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1

How Do Historians Find Out About the Past?

aims

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the job of the historian.

Key Words

history
evidence
prehistory
source
primary
secondary
written
visual
aural
oral
tactile

The Job of the Historian

What is history?

History is the story of the past based on **evidence**.

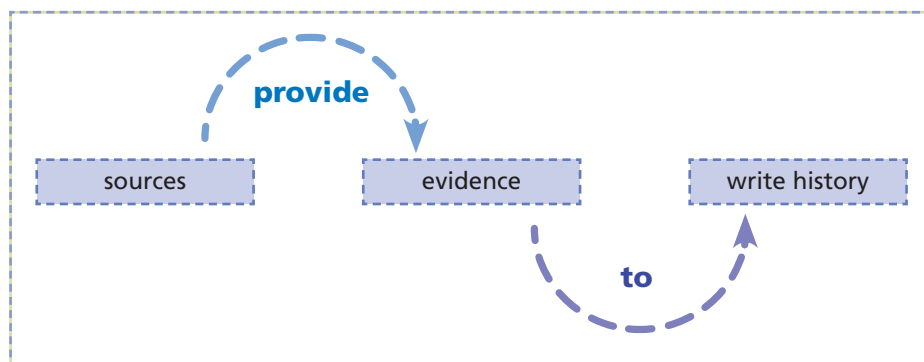
key
point

What is prehistory?

Prehistory is the history of people before writing was invented, based on **archaeological evidence**.

What is evidence?

Evidence is the information which proves or disproves the story of the past. Historians get their evidence from **sources**.



What is a primary source?

A **primary** source comes **directly** from the time that is being studied. It is a **first-hand account** of what happened.

Examples: a diary, a newspaper

What is a secondary source?

A **secondary** source comes **from after** the time being studied.

Secondary sources are **based** on primary sources and other secondary sources.

Example: your history textbook

Sources

What are the different types of sources?

- Written sources** (things that are written or typed)
 - **Manuscripts** are books written by hand.
 - An **autobiography** is the story of a person's own life.
 - A **biography** is written by a historian about another person's life.
 - A **census** (of population) records information about families, businesses, housing, education.
 - **Newspapers** are another kind of published source.
- Visual sources** (things that can be seen)
 - Photographs, paintings, documentaries
 - Cartoons and drawings
 - Maps
- Aural sources** (things that can be heard)
 - Interviews
 - Podcasts
- Oral sources** (things that are spoken)
 - Interviews
 - Recordings
- Tactile sources** (things that can be touched)
 - Artefacts (objects)
 - Buildings

Key Words

archive	biased
museum	objective
library	propaganda
digital	reliable
fact	useful
opinion	limitations
interpretation	chronology
viewpoint	timeline



Archives, museums and libraries are all examples of repositories of historical evidence.

Where are sources stored?

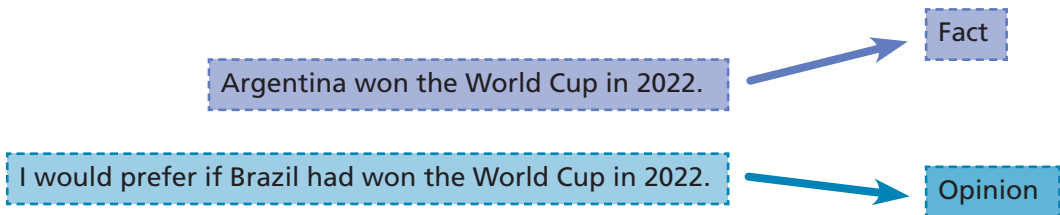
- An **archive** collects mainly **written** (documentary) sources.
Example: National Archives of Ireland
- A **museum** collects and stores **objects** (artefacts) for study and display.
Examples: National Museum of Ireland, local museums
- A **library** stores books.
Examples: National Library of Ireland, your local county or city library
- Some of these sources are stored on **microfilm** (a small film) or **microfiche** (a scaled-down copy), which can be viewed with a magnifying lens.
- Websites** are now used by museums, archives and libraries to make available **digital copies** of the sources – documents, newspapers and photographs – that they hold.

Differences and similarities

Archives	Museums	Libraries
Stores mainly written documents	Stores mainly artefacts (objects)	Stores mainly books
Primary sources	Primary sources	Mostly secondary sources Autobiographies are primary sources
Must be preserved or conserved	Must be preserved or conserved	Most books can be replaced
Handled carefully with gloves	Handled carefully with gloves	Gloves are not needed for handling the books
Must be studied/researched in the archive	Must be studied/researched in the museum	Books can be borrowed

How do historians use sources?

Historians must distinguish between **fact** (something that happened; true) and **opinion** (a view or belief about something).



Historians need to **cross-check** between different sources to ensure their facts are **accurate**.

Historians can provide different **interpretations** (versions) of the same events because their **sources** or their **viewpoint** may be different. A historian's viewpoint or **point of view** (also called **perspective**) can be influenced by gender, beliefs, values and interests.

What is bias?

Historians are **biased** if they deliberately **favour one side** over the other.

The job of the historian is to be as **objective** as possible. Being **objective** means that historians must not be influenced by **personal opinions** when researching and writing history.

A historian's description and analysis of the past (an account) is called an **interpretation**.

What is propaganda?

Propaganda is using information to influence people's opinions or to convince people that a particular belief is true.

How reliable is a source?

A source is **reliable** when you can **trust** that the information in it is **accurate** and **true**.

How useful is a source?

A source is **useful** when it **provides information** about the topic you are **researching**.



A Nazi propaganda poster showing Hitler as a great leader: 'One people, one empire, one leader!'



What are the **usefulness** and **limitations** (weaknesses) of some sources?

Source	Usefulness (strengths) of source for historians	Limitations (weaknesses) of source for historians
Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide eyewitness accounts • Provide information on political, social and economic aspects of the time • Provide photographs • Different newspapers provide different viewpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can report incorrect information • Can be biased • Could be used for propaganda
Diaries and letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide personal opinions of writers • Can explain motives or reasons for actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be biased • Can have incorrect information
Photographs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide first-hand view of events or scenes • Provide information on political, social and economic aspects of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be altered for propaganda purposes • Only record a moment in time



Videos and documentaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can show live action of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be selective • Can be used for propaganda
Cartoons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show political and social views of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biased • Used for propaganda • Used to get across a point of view
Artefact (object)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show objects made by people at the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be fake
Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide views of eyewitnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory can be faulty • Can deliberately mislead • Can exaggerate role in events

What is chronology?

Chronology is putting events in **order of time** (when they happened), starting with the earliest.

- Decade = 10 years
- Century = 100 years
- An age = a number of decades or centuries
- BC = the years before the birth of Christ
- AD = the years after the birth of Christ

Some historians use BCE (Before Common Era) instead of BC, and CE (Common Era) instead of AD.

Examples – Which century?

3rd century BC = 299 BC to 200 BC
 5th century AD = 400 AD to 499 AD
 545 AD = in the 6th century
 1589 AD = in the 16th century



A **timeline** is a line or graph that shows the dates when events happened; puts events in chronological order.

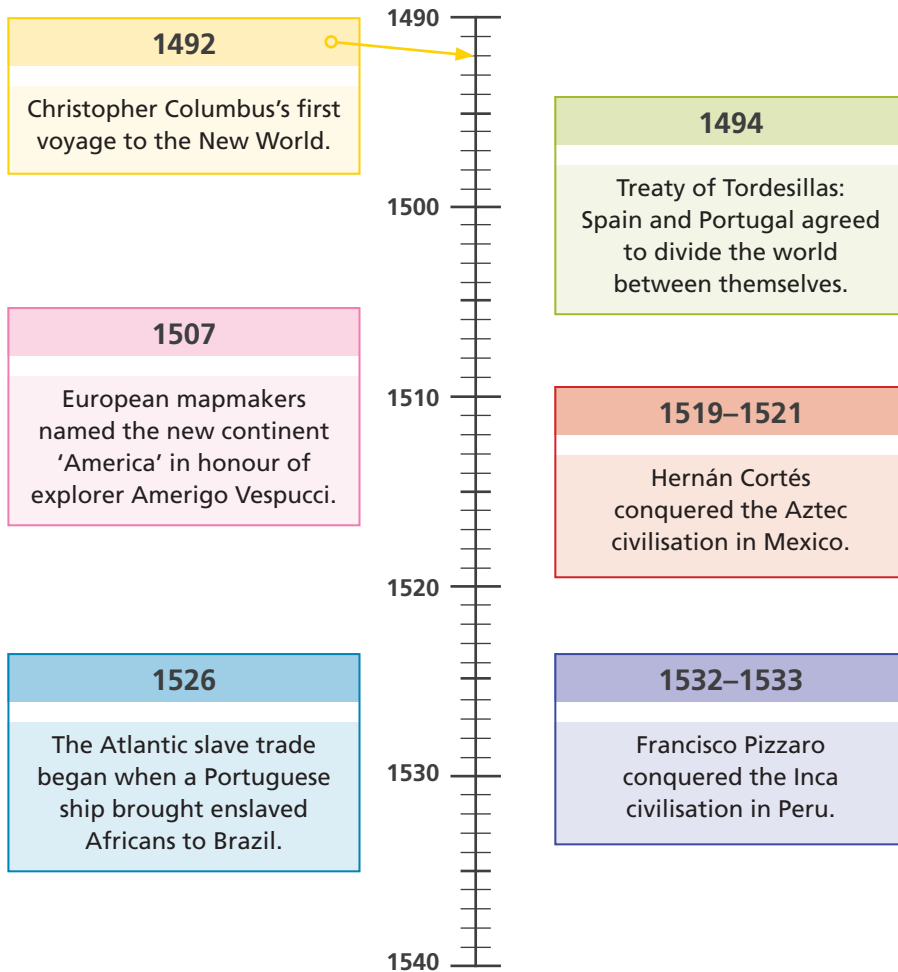


It is important to **put events in the correct chronological order when answering questions.**



Sample Question

The timeline below relates to exploration and conquest in the New World. Examine the timeline and answer the questions which follow.



(a) How many decades are represented on the timeline?

5 decades

(b) Draw arrows to link each event to the correct date on the timeline. The first arrow has been done for you.

Junior Cycle History Examination 2022, Q3

Revision Questions

Scan the QR code for more revision questions.



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The Causes of World War II

exam focus

If you are asked about World War I or World War II, you should **write about World War II**.

aims

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

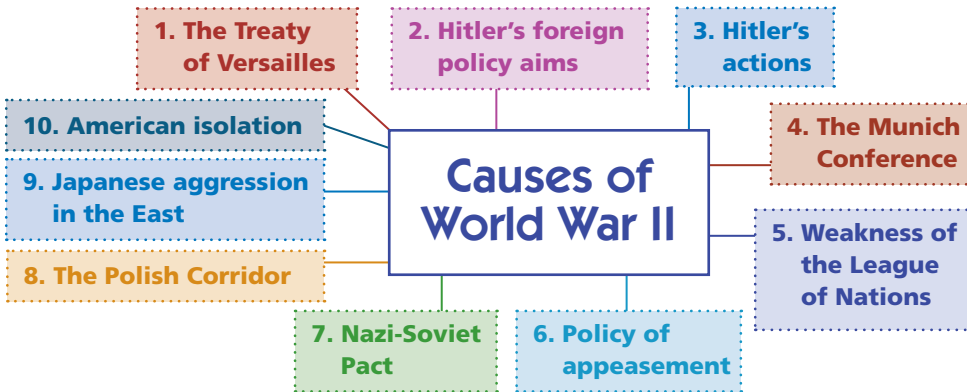
- Identify the main causes of World War II.

Key Words

Treaty of Versailles
reparations
Polish Corridor
Anschluss
Lebensraum
Munich Conference
League of Nations
appeasement
Nazi-Soviet Pact

What Were the Causes of World War II?

There were 10 main causes of World War II.



1. The Treaty of Versailles

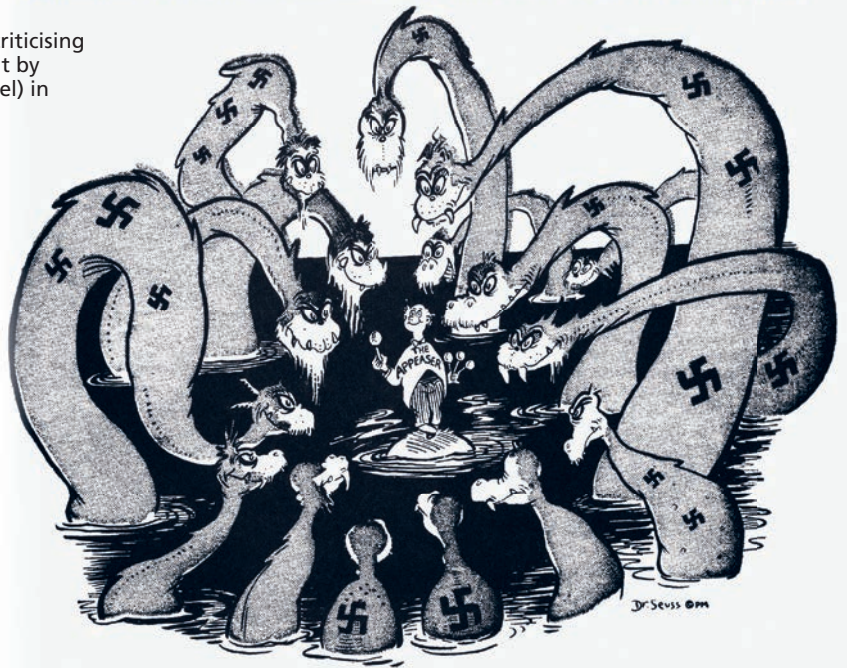
- After World War I, Germany was forced to sign the **Treaty of Versailles**, which severely **punished** Germany. Germans **greatly resented** this.
- Terms included:
 - Germany had to sign a **war guilt clause** accepting full responsibility for World War I.
 - They had to pay **£6.6 billion** in **reparations** (compensation).
 - They could not enter the **Rhineland**.
 - They lost a piece of land called the **Polish Corridor**.
 - The German army was reduced to **100,000**.
 - Union with Austria (**Anschluss**) was **forbidden**.

2. Hitler's foreign policy aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitler wanted to make Germany great again, but this aim was bound to disturb peace in Europe because it meant taking over non-German territory. • Hitler's foreign policy had three main aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unite all German-speaking people to form a Greater Germany (Grossdeutschland) • Abolish the Treaty of Versailles • Obtain Lebensraum (living space) in Eastern Europe for his Greater Germany.
3. Hitler's actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As soon as Hitler came to power, he began to destroy the Treaty of Versailles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1935 – rearmament began. • 1936 – Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland. • 1938 – Hitler united Germany and Austria (Anschluss). • These actions showed Hitler was building up the German military and starting to expand German borders.
4. The Munich Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next, Hitler laid claim to the Sudetenland (the German-speaking part of Czechoslovakia). • Czechoslovakia refused to hand over the Sudetenland. • Britain (Chamberlain), France (Daladier) and Italy (Mussolini) met Hitler at the Munich Conference (1938) to sort the issue out. • Czechoslovakia was not invited. • The Czechs were forced to hand over the Sudetenland. • Chamberlain came home claiming he had achieved 'peace in our time', but six months later, Hitler took over the rest of Czechoslovakia. • Hitler could no longer claim to be uniting all German-speaking people as he was not welcomed in the rest of Czechoslovakia as he had been in the Sudetenland, Austria and the Rhineland. • Hitler ignored what had been agreed at the Munich Conference and continued to expand the German Reich.
5. Weakness of the League of Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The League of Nations was set up after World War I to promote international co-operation and achieve international peace. • But they failed to stop Hitler, Japan or Mussolini from expanding beyond their borders. • The League had a number of weaknesses: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The USA did not join. 2. All decisions had to be unanimous. 3. The League had no army to protect weak countries.
6. Policy of appeasement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britain and France gave into Hitler's demands because they followed a policy called appeasement. • They believed that if they gave into Hitler's demands, then they would prevent war. • Hitler saw this as a sign of weakness and continued to make more demands.

7. Nazi-Soviet Pact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fascists (Nazis) and communists hated each other, but in 1939 Hitler and Stalin surprised the world when they signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact. They agreed to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sign a 10-year non-aggression pact (which Hitler later broke) divide Poland between them. This pact meant Hitler could invade Poland without risking war on his eastern side.
8. The Polish Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Polish Corridor separated Germany from one of her provinces, East Prussia. Hitler demanded the return of the Polish Corridor, but Poland refused. Britain and France supported Poland, but Hitler believed they were too far away to actually help Poland. On 1 September 1939, Hitler invaded Poland.
9. Japanese aggression in the East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japan expanded into China in the 1930s. The League of Nations failed to stop this. Japan also invaded Indo-China (Vietnam). The US imposed economic sanctions on Japan. Japan attacked the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. This event in December 1941 brought the US into the war.
10. American isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America did not join the League of Nations after World War I. Even though America was the most powerful country in the world, she hoped to stay isolated and away from conflict. However, America was forced to take action because of Japanese expansion in Asia.

'Remember . . . One More Lollypop, and Then You All Go Home!'

An American cartoon criticising the policy appeasement by Dr Seuss (Theodor Geisel) in *PM*, 13 August 1941.





Sample Question

Outline **three** causes of either World War I or World War II.

There were many causes of World War II. Some of the most significant were: the Treaty of Versailles, the weakness of the League of Nations, and the policy of appeasement.

After World War I, Germany was forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles. Germans greatly resented the severe terms. They could not enter the Rhineland. They lost a piece of land called the Polish Corridor. Union with Austria (Anschluss) was forbidden. Hitler worked to undo many of these terms, which contributed to the outbreak of World War II.

The League of Nations was set up after World War I to promote international co-operation and achieve international peace, but they had a number of weaknesses. The USA did not join, all decisions had to be unanimous, and the League had no army to protect weak countries. As a result of these, the League failed to stop Hitler, Japan or Mussolini from expanding beyond their borders.

Britain and France gave into Hitler's demands because they followed a policy called appeasement. They believed that if they gave into Hitler's demands, then they would prevent war. Hitler saw this as a sign of weakness and continued to make more demands.

Revision Questions

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