

1 Historical concepts and skills

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LESSON 1.1 Overview

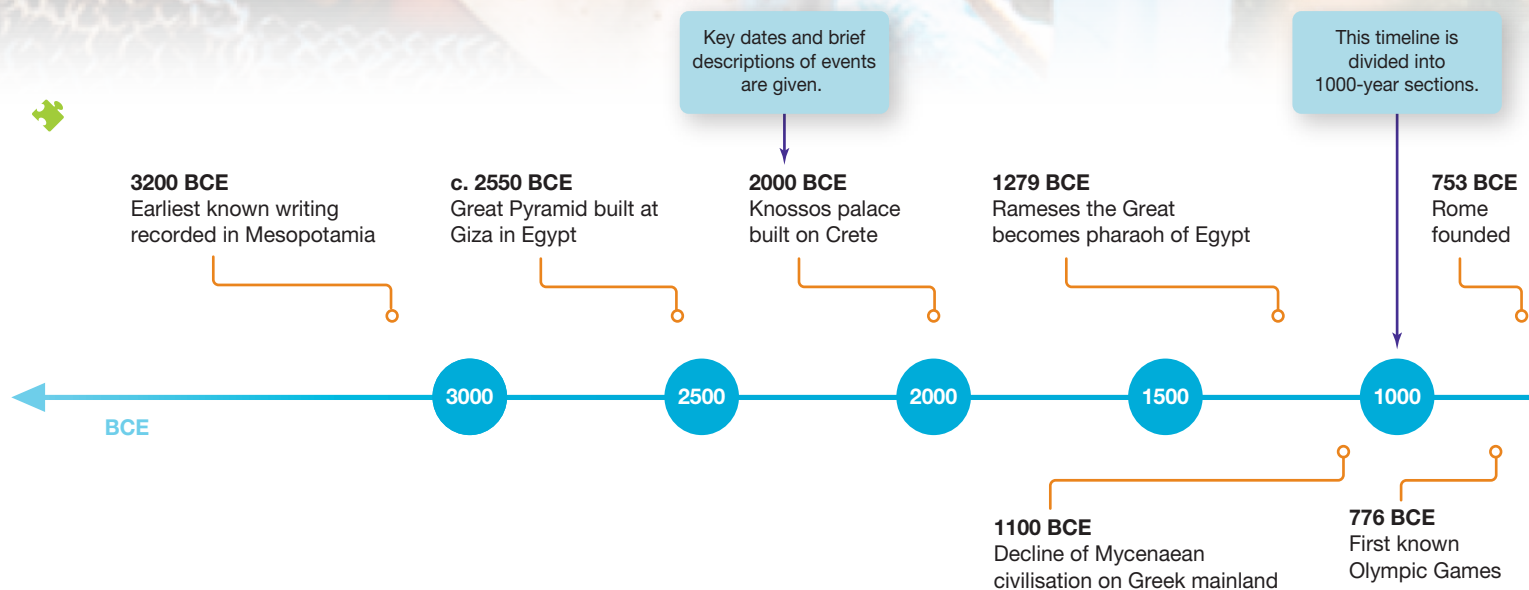
INQUIRY QUESTION

Why are Europe, the Mediterranean world, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific region important to study, and what skills do I need to understand this history?

The period from 600 to 1750 CE shaped modern society. It witnessed the rise and fall of empires, the spread of religions and cultural evolution. The Vikings emerged as influential seafarers and warriors, impacting Europe and the Mediterranean through raids and interactions. Education spread through monasteries and universities. The Age of Exploration brought advancements in art, science and technology and led to the discovery of new lands and trade routes.

learn on

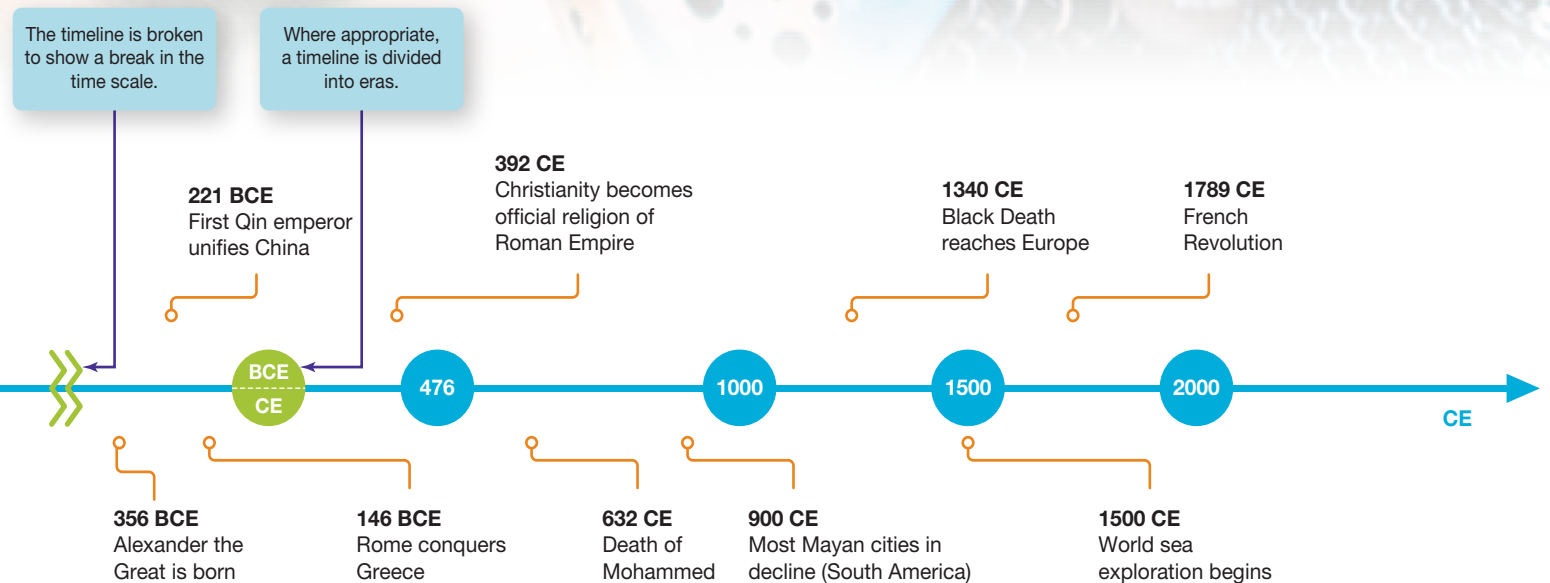
-  **eWorkbook**
Customisable worksheets for this topic
-  **Digital document**
Key terms glossary
-  **Video eLesson**
History concepts and skills



SkillBuilder

Use the SkillBuilder activities to develop these Historical concepts and skills:

- HISTORICAL QUESTIONS
- CHRONOLOGY
- USING HISTORICAL SOURCES
- CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
- CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES
- HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
- COMMUNICATING



LESSON 1.2 Historical concepts and skills

LEARNING INTENTION

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- **identify** the historical concepts and skills
- **explain** why they are important.

1.2.1 Introduction

From 600 to 1750 CE, Europe and the Mediterranean world, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific region experienced transformative events shaping modern society. This period saw empires rise and fall, the spread of religions and major cultural advancements. The medieval era brought the feudal system, Church dominance and the growth of monarchies.

The Renaissance and Reformation revolutionised art, science and technology, leading to the occupation of previously unknown lands and discovery of new trade routes. The Ottoman Empire and the Spanish conquest of the Americas significantly altered global dynamics.

In this topic, you will expand your historical knowledge and develop further the key historical concepts and skills introduced in Year 7, enhancing your understanding of this influential era.

1.2.2 Historical concepts and skills

As we know, historians study past civilisations, cultures and societies to understand how people lived, their ideas, customs, rulers and livelihoods. They examine sources to explain how lives were shaped by other people and events. This topic covers concepts and skills related to discovering a period of history between 600 and 1750 CE in Europe and the Mediterranean world, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific region.

TABLE 1 The concepts and skills that you will use in History

Concepts and skills	Description
Asking historical questions	Our understanding of the past is shaped by the questions we ask and the responses we receive.
Sequencing chronology	Historical events are arranged in order of time.
Using historical sources as evidence	Sources are any written or non-written materials that can be used to investigate and give us information about the past; evidence is the information we get from sources that is useful to our investigations.
Identifying continuity and change	Consideration is given to parts of life or society that have stayed the same and those that have changed over a period of time.
Analysing cause and consequence	The relationship between historical events or actions is analysed — for example, when one event or action happens because of another.
Determining historical significance	Consideration is paid to the importance given to events of the past.
Communicating	Ability to express our interpretations of the past is shown by constructing a historical argument using knowledge and evidence.

SOURCE 1 We can also view the concepts and skills diagrammatically.



The concepts and skills you will learn while studying History are also important in many careers. These skills will help you to:

- carry out research
- draw conclusions and make decisions based on evidence
- recognise the difference between fact and opinion
- understand that more than one way of thinking about any problem is usually possible
- think critically
- communicate effectively.

Knowledge of history is important in our everyday lives too. And history gives many people great personal pleasure. How much more enjoyment do people derive from travel, books and movies when they know about the history that shaped the places they visit, or the stories they read or watch on a screen?

1.2.3 Historical questions

In the study of History, our examination of the past is directed and influenced by the questions we ask. A broad spectrum of questions can be used to obtain specific information sought, and mastering the art of formulating these questions will enhance our historical research.

Questions may be crafted using the historical concepts and skills detailed in this topic. Such as **cause and consequence**, **continuity and change**, **significance** and **evidence**.

Outlined below is a table of questions frequently asked within the History classroom.

TABLE 2 Examples of questions you might ask in History

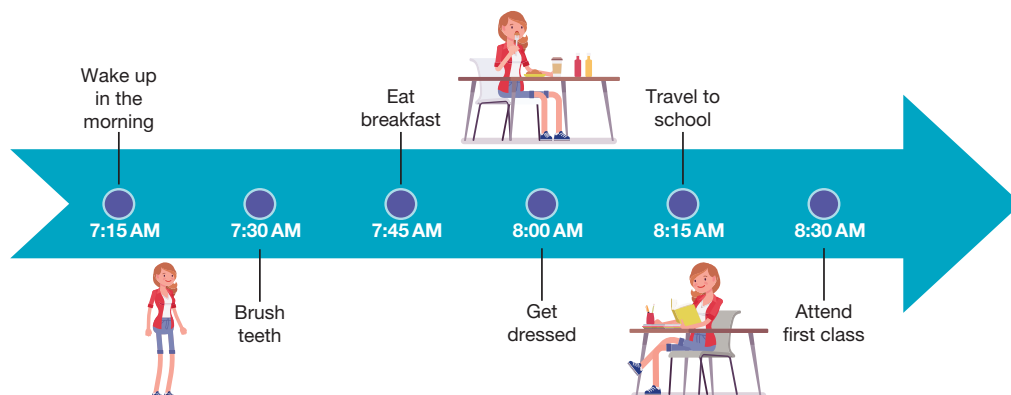
Historical thinking concepts and skills	Example of questions
Sequencing chronology	When does my timeline of events begin and when does it end? What event appears before ... and what happened after? What event caused ... to occur?
Using historical sources as evidence	Who wrote this source? Why did they write this source? What does this source tell me about the historical period I am studying, and what does it not tell me?
Continuity and change	At the beginning of the historical period I am studying, what was life like in regard to ... (power structures / economy / people / ideas / technology)? By the end of the historical period I am studying, what changed in regard to ... (power structures / economy / people / ideas / technology)? What / who caused these changes to occur? How quickly did these changes occur? What remained the same by the end of the historical period I am studying? What / who stopped these things from changing?
Causes and consequences	What were the short-term causes of ...? What were the long-term causes of ...? What were the political / economic / environmental causes of ...? What were the immediate consequences of ...? What were the long-term consequences of ...? What were the political / economic / environmental consequences of...?
Significance	Why is this person / event / idea / movement important? How important was this person / event / idea / movement to those living during the historical period? How many people were affected by this person / event / idea / movement? How is this person / event / idea / movement remembered today?

1.2.4 Chronology

Chronology involves recording and sequencing significant events, individuals, ideas and developments in the order they occurred. This systematic approach helps historians and researchers to track the progression of these elements over time, providing a clear understanding of how they interrelate.

By arranging events chronologically, we can explain the continuity and change that occurred throughout a given period, identifying what aspects of society, politics, economy and culture remained constant and what underwent transformation.

Additionally, this chronological sequencing helps in establishing the causes and consequences of events, shedding light on the short-term and long-term impacts they had on various facets of life.

SOURCE 2 A simple timeline representing the sequence of events during a typical morning

1.2.5 Using historical sources

Evidence consists of factual information that verifies or disproves an event. It can come from various sources and is crucial for verifying or refuting historical events.

Sources

Sources are any written or non-written materials that can be used to investigate and provide information about the past. It is important to make use of sources from the time we are studying, and after the time, to explore the different points of view, or perspectives, of people from the past.

Primary and secondary sources

Historians can use two types of sources to investigate events from the past.

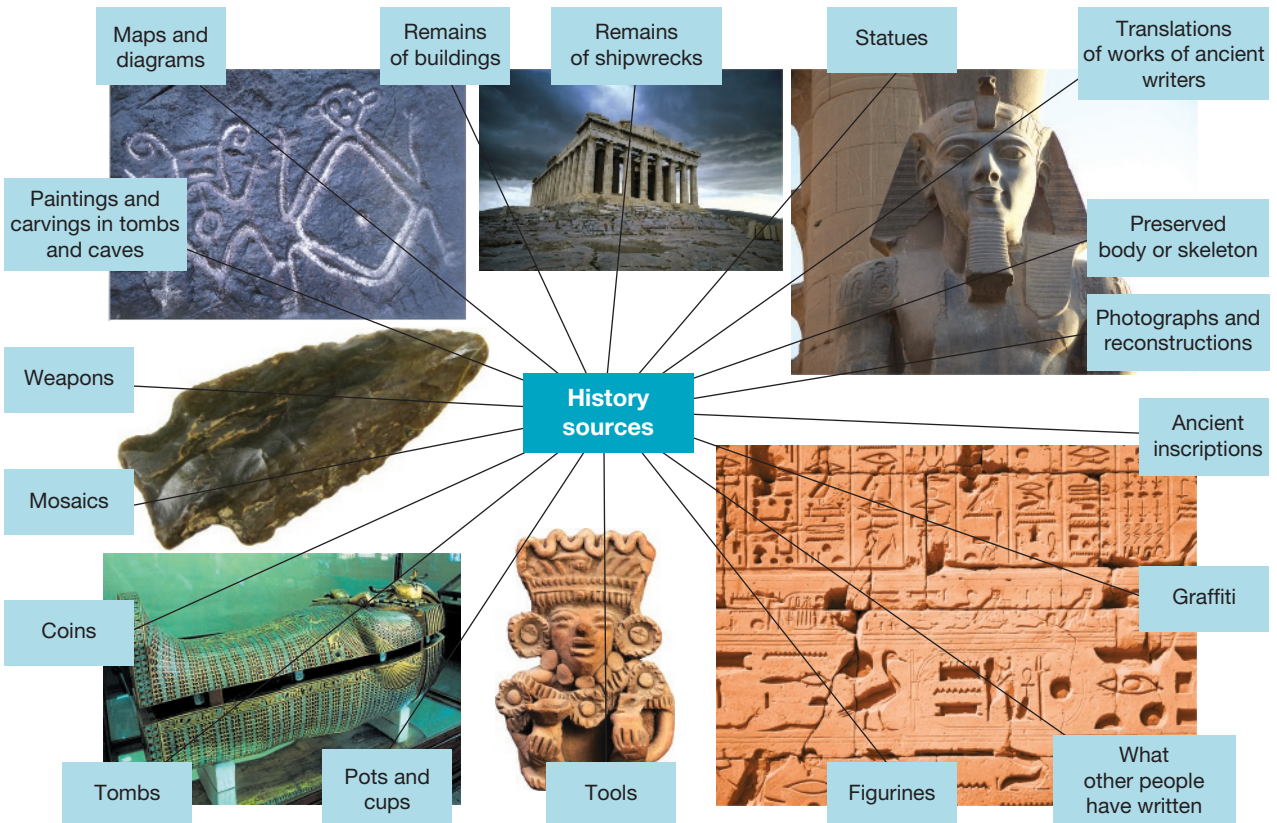
- **Primary sources** were created or written in the period that the historian is investigating.
- **Secondary sources** are written or created by people living after the period that the historian is studying.

Primary sources might include bones, stone tools, art, photographs or many other traces. Written primary sources can include such things as poems, songs, letters, newspapers, speeches, myths and legends.

Secondary sources can include books, articles, websites, models, timelines, computer software and documentary films. To create secondary sources, historians often:

- locate information in primary sources
- interpret that information
- use it to explain what happened.

SOURCE 3 The many different types of primary source



Analysing evidence

When using historical sources as evidence, historians need to ask questions about each source, such as where the source comes from (origin) and why it was created (purpose). A source may be fact or someone's opinion — that is, it could be **biased**. One way to test sources for reliability is to compare them to other sources. If this evidence leads to the same conclusion, we call it supporting evidence. If it leads to different conclusions, we have contradictory evidence.

When we use sources to try to find out about the past, we must ask some questions. For example, we might ask:

- What type of source is this?
- Who is the author or creator of this source, and when was it written or created?
- What was the purpose of writing or creating this source?
- What evidence does the source present?
- What were the historical or contextual circumstances at the time of the source's creation?
- Is the source reliable and trustworthy?

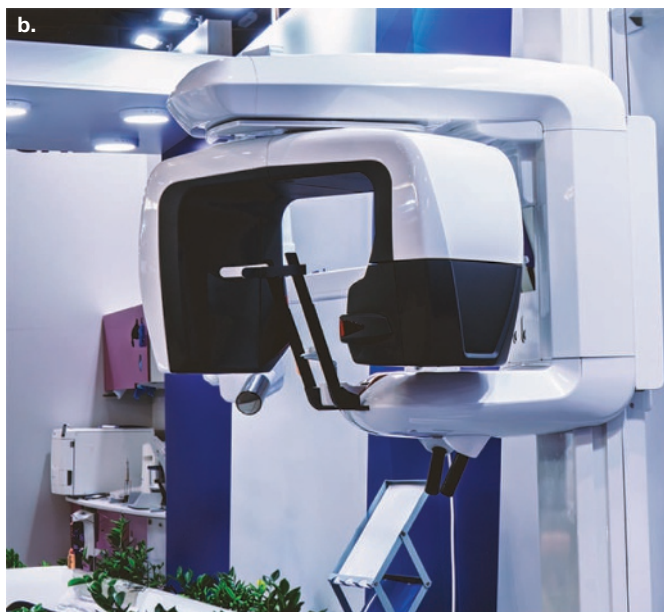
1.2.6 Continuity and change

When studying different societies, historians can see that some aspects of life have remained the same over time, while other aspects of life have changed dramatically. This concept is known as 'identifying continuity and change'.

Change refers to something that is different from what has occurred in the past. This may occur over a long period of time or may occur dramatically and suddenly.

Continuity refers to the things that endure, relatively unchanged, over time. You will find that many things remain the same across long periods in history. Sometimes these continuities have lasted into modern times.

SOURCE 4 a. Medieval doctors check for problems by using visual examinations. b. In contrast, a modern 3D dental scanner creates a detailed image of the jaw.



SkillBuilder discussion

Continuity and change

1. Consider the area of medicine. Look at the images in **SOURCE 4**. What are the main changes in medicine?
2. What, despite the passage of time, remains the same?

1.2.7 Causes and consequences

Once historical events have been placed into chronological order, investigating how one event has caused another event and how events are connected becomes easier. We can also look at the developments that have happened in both the short term and over a longer period of time.

In history, events do not simply occur without reason. Every event will have a cause and is likely to result in several effects or consequences. Being able to identify patterns of cause and effect is an essential skill for historians that allows them to explain how and why things happened in the past.

Causes may include people, societies, politics, beliefs, economics or any other historical factor. Likewise, effects can include impacts on people, societies, politics, beliefs, economics or any other historical factor. It is important to understand that not all causes leading to a specific event are equally significant — some causes may have more influence than others.

Some causes occur immediately before an event begins, while others may have existed for several years, decades or centuries before the event. Some effects occur immediately after an event or action, while others may occur years, decades or centuries following the event or action.

1.2.8 Historical significance

Historical significance relates to the importance of particular aspects of the past such as events, individuals or groups, developments, ideas or movements and historical sites. We need to make judgements about what is important and what is less important.

When we try to establish the significance of an aspect of the past, we must consider a number of questions. For example:

- To what extent was it relevant to individuals living during that period?
- What was the number of people impacted by it?
- In what ways did it alter individuals' lives?
- For what duration of time were individuals' lives affected?
- How significant and enduring were the consequences?
- How relevant is it to the contemporary world?

SkillBuilder discussion

Historical significance

1. List some of the things happening in the world today. These might be political, economic or geographical events.
2. Do you think that the things on your list will be significant 10, 20, 30 or 50 years from now?

1.2.9 Communicating

As a result of our investigations, we should be able to apply our newly learnt knowledge of a historical period and communicate this, using facts and evidence. We can present our interpretations of the past in a variety of ways, including written and multimodal presentations, oral presentations and other methods. It is important to use an appropriate and clear format to communicate our historical findings, including the use of subheadings, guiding questions and formal language.

Furthermore, as historians, we must acknowledge the sources we use and the interpretations of other historians in our work — this is called referencing, and there are several guidelines to follow when referencing. Often, your school or teacher will have you follow a particular reference guide, which informs you how to create a reference list.

1.2 SkillBuilder Activity SEQUENCING CHRONOLOGY

1. Construct a timeline of Europe and the Mediterranean world between 476 and 1683 CE.
 - a. Use a vertical timeline.
 - b. Divide it into centuries.
 - c. Decide what scale you will use.

Add these key events to your timeline:

1066 CE	William of Normandy wins the Battle of Hastings and becomes King of England.
476 CE	Western Roman Empire ends.
1096 CE	The Crusades start.
711 CE	Islamic forces conquer Spain.
1215 CE	King John of England is forced to sign the Magna Carta.
787 CE	The first recorded Viking raid on England takes place.
1298 CE	Osman I founds the Ottoman Empire.
1347 CE	The Black Death breaks out in Europe.
1429 CE	Joan of Arc drives the English out of Orleans.
1453 CE	Crusades end as the Ottomans take Constantinople.
1529 CE	Advancing Ottoman forces are defeated at Vienna.
1683 CE	Ottoman forces are again defeated in Vienna. Many see this as the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

2. Answer the following questions based on the timeline you have drawn.
 - a. What time span does your timeline cover (i.e. how many years in total are covered by your timeline)?
 - b. Which event on your timeline was the earliest?
 - c. How many years elapsed between the start and the end of the Crusades?
 - d. How many years elapsed between the start of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of its decline?
 - e. What event of significance took place in the fifth century?

1.2 Exercise

learn on

Learning pathways

■ LEVEL 1

1, 3, 4, 8

■ LEVEL 2

2, 5, 6

■ LEVEL 3

7, 9

REMEMBER AND UNDERSTAND

1. Which of the following lists best represents the seven historical concepts and skills?
 - A. Innovation, Migration, Invasion, Democracy, Trade, Economy, Culture
 - B. Historical questions, Chronology, Using historical sources, Continuity and change, causes and consequences, historical significance, communicating
 - C. Agriculture, Industry, Urbanisation, Exploration, Colonisation, Conflict, Trade
 - D. Chronology, perspectives, empathy, bias, using historical sources, primary and secondary sources, communicating

2. What is involved in sequencing chronology?
 - A. Comparing two different historical events
 - B. Placing historical events in the order they occur
 - C. Explaining why an event is important
 - D. Identifying different perspectives of an event
3. What is the main difference between primary sources and secondary sources?
 - A. Primary sources are written later, while secondary sources are created at the time.
 - B. Primary sources are original, first-hand accounts, while secondary sources are interpretations or analyses of those accounts.
 - C. Primary sources are about science, while secondary sources are about history.
 - D. Primary sources are used in fiction, while secondary sources are used in nonfiction.
4. Provide two examples of written sources and two examples of archaeological sources.
5. Outline how historians create secondary sources.

ANALYSE AND APPLY

6. Explain why it would be wrong to think that primary sources are always more reliable than secondary sources.
7. Make a list of some kinds of primary sources that could be used to create a history of your school (a secondary source). Next to each source in your list, write what you think you could find out by using it as evidence.

EVALUATE AND COMMUNICATE

8. Examine **SOURCE 4**. Identify the changes that have occurred in medicine from the medieval times to the modern age.
9. Discuss the limitations of both primary and secondary sources.

Answers and sample responses for this topic are available online.

LESSON 1.3 SkillBuilder: Historical questions

online only

What are historical questions?

Historical questions may be asked to evaluate historical sources, examine cause and consequence or how or why something happened. In this lesson you will develop your ability to ask historical questions.

LESSON 1.4 SkillBuilder: Chronology

online only

What is a timeline?

A timeline is a tool that arranges events in the order they occurred. It typically includes dates and descriptive labels. Timelines can span short periods or many centuries. They may be simple lines or visually detailed with colours and images. In this lesson you will sequence events that occurred in Renaissance Italy.

LESSON 1.5 SkillBuilder: Using historical sources

online only

What are works of art?

Works of art are one common type of primary source. Throughout this topic we have examined various primary sources: artworks, monuments, buildings and written sources. Artworks include paintings, sculptures, bas reliefs and mosaics. Art styles changed significantly throughout the Middle Ages, and differed from kingdom to kingdom.

LESSON 1.6 SkillBuilder: Continuity and change

online only

What does 'explain continuity and change' mean when studying history?

When we study history, we try to understand how certain elements have persisted over time and how others have transformed. Continuity refers to aspects of the past that have remained relatively unchanged, while change refers to the evolution or transformation of other components over time.

LESSON 1.7 SkillBuilder: Causes and consequences

online only

The importance of analysing causes and consequences

In this lesson you will learn to understand how past events shape current situations. Understanding cause and consequence is crucial to grasp these connections. To evaluate any historical event's significance, we must identify its effects on later developments. Historians often disagree about these impacts due to their complexity.

LESSON 1.8 SkillBuilder: Historical significance

online only

How do we evaluate historical significance?

Of all the thousands of events that happen in our lifetime, how do we determine the ones that are significant? For most of us, the events that lead to a positive change are remembered as important. Historians face similar questions when they try to determine which events, ideas, achievement or people have the most impact on history. Asking questions about the impact of an individual, development or cultural achievement can help us to assess its significance in bringing about change. In this lesson you will evaluate the significance of some of the important thinkers during the Renaissance.

LESSON 1.9 SkillBuilder: Communicating

online only

What is communication?

Effective communication is essential in any successful study of history. Communication is not only about conveying information; it is also about conveying it sensitively and appropriately to different audiences.

LESSON 1.10 Review

1.10.1 Key knowledge summary

Use this dot point summary to review the content covered in this topic.

1.2 History concepts and skills

- Historians investigate and interpret the past.
- History helps us to understand the present and what the future may hold.
- History provides us with essential skills.
- The seven Historical concepts and skills that you will develop throughout your course are:
- *Asking historical questions*: This involves asking questions in a way that helps to shape our understanding of the past.
- *Sequencing chronology*: This involves understanding the sequence of historical events and placing them in a timeline. It helps students to comprehend the order in which events occurred and how they relate to each other over time. This skill is essential for constructing a coherent narrative of the past and understanding the progression of historical developments.
- *Using historical sources*: This skill focuses on the ability to locate, analyse and interpret various types of historical sources, such as documents, artefacts and oral histories. Students learn to evaluate the reliability and perspective of sources, which is crucial for constructing accurate historical accounts and understanding different viewpoints.
- *Identifying continuity and change*: This involves identifying what has stayed the same and what has evolved over time. This skill helps students to recognise patterns and trends in history, understand the reasons behind changes and appreciate the persistence of certain elements across different periods.
- *Analysing causes and consequences*: This involves analysing the reasons behind historical events and their outcomes. Students learn to identify and evaluate the factors that led to specific events and the short-term and long-term effects of these events. Understanding causes and consequences is key to comprehending the complexities of historical processes.
- *Determining historical significance*: This refers to the importance of certain events, individuals or developments in history. Students learn to assess the impact and lasting influence of historical phenomena, considering factors such as the scale of change, the number of people affected and the duration of the impact.
- *Communicating*: This focuses on the ability to effectively convey historical knowledge and understanding through various forms of communication, including writing, speaking and using digital media. Students learn to present their ideas clearly and persuasively, using evidence to support their arguments and engaging with different audiences.

1.10.2 Key terms

absolute dating techniques methods used to assess the age of something (e.g. radiocarbon dating, tree-ring dating)

ancient history the period from the beginning of civilisation to the fall of the Roman Empire

anno Domini Latin for 'in the year of our Lord'

artefact an object made or changed by humans

biased one-sided or prejudiced; seeing something from just one point of view

cause and consequence the concept that every historical event will have a cause, and every event or action is likely to be the cause of subsequent effects or consequences

chronology a record of past events in order of time, from ancient Greek *chronos* (time) and *logos* (word)

civilisations societies that have towns and features such as complex forms of government and religion

contestability when particular interpretations of the past are open to debate

continuity and change the concept that while many changes occur over time, some things remain constant

evidence information that indicates whether something is true or really happened
heritage everything that has come down to us from the past
hypothesis (plural: hypotheses) a theory or possible explanation
Latin the language of ancient Rome and its empire
perspectives point of view or attitude
prehistory the period before writing was invented
primary sources objects and documents that were created or written in the period of time that the historian is investigating
relative dating techniques methods used to assess whether something is older than something else (e.g. stratigraphy, fluorine dating)
secondary sources reconstructions of the past written or created by people living at a time after the period that the historian is studying
significance the importance assigned to particular aspects of the past; for example, events, developments, movements and historical sites
strata (singular: stratum) distinct layers of material beneath the ground, built up over time, that provide information for archaeologists and geologists
timeline a diagrammatic tool representing a period of time, on which events are placed in chronological order

1.10.3 Reflection



Complete the following to reflect on your learning.

Revisit the Inquiry question posed in the Overview:

Why are Europe, the Mediterranean world, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific regions important to study, and what skills do I need to understand this history?

1. Now that you have completed this topic, what is your view on the questions? Discuss with a partner. Has your learning in this topic changed your view? If so, how?
2. Write a paragraph in response to one of the inquiry questions, outlining your views.

learn on

-  **eWorkbooks** Customisable worksheets for this topic
Reflection
-  **Digital document** Key terms glossary

1.10 Review exercise

Learning pathways

■ LEVEL 1

1, 2, 3, 6

■ LEVEL 2

4, 7, 8, 10

■ LEVEL 3

5, 9

REMEMBER AND UNDERSTAND

- Chronological order means:
 - a timeline.
 - in order from the beginning to the end.
 - any random order.
 - from the end to the beginning.
- The work of historians can be described like that of detectives because:
 - historians solve crimes.
 - historians are always right.
 - historians never make mistakes.
 - historians gather evidence from sources and interpret that evidence.
- Primary sources are:
 - sources that were created during the time being studied.
 - sources that came first.
 - secondary sources.
 - books.
- Identify which of the following concepts of history refers to the facts and information available to historians.
 - Perspective
 - Evidence
 - Cause and effect
 - Empathy
- The concept of history 'continuity and change' refers to:
 - the study of aspects of history that have remained relatively unchanged and the aspects that have changed dramatically.
 - studying written or non-written materials that can be used to provide information about the past.
 - historians trying to discover how people thought and felt in the past.
 - the ability to make judgements about the importance assigned to particular aspects of the past.

ANALYSE AND APPLY

- In your own words, **explain** what the term *supporting evidence* means.
- What is a hypothesis?
- Archaeologists search for historical sources to help them understand the past. **Describe** four examples of archaeological sources.

EVALUATE AND COMMUNICATE

- Look carefully at **SOURCE 3**. Choose two images and **evaluate** the usefulness of these for understanding the day to day experiences of people.
- Explain** why primary sources are often used in museum displays.

Answers and sample responses for this topic are available online.

