



Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

ANCIENT HISTORY

GENERAL COURSE

Year 12 syllabus

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Important information

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2024.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Rationale

The study of ancient history is the process of making meaning of the distant past in order to understand our present. It provides an opportunity for students to study people from cultures and communities that no longer exist, and to investigate how these communities responded to the problems and challenges of their time. Ancient history allows students to explore the ancient historical narrative and to seek out evidence for this.

The Ancient History General course promotes skills of research, hypothesis testing and analysis of information as students engage with historical inquiries. Through these inquiries, they learn that historical judgements are provisional and tentative in nature. A study of ancient history also enables students to develop skills in critical thinking and analysis as it encourages them to compare and contrast information, detect inconsistencies in details, recognise the manipulation of evidence, identify perspective in the presentation of graphic and textual material, and evaluate the accuracy and reliability of sources. Students are exposed to a variety of historical sources of both a textual and a material nature, such as letters, speeches, buildings, tombs and works of art, in order to determine cause and effect, and the motives and forces influencing people and events. Students use the evidence from sources to formulate and support their own interpretations, and to communicate their findings in a variety of ways.

The Ancient History General course allows students to gain insights into their own society and its values through the study of societies and cultures of the more distant past. These societies vary in size from small city states to vast empires and, in significant cases, are the ancient foundations of modern political, legal, cultural and religious institutions. It helps students to understand why societies and peoples hold certain values, and why values and belief systems vary from one group to another.

Course outcomes

The Ancient History General course is designed to facilitate achievement of the following outcomes.

Outcome 1 – Historical skills

Students apply the skills of historical inquiry and methodology to investigate the past and communicate their findings using the discourse of history. Students understand that interpretations and perspectives of people and events may change over time.

In achieving this outcome, students use the following:

- chronology, terms and concepts
- historical questions and research
- analysis and use of sources
- perspectives and interpretations
- explanation and communication.

Outcome 2 – Understanding the past

Students understand the past, linking the chronology of people, events, ideas and distinctive features of society into an historical narrative.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand that time periods have chronologies with distinctive features, people and events
- understand that a variety of ideas, values and beliefs exist at a particular time in a society and that some are more influential than others
- understand that societies have a range of organisational structures which impact on people and events.

Outcome 3 – Continuity and change in the ancient world

Students understand the nature of forces, the interaction between forces, and their significance for continuity and change in an historical context.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand the nature of the forces in a society that are responsible for continuity and change
- understand how historical forces operate and interact to bring about both continuity and change
- understand that some forces are more significant than others in bringing about continuity and change.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 12 syllabus is divided into two units which are delivered as a pair. The notional time for the pair of units is 110 class contact hours.

Unit 3 – Societies and change

In this unit, students learn about the evolving nature of societies and the various forces for continuity and change that exist. They also learn that values, beliefs, and traditions are linked to the identity of a society.

Unit 4 – Confrontation and resolution

In this unit, students learn that there are internal and external forces that result in confrontation and resolution within societies, and these have consequences for continuity and change.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- electives – an elective in which the unit content could be taught
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

The Ancient History General course continues to develop student learning in history through the two interrelated strands of Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills. This strand organisation provides an opportunity to integrate content in flexible and meaningful ways.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

In order for students to make meaning of the past, they examine a range of ancient historical narratives to develop understandings about the chronology of a time period. They examine the defining characteristics of a society at the start of the period; the key people, ideas and events that were forces for continuity and change during the period; and the effects of continuity and change on a society and/or upon other societies. Through the study of a range of ancient historical narratives, they develop a growing awareness that ancient historical narratives are set within a defined period of time, reflect a particular view of history which may be similar to, or different from, other ancient historical narratives, and that the narratives are supported with evidence.

Historical Skills

This strand presents historical skills, including skills that are used in historical inquiry. There are five key skill areas that build on those learned in the Year 7–10 History curriculum, and that continue to be developed in the Year 11 and Year 12 Ancient History General syllabuses. These are chronology, terms and concepts; historical questions and research; analysis and use of sources; perspectives and interpretations; and

explanation and communication. There is an emphasis through this strand on the development of informed and defensible responses to inquiry questions through a critical use of sources.

Relationships between the strands

The two strands are interrelated and the content enables integration of the strands in the development of a teaching and learning program. The Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand provides the contexts through which particular skills are to be developed. The same set of historical skills is included in each of the units to provide a common focus for the teaching and learning of content in the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand.

Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Ancient History General course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Literacy

Literacy is of fundamental importance in the study of ancient history. Students access historical content through a variety of print, oral, visual, spatial and electronic forms, including inscriptions, reliefs, accounts of the past by ancient writers, photographs, films, artefacts, sites and archived material. They learn to interpret and extrapolate meaning from a variety of sources to identify evidence. They analyse and evaluate texts for authority, reliability, relevance and accuracy. Students have opportunities to create a wide range of texts to communicate, explore, discuss, explain and argue a point of view; select and employ text structure; and develop language knowledge to express their thoughts and ideas logically and fluently, supported by evidence. They learn to monitor their own language use for accuracy in the use of historical terms, clarity of ideas and explanations, conciseness of expression, and to use language effectively to articulate a position.

Numeracy

Numeracy is useful in the historical inquiry process as it requires students to recognise patterns and relationships chronologically and spatially through the use of scaled timelines and maps. Students have opportunities to support their views with data, some of which is numerical in nature. They develop numeracy capability when they analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from statistical information, for example, in relation to change over time.

Information and communication technology capability

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability is important in the inquiry process, particularly in relation to investigation, analysis and communication. Students use digital tools and strategies to locate, access, process and analyse information. They use ICT skills and understandings to investigate and identify the provenance and credibility of evidence, and to communicate historical information. Students have opportunities to scrutinise websites and the interpretations and representations of the past they convey, including how and why such sites are constructed, and the audiences they serve and their goals in, for example, preservation, education, scholarship. They develop an understanding of the issues involved in the use of ICT when practising ethical scholarship as part of the historical inquiry process.

Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking is integral to the historical inquiry process. There are opportunities for students to delve deeply and broadly into the implications of any missing or questionable information in their investigation of historical topics. The demands of historical inquiry include the ability to pose intelligent questions, interrogate, select and cross-reference sources, and develop interpretations based on an assessment of the evidence and reasoning. Students identify possible weaknesses in their own positions, and analyse, evaluate and synthesise alternative interpretations and representations of the past.

Personal and social capability

Personal and social capability skills are developed and practised in the Ancient History General course by students enhancing their communication skills and participating in teamwork. Students have opportunities to work collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research in ancient history. Students develop advanced research, and presentation skills to express and justify their views effectively to others. Through the study of individuals and groups in the past, students develop their ability to appreciate the perspectives and experiences of others through the practise of empathy. Students develop increasing social awareness through the study of relationships between individuals and diverse social groups in the ancient past.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding provides opportunities for students to explore and understand the diverse perspectives and circumstances that shaped the actions and possible motivations of people in the past compared with those of today. Students have opportunities, both independently and collaboratively, to explore the values, beliefs and principles that were the basis for the judgements and actions of people in the past.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is a vital part of historical learning in ancient history. Students acquire knowledge of culturally diverse perspectives and roles and learn how these can change over time. Students develop an understanding of the diverse societies and cultures of the ancient world, and that different ways of life provide a frame of reference for recognising and appreciating intercultural diversity in the contemporary world. They also explore different perspectives, the historical contexts for those perspectives, and the legacies of ancient societies in relation to the contemporary world.

Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities address the contemporary issues that students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the following priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Ancient History General course. The cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Ancient History provides the opportunity to draw comparisons between the ancient cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as practised prior to the European settlement of Australia, and those of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome or China.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia is addressed in the Ancient History General course through the opportunity to study China in the ancient period through the study of physical remains, the nature of those sources, and the beliefs and practices of Chinese society. The subject also includes the role of individuals in society, and key developments in particular historical periods of China in ancient times.

Sustainability

Sustainability is addressed in the Ancient History General course through opportunities to study the use of technology in ancient times to access resources and control the environment.

Unit 3 – Societies and change

Unit description

In this unit, students examine the evolving nature of societies and the various forces for continuity and change that exist. They also learn that values, beliefs and traditions are linked to the identity of a society. Students learn that in any period of change there are those individuals and/or groups that support change, but others that oppose it, and that there are different interpretations of the resultant society.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

Chronology, terms and concepts

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding

Historical questions and research

- formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues
- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of ancient and modern sources
- identify and practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument
- evaluate the reliability, usefulness and contestability of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument

Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
- evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments
- communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students study **one** of the following electives, which is to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

The elective studied must not be the same as those electives studied in Unit 1 or planned for Unit 4.

- Old Kingdom Egypt, Dynasty 3–6 c. 2686–c. 2181 BC
- Egypt, Dynastic change, Dynasty 17–18 c. 1560–c. 1504 BC (the wars against the Hyksos to Amenhotep I) and Dynasty 18–19 (Ay to Rameses II) c. 1327–c. 1213 BC
- The establishment of Rome from the beginning of the Republic to the end of the Punic Wars c. 509–146 BC
- Rome, the Late Republic to the Lex Manilia c. 133–66 BC

The following themes should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the elective:

- military
- political
- social
- cultural
- religious
- economic.

Students investigate the chosen elective using the following framework:

Elements of a society at the start of the period

- broad overview of the historical context for the ancient society
- key political, social, religious, cultural, military and economic structures of the society at the start of the period
- values, beliefs and traditions that have evolved and/or become integral to the society
- individuals and groups who hold power and those who do not

Key people, ideas and events of the period

- key people, ideas and/or events and their influence on society
- the role of people, ideas and events as forces for change in the period
- examples of change in the period (political, social, religious, cultural, military and/or economic)
- examples of continuity in the period (political, social, religious, cultural, military and/or economic)
- methods and strategies used by leaders, individuals and/or groups seeking change
- leaders, individuals and/or groups that supported change and their reasons (motives) for doing so
- leaders, individuals and/or groups that resisted change and their reasons (motives) for doing so

Effects of continuity and change in the period

- short-term and long-term effects of change in the period
- evidence and impact of change on the lives of individuals and/or groups
- short-term and long-term effects of continuity in the period

Unit 4 – Confrontation and resolution

Unit description

In this unit, students learn that there are internal and external forces that result in confrontation and resolution within societies, and these have consequences for continuity and change. Students assess how power is used, how different groups and individuals respond, and whether there is the potential for greater confrontation or more effective resolution to conflict.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

Chronology, terms and concepts

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding

Historical questions and research

- formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues
- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of ancient and modern sources
- identify and practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument
- evaluate the reliability, usefulness and contestability of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument

Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
- evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments
- communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students study **one** of the following electives, which is to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

The elective studied must not be the same as those electives studied in Unit 1 or Unit 3.

- Egypt, Dynastic struggles and Empire, Tuthmosis II, Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut c. 1492–1425 BC
- Egypt, Akhenaten and the Amarna Revolution, Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten to the death of Horemheb c. 1352–c. 1295 BC
- Philip II and Alexander the Great of Macedon and the wars of the successors 382–c. 281 BC
- the conflict between the Greeks and the Persian Empire to the Battles of Plataea and Mycale, from 512/11–479/78 BC
- Rome, from Pompey’s Eastern Command to the First Settlement of Augustus 66–27 BC.
- China, the Han Dynasty, imperial rule both within and outside 206 BC–AD 220

The following themes should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the elective:

- military
- political
- social
- cultural
- religious
- economic.

Students investigate the chosen elective using the following framework:

Elements of a society at the start of the period

- broad overview of the historical context for the ancient society
- key political, social, religious, cultural, military and economic structures of the society at the start of the period
- values, beliefs and traditions that were integral to the society and how these were challenged
- individuals and groups who hold power and those who do not

Key people, ideas and events of the period

- causes of confrontation in the period (internal and external forces)
- people, ideas and/or events that contributed to confrontation in the period
- people, ideas and/or events that contributed to resolution of conflict in the period
- means by which individuals and/or groups have gained power
- methods and strategies used by leaders, individuals and/or groups to achieve their aims

Effects of confrontation and resolution for continuity and change in the period

- short-term and long-term effects of confrontation for continuity and change
- short-term and long-term effects of resolution of conflict for continuity and change

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)* Manual contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Ancient History General Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 12

Type of assessment	Weighting
<p>Historical inquiry</p> <p>Students use the relevant historical skills to plan, conduct and communicate an inquiry related to the elective they are studying. The inquiry proposition is devised by the teacher.</p> <p>The final presentation can be: a written report that includes timelines, flow diagrams, photographs; an analysis of sources used in the inquiry; multimodal presentations that could include a poster, museum display, re-enactment, PowerPoint, video and/or website, that can be presented individually or in a group.</p>	20%
<p>Explanation</p> <p>A response in the form of: a short answer or set of short answers; an extended answer which can be scaffolded or sectionalised essay questions and can contain timelines, flow diagrams; an oral presentation which can include a debate, hypothetical, group presentation and/or re-enactment for one or more closed or open questions.</p> <p>An explanation can involve: responding to propositions or points of debate; interpretations, explanations and/or evaluations of historical evidence.</p>	25%
<p>Source analysis</p> <p>A number of sources are interpreted, analysed, synthesised and/or evaluated. Questions typically require students to use evidence from the sources when commenting on: message; origin, purpose and context; reliability, usefulness and contestability of the evidence; perspective; and relevance to the context.</p> <p>The teacher can select the sources and provide the questions, or a student (or group of students) can select a range of sources to respond to questions provided by the teacher.</p> <p>Sources can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ancient materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ written sources (such as: extracts from historical narratives, biographies, constitutional treatises, drama, poetry, contracts, treaties, speeches, letters) ▪ archaeological sources (such as: photographs of inscriptions, coins, statues, ostraca, wall paintings, artefacts, buildings, human remains) ▪ maps and diagrams • modern materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ written sources (such as: extracts from historical narratives, biographies, historiographical texts) ▪ reconstructions ▪ maps and diagrams. 	25%
<p>Test</p> <p>Can be conducted during the unit or at the end of each semester and/or unit. Typically a combination of closed and open questions which are elective specific.</p>	15%
<p>Externally set task</p> <p>A written task or item or set of items of 50 minutes duration developed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority and administered by the school.</p>	15%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units.

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. The externally set task occurs in Term 2.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes. For example, student performance for an historical inquiry could be validated by a student/teacher interview, a declaration that all reference material is cited according to the school protocols, a learning journal, and/or a research organiser.

Externally set task

All students enrolled in the Ancient History General Year 12 course will complete the externally set task developed by the Authority. Schools are required to administer this task in Term 2 at a time prescribed by the Authority.

Externally set task design brief – Year 12

Time	50 minutes
Format	Written
	Conducted under invigilated conditions
	Typically between four and five questions
	All questions require students to refer to the material provided in a source booklet
Content	The Authority informs schools during Term 3 of the previous year of the Unit 3 syllabus content on which the task will be based

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information.

Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units. The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Ancient History General Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12

A

Historical Skills

Selects a range of relevant ancient and modern sources and assesses these for origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, differences in perspectives and interpretations, and/or contestability.

Responds effectively to key words in research or explanation tasks, applying evidence and historical understandings from appropriately acknowledged sources.

Explains how and why historical perspectives change.

Uses appropriate historical terms and concepts and develops responses which are logical and coherent.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Discusses the evolving nature of societies and the various forces for continuity and change that exist. Examines the individuals and/or groups that support change and those that oppose change within a society.

Discusses the causes of confrontation and resolution within societies and discusses the consequences for continuity and change.

Discusses the use of power within societies and the responses of individuals and groups.

B

Historical Skills

Selects a range of relevant ancient and modern sources and makes some assessment of origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, and differences in perspectives and interpretations.

Responds to key words in research or explanation tasks, applying some evidence and historical understandings from appropriately acknowledged sources.

Explains why various perspectives of ancient history exist.

Uses appropriate historical terms and concepts and develops a response which is logical and coherent but largely narrative.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Explains the evolving nature of societies and the various forces for continuity and change that exist.

Investigates the individuals and/or groups that support change and those that oppose change within a society.

Explains the causes of confrontation and resolution within societies and the consequences for continuity and change.

Explains the use of power within societies and the response of individuals and groups.

C

Historical Skills

Selects a narrow range of relevant ancient and/or modern sources and discusses some aspects of origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, and/or differences in perspectives and interpretations.

Responds to most aspects of research or explanation tasks.

Selects and acknowledges sources, but makes minimal use of supporting evidence.

Identifies different perspectives of ancient history.

Uses some historical terms and concepts and recounts the major features of the historical narrative, providing a simple structure for the response.

Historical knowledge and understanding

Describes the evolving nature of societies and some of the forces for continuity and change that exist. Identifies the individuals and/or groups that support change and those that oppose change within a society.

Describes the internal and external forces that result in confrontation and resolution within societies and some of the consequences for continuity and change.

Describes the use of power within societies and the responses of individuals and groups.

D

Historical skills

Selects ancient and/or modern sources, which may or may not be relevant, from a narrow range.

Provides some statements about origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, and/or differences in perspectives and interpretations.

Responds to limited aspects of research or explanation tasks, selects and acknowledges limited sources, and uses little to no supporting evidence.

Identifies a simple perspective of an historical event or person.

Displays limited knowledge of the historical narrative and structural conventions in the response.

Historical knowledge and understanding

States some features of societies and lists some of the forces for continuity and change that exist.

Lists/states the individuals and/or groups that support change and those that oppose change within a society.

Lists/states the causes of confrontation and resolution within societies and some of the consequences for continuity and/or change.

Makes statements about power within societies and lists some of the responses of individuals and groups.

E

Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

This glossary is provided to enable a common understanding of the key terms in this syllabus.

Ancient

As defined in this syllabus, the Ancient period covers history from the development of early human communities to the end of late antiquity (around AD 650).

Ancient sources

Ancient sources are any written or non-written materials created up to the end of late antiquity (around AD 650) that can be used to investigate the past. Ancient sources include written materials, such as extracts from historical narratives, literary works, biographies, letters; archaeological materials, such as photographs of archaeological sites, inscriptions (epigraphic sources), coins (numismatic sources), tombs, buildings, reliefs and artwork, statues, weapons, tools and artefacts; and maps or diagrams. These sources are analysed by the historian to answer questions about the past. (Sources created between AD 650–1500 may also be important to the study of some ancient societies.)

Cause and effect

Used by historians to identify chains of events and developments over time, short-term and long-term.

Contestability

Occurs when particular interpretations about the past are open to debate (for example, as a result of a lack of evidence or different perspectives).

Continuity and change

Aspects of the past that remained the same over certain periods of time are referred to as continuities. Continuity and change are evident in any given period of time and concepts, such as progress and decline may be used to evaluate continuity and change.

Concepts

A concept (in the study of history) refers to any general notion or idea that is used to develop an understanding of the past, such as concepts related to the process of historical inquiry (for example, evidence, continuity and change, perspectives, significance).

Empathy

Empathy is an understanding of the past from the point of view of a particular individual or group, including an appreciation of the circumstances they faced, and the motivations, values and attitudes behind their actions.

Evidence

In History, evidence is the information obtained from sources that is useful for a particular inquiry (for example, the relative size of historical figures in an ancient painting may provide clues for an inquiry into the social structure of the society). Evidence can be used to help construct an historical narrative, to support a hypothesis, or to prove or disprove a conclusion.

Historical authentication

A process of verifying the origins of an artefact or object and establishing it as genuine.

Historical inquiry

Historical inquiry is the process of investigation undertaken in order to understand the past. Steps in the inquiry process include posing questions, locating and analysing sources, and using evidence from sources to develop an informed explanation about the past.

Hypothesis

A tentative statement or proposition that can be tested by asking questions and analysing evidence.

Interpretation

An interpretation is an explanation of the past, for example, about a specific person, event or development. There may be more than one interpretation of a particular aspect of the past because historians may have used different sources, asked different questions and held different points of view about the topic.

Modern sources

Modern sources are any written or non-written materials created after the end of the late Middle Ages (around AD 1500) that can be used to investigate the ancient past. These sources are often accounts about the past, that use or refer to ancient sources, and present a particular interpretation. Modern sources include written materials, such as extracts from historical narratives, literary works, biographies, historiographical texts; reconstructions; documentaries; maps; diagrams; and websites. (Sources created between AD 650–1500 may also be important to the study of some ancient societies.)

Perspective

A person's perspective is their point of view; the position from that they see and understand events going on around them. People in the past may have had different points of view about a particular event, depending on their age, gender, social position and their beliefs and values. Historians also have perspectives and this can influence their interpretation of the past.

Reconstruction

A process of piecing together evidence from sources to develop an understanding or explanation of the past.

Representation

A picture or image of the past that may be a popular portrayal within society (past or present) or that may be created by historians.

Significance

The importance that is assigned to particular aspects of the past (for example, events, developments, and historical sites). Significance includes an examination of the principles behind the selection of what should be investigated and remembered and involves consideration of questions, such as: How did people in the past view the significance of an event? How important were the consequences of an event? What was the duration of the event? How relevant is it to the contemporary world?

Source

Any written or non-written materials that can be used to investigate the past (for example, coins, letters, tombs, buildings). A source becomes 'evidence' if it is of value to a particular inquiry.

Terms

A word or phrase used to describe abstract aspects or features of the past (for example, imperialism, democracy, republic) and more specific features, such as a pyramid, gladiator, and temple.