# History glossary

beliefs

A set of principles or tenets that, together, form the basis of a philosophy, moral code, religion or worldview

cause

A factor, such as the actions of an individual or group, or a condition that contributes to a historical development. Causes may be long- or short-term factors and catalyst triggers. Historical changes are typically attributed to multiple causes, with political, societal, economic, cultural and environmental considerations. Causation is a key historical thinking concept.

change

An outcome of historical process and which denotes a shift or alteration in conditions or circumstances. Changes may vary in magnitude, profundity, significance, pace or duration. Change may include alteration or shift in economic, political, social, cultural and environmental conditions.

chronology

In History, chronology involves the sequencing of events in order, as in a timeline, so that patterns of continuity and change and causes and consequences can be observed and identified.

consequence

The outcome or result of historical developments. Consequences may be intended or unintended and long or short term.

contestability

In History, contestability reflects the interpretive nature of the discipline. Contestability relates to the differences between historical interpretations that may result from different evidence or historical explanation.

context (sources)

The social and historical time, place and conditions in which a historical source was created. The context of a historical source is considered as a factor in the evaluation of that historical source.

continuity

A form of historical process in which the outcome of a historical phenomenon is no change.

Country

The physical environment that a particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ group has a relationship with. Referring to this territory as ‘Country’, rather than land, indicates a reciprocal and deep relationship and one where Country both owns and is owned by the People. The concept of Country includes lands, waters and sky.

Deep Time

In History, Deep Time refers to the period between the emergence of modern humans and the development of written records. In the Australian context, this encompasses the period during which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples populated the Australian landmass and the establishment of the first British colony. This period was accompanied by significant changes to the physical environment and historical interpretation commonly draws on archaeological evidence.

diversity

Recognises the variety of people in a group or society, including differences in age, ability, class, ethnicity, gender identities, sexualities, culture, religion and worldview.

evidence

In History, evidence is the information obtained from historical sources that are used to support an interpretation of the past. The explicit and implicit information in historical sources is evaluated and corroborated to establish its accuracy, relevance and usefulness as part of the processes of historical inquiry. Evidence can be used to help construct a historical narrative, to support a hypothesis or to prove or disprove a conclusion.

historical inquiry

The process of investigation undertaken to understand the past. Historical inquiry entails the application of Historical Concepts and Skills, such as the use of sources, continuity and change, and causes and consequences, to Historical Knowledge and Understanding (what students have learned about) to develop an interpretation of the past.

interpretation

In History, an interpretation is an explanation of the past, for example about the significance of an individual, event or development, and its relationship to continuity and change and/or causes and consequences, based on evidence from historical sources. There may be more than one interpretation of a particular aspect of the past because historians may have used different sources, asked different questions and held different points of view about the topic.

perspective

In History, perspective refers to the outlook of an individual or group as shaped by their worldview and context. This incorporates ideas, beliefs and attitudes, the cultural context and other factors including age, gender, social status, locality, ethnicity or national identity, etc.

Place

‘Place’ is significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

For Torres Strait Islander Peoples, ‘Place’ is a space mapped out that Torres Strait Islander individuals or groups occupy and regard as their own and that has varying degrees of spirituality. It includes lands, waters and sky.

For Aboriginal Peoples, ‘Place’ refers to the special places that exist within Country, the purposes of which vary significantly. They can include places of ceremony and initiation, birth and the provision of healing and health care; places of learning; and places for Sorry Business. These places vary greatly over the various landscapes and seascapes across the continent. There are some parts of Country that have landmarks that directly relate to the ancestor spirits and the creation of existence. These are especially important as culturally significant places and need to be cared for. There are also other places on Country that are important for ceremony, as mentioned above, which are also considered especially important for Aboriginal communities.

primary sources

In History, primary sources are from the time of, or shortly after, a historical event and include oral, visual and written forms. Examples of primary sources include oral accounts; official documents, such as laws and treaties; personal documents, such as diaries and letters; photographs; video footage; and artefacts, such as weapons, household objects, implements and tools. These sources are analysed, interpreted and verified by historians for evidence of past events. Primary sources may provide evidence of historical perspectives of events and the experiences of individuals and groups.

secondary sources

In History, secondary sources are interpretations of the past created after the time being investigated. Secondary sources generally use primary sources as evidence. Examples of secondary sources include writings of historians, encyclopedias, documentaries, fiction, history textbooks and websites.

significance

In History, significance is the importance that is assigned to a particular historical phenomenon. Establishing historical significance is an evaluative process based on using questions and criteria.

turning point

The point at which significant change takes place, directly or indirectly caused by a specific event and representing enduring change