



**Queensland University of Technology**  
Brisbane Australia

This may be the author's version of a work that was submitted/accepted for publication in the following source:

[Quanchi, Max](#)  
(2003)

*Teaching History : A Guide for Teachers Teaching History for the First Time.*

Teaching the Pacific Forum -TTPF/HistoryCOPs.

The Council of Presidents of Pacific Island History Associations (HistoryCOPs), Brisbane, QLD.

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**TEACHING HISTORY**

**A GUIDE  
FOR  
TEACHERS TEACHING HISTORY FOR  
THE FIRST TIME**



Outdoor class, near Port Moresby, PNG, *Walkabout*, January 1964, p.15

*HistoryCOPs*  
**Samoa**  
**2003**

Published by The Council of Presidents of Pacific Island History Associations (*HistoryCOPs*) a regional professional development project funded since 1995 by the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Nations Fund, Japan.

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Printed in Brisbane, Australia.  
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This material may be copied freely, with appropriate acknowledgement made to *HistoryCOPs*. The manuscript was prepared at the *HistoryCOPs* regional workshop, held in Apia, Samoa, December 2000, and the VSSTA/*HistoryCOPs* workshop in Port Vila, Vanuatu, October 2001. Thanks also to Dr Brian Hoeppe and Mr Ian Gray for their help in preparing the final draft.

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# ONE GETTING READY FOR YOUR FIRST HISTORY LESSON

Teaching history is quite different to teaching other subjects. The History classroom is different to Science and Mathematics classrooms and is even quite different to classrooms in the humanities such as English, Social Studies, Geography and Politics.

The best advice is to learn about the content - the basic outline of events of the first topic you have to teach, and to teach it with enthusiasm. That means checking on the *people and places* involved, *causes and effects*, *changes over time* and different *interpretations* of the same event. Teaching and learning History does include remembering some dates and names but they are only important to get a basic understanding of the time period in which events occurred. There are a few scattered fragments left behind to tell us what happened in the past – an old diary, a torn newspaper, a letter, wrecked buildings, rusting machinery, a few photographs, broken pots, spears, guns or old-fashioned dresses – but students will expect you to know everything about the topic. Don't panic yet.

The following suggestions will help you be prepared and ready to teach history.

## Before term or semester starts/resumes

- Read the syllabus. (For senior classes read the prescribed assessment and examination guidelines)
- Meet with the previous history teacher, or new history colleagues and obtain:
  - Past samples of students work
  - Past quizzes, questions sheets, assignment sheets, etc
  - Past lesson plans, schemes of work etc
  - Past exam papers and tests
- Collect the materials needed to carry out lessons in the classroom for the year.
  - Poster size paper
  - Felt tip pens, marker pens, chalk, dusters
  - Stapler / staples
  - Glue / Sellotape
  - Old magazines, newspapers, etc
  - Overheads (OHTs, or plastic paper)
- Collect the textbooks to be used in your class (if there is a compulsory text).
- Check what books and other non-book resources are available from the school library or special "History cupboard".
- Check your local community library to see what resources they have for students
- Look for other materials that will enhance your history lessons and may be useful to supplement the textbooks (ie. maps, magazines, pictures, photographs, posters, etc)

## In the week before your history teaching starts

- Write a week-by-week scheme of work. (Include a broad outline of what students will achieve)
- Design detailed daily lesson plans for the first two or three weeks (after this you should survive OK)

## The First Lesson

- Learn as much as you can about the first topic. Students will be very impressed if you can show familiarity with the little details and seem to know "everything" about what happened, such as;
  - How ordinary people were involved,
  - key actors
  - the place,
  - the weather,
  - the time events occurred,
  - related events elsewhere in the world
  - the first names of characters involved,
  - the names of historians who have written on this topic
  - the names of feature films (eg., from Hollywood) and documentaries on this topic
- Learn to pronounce the names of historic peoples and places (and to spell them correctly)

- Check the daily or weekly *Newspapers* for references to history (keep a folder of cuttings)
- Discuss the list of topics you will be teaching with the class to find out what they know already.
- Announce the procedures you want followed in your classroom. Have these procedures typed up, copied and pass them out after reviewing them with the students at the beginning of the term. Include;
  - seating arrangements,
  - roll call,
  - homework assignments,
  - disciplinary procedures
  - testing procedures.

### Some general hints

- History is a **talking** subject. Look for ideas to challenge students other than only using written work. Oral history is important - and students should be able to practice arguing, speaking out, debating, making speeches, acting in plays, or role playing (for example, acting out events in Parliament/the UN/the Pacific Forum.)
- **Presentation.** Students in History classrooms usually respond to tasks with written assignments, such as sentences, paragraphs and essays. Use this method but look for other opportunities – a wall chart, a poster, timeline, annotated map, a cartoon strip, a painting, poem, song, mime, dance drama, or performance of an historical play.
- Read the *HistoryCOPs* publication written by your History teacher colleagues across the region;

*Teaching the Pacific Forum; report on the Honiara workshop* (1995)

*Teaching the Pacific forum; report on the Port Moresby In-service* (1996)

*100 books for a Pacific History reference Library* (ed, Doug Hermann, 1996)

*Teachers, teaching and Pacific History; units from the Hilo workshop* (1996)

*Update* (quarterly newsletter)

*Pacific history, teaching and role of Professional Associations* (1997)

*PSSC Pacific History; a guide to student projects* (ed, John Obed, 1998)

*PSSC History; Internal assessment Teachers guide* (by Moffatt Wasuka, 1998)

*Good books on Pacific History for classroom use* (ed, Alli Suhonen, 1999)

*Glossary of historical terms for students* (ed, Asofou So'o, 2000)

*National History Profiles – Poster set on 23 Pacific entities* (2001)

*Pacific History, Museums and cultural centres; a guide for History teachers* (2002)

- Do some “quick reading” by skimming through the entries in historical dictionaries or the chapters in general histories of the Pacific - for example;
  - Brij Lal, ed, *The Pacific Islands Encyclopaedia* (also on CDROM)
  - Donald Denoon, ed, *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islands*
  - Moshe Rapaport, ed, *The Pacific Islands*
  - Anne Turner, *Historical Dictionary of Papua New Guinea* (and others in this series on Micronesia, Polynesia, Tahiti, Fiji)
  - Max Quanchi, *The Jacaranda Pacific Atlas* (Jacaranda, Wiley)
  - Kofi B Hadjor, *Dictionary of Third World terms* (Penguin)
  - Alan Palmer, *Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century History 1900-1989* (Penguin)
  - Chris Cook, *A Dictionary of historical terms* (Macmillan)
  - Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty key thinkers on History* (Routledge)
- Read the newsletters and attend meetings of your local **History Teachers Association**. Your colleagues are keen to share ideas and offer support to new history teachers

And personally ... Be a good role model and be professional - do not smoke or drink alcohol in front of students, take excessive kava and avoid using coarse, vulgar, insulting or derogatory language. Set a good example by dressing appropriately and always be available to offer personal help and give sound career advice.

**Be confident about the subject matter, explicit in your directions on what students need to do, and remember to laugh every now and then and enjoy your history teaching experience.**

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## TWO HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR CREDENTIALS AS A HISTORY TEACHER

The successful History teacher can demonstrate their professional approach to the discipline of History by promoting History as a school subject. This will identify you with the subject and as a teacher who cares about things historical – the days gone by, how we tell stories, how we preserve those stories and how we learn new versions about past events.

Good History teachers usually do the following;

- Arrange excursions to cultural centres, museums or Parliament. (They often have an Education Officer to help with visits and excursions)
- Relate topics (from the past) to current national and international events
- Design activities that promote in students *a social conscience*
- Invite guest speakers into your classroom to talk on a specific topic
- Let students make a choice of topic – from a list you prepare.
- As well as work done by the whole class, and small groups, allow individual students to do research on a special topic (of their choice or nominated by you)
- Go out of the classroom and do on-site maps, photography, local surveys, questionnaires or interviews
- Always be on the lookout for useful handouts, printed materials and unusual non-print resources
- Design and then paint - as a class activity - an historical mural on the wall of your local store, post office or bus stop (get approval first) .
- Screen feature films, documentaries and slides in the classroom
- Plan classroom opportunities so their students can study a variety of **evidence**:
  - a) *photographs* of significant events or people
  - b) investigate the use and making of *artefacts*
  - c) use old *newspaper cuttings* to discuss how events unfolded after the event was reported.
  - d) interrogate old *letters* (why were they written, who kept them?)
- Create a special room or corner to store anything historical
- Display students work at school, in public places and institutions: this will
  - a) Promote appreciation of their own and others efforts
  - b) Offer an opportunity for peer evaluation
  - c) Foster critical analysis
  - d) Stimulate different ways of presenting
- Arrange a history day for your school or all the local schools involving a
  - (a) History quiz
  - (b) Historical drama, concert, poetry, songs
  - (c) Student panel discussions on current issues
- Make an annual Field trip to a local historical site, old building or a stone ruin.
- Present small awards (each month) for high achievement or performance in assignments and tests
- Regularly evaluate your role as a teacher and student progress as learners.
- Arrange regular “History talks” by students at School Assembly, especially on national or commemorative days.
- Arrange for the local radio or TV station to schedule regular “History Talks” on local topics
- Know and appreciate their student’s life histories, experiences and ambitions.

**Students will respond quickly – and negatively – if you are half-hearted or lazy about your new job as a History teacher. Be positive about the subject and promote respect for History (as a subject) and you will quickly establish your credibility as a History Teacher**

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# THREE ASSESSMENT

There are three types of Assessment used in History classrooms:

## 1 DIAGNOSTIC assessment

This is an instrument that tests student's prior knowledge and is used to establish links to the new lesson;

Examples:-

1. Brainstorming: Test students prior knowledge by asking them to respond to key words, names and dates related to the next topic
2. Brief definitions (oral and written): ask students to define key words and terms
3. Concept Mapping (or listing on board, in books or in groups) so students indicate quickly their ideas about the coming topic
4. Informal Question & Answer session; will provide feedback from students and review their understanding of the topic

## 2 FORMATIVE assessment

This is an instrument to test whether students achieved the objectives set for the topic (using either verbal or written methods)

### VERBAL

1. Oral presentations (individually, just talking out the front)
2. Oral presentations with visual aids (eg. Talking about or to a photograph, diagram, cartoon, etc)
3. Debate between opposing groups
4. Group discussion (general open discussion by the whole class)
5. Role play – dramatise an event

### WRITTEN

1. Paragraph writing
2. Essay writing
3. Short answer test
4. Multiple choice test
5. Yes/No answer test
6. A series of comprehension questions based on reading (often done as Homework)
7. Assignments
  - Posters
  - Timelines
  - Puzzles and historical crosswords
  - Star diagrams
  - Cartoon, photograph, film and documentary interpretation
8. Major Research Projects, Reports and multimedia presentations

## 3 SUMMATIVE assessment:

Summative assessment is used to test whether the students have achieved the objectives of the whole unit or series of topics, or a whole semester, term or years work. They may be school-based (internal) or set by an external body such as SPBEA, NZ Bursary or your Education Department. This sort of assessment tests whether *“At the end of the unit students will be able to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills; For example;*

- Knowledge of Past events and changes over time
  - Knowledge of the cause and impact of events
  - Understanding comparisons and contrasts between historical events
  - Understanding the role of the Historian
  - The skill of formulating hypothesis and drawing conclusions
  - The skill of analysing and critically evaluating evidence (text, photographs and documents)
  - The skill of evaluating historical opinions and interpretations
-



## FOUR WHY IS HISTORY IMPORTANT IN THE SCHOOL CURRICIULUM?

The study of history plays an important role in the education of secondary school students. Through the study of history, your students will develop important *historical knowledge and understandings* and develop *thinking, interpreting, analysing, presenting and performance* skills.

These skills enable your History students to understand their own past and the connections of the past to the present. Your students will then be better prepared to play a role and plan for the future. They will have a respect for the past, and know what they can do to protect and promote their own cultures and histories. They will become good citizens. They will be proud to tell the world who they are, where they come from and what they have achieved.

If you plan and prepare your lessons well, your teaching will promote curiosity in your students – what actually happened last year, last century, a thousand years ago?

As many of your class will not go on further with their education, the work they do in your History classes will be the last formal contact they have with History as a subject. It is crucial that these “early-leaver” students build up a basic understanding of the past, and their place in their own family, community and national history.

Other students in your class will be going on to study History in Years 11-14. They need to develop an understanding of the *key concepts* behind historical inquiry as well as the skills needed for success in their final years at school.

**The *key concepts* or understandings that students acquire in History lessons are;**

**Time;** events occur at a specific time and in a chronological sequence. They occur in both the very ancient and the very recent period (called Ancient, Modern and Contemporary Histories)

**Change;** everything changes – over short and long time periods; so studying history is about studying changes in Social, Cultural, Political, Economic, Technological, Scientific and Environmental aspects of life

**Regions,** events are studied in the context of place - in the world, region, country, province, district and local area

**People;** History is a “people” subject – who we are, where we came from, how we cooperate together or struggle against each other and how we respond to changes, the environment, tragedies and natural disasters - history is all about individuals, families, groups, clans, tribes, nations

**Sites;** evidence about the past is often found in *special places* related to religion, institutions, families, individuals, conflicts, or ceremonies. (Studying history also means studying location, geography and environment)

**Interpretation,** the leading of students to express an opinion based on evidence, about what *they* think happened in the past.

**Evidence;** what proof remains that things happened in the past – how reliable is this proof (evidence); is it complete or only partial evidence; what do letters, eye-witness accounts, newspapers, tools, scars and cemeteries prove? (Studying history also means examining poetry, song, dance, art, carvings, tatoo and language)

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## **FIVE HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD BE SPENT ON EACH TOPIC?**

The following plan is based on typical classroom plan for four weeks of lessons on a single topic.

**Step One;** Review the number of topics in your history syllabus to be taught during the term/semester/year  
For Example: There may be 9 topics to be taught in a year

**Step Two;** Consider the length of your term/semester/year.  
For Example: There may be 36 weeks in a school year, divided into 3 terms – each term is therefore approximately 12 weeks long.

**Step Three;** Divide the number of history topics into the total teaching period.  
For Example: If there are nine topics for the year and 36 teaching weeks, the plan will have three topics OF FOUR WEEKS EACH per term.

**Step Four;** Divide the four weeks into a series of sub-topics. These sub-topics should be logically arranged in a sequence that slowly develops the student's understanding of the main topic.

For Example: If the main topic is "Colonialism in the Pacific" and this topic has been assigned 4 weeks and there are, say, three History lessons each week, you need to plan 12 lessons. Here is a suggested 4 week and 12 lesson sequence for the topic "Colonialism in the Pacific Islands"

Suggested sub-topics (for 12 lessons)

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Lesson 1  | A Pacific timeline – from whom and when did countries get independence (students copy Timeline from board)   |
| Lesson 2  | My nation – important dates from colonial rule to independence (a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Timeline, built up by class discussion, then copied into books)                      |
| Lesson 3  | Colonialism – a definition, (group discussion, writing definitions)  |
| Lesson 4  | Colonies – type 1; British Crown Colony – Fiji (students copy notes from board)  |
| Lesson 5  | Colonies – type 2; Condominium – Vanuatu (students copy notes from board and for example, read poems from Vanuatu by Grace Molissa on "colonial rule")                 |
| Lesson 6  | Colonies – Type 3; Protectorate – the modern history of Tonga (students copy notes from board) or show video of "Royal Tonga" or "Fit for a King".                     |
| Lesson 7  | Colonies – Type 3; Partition – New Guinea (in groups or pairs make maps showing German, Dutch, Indonesian, British, Australian areas, with dates)                      |
| Lesson 8  | Colonies – Type 5; Make a class wall map of Oceania showing the countries still under foreign rule.  |
| Lesson 9  | Student Research project – allow three lessons - "My nation under colonial rule – what did it mean for my people" (report as a timeline, mini-essay, speech or poster) |
| Lesson 10 | Student Research project continued   |
| Lesson 11 | Student Research project continued   |
| Lesson 12 | Presentations – mini reports by students to class (these can be collected and used as evaluation)  |

### ***Four essential characteristics of History lesson planning***

1. *List your Topic Objectives (these may be copied from the curriculum statement)*
2. *Vary the teaching methods, strategies and student activities*
3. *Gather the necessary Resources and Materials needed by students*
4. *Decide on the Evaluation / Assessment used to test student progress and achievement*

### **Remember the six "Ps"**

Proper  
Planning and  
Preparation  
Prevents  
Poor  
Performance!!

## SIX SOME SUGGESTIONS ON APPROPRIATE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

### 1 *Create a Good Teacher Student Relationship*

Create a warm relationship with the students and make them feel welcome and secure in your History classroom. You must be in control, but also be flexible, fair and firm. Encourage students to get to know each other well – allow time for the introduction of students to each other (through historical aspects of their own lives such as their place of origin, personal histories, previous History subjects, sites visited, etc)

### 2 *Vary the Approach for Teaching each topic*

- **Inquiry approach** expand in steps from (1) student's knowledge of the topic from previous study and experiences; (2) identifying the problem; (3) setting the tasks; (4) students gathering data; (5) analysing evidence; (6) final oral or written presentation by students individually or in groups. The inquiry approach is partly teacher directed, but allows a high degree of individual initiative
- **Didactic Approach** the teacher-out-the-front approach means the Teacher is the director of all activities, all of the time.
- **Student centred learning** The teacher introduces the topic, suggests ideas and activities and students select a topic, how they will address the task, how they will work and how they will report. Your role is then to supervise, but students must be ready to accept responsibility for their own study. Students work in individually or in pairs, teams or larger groups to achieve the task set by the teacher, to share their own historical knowledge with each other and design a means of presenting their results to the class. This requires careful preparation, organisation of the room space and constant assistance and supervision.

### 3 *Focus on the student's history*

Try at all times to relate each topic to the life experiences of the individual students in your class. Allow opportunities for students to research, or present information about their personal and family histories and ancestors and always look for the links that exist between the topic and the individual student.

### 4 *Use different ways to summarise the topic*

Avoid repeating the same concluding activity – such as a mini-test, essay, poster or speech to the class – these are good summative strategies and should be done regularly so students can improve their skills and performance, **but** – vary the final activity so students can see that History has many ways of being presented. (it also maintains interest and can be good fun). Use individual, pairs and group reports to summarise; Promote dance, film, poetry and art as a means of reporting on an historical topic.

### 5 *Offer constructive feedback at the end of the topic*

Always review with the class what you (the teacher) has done during the unit just completed and always comment on the student's work individually so they get a sense of progress, where they need to improve and where they are developing expertise and skills.

## SEVEN THE SKILLS TAUGHT IN HISTORY LESSONS

Make sure your program allows students time to develop skills in each of the six areas. Try and get a balance between the time devoted to each skill area – but if you find an area of weakness it is a good idea to focus on that skill for a longer period, even at the expense of providing opportunities for repeating other skills.

### 1 *Gathering historical information*

<u>Listening:</u>	Develop good listening skills in your students can identify the important information
<u>Research Methods:</u>	Rather than tell them - let students ask - where can I get information? (Libraries, museums, interviews, historical sites, diaries, photographs, newspaper articles, etc)
<u>Library Skills:</u>	How to look up books / articles in the library
<u>Note taking:</u>	Develop effective and brief note taking skills by showing students how to pick the most important and relevant information
<u>Conducting Interviews:</u>	Make students identify their topic and the purpose of the questions they are asking (they need to collect background information on the topic before they ask questions)
<u>Types of evidence:</u>	Offer plenty of practice differentiating between primary and secondary sources
<u>Evidence:</u>	Offer students a wide range of evidence (“stuff”) for each topic – don’t rely just on the text book – use photographs, music, dance, folk tales, tattoo, crafts and art.

### 2 *Analysing data*

<u>Chronology:</u>	arranging data into sequences – timelines are a basic tool for historians
<u>Interpreting:</u>	deciding what evidence is reliable (and true) and what is not verified, and then expressing an opinion based on this evidence
<u>Simplifying:</u>	making lists, charts, graphs, tables and maps
<u>Relevance:</u>	Offer students plenty of practice at identifying what has relevance, or significance, from among all the evidence being studied in class
<u>Bias:</u>	Students should be made aware that all evidence from the past has a bias. Senior students should learn to differentiate between subjective and objective evidence.
<u>Facts:</u>	Offer students opportunities to differentiate between opinions and evidence (facts)
<u>Main message:</u>	Demonstrate to students how to identify the essential detail (or evidence) in a document or fragment from the past.
<u>Comparison:</u>	Teach your students to always look in the evidence for comparisons – with another year or time period, with another country, with another event.
<u>Veracity</u>	Offer opportunities for students to check one piece of evidence against other facts, opinions and sources.

### 3 *Writing about history*

<u>Referencing:</u>	Students should cite where they get information from - this will deter plagiarism
<u>Borrowing:</u>	Promote the borrowing of the exact words used by historical characters (insist they are always indicated by “quotation marks”) .

### 4 *Speaking about history*

<u>Articulate:</u>	Insist that students act confident and well spoken during presentations
<u>Posture:</u>	Insist students make eye contact with the audience, stand straight and do not slouch
<u>Voice Projection:</u>	Allow students to practice speaking to a large audience and stress the importance of “throwing” their voice to the back of the room.
<u>Terminology:</u>	The language used must be precise yet simple. Insist on the use of technical terms from History – avoid slang.
<u>Borrowing:</u>	Promote the borrowing of the exact words used by historical characters

### 5 *Cooperating in groups*

<u>Co-operation:</u>	Design strategies to develop in each student the ability to work effectively in a group
<u>Organisation:</u>	Begin early in the term by organising students totally, then gradually allow students to organise themselves. This ensures group work time is used effectively
<u>Appreciation of others:</u>	Allow students to express their own views but insist they listen to others attentively.

**6 Presenting of student opinion and results**

<u>Variation;</u>	Promote a variety of presenting formats – from annotated maps, poetry and posters to wall murals!! Vary the written task – long and short sentences, long and short paragraphs, long and short essays, long and short speeches, newspaper-type columns, encyclopaedia entries, obituaries, advertisements
<u>Public display;</u>	Always be on the lookout for opportunities to put students work on public display – in a shop, office or hall.
<u>Making a statement;</u>	Make sure each piece of student presentation has a clear and simple statement about an aspect of history.
<u>Individuals and groups;</u>	Vary the format of assessment for each topic - use individuals, pairs, groups and whole-class presentations
<u>Equality;</u>	Consider carefully the relative value (grade or %) of presentations – should a short talk, a wall mural or an annotated map be worth more or less than a 500 word essay?

Photograph 1; Niue High School, Niue 2002

Photograph 2; Several memorials and historical markers, Niue 2002

## **EIGHT      HOW TO WRITE AN HISTORICAL STATEMENT**

The most important skill to develop in writing paragraphs is that your students must be prepared to make an opening **statement** (or an assertion). Each paragraph also needs to offer **evidence** to support the statement, and finally make **a link** to the next paragraph or back to the opening statement

Insert diagram

## NINE STUDENT ACTIVITIES and RESEARCH PROJECTS

### *How to write appropriate comprehension questions (for mini-tests, revision and homework)*

1. Make sure questions and tasks *relate to the content* in the book, film or document being used
2. Make sure the questions *are short and specific*
3. Students must be given direction on where to find the answers

### *Individual tasks (activities undertaken by one student)*

A higher level of activity will ask questions that allow students to *think independently, to use personal initiative and express personal opinions*. The History teacher's role is to make sure adequate resource materials are available for the students

- 1 Ask a question and indicate how it should be presented
- 2 Student collects and organise/simplify the data
- 3 Student analyses data
- 4 Student reports

### *Activities for two students*

Asking students to work in pairs is a good activity for developing a sharing, collaborative responsibility. It also gives students a chance to work with a friend, and enjoy the classroom.

1. Offer a list of topics/themes/problems
2. The pair pick a topic (both members must approve)
3. Teacher (or students) allocate their individual roles
4. Students Collect data
5. Students Organise/simplify data
6. Students choose a method of reporting and allocate tasks
7. Students report

### *Group Project*

Group projects are harder to organise and require more preparation and supervision, but they do develop responsibility and can produce amazing results (group performances, murals etc.)

1. Students form a group and allocate a task, problem or question to each member
2. Students collect and organise/simplify the data
3. Students share opinions, data and conclusions
4. Students choose a method of reporting and allocate tasks
5. Students report

### **Research Projects**

What are "Research" activities? They are activities that require students to take responsibility for their own learning. The *copy from the board, textbook or question sheet lesson* is effective, but good History teachers also allow students to undertake *research* – to find out about a special topic and then come back and tell the class what they found. The teacher guides this process, offering advice and helping but not dominating. Some typical "research" activities are;

- Design a wall *Montage* based on evidence about an event, telling the story using pictures out of newspapers, magazines etc
- Create a folder or *scrapbook* using evidence about an event or specific topic. Keep this in a filing system for future students.
- *Perform* a skit, drama, role-play, mime or charade; Students study an event, (5 lessons) identify key characters, (2 lessons) write a script (4 lessons) and perform their mini-play (1 lesson)
- Write and design a *Brochure* for a Museum or Cultural Centre
- *Investigate* the value (veracity) of a piece of evidence - a speech, letter or photograph
- Go on a *Field Trip* and write a report (using film, photographs or diaries)
- Watch an *historical documentary* or Video

- *Design a plaque* or sign for a local historical site or building
- Design and write an *Historical Poster* – on a specific event or person
- Plan and conduct community *Interviews*
- Write *Poems / Songs* based on historical events and persons
- *Journal writing*: students pretend to be a particular person eg., witness to event or a spectator and write a week long diary by that person
- *Briefcase study*: pick an important person in the period studied and then list 10 items a person would carry – eg, their briefcase, *bilum* or bag. Students must justify specifically each item and then present their list orally to the class.
- *Speech Project*: memorise a 50 to 100-word speech by an historical figure. Students give a brief explanation of how, when, and why this speech was given, and then deliver it to the class.
- *Mock trials*: on controversial historical issues
- *Costume Day*: students dress up in the costumes of a particular historical event
- *Food Day*: Students prepare meals of a particular historical event
- *Map Work*: tell the story of an event by using an annotated map
- *Biographies*: write mini-biographies of famous characters from the past; local identities and recently deceased national figures (See *HistoryCOPs Update No 18*, pages 5-6 for some ideas)
- *Time Lines*: students work individually, in pairs or in groups to list the sequence of events and present it as a timeline

Students must search and investigate the evidence before making a judgement about how to present their interpretation of the event/theme/topic. Let students vary the outcome – on the basis of what they find they may want to change from an essay to a poster, a map to a poem or a mural to a timeline. This is the sign of good research – the student is making decisions based on what they have found.

Photograph; Pacific Island History teachers at a regional History workshop, Hilo, Hawaii 1996



## TEN TYPICAL AND UNUSUAL SOURCES

As the History Teacher you must introduce to your class a range of **primary evidence** – a variety of objects from which we learn about the past. These may be written, spoken, danced or drawn; they may be complete or incomplete, torn, broken and partial; they are all biased by the motivation of the person who created them; they may be a fake, misleading or deliberately left behind as ‘false clues’ to cover up what really happened. Written primary evidence is usually called a ‘document’.

Books, feature films, documentaries (videos), murals, statues, essays, journals and encyclopaedia produced in recent times are also a source – but they are **secondary evidence** – a report by someone who was not present, or who recorded the event later, often hundreds of years later and who wants to express a particular opinion about those events. These are not evidence of what actually happened – they are only the interpretations or opinions of the *Historians* who examined the evidence afterwards.

### *What is historical evidence? What are sources?*

Historical evidence is any object that is useful in providing information about the past. It is the student’s task to draw from this source or evidence the clues that tell what happened. This process of ‘drawing out’ what happened is called *interpretation*. Students can learn to *interpret evidence* and express a reasonable opinion based on what they have found. You can help students to practice interpretation by asking the following type of questions;

- What does this *cartoon* tell us about people’s attitudes towards the people in the cartoon?
- What does this *photograph* tell us about the event pictured?
- What does this *speech* tell us about the speaker and the audience?
- What does this *old building* tell us about the city 100 years ago?
- What does this *broken pot* tell us about cooking 1000 years ago?
- What does this traditional dance tell us about the role of men 5000 years ago?

Your job as the History teacher is to ask the right questions – questions that will force students to critically examine the evidence, and to make interpretations. When students start saying, ‘excuse me Sir, what does this letter really prove?’ – you will know you are a successful history teacher.

### *Unusual or non-book Classroom Resources:*

With a little effort you can provide a wide range on non-book (non-printed) evidence and sources;

- Guest speakers
- Videos, historical documentaries and Radio programs
- Artefacts, photographs, songs, dances and story telling
- Field Trips, excursions and visits to institutions (museums and cultural centres)
- History board games
- www – allow students to search for views and details of current events
- History CDROMs on special topics
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It is your job as the History teacher to ensure students in your class are asking questions, interpreting and expressing opinions about a wide range of evidence.

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**Summary**

**Nine reasons why you should enjoy teaching History**  
**Nine reasons why students should learn History**

**CURIOSITY**

To answer; what is that?

**GENEALOGY**

To answer; where do I come from?

**CELEBRATION**

To honour and respect the achievements of ancestors

**CONTINUITY**

To investigate the links between the past and the present

**STRUGGLE**

To tell the story of those who fought for what was right

**REVISION**

To set the record (the facts) straight

**EXPOSE**

To reveal the voices not heard or deliberately left out

**CHALLENGE**

To establish the legitimacy of those that claim power

**CAUSE AND EFFECT**

To ask who started it, who benefited and who suffered?

*The past is gone  
Only fragments remain  
My task is to find out  
And tell the world*