, and why.
☐	I explained how this perspective could lead a historian to one interpretation rather than another.
☐	I checked my reading against at least one other source.

Marking rewards good reasoning, not a 'correct side'.

Figure 12. The perspective-analysis checklist.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — Analysing Source B with the lens (E02, E04)

Task: “Use the five-question lens to analyse Source B (Figure 9). What beliefs, values and attitudes does it reveal?”

Working	Comment
Step 1: Identify the maker and his position. John Hunter, captain of HMS Sirius, the fleet’s flagship — a naval officer writing about the voyage years after it, for publication in 1793.	Position first: an officer describes the convicts from above, as a commander describes cargo he is answerable for.
Step 2: Identify audience and purpose. Readers in Britain. Purpose: to give a full account of the settlement’s founding that reflects well on its leaders, including Phillip.	Purpose is where praise lives. Note that Hunter calls Phillip’s order “very humanely” — the word is doing work.
Step 3: Quote the words that carry beliefs, values and attitudes. (i) “very humanely” — Hunter values kindness in command and believes it worth praising. (ii) The order’s reasons — that convicts “might ... wash and keep themselves clean” — values health and cleanliness as part of discipline. (iii) “intended insurrection” — an attitude of watchfulness: kindness and fear of revolt sit in the same paragraph.	Quote exact words, then name the value or attitude each shows. Never paraphrase the feeling away.
Step 4: Test majority/minority (E01). Hunter’s view that convicts should be treated with some humanity was shared by Phillip and other officers, and appears in official instructions — but it was a minority of the wider 1780s British public, whose law still punished theft with death (section 2A).	One officer’s kindness is evidence of an officer’s view. Its spread must be checked in other sources.

Working	Comment
Step 5: Ask who is missing (E03). The convicts themselves. The irons came off <i>their</i> wrists, yet their feelings about it reach us only as a report of a “scheme” discovered among them.	The lens’s last question turns a good analysis into a complete one.

Worked example 2 — From perspective to interpretation (E04)

Task: “Explain how the same voyage can support two different historical interpretations.” Use Sources A and C and Figure 7.

Working	Comment
Step 1: Lay out the two readings. Reading 1: the First Fleet voyage was well managed — 24 of 775 convicts died at sea (Source A), and 72 of 1,030 landed people died in twenty-one months (Source C). Reading 2: the system was careless with lives — the Second Fleet lost 273 of 1,038 at sea (Figure 7).	State each reading in full before judging either. A steelman first, a verdict second.
Step 2: Trace the variation in perspective. Tench and White sailed <i>with</i> the First Fleet and had reasons to be proud of it; their sources praise it. The Second Fleet’s numbers come from a table Tench printed <i>after</i> the event, comparing the two voyages — the perspective of a man looking back with horror.	Same author, two perspectives: pride in his own voyage, shock at the next one.
Step 3: Show how interpretation follows. A historian emphasising Sources A and C writes “triumph of care”; a historian emphasising Figure 7 writes “gamble with lives”. Each selects, emphasises and weighs differently.	Name the chain: selection → emphasis → interpretation. That is the E04 skill in one sentence.
Step 4: Close with a check. To judge between them, bring in more sources: the Second Fleet’s own logs and the inquiry that followed it, and convict-side records such as court testimonies.	Good history ends with “and here is what I would check next”.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

- Look at Figure 1. (a) Which word means “what a person or group holds to be important”? (b) Which word means “the point of view from which a person sees events”? (c) Which of the four words can you directly *find* in a source, and why?
- Figure 2 lists six source types. Match each example to its type: (a) the Hulks Act of 1776; (b) Hunter’s account of the voyage; (c) a World War I recruiting poster; (d) the words Thomas Barret spoke at his trial, written down by the court.
- Using Figure 3: (a) name the two officers whose written records this section quotes as Sources A–C; (b) which group in the table left almost nothing in their own words?
- Figure 4 gives five lens questions. Which question number asks about (a) audience and purpose; (b) whether a view is representative; (c) silences in the record?
- Figure 5, left panel: state the majority view in Australia in 1914 in one line, and name one group that held a minority view against it.
- Figure 7: (a) which fleet lost a higher share of its people at sea? (b) Give the two “died at sea” figures as counts (X of Y).

Un scaffolded

- Using Source C, identify and explain **two** beliefs, values or attitudes shown by John White. Quote his exact words for each, and name the value or attitude each shows. (E02)

8. “Tench’s pity for ordinary convicts was the majority view among the fleet’s officers.” Discuss whether Tench’s perspective in Source A speaks for most of the fleet’s officers at that time, or for a minority, using at least two other pieces of evidence from this section. (E01)
9. Explain **two** reasons why no diary or letter by a First Fleet convict woman is known to survive, and state what that silence is evidence *for*. (E03)
10. One historian writes: “The First Fleet voyage was a triumph of careful, humane management.” Another writes: “Transportation was a gamble with human lives, and the Second Fleet exposes it.” Using Sources A–C and Figure 7, explain how variations in perspective and source selection lead to these two interpretations, then say which evidence you would check to judge between them. (E04)

Source task

Study Sources A, B and C (Figures 8, 9 and 10), then answer the questions that follow.

- S1. For each source, state (a) who made it and what position they held, and (b) whether it is a primary or secondary source, justifying each answer with *when* it was made.
- S2. Source A counts deaths at sea (“we lost only one ... but twenty-four perished”). Identify the **value** this counting shows Tench holding, and quote one other phrase from Source A that shows an attitude about how the voyage was run.
- S3. Source B describes Phillip’s order to remove the convicts’ irons as done “very humanely”. (a) What **value** does the order itself show Phillip holding? (b) What **attitude** does Hunter’s word “humanely” show him holding? (c) The same source reports an “intended insurrection”. What attitude to the convicts sits alongside the kindness in this source?
- S4. Using Sources A–C and Figure 7: (a) which source would a historian citing “triumph of care” lean on most, and which would a historian citing “gamble with lives” lean on most? (b) Explain in two or three sentences how the same event — voyages to Australia — produces the two interpretations. (E04)
- S5. Whose voice is missing from all three sources? Give **two** reasons from Figure 6 for that silence, and one place in this section where that missing group is heard, even if only through someone else’s pen. (E03)

Answers

1.
 - (a) Value. (b) Perspective. (c) Attitudes — because they show up in the tone and chosen words of what a person says or writes; beliefs and values have to be inferred from them.
2.
 - (a) Laws. (b) Diaries and journals. (c) Propaganda. (d) Oral accounts.
3.
 - (a) Watkin Tench (Source A) and John White (Source C); John Hunter (Source B) is the third officer quoted. (b) Convict women.
4.
 - (a) Question 2. (b) Question 4. (c) Question 5.
5. Majority view: the war was seen in favourable terms — noble, heroic, a test of courage, with both major parties pledging support. Minority view against it: some church groups, some women's organisations and parts of the labour movement.
6.
 - (a) The Second Fleet. (b) First Fleet: 24 of 775; Second Fleet: 273 of 1,038.
7. Answers will vary. A strong answer quotes, for example: (i) “I found some of the female convicts with evident symptoms of the scurvy” — the value that sick people, including convict women, are worth noticing and recording (a duty of care); (ii) the counting of deaths, “only seventy-two have died in one and twenty months” — pride in outcomes and the value of careful record-keeping. Each quote must be paired with a named value or attitude.
8. Answers will vary. A strong answer notes that Tench's pity appears in other officers' records too (Phillip's humane order praised by Hunter; White's care for the sick), so a humane strand existed among officers — but that the harsher view was the majority of the wider public whose law punished theft with death, and that even Tench divides convicts into the pitiable many and the “villainous” few. Verdicts of majority/minority must be stated *for which group* (officers vs. the wider public).
9. Any two of the four reasons in Figure 6: most working people could not write; writing materials and free time cost money they did not have; the people who kept records (courts, churches, governments) were run by the powerful; spoken words were rarely written down. The silence is evidence *for* who held power — and against treating the surviving record as the whole past.
10. Answers will vary. A strong answer traces the chain: the officers sailed with the First Fleet and had pride and purpose in praising it (selection and emphasis of low death counts and good order); the Second Fleet's disaster, counted afterwards, selects and emphasises the human cost; each historian's interpretation follows their selection and emphasis. The close must name further evidence to check — e.g. the Second Fleet's own logs and the inquiry into it, court testimonies of convicts, and official instructions. S1. (a) Source A: Watkin Tench, marine officer. Source B: John Hunter, captain of HMS Sirius. Source C: John White, chief surgeon. (b) All three are primary: each was written by a man who sailed with the fleet, within a few years of the voyage (1789, 1793, 1790) — made at or near the time by people who were there. S2. The value: human life is worth counting (care for people, even convicts). Other phrase: “the provisions served on board were good, and of a much superior quality to those usually supplied by contract” — an attitude of approval of how the voyage was run, and a jab at the usual contractors. S3. (a) That convicts are people to be treated with some humanity — health and cleanliness matter even under punishment. (b) Approval and praise of kindness in command. (c) Watchfulness and fear: kindness sits beside a report of armed rising, so the source holds care and control at once. S4. (a) “Triumph of care”: Sources A and C (and B's humane order). “Gamble with lives”: Figure 7's Second Fleet numbers, read against Source B's hint that convicts were cargo to be controlled. (b) The same event produces two interpretations because writers differ in position (officer pride vs. later horror), selection (which voyage, which numbers) and emphasis (intention vs. outcome); interpretation follows that chain. S5. The convict women's voices. Two reasons from Figure 6, e.g.: most could not write, and the people who kept records were the powerful. Heard through someone else's pen: Tench's record of their cry “Letters, letters!” aboard the *Lady Juliana* in June 1790 (Figure 6 / Part 5).

Full solutions

Question 7 — a model answer. Step 1: First value — care for the sick, whoever they are. White writes that he “found some of the female convicts with evident symptoms of the scurvy” and recorded it in his journal. A surgeon who notes sick convict women by name of their ship shows the belief that their health is his duty and worth recording. Step 2: Second value — lives are worth counting, and good management is worth credit for. White counts that “only seventy-two have died in one and twenty months” of 1,030 landed. The word “only” shows pride: he believes careful management saved lives and wants that known. Step 3: Check — both readings quote exact words and name the value each shows, which is what E02 requires.

Question 8 — a model answer. Step 1: State the view to test: Tench’s pity for ordinary convicts (Source A counts their deaths as a loss; in the rest of his book he divides them into the unfortunate many and the hardened few). Step 2: Test it among officers. For: Phillip’s order to remove the irons “very humanely” (Source B) and White’s care for the sick (Source C) show a humane strand among the fleet’s leaders. Against: even these officers speak *about* convicts, never *with* them, and their kindness sits beside fear of “insurrection”. Step 3: Test it in the wider public. The harsh view ruled: English law carried death for over 200 offences and transportation was routine (section 2A) — so pity was a minority current in the 1780s, stronger among some officers than in the public. Step 4: Verdict with precision: representative of a humane *minority* current of the period, shared by several officers, not of the majority of the society that sent the fleet. Marks live in steps 2–4, not in the verdict.

Question 9 — a model answer. Step 1: Reason 1 — skill and schooling: most working women of the 1780s had little or no schooling, and writing was a trained skill. Step 2: Reason 2 — power and record-keeping: the institutions that kept records (courts, churches, governments) were run by the propertied and powerful; a convict woman had no institution keeping her words. Step 3: What the silence is evidence for: who held the pen is who held power. The archive’s gap is not empty — it maps the power structure of the time.

Question 10 — a model answer. Step 1: Interpretation 1 and its perspective. Sources A and C were made by officers who sailed with the First Fleet and had purpose in praising it: low death counts (“but twenty-four perished”), good provisions, a surgeon’s care. Selecting these, a historian writes “triumph of careful, humane management” — and the evidence is genuine. Step 2: Interpretation 2 and its perspective. Figure 7’s Second Fleet numbers (273 of 1,038 dead at sea, 486 landed sick) select the human cost; Source B adds that convicts travelled in irons and were feared as a rising risk. Selecting these, a historian writes “a gamble with human lives” — and this evidence is genuine too. Step 3: Explain the variation. The writers differ in position (pride on the spot vs. horror looking back), in selection (which voyage, which numbers), and in emphasis (humane intention vs. human outcome). Interpretation follows selection and emphasis — that is the E04 chain. Step 4: Judge with more evidence. Check the Second Fleet’s own logs and the official inquiry into it; check convict-side records (court testimonies, the *Lady Juliana* women’s cry in Tench); check the official instructions Phillip worked under. The interpretation that survives the widest source base is the stronger one.

Source task — model responses. S1. Step 1: Makers and positions — Tench, marine officer; Hunter, naval captain of the *Sirius*; White, chief surgeon. Step 2: All three primary — made at or near the time (1789, 1793, 1790) by men who sailed with the fleet; a secondary source would be a later historian’s account built from such records. S2. Step 1: Counting the dead shows the value that lives — even convict lives — are worth counting. Step 2: “the provisions served on board were good, and of a much superior quality to those usually supplied by contract” shows approval of this voyage’s management and a critical attitude to the usual contract system. S3. Step 1: The order values humane treatment — health and cleanliness even under punishment. Step 2: “humanely” shows Hunter’s approving attitude to kindness in command. Step 3: Alongside the kindness sits watchfulness: the “intended insurrection” report shows the convicts were also seen as a risk to be controlled; care and control in one source. S4. Step 1: “Triumph of care” leans on Sources A and C (and B’s order); “gamble with lives” leans on Figure 7’s Second Fleet numbers read against B’s irons and insurrection. Step 2: The same event yields two interpretations because perspective varies by position, selection and emphasis — and interpretation follows that chain. S5. Step 1: Missing voice — the convict women’s. Step 2: Two reasons — most could not write; the people who kept records were the powerful (or: materials and time cost money; spoken words were rarely recorded). Step 3: Heard through another’s pen — Tench’s “Letters, letters!” aboard the *Lady Juliana*, June 1790.

When historians disagree

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 9 and 10

Owns VC2HH10S06

Draws on — VC2HH10S06.E01, VC2HH10S06.E02, VC2HH10S06.E03, VC2HH10S06.E04, VC2HH10S06.E05

Builds on — section 7A (VC2HH10S01), section 7B (VC2HH10S02), section 7C, section 7D (VC2HH10S04) and section 7E, together with the knowledge chapters, which supply the events and debates this section evaluates. This section adds the next step: judging the interpretations that historians, museums and film-makers build from sources.

Every chapter of this book so far has told you things about the past: the Industrial Revolution began in Britain around 1760; Australia federated on 1 January 1901; two conscription referendums were defeated in 1916 and 1917. But none of those statements reached you directly from the past. Each one passed through a person — a historian, a museum, a film-maker — who selected sources, arranged them, and said *this is what they mean*. That person’s account is an **interpretation**, and when interpretations disagree we have a **debate**. This section teaches you to evaluate both.

An **interpretation** is an account of what the past means and why it matters, built by someone from sources. A **debate** is a disagreement between interpretations that can be argued with evidence. Neither word means “made up”: a serious interpretation rests on real sources, and a serious debate is won by better reasoning about those sources, not by louder voices.

The section gives you a three-layer model of history, four reasons interpretations differ, a five-move method for evaluating any interpretation, and four real debates to practise on: who was responsible for World War I, conscription in Australia in 1916–17, what colonial society around 1900 was like, and what a museum or a film is really arguing.

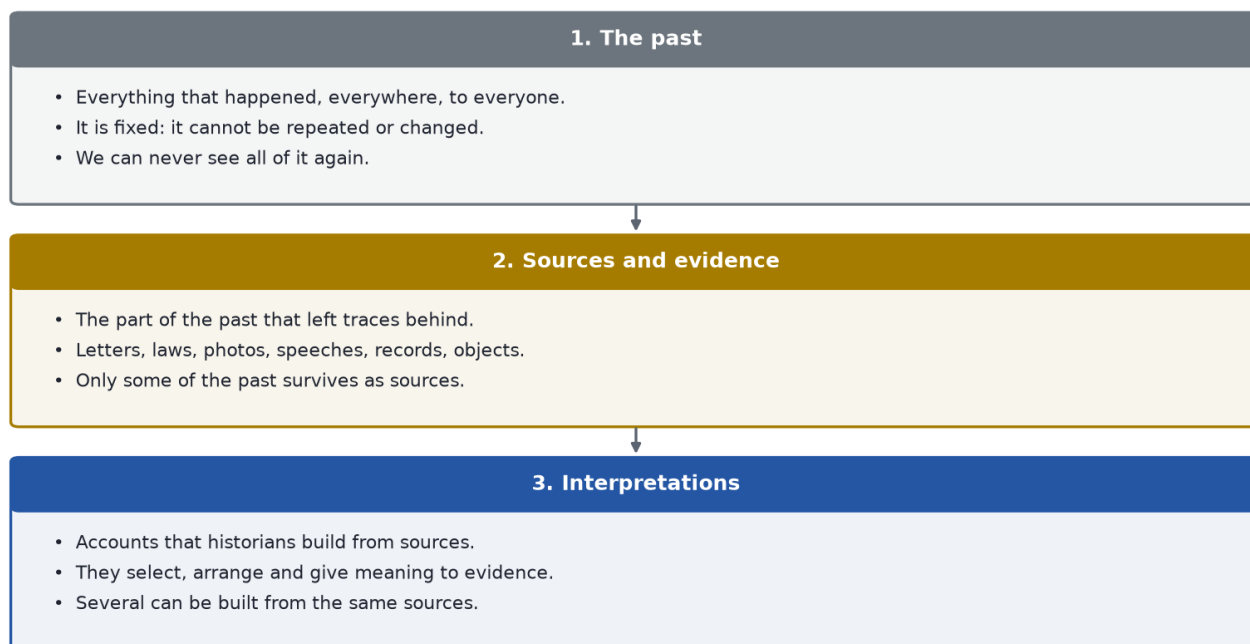
Theory

1. The past, the sources and the interpretations (VC2HH10S06)

History is built in three layers, and each layer is narrower than the one above it. Figure 1 sets the model out.

The past, the sources and the interpretations

Each step is built on the one before it - and each step narrows.



Three stacked panels joined by downward arrows: 1. The past (everything that happened, everywhere, to everyone; it is fixed and we can never see all of it again), 2. Sources and evidence (the part of the past that left traces behind; letters, laws, photos, speeches, records, objects; only some of the past survives as sources), 3. Interpretations (accounts that historians build from sources; they select, arrange and give meaning to evidence; several can be built from the same sources).

Figure 1. The past, the sources and the interpretations (source: section 7F, part 1; the model is used in every later part).

The **past** is everything that happened. It is fixed — it cannot be repeated or changed — and it is far too big for anyone to see whole. The **sources** are the part of the past that left traces: a letter, a law, a photograph, a speech, a roll of votes. Only some of the past survives as sources, so the second layer is already narrower than the first. The **interpretations** are the accounts built from those sources, and this layer is narrower still, because two people can build different accounts from the same sources.

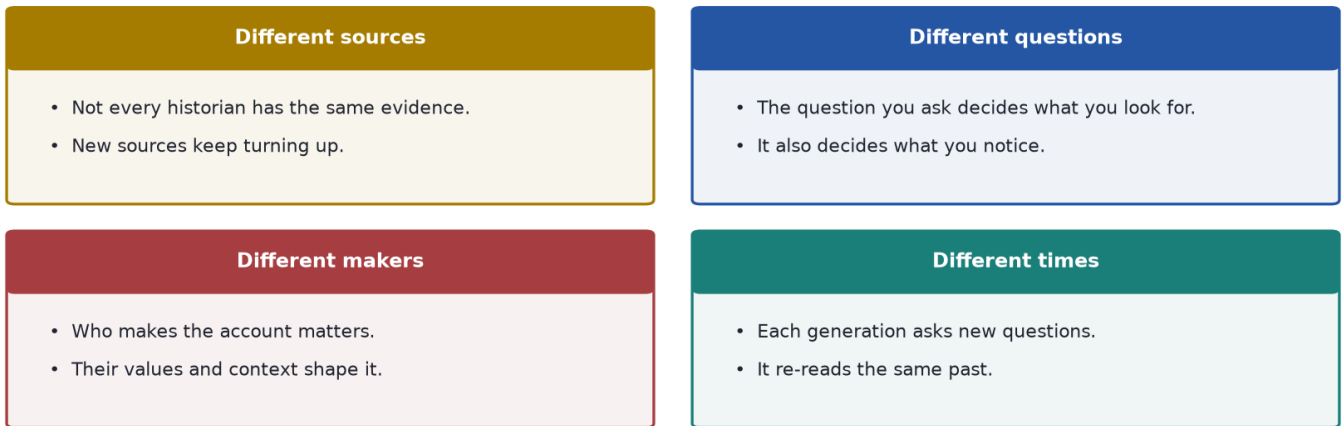
That last point is the key to the whole section. Because an interpretation is a *building*, we can evaluate it the way we evaluate any building: what is it made of (its evidence), who built it and why (its maker and purpose), how well the parts hold together (its reasoning), and what it leaves out. That is what VC2HH10S06 means by *evaluate*.

2. Why interpretations differ (VC2HH10S06)

If the past is fixed, why do accounts of it disagree? Four common reasons, and most real debates involve more than one. Figure 2 lists them.

Why do interpretations differ?

Four common reasons. Most real debates involve more than one.



Four panels in a two-by-two grid: Different sources (not every historian has the same evidence; new sources keep turning up), Different questions (the question you ask decides what you look for; it also decides what you notice), Different makers (who makes the account matters; their values and context shape it), Different times (each generation asks new questions; it re-reads the same past).

Figure 2. Why interpretations differ (source: section 7F, part 2; the four reasons are used to explain every debate in this section).

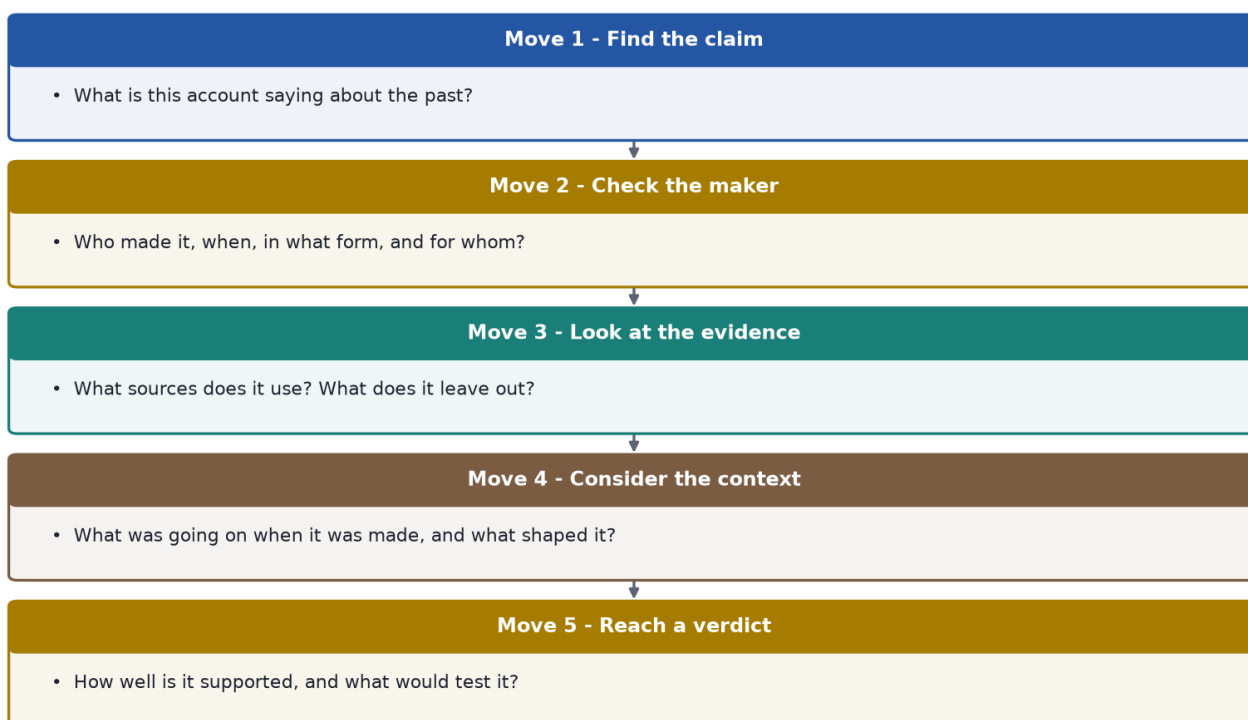
Notice what the four reasons do *not* include: they do not say that one side is careless with the facts and the other is careful. In the debates of this section, both sides use real sources and honest reasoning. That is what makes them debates worth studying — and it is why evaluation is a weighing job, not a hunt for the villain. When you meet a historical disagreement, the first question is not “who is wrong?” but “which of the four reasons is at work here?”

3. Five moves to evaluate an interpretation (VC2HH10S06)

Figure 3 is the method this section uses. Work down the list; your verdict should follow from the moves, not come first.

Five moves to evaluate an interpretation

Work down the list. Your verdict should follow from the moves.



Five panels joined by downward arrows: Move 1 - Find the claim (what is this account saying about the past?), Move 2 - Check the maker (who made it, when, in what form, and for whom?), Move 3 - Look at the evidence (what sources does it use? what does it leave out?), Move 4 - Consider the context (what was going on when it was made, and what shaped it?), Move 5 - Reach a verdict (how well is it supported, and what would test it?).

Figure 3. Five moves to evaluate an interpretation (source: section 7F, part 3; the method is used in the worked examples and in the inquiry task).

- **Move 1, find the claim.** Every interpretation says something about the past. Before you judge it, state it in one sentence: “this account says that ...”
- **Move 2, check the maker.** A historian writing in 1928, a government printing a referendum question in 1916, and a film-maker releasing a movie in 1981 are different makers with different purposes. The maker does not decide whether the account is right, but it tells you what the account was built to do.
- **Move 3, look at the evidence.** What sources does the account use, and what does it leave out? An account built on one kind of source is narrower than it may look.
- **Move 4, consider the context.** What was going on when the account was made? An interpretation made just after a war asks different questions from one made fifty years later.
- **Move 5, reach a verdict.** Say how well the claim is supported by the evidence, and name what would test it — a new source, a different question, a comparison with another account. A good verdict is graded (“strong on this, weaker on that”), not a thumbs-up or thumbs-down.

Two mistakes to avoid at Move 5. The first is treating every interpretation as equally good because “it’s just an opinion”. Interpretations are *argued* accounts, and arguments can be weighed: one can rest on more evidence, or on better evidence, than another. The second is assuming the newest interpretation is automatically the best. Later accounts have later evidence and later questions, but earlier accounts were closer to the events; part 4 shows a case where the oldest account in the line is still one of the contenders.

4. Debate 1 — who was responsible for World War I? (VC2HH10S06.E01, VC2HH10S06.E05)

Few questions have been debated longer than this one: who was responsible for the war that began in 1914? Figure 4 follows the debate across four moments. Section 3A of this book teaches the causes of the war, including the July Crisis of 1914; here the subject is what people *argued* about those causes afterwards.

One event, changing views: who was responsible for World War I?

The same question answered differently as time passed and new work appeared.

When	Who / what	What it argued
1919	Treaty of Versailles, Article 231	Assigned responsibility for the war to Germany and her allies; became known as the war-guilt clause.
1928	Sidney Bradshaw Fay, a United States historian	In <i>The Origins of the World War</i> he argued no single country was wholly to blame; responsibility was shared.
1961	Fritz Fischer, a German historian	In <i>Germany's Aims in the First World War</i> he argued Germany bore major responsibility and had worked toward the war.
2012	Christopher Clark, a Cambridge historian	In <i>The Sleepwalkers</i> he argued the great powers stumbled into the war, moving the focus from blame to shared responsibility.

Interpretations change over time as new questions are asked and new evidence is used.

*Table with four rows: 1919, Treaty of Versailles, Article 231 (assigned responsibility for the war to Germany and her allies; became known as the war-guilt clause); 1928, Sidney Bradshaw Fay, a United States historian (in *The Origins of the World War* he argued no single country was wholly to blame; responsibility was shared); 1961, Fritz Fischer, a German historian (in *Germany's Aims in the First World War* he argued Germany bore major responsibility and had worked toward the war); 2012, Christopher Clark, a Cambridge historian (in *The Sleepwalkers* he argued the great powers stumbled into the war, moving the focus from blame to shared responsibility). Caption: interpretations change over time as new questions are asked and new evidence is used.*

Figure 4. One event, changing views: who was responsible for World War I? (source: the Treaty of Versailles, Article 231; Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 1928; Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, 1961; Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 2012; retrieval details in 'Sources for this section').

Read the four rows with the four reasons of Figure 2 in mind.

- **1919 — the winners' verdict.** The Treaty of Versailles, signed 28 June 1919, said in Article 231 that Germany and her allies bore the responsibility for the war. This became known as the war-guilt clause. Its context explains it: the treaty was made by the powers that had won and suffered, and it had to justify the payments (reparations) that Germany was ordered to make. Move 2 (check the maker) does heavy work here — the account was made by the winning side, as part of a peace settlement.
- **1928 — Fay shares the blame.** The United States historian Sidney Bradshaw Fay worked through the diplomatic records of all the great powers and concluded that no single country was wholly to blame: responsibility was shared. Move 3 explains the change: Fay drew on a wider pile of sources than the treaty-makers had used, and as a historian rather than a winner he could ask the question without needing one guilty party.
- **1961 — Fischer points back at Germany.** The German historian Fritz Fischer opened German records from the war years and argued that Germany had worked toward the war and bore major responsibility for it. Move 3 again: newly opened sources produced a new claim — and, in the context of 1961, a striking one, because a German historian was arguing that his own country carried the greater share of the blame.
- **2012 — Clark's sleepwalkers.** The Cambridge historian Christopher Clark began his account not with Germany but with the Balkans, and argued that the great powers stumbled into the war through a crisis none of them fully controlled. The focus moved from blame to shared responsibility.

This is exactly the skill of VC2HH10S06.E05: tracking how historians' readings of one event have changed over time, including changes that follow the discovery and release of more sources. The same question — who was responsible? — received four different answers as the sources grew and the questions shifted. And the debate is not settled: a historian who weighs Fischer's records against Clark's picture can still argue about where the heavier share of responsibility sits, which is VC2HH10S06.E01 in action, exploring a debate about how much weight each cause of World War I should carry.

Give each view its strongest form before judging it. The treaty-makers could say they had seen the war begin and had buried their dead; Fay could say the records of every capital showed risky behaviour; Fischer could say Germany's own war aims, in its own records, answered the question; Clark could say that no single capital's records carry the whole crisis. Four defensible readings of one event — that is not weakness in history, that is history working.

5. Debate 2 — conscription in Australia, 1916–17 (VC2HH10S06.E04)

Some debates happen while the event is still unfolding. Section 3B of this book teaches why Australian men chose to enlist in the First World War and how the force was raised by volunteers. The question that followed — should men be forced to serve overseas? — split the country, and this part evaluates that debate. VC2HH10S06.E04 asks you to pick out the rival readings of one event; the conscription debate is one of Australia's clearest cases. Figure 5 sets the two sides out.

The conscription debate, Australia, 1916-1917

Should men be forced by law to serve overseas? The country split over the question.

The YES case	The NO case
- Led by Prime Minister Billy Hughes. - Backed by much of the press and many Protestant groups. - Duty: Australia must keep supporting its troops. - Britain's war was Australia's war. - Volunteers alone were not enough to keep the force going.	- Spoken for by Daniel Mannix, a leading Catholic voice. - Backed by trade unions, the labour movement and many Irish-Australians. - Forcing men to fight and kill was wrong. - The human cost was already too high. - Workers should not be forced while others profited.

Two panels side by side. The YES case: led by Prime Minister Billy Hughes; backed by much of the press and many Protestant groups; duty - Australia must keep supporting its troops; Britain's war was Australia's war; volunteers alone were not enough to keep the force going. The NO case: spoken for by Daniel Mannix, a leading Catholic voice; backed by trade unions, the labour movement and many Irish-Australians; forcing men to fight and kill was wrong; the human cost was already too high; workers should not be forced while others profited.

Figure 5. The conscription debate, Australia, 1916–1917 (source: the 1916–17 referendum campaigns; Hughes and Mannix speeches reported in newspapers of the time, via Trove, National Library of Australia; retrieval details in 'Sources for this section').

Both sides argued from values and from evidence. The yes case, led by the Prime Minister, **Billy Hughes**, said Australia's duty to Britain and to its own troops at the front required keeping the force up to strength, and that volunteers alone were not enough. The no case, for which **Daniel Mannix**, who became Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne in 1917, was the most powerful voice, said that forcing men to fight and kill was wrong, that the human cost was already too high, and that workers should not be compelled while others profited from the war. Each side saw the same war through a different frame: duty and empire on one side, conscience and the cost of war on the other.

The country voted twice, in a **referendum** — a nationwide vote on a single question. Figure 6 gives the results.

The two conscription referendums

A referendum is a nationwide vote on a single question. Both were defeated.

Referendum	Votes for	Votes against	Result
28 October 1916	1,087,557	1,160,033	Defeated (no)
20 December 1917	1,015,159	1,181,747	Defeated (no), by a wider margin

Table of the two conscription referendums: 28 October 1916, 1,087,557 votes for and 1,160,033 against, defeated (no); 20 December 1917, 1,015,159 votes for and 1,181,747 against, defeated (no), by a wider margin.

Figure 6. The two conscription referendums (source: Australian Electoral Commission records of the 1916 and 1917 referendums; retrieval details in ‘Sources for this section’).

Both referendums were defeated, the second by a wider margin than the first. The narrowness of the first result — a difference of about 72,000 votes out of more than two million — is itself evidence of how evenly the two interpretations divided the country.

Source A (Figure 7) is the question exactly as it was put to voters in 1916. It is a primary source, and Worked example 1 below evaluates it.

Source A - the question Australians voted on, 1916

A primary source: the exact words put to voters at the first conscription referendum.

Referendum question, 28 October 1916

"Are you in favour of the Government having, in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over Australians in regard to defence beyond the Commonwealth as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?"

As printed for the referendum of 28 October 1916; National Archives of Australia.

Aged-paper source box headed ‘Referendum question, 28 October 1916’ containing the exact question: “Are you in favour of the Government having, in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over Australians in regard to defence beyond the Commonwealth as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?”
Attribution: as printed for the referendum of 28 October 1916; National Archives of Australia.

Figure 7. Source A — the question Australians voted on, 1916 (source: the referendum paper of 28 October 1916, National Archives of Australia).

6. Debate 3 — what was colonial society like? (VC2HH10S06.E03)

Not all debates are about one event; some are about what a whole society was like. VC2HH10S06.E03 asks you to compare historians’ views about colonial society — what they share and where they part — and three ideas lead that debate. Figure 8 gives one view and another view of each.

Comparing historians' views of Australian society around 1900

Three ideas about colonial society, and where historians disagree.

Idea	One view	Another view
A distinct Australian identity	Russel Ward, in <i>The Australian Legend</i> (1958), said a national character of mateship and equality grew out of outback workers.	Others say Ward's picture was mostly about rural men and left out women, city people and migrants.
The 'working man's paradise'	High wages and early reforms, such as the 1907 basic wage, made Australia a good place for workers.	Others point out that many workers still lived hard lives, and the 'paradise' left many people out.
'White Australia' and Federation	Some historians argue the wish to keep non-European migrants out helped drive the push to federate in 1901.	Others say defence, trade and national pride were stronger reasons.

Table with three rows. A distinct Australian identity: one view - Russel Ward, in *The Australian Legend* (1958), said a national character of mateship and equality grew out of outback workers; another view - others say Ward's picture was mostly about rural men and left out women, city people and migrants. The 'working man's paradise': one view - high wages and early reforms, such as the 1907 basic wage, made Australia a good place for workers; another view - others point out that many workers still lived hard lives, and the 'paradise' left many people out. 'White Australia' and Federation: one view - some historians argue the wish to keep non-European migrants out helped drive the push to federate in 1901; another view - others say defence, trade and national pride were stronger reasons.

Figure 8. Comparing historians' views of Australian society around 1900 (source: Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 1958, and later critics; the Harvester judgement of 1907 (section 2E); the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (sections 1F and 2E); retrieval details in 'Sources for this section').

- **A distinct Australian identity.** The historian **Russel Ward**, in *The Australian Legend* (1958), argued that a national character — practical, loyal to mates, believing in equality — grew out of the rural workers of the colonial bush. His critics answer that the picture was drawn mostly from rural men, and left out women, city dwellers and migrants. The similarity between the two views is as important as the difference: both agree that something like a national identity was forming; they disagree about who made it and what it looked like.
- **The 'working man's paradise'.** Many writers described colonial Australia as a good place for workers, pointing to high wages and early reforms — the 1907 Harvester judgement, taught in section 2E, set a basic wage measured against the normal needs of an average employee. The other view points out that many workers still lived hard lives, and that the "paradise" left many people out. Sections 1F and 2E showed you the laws of the period; whether those laws add up to a "paradise" is the interpretation, and it is contested.
- **'White Australia' and Federation.** The first federal parliament passed the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, the law behind the policy known as White Australia (taught in sections 1F and 2E). Some historians argue that the wish to keep non-European migrants out was a strong force behind the push to federate; others say defence, trade and national pride were stronger reasons. Evaluating that debate means weighing the parliamentary record of 1901 against the other motives of the federation movement.

Comparing the rows is the skill: for each idea, say what the two views share, where they part, and which of the four reasons of Figure 2 best explains the parting.

7. Interpretations come in many forms (VC2HH10S06.E02)

Historians' books are not the only interpretations. VC2HH10S06.E02 asks you to judge one interpretation in another medium — a museum exhibition, a film, a documentary or a video game — as history — because each one selects, arranges and takes a view, exactly like a written account. Figure 9 lists five forms with the questions to ask of each.

Interpretations come in many forms

The same questions apply to every form: what is the claim, what evidence, what is left out, and whose view is it?

Form	Example	Questions to ask of it
Museum exhibition	The Australian War Memorial, Canberra	What does it choose to show? How does it label things? What is left out? Is it a place to honour the dead or to study war?
Film	Gallipoli (1981), directed by Peter Weir	Whose story is told? What is compressed or invented for drama? What is its view?
Documentary	A television series on Australia's wars	What sources does it use? Whose voices are heard? What argument does it make?
Video game	A historical war game	What does the player get to do? What does the game reward? What does it leave out?
Written book	A historian's history of the wars	What is the claim? What evidence does it use? What perspective shapes it?

Table of five forms of interpretation. Museum exhibition (example: the Australian War Memorial, Canberra) - what does it choose to show? how does it label things? what is left out? is it a place to honour the dead or to study war? Film (example: Gallipoli (1981), directed by Peter Weir) - whose story is told? what is compressed or invented for drama? what is its view? Documentary (a television series on Australia's wars) - what sources does it use? whose voices are heard? what argument does it make? Video game (a historical war game) - what does the player get to do? what does the game reward? what does it leave out? Written book (a historian's history of the wars) - what is the claim? what evidence does it use? what perspective shapes it?

Figure 9. Interpretations come in many forms (source: section 7F, part 7; the Australian War Memorial opened in Canberra in 1941; Gallipoli was directed by Peter Weir and released in 1981).

The **Australian War Memorial** in Canberra, opened in 1941, is one of the country's most visited museums. It is also an interpretation: what it chooses to display, how it labels its objects, and what it leaves out all take a view of what war means for Australia. People have long debated whether such a place is chiefly a shrine to honour the dead or a museum to study war — and the two purposes can pull a display in different directions. That debate is itself a historical debate, and it is evaluated the same way: find the claim, check the maker, look at the evidence, consider the context, reach a verdict.

A film is an interpretation too. Source B (Figure 10) describes what the film *Gallipoli* presents. Worked example 2 evaluates it with the five moves.

Source B - the film Gallipoli (1981)

A film is an interpretation: it selects, compresses and takes a view.

What the film presents

- Two young Australian friends enlist in 1915, full of spirit.
- It follows them to the Gallipoli campaign.
- It ends with the doomed attack at the Nek.
- Its view: brave Australians were wasted by poor leadership, and the war cost them dearly.
- It is a drama, made to move an audience, not a record.

Gallipoli, directed by Peter Weir (Australia, 1981).

Source box headed 'What the film presents': two young Australian friends enlist in 1915, full of spirit; it follows them to the Gallipoli campaign; it ends with the doomed attack at the Nek; its view - brave Australians were wasted by poor leadership, and the war cost them dearly; it is a drama, made to move an audience, not a record. Attribution: Gallipoli, directed by Peter Weir (Australia, 1981).

Figure 10. Source B — the film Gallipoli (1981) (source: *Gallipoli*, directed by Peter Weir, Australia, 1981).

8. A model evaluation (VC2HH10S06)

Figure 11 puts the five moves to work on one interpretation from part 4, in four colour-coded bands: the claim, the evidence, the test, and the verdict. Read it as the shape your own evaluations should take.

A model evaluation of one interpretation

The claim, the evidence, the test and the verdict - colour-coded.

CLAIM
Christopher Clark's <i>The Sleepwalkers</i> (2012) argues that the great powers of Europe stumbled into war in 1914 rather than choosing it, so blame cannot be pinned on one country.
EVIDENCE
Clark draws on records between governments from all the great powers to show that leaders in several countries took risks and made mistakes in July 1914.
TEST / LIMIT
But a historian testing this asks: does it let Germany off too lightly? Fritz Fischer (1961) had argued Germany worked toward the war. Clark's view is one reading of the same evidence.
VERDICT
Clark's interpretation is well supported by the records and is strong on how the crisis spread. It is weaker on the deeper rivalries that made war possible, and it is one of several views that can be defended.

Four colour-coded bands. CLAIM: Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers* (2012) argues that the great powers of Europe stumbled into war in 1914 rather than choosing it, so blame cannot be pinned on one country. EVIDENCE: Clark draws on records between governments from all the great powers to show that leaders in several countries took risks and made mistakes in July 1914. TEST / LIMIT: but a historian testing this asks - does it let Germany off too lightly? Fritz Fischer (1961) had argued Germany worked toward the war; Clark's view is one reading of the same evidence. VERDICT: Clark's interpretation is well supported by the records and is strong on how the crisis spread; it is weaker on the deeper rivalries that made war possible, and it is one of several views that can be defended.

Figure 11. A model evaluation of one interpretation (source: Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 2012, tested against Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, 1961; the five moves of Figure 3).

Notice three things about the model. First, the verdict is **graded**: strong on one thing, weaker on another, “one of several views that can be defended” — not “right” or “wrong”. Second, the test uses another interpretation (Fischer's) as the checking tool: comparing interpretations against each other is one of the best tests there is. Third, the whole evaluation is one paragraph's work; you do not need an essay to evaluate an interpretation, you need the moves.

Sources for this section

Retrieval date for all online sources: 26 August 2026.

1. Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany (the Treaty of Versailles), signed 28 June 1919, Article 231 — the war-guilt clause; Australian Treaty Series 1919 No. 1, austlii.edu.au; also cited in section 3A.
2. Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War* (New York: Macmillan, 1928) — the shared-responsibility argument of 1928.
3. Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (London: Chatto & Windus, English edition 1967; first published in German, 1961) — the major-responsibility argument of 1961.

4. Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012) — the sleepwalkers argument of 2012.
5. Referendum paper of 28 October 1916, National Archives of Australia — the conscription question reproduced in Source A (Figure 7).
6. Australian Electoral Commission, records of the referendums of 28 October 1916 and 20 December 1917 — the vote counts in Figure 6; aec.gov.au.
7. William Morris (Billy) Hughes, referendum campaign speeches of 1916, and Daniel Mannix, anti-conscription speeches of 1916–17 (Mannix became Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne in 1917) — reported in newspapers of the time, via Trove, National Library of Australia; trove.nla.gov.au.
8. Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958), and later critics of Ward's picture — the identity row of Figure 8.
9. Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, the Harvester judgement (H. B. Higgins), November 1907 — the basic wage behind the 'working man's paradise' row; also reproduced in section 2E.
10. *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (No. 17 of 1901), Federal Register of Legislation, legislation.gov.au — the White Australia row; also taught in sections 1F and 2E.
11. Australian War Memorial, Canberra — opened 1941; awm.gov.au.
12. *Gallipoli*, directed by Peter Weir (Australia, 1981) — Source B (Figure 10) and Worked example 2.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with help (VC2HH10S06.E04)

Question. Evaluate Source A — the 1916 referendum question (Figure 7) — as an interpretation, using the five moves of Figure 3.

Working	Comment
Move 1: the claim. The question says the country faces a “grave emergency” and asks only whether the Government should have the same compulsory powers over men serving overseas as it already has for service at home. Framed that way, it suggests the answer is a small, reasonable step.	Even a question carries a claim. The words chosen do the arguing.
Move 2: the maker. The question was set by the Hughes Government, which was campaigning for a yes vote. It is the yes case's own framing, printed on the official paper.	Check the maker: the maker here had a side.
Move 3: the evidence. The question presents no evidence and names no cost: no numbers of men, no mention of death or wounding, no mention of who would be compelled. What it leaves out is exactly what the no case put at the centre.	What a source leaves out is part of its interpretation.
Move 4: the context. By October 1916 the war had run for over two years; casualties from Gallipoli and the Western Front were known across Australia, and volunteers were falling short of what the Government wanted.	The context explains why the question was asked then, and why it chose the word “emergency”.
Move 5: the verdict. As an interpretation, the question is a one-sided framing — it is the yes case in the form of a question — and voters treated it as such: the no side won on 28 October 1916 by about 72,000 votes. The verdict is therefore graded: a clear piece of evidence for <i>how the yes case argued</i> , and a weak guide to the debate as a whole, which Source A must be checked against the no case (Figure 5) to see.	A graded verdict: strong for one purpose, weak for another — and named tests.

Answer: the 1916 question is an interpretation with the yes case’s framing built into it (“grave emergency”, “same compulsory powers”); its maker had a side; it leaves out the human cost the no case stressed; and its defeat at the polls shows the country did not accept that framing. Evaluate it as one side’s argument, checked against the other.

Worked example 2 — with help (VC2HH10S06.E02)

Question. Evaluate the film *Gallipoli* (1981) as a historical interpretation, using the five moves and Source B (Figure 10).

Working	Comment
Move 1: the claim. The film says brave young Australians were wasted by poor leadership at the attack on the Nek, and that the war cost Australia dearly.	One sentence, stated plainly, before judging.
Move 2: the maker. A feature film directed by Peter Weir, released in 1981, made to move an audience — a drama, not a record.	The form is part of the maker: films compress and invent to move people.
Move 3: the evidence. The film draws on the real campaign — enlistment in 1915, Gallipoli, the attack at the Nek — but it tells the story through two invented friends, and it ends the whole story at one doomed attack. What it leaves out (the wider campaign, the reasons men enlisted, the other theatres of the war) is as important as what it shows.	The invented friends and the narrowed ending are the interpretation working.
Move 4: the context. By 1981 the view of the war as a waste of young lives by failing leaders had grown strong in Australia, decades after the war itself; the film both drew on that view and strengthened it.	The film is an interpretation of its own time as well as of 1915.
Move 5: the verdict. As history, the film is strong on what the war <i>felt</i> like and on the sense of waste, and weak where drama needs shortcuts: two friends cannot carry the evidence a historian would need, and a viewer who took the film for the whole story would miss much. Its value is as a powerful interpretation to be evaluated — exactly what this worked example does — not as a record to be trusted untested.	Graded: strong on feeling and view, weak on coverage; named limit and use.

Answer: *Gallipoli* is a real historical interpretation: it makes a claim (courage wasted by poor leadership), builds it from selected and invented material, and belongs to the view of the war that was strong in 1981. Evaluated with the moves, it is powerful evidence of *how Australia came to see the war*, and a source to check against the wider record, not a substitute for it.

Notice the shape of both examples: claim, maker, evidence, context, graded verdict. Use it for any interpretation, in any form.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Key ideas (VC2HH10S06). Using Figure 1: (a) define **interpretation** and **debate** as this section uses them; (b) name the three layers of the model; (c) explain in one sentence why the third layer is narrower than the first.

Q2. Why interpretations differ. Using Figure 2, name the reason at work in each case: (a) a historian in 2012 reads the July Crisis with records that were closed to a historian in 1928; (b) one historian asks “who was to blame?” while another asks “how did the crisis spread?”; (c) a film about the war is made to move an audience, while a government report is made to justify a decision.

Q3. The method. (a) List the five moves of Figure 3 in order. (b) Apply Move 2 to Source A: who made it, and what side were they on? (c) Name the two Move-5 mistakes this section warns against.

Q4. The origins of World War I (VC2HH10S06.E01, VC2HH10S06.E05). Using Figure 4: (a) what did Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles say? (b) which two of the four views put the heavier share of responsibility on Germany? (c) give one reason, from the four reasons of Figure 2, that Fay's 1928 view differed from the treaty's 1919 view; (d) what does the change from 1919 to 2012 show about interpretations over time?

Q5. The conscription debate (VC2HH10S06.E04). Using Figures 5 and 6: (a) give two arguments of the yes case and two of the no case; (b) name one leader of each side; (c) what were the results of the two referendums, and what does the narrow first margin show?

Q6. Colonial society (VC2HH10S06.E03). Using Figure 8: (a) what did Russel Ward argue in *The Australian Legend*? (b) what do his critics say his picture left out? (c) on the 'working man's paradise' row, name one dated fact each side could use from this book (section 2E teaches the 1907 basic wage).

On your own

Q7. Evaluating a form (VC2HH10S06.E02). Choose one row of Figure 9 other than film. In three or four sentences, evaluate that form as a historical interpretation: state one claim such a work might make, one thing it is likely to leave out, and one question from the row that tests it.

Q8. Are later interpretations better? "A later interpretation of an event is always better than an earlier one." Using Figure 4, give the claim its strongest defence, then argue against it with evidence from the same figure. Reach a graded verdict.

Q9. Weighing causes (VC2HH10S06.E01). Section 3A teaches both the long-term causes behind World War I (the alliances, the arms race, the empires' rivalries) and the short-term cause (the July Crisis of 1914). In one paragraph, say which of the four views in Figure 4 leans on the short-term crisis and which leans on longer rivalries, and say which mix you find better supported. Give the other mix its strongest form before you decide.

Q10. The 'working man's paradise' (VC2HH10S06.E03). "Colonial Australia deserved the name 'a working man's paradise'." Weigh both sides in one paragraph, using Figure 8 and at least one dated fact from sections 1F or 2E, and end with a graded verdict.

Q11. Conscription verdict (VC2HH10S06.E04). Using Source A and Figures 5 and 6, decide which side of the conscription debate made the stronger case. State each side's strongest argument before you weigh them, and let your verdict follow from the weighing.

Q12. Inquiry task (VC2HH10S06, drawing on VC2HH10S06.E01–VC2HH10S06.E05). Evaluate a historical debate from this book, using the planner in Figure 12. (1) Choose one debate studied in this book — for example, the causes behind World War I (3A and Figure 4), the conscription votes (3B and Figure 5), or a view of Australian identity (Figure 8). (2) Find two different interpretations of the same event or question; record who made each, and when. (3) Evaluate each with the five moves of Figure 3. (4) Compare them: where do they agree, where do they differ, and which of the four reasons of Figure 2 best explains the difference? (5) Reach your own graded verdict, giving each side a fair hearing, and present it to the class in one short paragraph plus your planner.

Your inquiry planner

Work through the five steps to evaluate a historical debate.

Step	What to do
1. Choose a debate	Pick one debate from this book - for example, the causes of World War I, the conscription votes, or a view of Australian identity.
2. Find two interpretations	Find two different interpretations of the same event or question.
3. Evaluate each	Use the five moves: the claim, the maker, the evidence, the context, and a verdict.
4. Compare	Where do the two interpretations agree? Where do they differ, and why do they differ?
5. Reach your own view	Weigh the evidence and give your reasoned judgement. Give both sides a fair hearing before you decide.

Table of five steps. 1. Choose a debate (pick one debate from this book - for example, the causes behind World War I, the conscription votes, or a view of Australian identity). 2. Find two interpretations (find two different interpretations of the same event or question). 3. Evaluate each (use the five moves: the claim, the maker, the evidence, the context, and a verdict). 4. Compare (where do the two interpretations agree? where do they differ, and why do they differ?). 5. Reach your own view (weigh the evidence and give your reasoned judgement; give both sides a fair hearing before you decide).

Figure 12. Your inquiry planner (source: section 7F, inquiry task; the steps reuse Figures 2 and 3).

Answers

Q1. (a) An interpretation is an account of what the past means and why it matters, built by someone from sources; a debate is a disagreement between interpretations that can be argued with evidence. (b) The past; the sources; the interpretations. (c) The past is everything, sources are only the part that left traces, and interpretations are only the accounts built from those traces — so each layer is narrower than the one above it.

Q2. (a) Different sources (and different times: the records were closed in 1928 and open by 2012). (b) Different questions. (c) Different makers.

Q3. (a) Find the claim; check the maker; look at the evidence; consider the context; reach a verdict. (b) The Hughes Government set the question, and it was campaigning for yes. (c) Treating every interpretation as equally good because “it’s just an opinion”, and assuming the newest interpretation is automatically the best.

Q4. (a) It assigned responsibility for the war to Germany and her allies — the war-guilt clause. (b) The 1919 treaty and Fischer (1961). (c) Different sources: Fay worked through the diplomatic records of all the great powers, a wider pile than the treaty-makers drew on (that the makers were different is also a reason). (d) Interpretations of one event change over time as new sources are found and new questions are asked — and the debate can stay open.

Q5. (a) Yes: duty to Britain and the troops at the front; volunteers were not enough. No: forcing men to fight and kill was wrong; the human cost was already too high. (b) Yes — Billy Hughes; no — Daniel Mannix. (c) Both were defeated; the first by about 72,000 votes out of more than two million, which shows how evenly the two interpretations divided the country.

Q6. (a) That a national character of mateship and equality grew out of the rural workers of the colonial bush. (b) That his picture was mostly about rural men and left out women, city people and migrants. (c) For: the 1907 Harvester judgement set a basic wage measured against a worker’s normal needs (2E). Against: the same sections teach that the period’s laws sorted and excluded people (for example the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, 1F/2E), so the “paradise” left many out.

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. Model answer (museum exhibition row). A war museum might claim that a nation’s wars are the centre of its story. It is likely to leave out the lives that never reach a display case — the home front, the objectors, the people the wars displaced. The row’s question “is it a place to honour the dead or to study war?” tests it, because a shrine selects to honour while a museum selects to explain, and the two purposes produce different displays. Evaluated with the moves: the claim is real, the maker’s purpose is mixed, and the evidence (the displays) must be read against what is absent.

Q8. Strongest defence of the claim: later interpretations stand on more sources — Fay in 1928 used diplomatic records the treaty-makers of 1919 had not pooled, Fischer in 1961 used German records that were closed for decades, and Clark in 2012 used archives from all the great powers; later historians are also farther from the anger of the event, so they can ask calmer questions. Against it: the earlier accounts were closer to the event and to people who lived it — the treaty-makers had just come out of the war, and closeness is itself a kind of evidence; and the figure shows later views *disagreeing* with each other (Fischer against Fay, Clark against Fischer), so later cannot mean settled. Verdict: later interpretations usually have the advantage in sources and distance, but “always better” fails — each account in the line, old or new, must still pass the five moves, and the 1919 account’s limit is its maker, not its date.

Q9. Model answer. Clark’s sleepwalkers picture leans hardest on the short-term crisis: his account lives in the weeks of July 1914, in the risks and mistakes that turned one assassination into a general war. The treaty’s Article 231 and Fischer’s 1961 argument lean on the longer rivalries: Fischer’s Germany worked toward the war through its aims and alliances, and the treaty’s blame sat on years of built-up rivalry as much as on one summer. Weighing them: the long-term mix is better supported, because the crisis of 1914 only became a world war through the alliance systems and arms races the long view names — the short crisis explains the spark, the long rivalries explain the powder. Strongest form of the other mix: no alliance and no arms race made war inevitable, and in July 1914 decisions by a handful of leaders decided whether the crisis spread — so the short-term view rightly restores responsibility to the people who actually chose. The graded verdict holds both: the powder was long in the laying, the spark was chosen in July.

Q10. Model answer. For the name: the 1907 Harvester judgement set a basic wage measured against the normal needs of an average employee — a court fixing pay to human need was rare in the world of its time — and colonial parliaments passed early factory and wage laws (2E), which is real evidence for the “paradise” view. Against it: the same record shows who the paradise left out — the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* sorted arrivals by race (1F, 2E), and many workers, and most women, had no such protection; hard lives, not comfort, were the daily fact for plenty. Verdict: “a working man’s paradise” is a real interpretation with real evidence behind it, but it is a partial one — true for a slice of workers, and paid for by excluding others; the term is best used as evidence of how some Australians wanted to see their society, which is exactly how Figure 8 treats it.

Q11. Model answer. The yes case’s strongest argument: Australia had volunteered for a war far away, its troops at the front needed relief, and by late 1916 volunteers were not keeping the force up to strength — a country that had said it would stand with Britain faced breaking that word. The no case’s strongest argument: the question itself (Source A) never named the cost — compulsion to fight and kill overseas is a different thing from training at home, and a society that forces men to die against their conscience needs a heavier justification than “the same powers as we already have”. Weighing: the yes case rests on duty and numbers, which are real; the no case rests on the line between volunteering and compulsion, which the narrow first defeat (about 72,000 votes) shows the country felt sharply — and the second, wider no in 1917 shows that as the cost of the war became plainer, more voters moved to the no side. Verdict: the no case was the stronger, because it answered the question the yes case avoided — not “can we keep the force up?” but “may a government compel men to fight and kill overseas?” — and the electors, twice, agreed.

Q12. There is no single correct debate; the marks sit in the method. A strong response: (1) chooses a debate actually studied in this book and names it; (2) finds two interpretations with their makers and dates recorded (for example, the Treaty of Versailles’ Article 231, 1919, against Fay, 1928); (3) evaluates each with all five moves, ending in a graded verdict rather than a thumbs-up; (4) compares the two, locating the difference in one or more of the four reasons of Figure 2 (for example, different sources and different makers between 1919 and 1928); (5) reaches a personal verdict that gives each side a fair hearing and follows from the weighing. A weak response picks a side by instinct, treats one interpretation as “wrong” without weighing its evidence, or forgets that a museum label, a film and a textbook are interpretations too.

Key terms

Term	Meaning used in this section
Interpretation	An account of what the past means and why it matters, built by someone from sources
Debate	A disagreement between interpretations that can be argued with evidence
The past / sources / interpretations	The three layers of Figure 1: everything that happened; the part that left traces; the accounts built from those traces
Claim	What an interpretation says about the past, in one sentence
Maker	Who made an account, when, in what form, and for whom
Evidence	Information from a source judged useful for answering a question
Context	What was going on when an account was made, and what shaped it
Verdict	The graded judgement at Move 5: strong on this, weaker on that, and what would test it
Primary source	A source made at the time being studied (a referendum paper, a speech, a law)
Secondary source	A source made later by someone studying the time (a historian’s book, a documentary)

Term	Meaning used in this section
Perspective	A point of view shaped by who someone is and where they stand
Contested	Argued about; not settled on one agreed meaning
Conscription	Forcing people by law to serve in the armed forces
Referendum	A nationwide vote on a single question
War-guilt clause	Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles (1919), assigning responsibility for the war to Germany and her allies
Museum exhibition / film / documentary / video game	Forms of interpretation this section evaluates, per VC2HH10S06.E02