

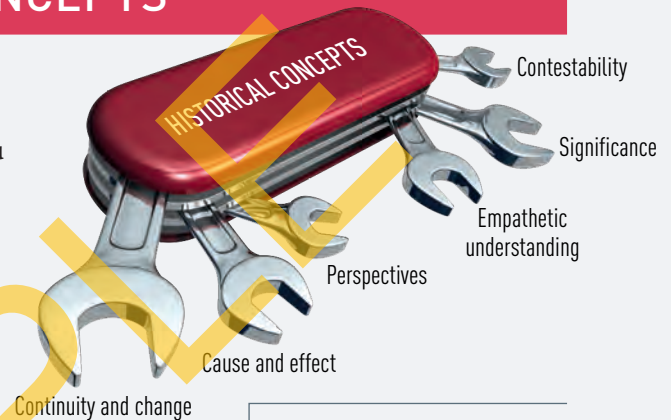
# APPENDIX: THE HISTORIAN'S TOOLKIT

## CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

As you investigate the medieval and early modern world, you will continue to learn and apply the historical concepts and skills that historians and archaeologists use in their investigations. These concepts and skills are a historian's 'tools of the trade'. This toolkit describes the range of historical concepts and skills that you will learn about during your study of history.

### HT.1 HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

Six key historical concepts are shown in Source HT.1. At times you might focus on just one of the concepts; at other times you will use several at once. As you learn to apply each concept, you will begin to think like a historian.



Source HT.1 Historical concepts

### Continuity and change

Historians recognise that over time some things change, while others stay the same. This concept is referred to as continuity and change. Examples of continuity and change can be seen across every **civilisation** and any given **period of time**. They can be seen in some aspect of everyday life that has continued across **centuries**, or a change in religious beliefs that has affected an entire society's culture.

### Examples of continuity and change

**Continuity:** Barbers and barber shops are common today as they were during medieval times. This is an example of historical continuity.

**Change:** In the middle ages, hair was not the only thing that barbers cut. As well as cutting hair, they also extracted teeth, performed surgery and the common medical procedure of **blood-letting** – all without any formal training. Blood-letting involved cutting a person's veins and collecting a particular amount of blood in a dish. This process was believed to cure illness and prevent diseases such as the bubonic plague. No barber today would be legally permitted to perform such a procedure, nor would you want him to. This is an example of a historical change.



Source HT.2

Modern-day barbers continue one of the roles carried out by their medieval counterparts, who were known as barber-surgeons.



Source HT.3 A 15th-century illustration of a barber-surgeon performing a blood-letting procedure on a woman.

### APPLY HT.1

- 1 Find examples of continuity and change related to activities you do, or objects that you use every day. Think about things you do or use that have stayed the same for many years, and others that have changed. Why might this be the case? Share your thoughts with the class.

## Cause and effect

The concept of cause and effect is used by historians to identify the events or developments that have led to particular actions or results. Sometimes the link between cause and effect is clear. For example, heavy rain over many weeks (cause) leads to flooding and the destruction of crops (effect). However, this link is often less obvious or more complicated. Generally, there are many causes (reasons) that lead to an event or result. There can also be many effects or outcomes. Sometimes the effects are simple to identify, while in other cases they are more difficult to predict and may not even be observed until long after the event.



Source HT.4 A  
medieval illustration of  
a couple afflicted with  
the plague.

## Examples of cause and effect

During the 14th century, a terrible plague known as the Black Death swept across Europe, Asia and parts of Africa. Historians estimate that at least 75 million people across Asia, North Africa and Europe died as a result. In Europe, this represented between 30 and 40 per cent of the population.

There were a number of factors that led to the rise and spread of the Black Death. Bubonic plague, long considered to be the most common form of the disease, was spread by fleas infected with a bacterium known as *Yersinia pestis* (cause). These fleas lived on black rats that were commonly found in all medieval towns and cities because of poor hygiene and sanitation (cause). Bites from the infected fleas spread the disease to humans (cause). Another form of the disease, pneumonic plague, was spread from person to person through the air, infecting bodily fluids such as mucus and blood (cause).

The Black Death resulted in a range of short- and long-term effects. Some of these are listed below.

Short term effects:

- a massive drop in population resulting in shortages of farm labourers and skilled craftspeople
- abandoned houses were left dirty and unattended, and rubbish and raw sewage in towns and cities was left to rot
- large numbers of deaths meant that mass burials of plague victims in large pits were necessary
- some priests refused to bury victims of the plague for fear of contracting the disease
- the persecution of some people in society (such as Jews) who were accused of causing the plague.

Long-term effects:

- the breakdown of **feudalism** across Europe because labourers and tradespeople could now demand better conditions and higher wages instead of working in return for the protection of feudal lords
- a reduction in the power and influence of the Church on people's lives due to the belief that the Church (including priests and clergy) had not been able to prevent the plague
- workers demanding recognition of their rights through a number of uprisings
- improvements in hygiene and medical knowledge due to new regulations and laws introduced to prevent further infections.

### APPLY HT.2

- 1 Create a flow chart to show the causes and effects (both short-term and long-term) of the Black Death.



## Perspectives

The concept of perspectives is an important part of historical inquiry. A person's perspective is their point of view – the position from which they see and understand events. People will have different perspectives about an event, person, even a society, depending on factors such as their age, gender, social position, and beliefs and values. Historians must try to understand the different values, beliefs and experiences that shaped or affected the lives of people who lived in the past, despite their own perspectives.

People from the past will have had different perspectives about the same event. For example, an invasion would be viewed very differently by the conquering forces and the defeated peoples.

Writers and historians also have perspectives that can influence their interpretation of the past.

## Examples of perspectives

The Spanish conquest of the Americas in the 16th century provides an example of how a clash between very different cultures, societies and religions resulted in the near-destruction of the native civilisations in the Americas.

Spanish conquistadors such as Hernán Cortés came to the Americas in 1519 driven by a desire to convert the native people to Christianity, to expand Spanish territory and to increase Spanish wealth. The Spanish believed it was their duty to convert to Christianity a

race of people that they saw as uncivilised.

From a Spanish perspective at the time, their actions were lawful and blessed by their Christian god. They also believed they were entitled to enslave the population and send the wealth and treasures of the Americas back to Spain in the name of the king.

Within 100 years, the Inca, Aztec and Maya civilisations and cultures had been largely destroyed. From a modern perspective, the actions of the Spanish during this time are seen as brutal, cruel and unjustifiable. However, regardless of what you may think personally about the way in which the Spanish acted, the concept of perspectives encourages us to view the actions of the Spanish as typical of the way Indigenous populations around the world were treated by European colonisers.



**Source HT.5** This Spanish artist's impression shows the conquistador Hernán Cortés meeting the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II in the capital of Tenochtitlan in 1519.

### APPLY HT.3

- 1 Examine Source HT.5 showing the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés meeting the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II in the city of Tenochtitlan in 1519.
  - a Use evidence from the illustration to determine the main differences between the two cultures.
  - b Cortés and the Spanish viewed the Aztecs as uncivilised 'barbarians'. From the evidence presented in the illustration would you agree or disagree with this point of view? Give reasons to support your answer.

## Empathetic understanding

Empathetic understanding is the ability to understand and appreciate particular events or actions from someone else's point of view. In the study of history, empathetic understanding is about trying to understand and appreciate the thoughts and views of people who have lived at different times, and in different cultures from your own. In short, this concept encourages us to put ourselves in someone else's shoes – to think the way they may have thought and feel the things they may have felt. Empathetic understanding helps us to understand the impact of past events on an individual or group. It also helps us to understand what has motivated an individual or group to act in a particular way.

### Examples of empathetic understanding

In medieval Japan a type of feudal system was developed in which there were rigid social classes. The warrior class, which included samurai, lived under a strict code of behaviour known as *bushido* ('the way of the warrior'). This code was based on honour, loyalty and discipline. A samurai's first duty was to honour and obey his master. If a samurai was defeated in battle, captured by the enemy or dishonoured in any way, the code required him to commit ritual suicide – an act known as *seppuku*. A special knife or short sword was used to stab deep into the abdomen and cut across the body from left to right. Only by taking his own life in this way would the samurai and his family be spared shame and disgrace.

It is difficult to imagine the agony of committing *seppuku*, and for many people today this act might seem barbaric. However, by applying the concept of empathy, we are able to appreciate how young men trained in the warrior code would have believed that their honour and loyalty was worth more than their life, and that no other option was acceptable. An appreciation of the type of disgrace brought upon the families of samurai who did not commit *seppuku* also helps us to understand their actions.



Source HT.6 A Japanese woodblock print of a samurai warrior about to perform *seppuku* – ritual suicide.

#### APPLY HT.4

- 1 Another example of a practice that may be difficult to understand from your own perspective was the practice of *devsirme*. During the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, officials of the Ottoman Empire travelled to Christian villages in the territories under Ottoman rule in south-eastern Europe. Their purpose was to 'gather' boys with the most potential, to be educated and trained as the Empire's elite soldiers and administrators. The boys were forced to convert to Islam, and many were sent to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire and would never return home.
- 2 Read the section '*Devsirme*' in Chapter 9 The Ottoman Empire and complete the activities in Interpret 9.2.



## Significance

The concept of significance relates to the importance that historians assign to aspects of the past, such as:

- events
- developments and movements
- individuals or groups
- discoveries and historical sites.

Historians make decisions about what is historically significant and worth studying. They do so by asking questions about the type of impacts particular events, discoveries, movements, individuals and sites have had on the world, both in their own time and in later periods.

## Example of significance

The changes introduced by Genghis Khan during his time as ruler of the Mongol Empire are considered significant because they affected enormous numbers of people over the vast territories of the empire. Although Genghis Khan ruled the Mongol Empire for a relatively short period of time, many of his actions

continue to influence the lives of people all over the world. Some of these legacies include:

- the unification of many nomadic tribes and the establishment of a vast empire, with a disciplined and well-organised army
- the establishment of a legal system that governed over 100 million people
- the development of a system that respected and accepted people of different religious beliefs
- the establishment of **dynasties** in several parts of the world, including Korea, China and southern Russia.



**Source HT.7** This statue of Genghis Khan near the Mongolian capital of Ulan Bator is over 40 metres high.

### STRANGE BUT TRUE

Genetic research has indicated that Genghis Khan's DNA is now found in around 0.5 per cent of the world's population, which suggests that he and his sons fathered an enormous number of children. One out of every 12 Asians is now thought to be descended from Genghis Khan.

### APPLY HT.5

1. Listed below are the types of questions historians ask to decide if events, discoveries, people or sites are historically significant:

- How important was this to people who lived at that time?
- How many people were affected?
- To what degree were people's lives affected?
- How widespread and long-lasting were the effects?
- Can the effects still be felt today?

Use each of these questions to determine the historical significance of

- a Genghis Khan
- b an event, discovery or individual of your choice, from any topic that you have completed in your study of history.

## Contestability

The concept of contestability is about interpretations of the past that are the subject of debate among historians. Historians around the world often have access to different sources, or they may study the same sources but come to different conclusions. Often there is no right answer. The development of new technologies can provide new evidence, which helps historians in their search for a more complete understanding of the past.

### Examples of contestability

Historians generally agree that early Polynesians migrated to various islands across the Pacific Ocean from one point of origin. However, historians have argued about how stone-age people could have crossed immense stretches of oceans to settle on these remote islands. They have also disagreed about whether Polynesians originally travelled from South America or from South-East Asia before they settled on the islands.

One theory suggests that Polynesians originated from modern-day Peru, floating across the ocean on rafts made of balsa wood, which is common in South America. The people who support this theory argue that the regular wind patterns and ocean currents would allow this type of travel, while travelling in the opposite direction would be much more difficult. They also sometimes suggest that there are similarities between Aztec, Incan and Mayan stone buildings and the stone statues of Polynesia such as the *moai* on Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

Another theory suggests that Polynesians originated in Asia and travelled eastwards across the Pacific Ocean. People who support this theory point to archaeological evidence found in islands to the east of Polynesia, as well as DNA testing.



**Source HT.8** In 1947, a Norwegian adventurer named Thor Heyerdahl carried out a daring voyage in an attempt to prove the theory that the Polynesians originally travelled from South America. He constructed a raft, which he called *Kon-Tiki*, and sailed it from South America into the Pacific.

#### APPLY HT.6

- 1 Read the section 'Theories about Polynesian expansion' in Chapter 13 Polynesian expansion across the Pacific. Then add marks and labels on a blank map of the Pacific region to explain the opposing theories about the origins of the Polynesian people. Include details about the arguments and evidence from both sides.
- 2 Using images and text, create a poster which illustrates and briefly explains the six historical concepts discussed in this section.

## HT.2 HISTORICAL SKILLS

To conduct any historical inquiry, historians need to apply a range of different skills (see Source HT.9). Each skill area has a number of specific skills that you will learn and practice during your study of history. Some activities in your depth study topics will focus on one skill. Other activities, such as the Rich Tasks, are more complex and open-ended activities, requiring you to apply a number of skills to complete them.



Comprehension: Chronology, terms and concepts

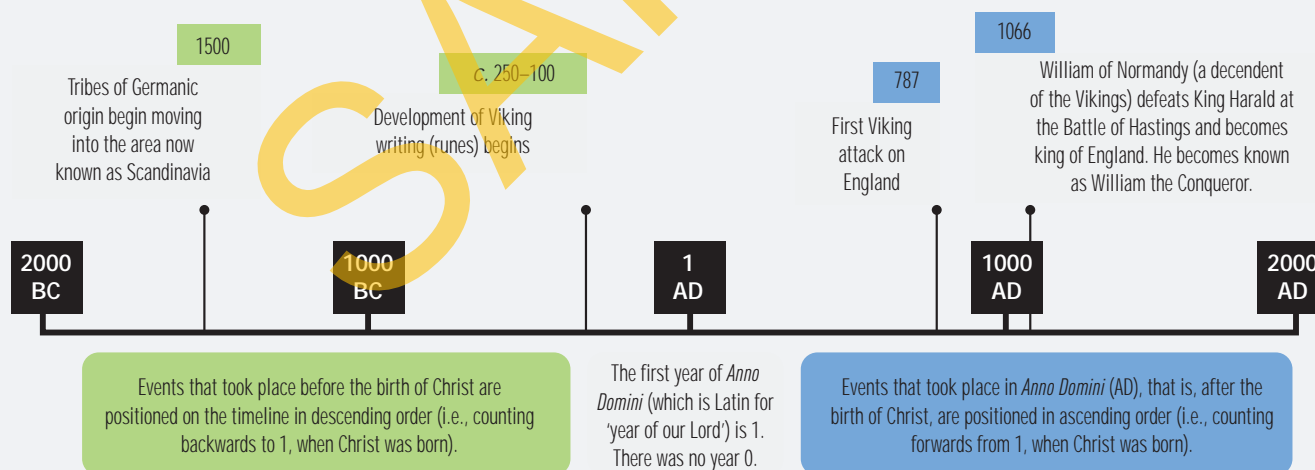
Source HT.9 Historical skills

## Comprehension: Chronology, terms and concepts

### Chronology

To get a better understanding of the past, historians organise events in the order they happened. This is known as chronology. Drawing a **timeline** is a useful way to visually represent the scope of the **time period**, as well as the order of events. We can use chronology to look at events that happened in one place or society, or compare events across many different places and societies.

Once events have been placed in chronological order, historians can use a range of historical concepts to analyse them in detail. These include cause and effect, significance, and continuity and change (for more information, see HT.1 Historical concepts).



## Terms and concepts

Terms and concepts related to historical time are covered in detail in *Depth Study 1: Investigating the ancient past*. These include terms and concepts such as **BC/BCE** and **AD/CE**.

A reference table for time periods BC and AD, divided into centuries, is provided below. You should be familiar with the terms used to describe historical time periods before you begin your depth studies.

Century BC	Time period	Century BC	Time period	Century BC	Time period
21st century BC	2100 to 2001	14th century BC	1400 to 1301	7th century BC	700 to 601
20th century BC	2000 to 1901	13th century BC	1300 to 1201	6th century BC	600 to 501
19th century BC	1900 to 1801	12th century BC	1200 to 1101	5th century BC	500 to 401
18th century BC	1800 to 1701	11th century BC	1100 to 1001	4th century BC	400 to 301
17th century BC	1700 to 1601	10th century BC	1000 to 901	3rd century BC	300 to 201
16th century BC	1600 to 1501	9th century BC	900 to 801	2nd century BC	200 to 101
15th century BC	1500 to 1401	8th century BC	800 to 701	1st century BC	100 to 1

**Source HT.11** More than 2000 years 'before Christ', divided into centuries. When ordering time BC, remember to count backwards from 1.

Century AD	Time period	Century AD	Time period	Century AD	Time period
1st century AD	1 to 100	8th century AD	701 to 800	15th century AD	1401 to 1500
2nd century AD	101 to 200	9th century AD	801 to 900	16th century AD	1501 to 1600
3rd century AD	201 to 300	10th century AD	901 to 1000	17th century AD	1601 to 1700
4th century AD	301 to 400	11th century AD	1001 to 1100	18th century AD	1701 to 1800
5th century AD	401 to 500	12th century AD	1101 to 1200	19th century AD	1801 to 1900
6th century AD	501 to 600	13th century AD	1201 to 1300	20th century AD	1901 to 2000
7th century AD	601 to 700	14th century AD	1301 to 1400	21st century AD	2001 to 2100

**Source HT.12** More than 2000 years *Anno Domini* ('in the year of the Lord') divided into centuries. When ordering time AD, remember to count forwards from 1.

In Depth Study 1: 'Investigating the ancient past' you learned historical terms and concepts such as:

- **primary sources** and **secondary sources**
- **hypotheses**
- **prehistory**.

During your study of the depth studies in 'The ancient to the modern world' you will come across specific terms related to your topics, such as:

- **Danelaw**
- **feudalism**
- **devsirme**
- **patrons**
- **yasa**
- **shoguns**
- **tapu**
- **dispossession**



## APPLY HT.7

- 1 Arrange the following dates in chronological order.  
AD 1 400 BC 399 BC AD 2013 2012 BC
- 2 Which centuries were the following years in?
  - a 2012 BC
  - b AD 1
  - c AD 1921
  - d AD 2000
  - e 902 BC
  - f 81 BC
- 3 Choose a person of interest to you and create a timeline of their life. The person can be an important historical figure (such as Genghis Khan or Leif Ericson), a person who has made an important discovery or invention that changed history (such as Christopher Columbus or Johannes Gutenberg), or even your favourite actor or singer.
  - a Your timeline should include at least six significant events. Each entry must include a date and brief description of that event.
  - b You should also include images related to at least two of the entries on your timeline.
  - c Present your timeline electronically or as a poster.

## Analysis and use of sources

### Identify the origin and purpose of primary and secondary sources

Historians use two types of **sources** to gather **evidence** about the past:

- **primary sources** – objects created or written at the time being investigated; for example, during an event or very soon after
- **secondary sources** – accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated and that often use or refer to primary sources and present a particular interpretation.

Both primary and secondary sources are useful, but they will almost always reflect the perspective of the person who created them, as well as the attitudes and beliefs of that time.

So it is important for historians to understand:

- their origin – where they came from
- their purpose – why they were created.

In some cases the author may have been paid or forced to write in a particular way or ignore certain facts. This is referred to as **bias**, which is often aimed at persuading the reader to agree with the author's point of view. Analysing sources by asking 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'why' questions will help you identify the origin and purpose of the sources.

## Evaluating sources

Questions historians ask to identify the origin and purpose of sources include the following:

Who wrote, produced or made the source?

- Is the creator's personal perspective obvious in the source?
- Is the creator a member of a particular group, religion or organisation?

What type of source is it?

- Was the source created at the time of the event or afterwards?

When was the source written, produced or made?

- How old is the source?
- Is it an eyewitness account or is it written by someone at a later date?
- Is the source complete?

Why was it written or produced?

- Was it designed to entertain, persuade or argue a point of view?
- Does the creator have anything to gain personally from the source?
- What other events may have been happening at the time and might have influenced the author or source?



**Source HT.13** The origin and purpose of these primary (A) and secondary (B) sources are very different, even though they are both related to Viking mythology: (A) A northern Icelandic bronze statue of the Viking god Thor holding his hammer (known as Mjolnir) dating back to around AD 1000 (B) Actor Chris Hemsworth as Thor holding his hammer (known as Mjolnir) in the 2011 Marvel Studios production of *Thor*.

### APPLY HT.8

- 1 Which of the following is an example of a primary source: a bronze statue of the Viking god Thor created in AD 1000, the film *Thor* released in 2011.

## Locate, compare, select and use information from a range of sources as evidence

By this stage of your historical inquiry, you will have located and collected a variety of different sources and types of information. Now it is time to compare and select the most relevant information that you will use as evidence to support your hypothesis. There are a number of different ways to organise large amounts of information so that you can decide quickly and easily which sources provide the most useful, relevant and reliable evidence. Organisation charts are very useful tools for collecting, comparing and selecting suitable resources that you have located. A decision-making chart can help you do this.

**RESEARCH TOPIC:** The Viking god Thor — how important was he?

**HYPOTHESIS:** That Thor played a central role in Viking society and warrior culture.

Source 1: 'Thor' Encyclopaedia Britannica	<b>Pros:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The entry is current and based on reliable evidence</li> <li>The entry is written by a reputable organisation – Encyclopaedia Britannica</li> <li>Detailed information about Thor's importance to Viking society in general</li> </ul> <b>Cons:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific information about Thor's importance for Viking warriors</li> </ul>	Category of source: Secondary source – Encyclopaedia entry	Reference information: <a href="http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/article-9313835/Thor">http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/article-9313835/Thor</a> (Accessed 24 February 2013)
Source 2:	<b>Pros:</b> <b>Cons:</b>	Category of source:	Reference information
Source 3:	<b>Pros:</b>	Category of source:	Reference information
Source 4:	<b>Pros:</b>	Category of source:	Reference information
Source 5:	<b>Pros:</b>	Category of source:	Reference information
Recommended sources in order of relevance/usefulness: 1 2 3 4 5			

**Source HT.14** A decision-making chart showing an example of how you might compare and select sources

### APPLY HT.9

- 1 Review your understanding of the difference between a fact and an opinion by writing definitions for these terms in your own words. Share your definitions with a partner and discuss any differences.

## Draw conclusions about the usefulness of sources

A useful source, whether primary or secondary, is one that will add to your understanding of a historical inquiry. The source needs to be relevant to the topic or question asked and must also be reliable. The following are good questions to ask in order to determine the usefulness of a source:

- Is it a reliable source?
- Is there enough information and sufficient detail to help me answer the inquiry question?
- Does the information support and reinforce evidence from other sources?
- Is it balanced or does it present one point of view (bias)?
- Is it based on fact or opinion?
- Is the information current?



## Separating fact from opinion

The conclusions you draw about the sources you have found will determine their usefulness. In many cases, this means separating fact from opinion. A fact is something that can be proved: when an event took place, what happened and who was involved. An opinion is based on what a person, or persons, may believe to be true. A simple way to detect whether a statement is fact or opinion is to look closely at the language used. The use of words like 'might', 'could', 'believe', 'think' and 'suggests' all indicate that an opinion is being expressed. For example:

- Fact: The inhabitants of Easter Island, the Rapa Nui, carved and transported huge stone statues known as *moai*.
- Opinion: Many historians believe these statues represent the ancestors of the Rapa Nui.

## Perspectives and interpretations

### Identify and describe different perspectives of participants in a particular historical context

Primary and secondary sources reflect and represent many different points of view, attitudes and values. These may include personal, social, political, economic or religious points of view. For example, an extract translated from the *Historia Regum*, written by an English monk, Simeon of Durham in the 12th century, provides the following description of the Vikings:

#### Source HT.15

[The Vikings] ... came to the church of Lindisfarne [in north-eastern England], laid everything to waste with grievous plundering, trampled the holy places with polluted steps, dug up the altars and seized all the treasures of the holy church. They killed some of the brothers [monks], took some away with them in chains, many they drove out naked and loaded with insults, some they drowned in the sea ...

Translated extract from *Historia Regum* by the 12th-century English monk Simeon of Durham. It was said to be a careful copy of a lost version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

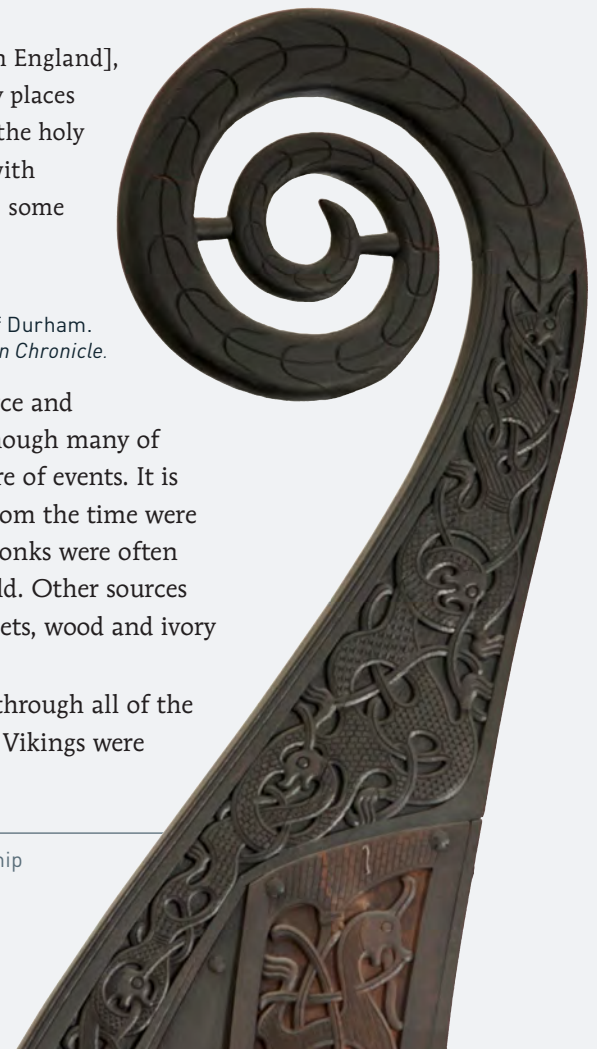
This account is one of many that form an image of the Vikings as fierce and merciless warriors who attacked vulnerable villages and monasteries. Although many of these accounts are accurate, they do not always present a complete picture of events. It is also important to take into account the fact that many written sources from the time were recorded only by the people who could write – Christian monks. These monks were often the direct victims of Viking attacks that targeted monasteries for their gold. Other sources have shown that the Vikings were also skilled silversmiths, carpenters, poets, wood and ivory carvers, jewellery makers, weavers and musicians.

It is only when we consider a range of different perspectives revealed through all of the available sources that we can begin to form a realistic picture of who the Vikings were as a people.

Source HT.16 The detailed wood carvings on the prow (front end) of the *Oseberg* ship provide evidence of the skill and craftsmanship of Viking ship builders.

#### APPLY HT.10

- 1 Why is empathetic understanding an important skill for a historian to have?



## Empathetic understanding

### Interpret history within the context of the actions, attitudes and motives of people in the context of the past

The concept of empathetic understanding was discussed in the 'Historical concepts' section. In your study of the 'Ancient to the modern world', you will apply this concept by interpreting why people in the ancient past acted or behaved in particular way. To do this with empathetic understanding, you will need to keep in mind the values and attitudes of the society they lived in.

## Research

### Ask a range of questions about the past to inform an historical inquiry

Historians begin any historical inquiry by asking questions. From these questions, historians develop a hypothesis (a theory) about who, what, when, how, where and why certain events took place. These questions help to frame the process of inquiry, and act as a guide for type of evidence that needs to be collected.

### Generating questions in inform a historical inquiry

The Oseberg is a well-preserved Viking ship discovered in a large burial mound at the Oseberg farm in Norway (just south of the capital Oslo). It was excavated by a team of Norwegian and Swedish archaeologists in 1904–1905.

A historian investigating the Oseberg would start by asking questions. You can learn to do this to by asking questions beginning with 'what', 'where', 'how', 'when' and 'why'. A good question will help open up an exciting area to explore, such as 'What does the design and construction of the Oseberg tell us about the skills of Viking craftsmen?'.

**Source HT.17** The Oseberg, a Viking ship displayed at the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo

#### APPLY HT.11

- 1 Generate four inquiry questions of your own about the Oseberg.
- 2 Identify the information you will need to answer these questions and where you might be able to locate it.
- 3 Are there any questions for which you have not been able to find reliable evidence

overmatter



## Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods

Sources provide information for historians. They can take many different forms, from historical artefacts to written records in books or online. Some examples of sources include human remains, coins, cave paintings, textbooks, journals, online databases, newspapers, letters, cartoons and diaries. Locating a range of relevant sources is a valuable skill which usually involves a number of different search methods, such as:

- checking catalogues at your school and local library
- using online search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing
- visiting museum and government websites
- looking at newspaper and magazine archives
- contacting local historical societies
- interviewing older family members about the past, and examining family antiques and keepsakes.

## Using ICT to locate relevant sources

Although printed books and newspapers are valuable sources of information, most research today is conducted online. In order to ensure that sources gathered online are accurate, reliable and relevant, a number of guidelines should be followed.

Search engines such as Google are useful research tools, but much of the material on these sites is not reliable and may contain inaccuracies, false and misleading information, or material that is out of date. When using search engines like Google or Yahoo, be sure to define your search using keywords. Your librarian is a good person to ask for help and information. Most schools will also have a website devoted to providing information about developing good research skills.

A reliable way of searching for sources is to use sites linked to educational institutions, government departments, reputable companies, museums, universities and educational institutions. A quick way of telling if a site is reputable is to look at the domain name in the URL (Internet address). Some of the most common domain names are listed in Source HT.18 along with some information about their reliability. Avoid blogs posted by unknown individuals. If you happen to find information relevant to your investigation on a blog or social media site, always verify it by using a more reliable source. Never cut and paste information from the Internet straight into your own work. Taking someone else's work, ideas or words and using them as if they were your own is called plagiarism and can result in very serious consequences.

**Source HT.18** Some domain names and their characteristics

Domain name	Description
.edu	The site is linked to an educational institution such as a university or school. These sites are generally very reliable.
.gov	The site is linked to a government institution. These sites are generally very reliable.
.net	This site is linked to a commercial organisation or network provider. Anyone is able to purchase this domain name and generally there is no one to regular the information posted on the site. As a result, these sites may be unreliable.
.org	This site is linked to an organisation. Generally, these organisations are not for profit (e.g., Greenpeace, World Vision International, British Museum). If the organisation is reputable and can be contacted, this generally means that the information provided has been checked and verified by that organisation. You need to be aware of any special interests that the organisation may represent (e.g., particular religious, commercial or political interests), as this may influence what they have to say on a particular issue. If you are unsure about the reliability of information found on a website with this domain name, check with your teacher or librarian.



## Recording relevant sources

As you identify and locate relevant sources, it is essential that you record details to include in your list of references or bibliography. A summary of the details to include when citing (mentioning) a book or online source in a bibliography is shown below.

### Citing a book in bibliography

Include the following details, in this order, if available:

- 1 author surname(s) and initial(s)
- 2 year of publication
- 3 title of book (in italics)
- 4 edition (if relevant)
- 5 publisher
- 6 place of publication
- 7 page number(s).

Example:

Dennett, B & Dixon S, 201, *Oxford Insight History 7*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 18–19.

### Citing online sources in a bibliography

Include the following information, if available:

- 1 author surname(s) and initial(s) or organisation name
- 2 year of publication or date of web page (last update)
- 3 title of document (article) enclosed in quotation marks
- 4 date of posting
- 5 organisation name (if different from above)
- 6 date you accessed the site
- 7 URL or web address enclosed in angle brackets <... > .

Examples:

British Museum, 'Papyrus from the Book of the Dead of Ani', accessed 6 September 2012, <[www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aes/p/book\\_of\\_the\\_dead\\_of\\_ani.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/p/book_of_the_dead_of_ani.aspx)>.

Williams, AR, 2005, 'King Tut Revealed: Modern forensics and high-tech imaging offer new insights into his life – and death', June, National Geographic, accessed 17 July 2012, <<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2005/06/king-tut/williams-text>>.

## Explanation and communication

Historical writing requires you to describe and explain using evidence from a range of sources. You will often be required to outline the significance of a past event while providing reasons for the event and referring to relevant evidence. Different types of sources need to be used to ensure that historical writing presents a balanced view and is supported by reliable evidence. The two most common and useful text types you will be expected to use this year are descriptions and explanations.

## Writing descriptions

The purpose of descriptions is to give clear information about people, places or objects at particular moments in time. Descriptions focus on the main characteristics or features of particular people or things. They ‘paint a picture’ in words for readers to increase their understanding.

Descriptions must be well planned, with events organised in a chronological order. Use a set structure such as the outline in Source HT.19 or a template from your teacher.

**Source HT.19** A guideline for writing a description

Structure of a description	
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduces the subject</li><li>• States the name of the person or event</li><li>• Outlines why the topic is important</li></ul>
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides details about the person or event (including dates and important facts)</li><li>• Information must be organised in paragraphs, with a new paragraph for each detail</li><li>• Quotations and descriptive words should be used where relevant</li></ul>
Conclusion (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a short and clear overview of the main ideas presented in the body.</li><li>• States a conclusion drawn from the evidence.</li></ul>

## Writing historical explanations and historical arguments

The purpose of an explanation is to tell how or why something happened. In a historical argument you are presenting a hypothesis that you can support with primary and secondary sources. Your writing in explanations and historical arguments must be clear and factual.

In both types of writing you must provide supporting evidence from a variety of sources for each point made. All sources should be acknowledged in a bibliography using the correct referencing format, as outlined in the skill ‘Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods’, which was covered earlier.

**Source HT.20** A guideline for writing an explanation/

Structure of an explanation	
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly states the main idea or aim</li><li>• Briefly outlines the reason/s why an event occurred and its effect/s</li></ul>
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each idea must be supported by evidence. There should also be some analysis of the evidence to explain its significance and importance.</li><li>• Information must be organised in paragraphs, with a new paragraph for each detail.</li><li>• Language should be precise and not contain emotional words.</li></ul> <p>Personal opinions (e.g., ‘I think##’ or ‘my opinion##’) should be avoided.</p>
Conclusion (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a short and clear overview of the main ideas presented in the body.</li><li>• States a conclusion drawn from the evidence.</li></ul>

## Select and use a range of communication forms and digital technologies

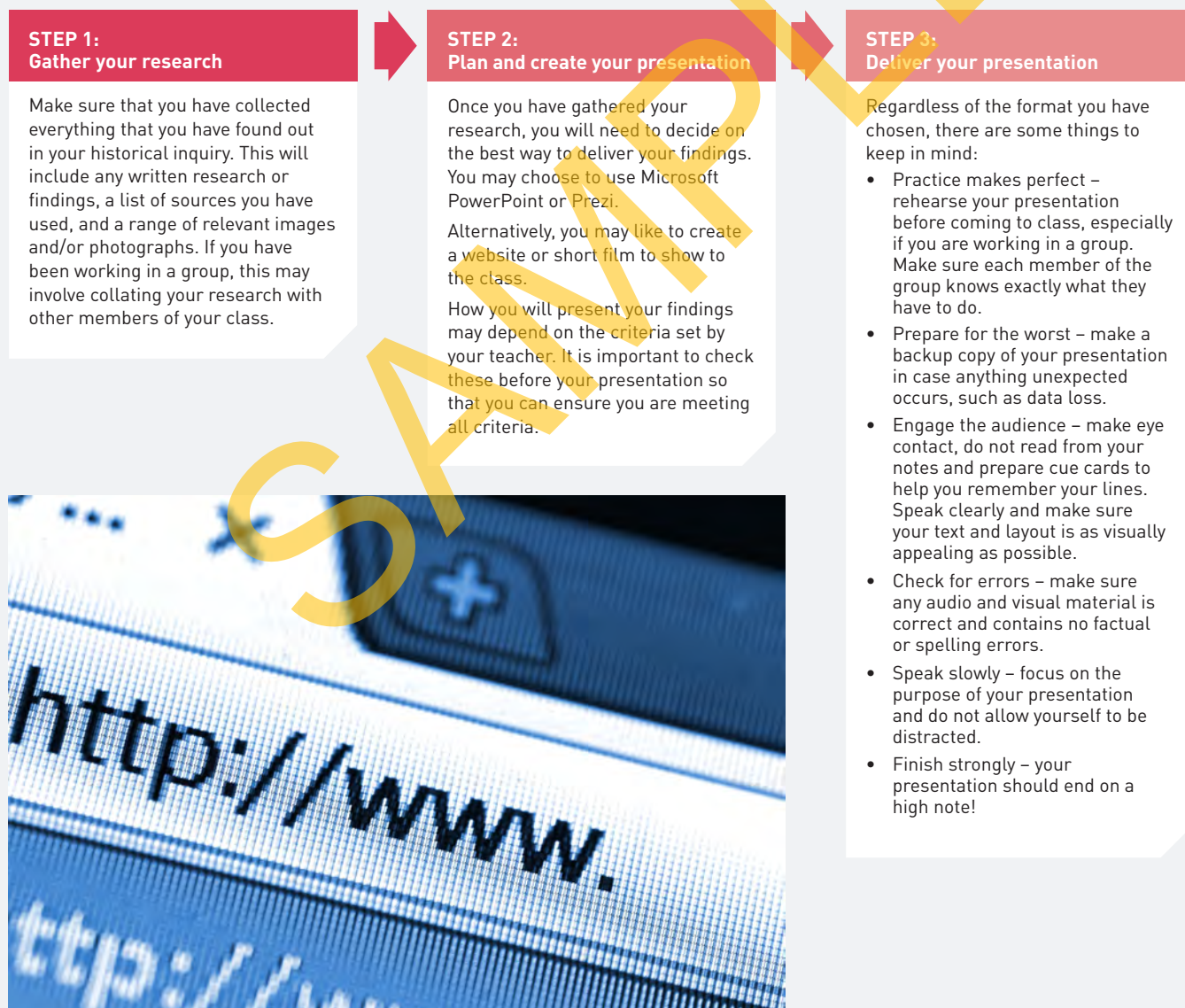
The final stage of any historical inquiry is the presentation of your findings. This is one of the most important aspects of your inquiry because it draws together all of the sources, evidence and findings of your investigation. There are a number of ways to effectively and impressively communicate your findings. For example:

- oral – speeches, class presentations, re-enactments, interviews and role plays
- graphic – posters, cartoons, graphic organisers and models
- written – descriptions, explanations, class newspapers, scripts, letters and diaries
- digital – audiovisual presentations, websites, films, blogs, wikis and apps.

These communication forms can add colour and life to the presentation of historical information.

One of the most popular ways to present the findings of a historical inquiry is to create an audiovisual presentation. To prepare and present a successful audiovisual presentation, there are several steps to follow.

Source HT.21 Steps in creating an audiovisual presentation





## APPLY HT.12

- 1 Using the table below give two advantages and two disadvantages of using the different search methods shown.

Search methods	Advantages	Disadvantages
Using the library catalogue		
Google search		
Interviewing older family members		

- 2 Examine the following sites. Explain whether you think they are reliable and give reasons.
  - a Australian National Museum [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au)
  - b Apple [www.apple.com.au](http://www.apple.com.au)
  - c Macquarie University <http://mq.edu.au/>
  - d Answers.com [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why\\_were\\_the\\_vikings\\_feared](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why_were_the_vikings_feared)
- 3 What is the purpose of a description? How is this different from an explanation?
- 4 Your teacher has asked you to provide a written piece about the significance of the *Oseberg* ship in Viking society. Would it be more appropriate to write a description or an explanation? Explain your choice.
- 5 Your fellow class members have presented an audiovisual presentation on Viking gods. Your teacher has asked each member of the audience to complete a peer evaluation by creating five assessment criteria. Present your five assessment criteria in order of importance.