Modern history Stage 6 – nature of modern history and historical investigation

JFK integrated study

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# Aim

The study of modern history in Stage 6 enables students to:

* develop knowledge and understanding of the modern world, the skills of critical analysis, and values and attitudes essential for an appreciation of the people, forces and ideas that have shaped the modern world
* develop a lifelong interest in the study of history
* prepare for active and informed citizenship in the contemporary world.

# Content focus

**Note:** this unit integrates the Nature of modern history (contestability of the past and construction of modern histories) topic, with a case study on the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy (JFK) and an historical investigation. The aim is to investigate how the issues around the construction of history and the use, and interpretation, of evidence relates to the assassination of JFK. The assessment task has students attempt to answer the question of who killed JFK and why.

This unit explores the following topics:

* **The construction of modern histories:** students investigate methods and issues associated with constructing accounts about the past. The historical concepts and skills content is to be integrated as appropriate.
* **JFK case study:** students investigate aspects of the history of the modern world using a range of sources. The historical concepts and skills content is to be integrated as appropriate.
* **The contestability of the past:** students investigate problems relating to the contestability of the past, focusing on sources available to historians. The historical concepts and skills content is to be integrated as appropriate.
* **Historical investigation**
* Students engage in one historical investigation, through which they further develop their skills.
* The historical investigation is designed to provide opportunities for all students to further develop relevant investigative, research and presentation skills that are the core of the historical inquiry process. The outcomes addressed in the investigation build on those in the History Years 7–10 Syllabus. Modern history students will access the Year 11 outcomes at different levels depending on their previous experiences. The investigation also provides the context for a practical application of the general capabilities.
* The historical investigation should extend a particular area of individual student or group interest. The investigation can be integrated into any aspect of the Year 11 course and need not be completed as one project. It might be conducted individually or collaboratively. The historical concepts and skills content is to be integrated as appropriate.
* Students should be encouraged to select a topic and presentation style that reflects their individual interests.

# Outcomes

A student:

* **MH11-1** describes the nature of continuity and change in the modern world
* **MH11-2** proposes ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments
* **MH11-3** analyses the role of historical features, individuals, groups and ideas in shaping the past
* **MH11-4** accounts for the different perspectives of individuals and groups
* **MH11-5** examines the significance of historical features, people, ideas, movements, events and developments of the modern world
* **MH11-6** analyses and interprets different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument
* **MH11-7** discusses and evaluates differing interpretations and representations of the past
* **MH11-8** plans and conducts historical investigations and presents reasoned conclusions, using relevant evidence from a range of sources
* **MH11-9** communicates historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in appropriate and well-structured forms
* **MH11-10** discusses contemporary methods and issues involved in the investigation of modern history

**Related Life Skills outcomes**: MHLS6-1, MHLS6-2, MHLS6-3, MHLS6-4, MHLS6-5, MHLS6-6, MHLS6-7, MHLS6-8, MHLS6-9, MHLS6-10, MHLS6-11, MHLS6-12

[Modern History Stage 6 Syllabus](https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie/modern-history-2017) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2017.

# Nature of modern history – part 1

**Note:** students develop an understanding of the nature of modern history through an investigation of relevant methods and issues. This section is an introduction to the ways in which modern histories are constructed.

## Learning sequence 1 – construction of modern histories

### Syllabus content

Students investigate:

* an overview of different types of histories, including narrative history, biography, social and cultural history
* the role of evidence, interpretation and perspective in the construction of historical accounts
* problems associated with the construction of modern histories: the abundance of documentary material, the incomplete nature of evidence and political controls on access to source materials, including classified records
* the role of selectivity, emphasis and omission in the construction of historical accounts.

### Overview of different types of history

**Note**: throughout this section, students will be looking at the following inquiry questions:

* What are the different types of history?
* What similarities and differences do they share?
* What are the pros and cons of the different types of history?
* Complete a concept map discussing the following questions:
* What is history?
* How is history recorded?
* Who decides what history is recorded?
* How do people access history?
* Why is it important to record history?

#### Narrative history

Read [Narrative history](https://understandingsociety.blogspot.com/2008/11/narrative-history.html) and list the positives and negatives of narrative histories.

#### Biographical histories

Read [the National Library of Australia’s research guide called Biography](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/biography).

* Complete a [PMI chart](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/551?clearCache=7d404f29-d4f2-f06f-cfcb-c610ef3845c7#.YEf8ylm1xVw.link) of the features of biographical and autobiographical history.

#### Autobiographical histories

* Complete the following questions
* What is the typical structure of a biography or autobiography?
* How does a biography or autobiography differ from a narrative history?
* What concerns might historians have about the usefulness of autobiographies?
* Read [Albert Speer and the myth of ‘the good Nazi’](https://www.dw.com/en/albert-speer-and-the-myth-of-the-good-nazi/a-52621382) and [Letter proves Speer knew of Holocaust plan](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/mar/13/secondworldwar.kateconnolly). Explain how historical perceptions of Speer changed between the release of his autobiography ‘Inside the Third Reich’ and 2007.

#### Social and cultural history

**Note**: the first link provided about social history is from Wikipedia and teachers should use their professional discretion when using it. Wikipedia is an excellent starting point for students and this should be explained in the context of conducting research and reviewing the references provided on the Wikipedia page.

* Read [Social History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_history) and explain what it is and how it developed as a field of history. Extension activity: Read [What is Social History?](https://www.historytoday.com/archive/what-social-history) and discuss the arguments presented by the author about the value of social histories.
* Look at the current top selling non-fiction works from an online book seller such as [Angus & Robertson](https://www.angusrobertson.com.au/non-fiction?src=HeaderNav) or [QBD Books](https://www.qbd.com.au/non-fiction/), and make a list of the titles and the ‘types’ of history found.
* [Brainstorm](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/542) who decides what aspects of society are recorded, and how does this impact an understanding of the past?

#### Digital and multimedia histories

* Browse the content of [Retronaut](https://retronaut.com/). List the advantages and disadvantages of this as a resource for history students.
* Watch [Dimensions in Testimony (2:19)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGzAc9mIoTM) and complete a [Quick write](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/548#.YEq5WLzpKIw.link) explaining how technology has changed the telling of history.
* Complete the following table exploring the different types of history.

Table 1 – types of history

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of history | Definition of this type of history | Positives of this type of history | Negatives of this type of history |
| Narrative |  |  |  |
| Biographical |  |  |  |
| Autobiographical |  |  |  |
| Social and cultural |  |  |  |
| Digital and multimedia |  |  |  |

* Explain why some types of histories might be more suitable for certain topics or audiences.
* Why is it important to consider different types of historical accounts when exploring the past?

### Role of evidence, interpretation and perspective in the construction of historical accounts

**Note**: when discussing Hollywood productions of history, some examples include [Gallipoli](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082432/), [A Knight’s Tale](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0183790/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0), [JFK (1991)](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0102138/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1a), [Dunkirk](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5013056/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1) or [The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0914798/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0). The response to Greg Jenner’s tweet could also be run as a class debate.

* Use a [dictionary](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/) to define the following key concepts:
* evidence
* interpretation
* perspective
* usefulness
* reliability.
* In groups or as a class, discuss how valid these dictionary meanings are from the perspective of studying history. Come up with a refined, history-specific, definition for each of the terms.
* Write a half page response to the following questions
* What are the risks associated with ‘inspired by historical events’ Hollywood productions?
* As a class debate the argument that it doesn’t matter whether ‘inspired by historical events’ Hollywood films are historically accurate.

### Problems associated with the construction of modern histories

* Read [How is History Written](https://theconversation.com/curious-kids-how-is-history-written-and-who-writes-it-153502) and then answer the following question: Is it possible for anyone to write and produce history or should it be left to academic historians?

### Role of selectivity, emphasis and omission in the construction of historical accounts

* Use a [dictionary](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/) to define the following terms
* selectivity
* emphasis
* omission
* perspective
* bias.
* In groups or as a class, discuss how valid these dictionary meanings are from the perspective of studying history. Come up with a refined, history-specific, definition for each of the terms.
* Write a paragraph explaining how these concepts affect the construction of history.
* Watch [History Matters – Why Isn’t New Zealand a Part of Australia? (3:22)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyfXeflrD_A) and [Simple History – The Industrial Revolution (3:58)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLhNP0qp38Q&list=PLu2xst_eS6doLsHFSOWoM-7CZO5aO0CXB&index=2). Thinking about the role of selectivity, emphasis and omission in the construction of historical accounts, write a paragraph explaining the advantages and disadvantages of historical mini-documentaries available on YouTube or other similar platforms.

# Case study

Students look at the context of JFK’s presidency and the events leading up to his assassination, to prepare for the historical investigation assessment task.

**Note**: the investigation must not overlap with or duplicate significantly any topic to be attempted in the Year 12 modern history or history extension courses.

The relevant historical debate or issue is covered in the historical investigation.

The links provided for the events or concepts research task are a starting point for students and their research should go beyond these links.

## Learning sequence 2 – JFK’s presidency

### Syllabus content

Students investigate:

* the historical context
* the nature of the features, people, ideas, movements, events and/or developments selected for study
* a relevant historical debate or issue.

### Historical context

* Define contestability.
* In pairs discuss and write answers to the following questions
* Are all historical sources contestable?
* What are some examples of people intentionally manipulating sources? What might the motivations be for manipulating a source?
* Research the following events or concepts that provide context to JFK’s presidency and write a one paragraph explanation of each
* [Cold War](https://www.britannica.com/study/cold-war-introduction)
* [Soviet-US Relations](https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history)
* [McCarthyism](https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/age-of-eisenhower/mcarthyism-red-scare)
* [Espionage and defection](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/espionage-cold-war)
* [ASIO and the Petrovs](https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/petrov-affair)
* [Cuban Revolution](https://www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-Revolution)
* [Cuban Missile Crisis and Bay of Pigs](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zygjq6f/revision/1)
* [Mafia and Organised Crime](https://www.history.com/news/robert-kennedy-started-the-war-on-mafia-gangs)
* Use [Evaluating websites, news and media](https://libguides.csu.edu.au/evaluate-web/home) and your own research to write 2 to 3 paragraphs explaining how to assess websites for their authenticity, reliability and usefulness.
* Use [John F. Kennedy - Key Events](https://millercenter.org/president/john-f-kennedy/key-events) and [John F. Kennedy](https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-F-Kennedy), and use [Padlet](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/592#.YE_qM7SPJy4.link) to create a timeline of JFK’s life.

### Nature of the features, people, ideas, movements, events or developments

**Note**: [JFK-22-nov-1963](https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/jfk-22-nov-1963-6d7e22cb0968419482cfddc092c80e54) opens in a language other than English, if students right click on the page they should be able to translate the webpage to English.

* Use the following resources to create a mind map of the common features of political assassinations
* [Julius Caesar](https://www.ancient.eu/article/803/the-murder-of-julius-caesar/)
* [Abraham Lincoln](https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/abraham-lincoln-assassination)
* [Archduke Franz Ferdinand](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/archduke-ferdinand-assassinated)
* [Olof Palme](https://theconversation.com/who-killed-swedens-prime-minister-1986-assassination-of-olof-palme-is-finally-solved-maybe-140542)
* Watch [JFK 3 Shots That Changed America(1:29:34)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsdkyl9jt9M) and complete the following tasks
* take notes about the types of footage that is presented in the film
* discuss if this is an unbiased source, and if it is possible to have unbiased sources in history
* write a justification for this film to be considered as **both** a primary and secondary source when studying the assassination of JFK.
* Using the [JFK-22-nov-1963](https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/jfk-22-nov-1963-6d7e22cb0968419482cfddc092c80e54) 3D virtual model of the area around Dealey Plaza and [JFK 3 Shots That Changed America(1:29:34)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsdkyl9jt9M), write responses to the following questions
* Describe the atmosphere surrounding the visit of President Kennedy to Dallas.
* What are some of the important events demonstrated in the clip regarding the motorcade and the route taken by President Kennedy?
* Why do you think this mystery continues?
* What drives conspiracy theories about the Kennedy assassination?

# Nature of modern history – part 2

This section continues looking at the nature of modern histories, focusing on the contestable nature of history and the role of sources.

## Learning sequence 3 – the contestability of the past

### Syllabus content

Students investigate:

* how historians test hypotheses about the past through the corroboration of sources
* problems associated with the evaluation of sources: authenticity, and reliability and usefulness for particular historical inquiries
* the importance of understanding the historical context in the interpretation of sources
* the role of sources and evidence in the evaluation of different theories about the past
* testing hypotheses.

### Problems associated with the evaluation of sources

* Using the internet, investigate JFK conspiracy theories and access [John F. Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_assassination_conspiracy_theories). Discuss the following questions
* How many potential pages are available when googling conspiracy theories surrounding this event?
* How many footnotes are there on [John F. Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_assassination_conspiracy_theories)?
* What problems might historians encounter in evaluating the sources available about the assassination?
* Consider [this academic forensic ballistic analysis](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5934694/) on the assassination of JFK. Answer the following questions
* How accurate is this source?
* How can you tell?
* How useful is this source for an historian studying the assassination of JFK?

### Importance of understanding the historical context in the interpretation of sources

* Listen to historian Patrick Moore on the [JFK Assassination and the Cold War (6:54)](https://www.wuwf.org/post/jfk-assassination-and-cold-war#stream/0).
* Make a list of possible reasons as to why the US authorities might have been motivated to quickly and decisively declare Oswald as the single assassin.
* Use the following sources to complete the table below.

Table 2 – interpretation of sources

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Source | Description | Who killed JFK? | Motive? |
| [Warren Commission summary of findings](https://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/select-committee-report/summary.html) |  |  |  |
| [JFK Assassination Magic Bullet Computer Recreation (4:17)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=PfSXkfV_mhA) |  |  |  |
| [Badge Man at Grassy Knoll (8:25)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtOCJplSLf8) |  |  |  |

### The role of sources and evidence in the evaluation of different theories about the past

* Use the sources below to answer the following question: Should all government records be open to the public?
* [25th JFK Assassination Secrets Scheduled for 2017 Release](https://time.com/4606082/jfk-assassination-secrets/)
* [Background](https://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/background) to the *John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act*.
* Discuss how and why the theories around the assassination of JFK continually develop and evolve.

# Historical investigation

This section begins the historical investigation, with students undertaking individual research to develop the investigative, research and presentation skills that are the core of the historical inquiry process. This process concludes with a formal assessment task in the next section.

## Learning sequence 4 – historical investigation

### Syllabus content

Content:

* The process of historical investigation involves:
* planning and conducting historical investigations using historical concepts
* formulating historical questions and hypotheses relevant to the investigation
* locating and interrogating a range of sources
* identifying different perspectives evident in sources
* analysing sources for their usefulness and reliability for the question(s) asked
* developing and/or examining historical interpretations
* using sources to develop a view about an historical issue
* selecting and organising relevant information
* synthesising evidence from a range of sources to develop and support a reasoned historical account or argument
* using historical terms and concepts appropriately
* presenting and communicating the findings of an historical investigation using appropriate and well-structured oral, written and/or multimedia forms, including ICT.

**Note**: this learning sequence contributes to the assessment provided at the end of this framework.

* Task – complete a [PowerPoint](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/116?clearCache=d2e47199-c0b6-5671-64e7-20e172d3549c) presentation addressing the historical investigation into who killed JFK and why.

The 5 to 7-minute presentation must:

* use at least 4 primary sources
* answer the following questions
* Who do you think actually shot JFK?
* What do you believe was the motive for his murder?
* Do you think there was a conspiracy? If so, who do you think was involved?
* What was the role (if any) of Lee Harvey Oswald?
* Why did Jack Ruby kill Oswald?
* include a bibliography.

### Resources

These resources might help with the historical investigation assessment:

* [JFK Assassination](https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/jfk-assassination)
* [The Assassination of John F. Kennedy](https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKindex.htm)
* [Lamar Waldron thinks he’s uncovered the truth behind JFK’s assassination (53:20)](https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/conversations/lamar-waldron/7774304)
* [Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald? (1:53:41)](https://www.pbs.org/video/frontline-who-was-lee-harvey-oswald/)
* [PBS Biography of Lee Harvey Oswald](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/twenty-four-years/)
* [The Kennedy Assassination](https://www.jfk-assassination.net/home.htm)
* [An Introduction to the JFK Assassination](http://22november1963.org.uk/)
* [The John F. Kennedy Assassination Homepage](https://www.jfk-assassination.eu/)
* [JFK Assassination Records – Warren Commission Report](https://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/warren-commission-report)
* [Mary Ferrell Foundation – THE JFK Assassination](https://www.maryferrell.org/pages/JFK_Assassination.html)
* [The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza](https://www.jfk.org/)
* [25th JFK Assassination Secrets Scheduled for 2017 Release](https://time.com/4606082/jfk-assassination-secrets/)
* [JFK: The Smoking Gun by Colin McLaren (1:38)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaFAZDeTexk).

# Assessment task

**Note**: when using this task, ensure it is placed on the school template and follows all assessment requirements.

This task has a peer marking component. The focus is on whether the theory proposed by the student is convincing, and well supported by the evidence. Each student should mark a selection of other presentations using the table. Then write a brief response justifying their peer mark for one presentation. This forms part of the mark for the student who wrote the response.

The marking criteria uses the [Common grade scale for preliminary courses](https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/Understanding-the-curriculum/awarding-grades/monitoring-grades/common-grade-scale) as its basis.

## Outcomes

* **MH11-2** proposes ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments
* **MH11-6** analyses and interprets different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument
* **MH11-7** discusses and evaluates differing interpretations and representations of the past
* **MH11-9** communicates historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in appropriate and well-structured forms

## Syllabus content

* The process of historical investigation involves
* planning and conducting historical investigations using historical concepts
* formulating historical questions and hypotheses relevant to the investigation
* locating and interrogating a range of sources
* identifying different perspectives evident in sources
* analysing sources for their usefulness and reliability for the question(s) asked
* developing and/or examining historical interpretations
* using sources to develop a view about an historical issue
* selecting and organising relevant information
* synthesising evidence from a range of sources to develop and support a reasoned historical account or argument
* using historical terms and concepts appropriately
* presenting and communicating the findings of an historical investigation using appropriate and well-structured oral, written and/or multimedia forms, including ICT.

## Task

There are 3 components to this assessment task.

### Part 1

Submit and present a [PowerPoint](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/116?clearCache=3ac583fa-7ea7-8953-7ce6-7f4497d2c6a3) presentation addressing the historical investigation into who killed JFK and why.

The 5 to 7-minute presentation must:

* use at least 4 primary sources
* answer the following questions
* Who do you think actually shot JFK?
* What do you believe was the motive for his murder?
* Do you think there was a conspiracy? If so, who do you think was involved?
* What was the role (if any) of Lee Harvey Oswald?
* Why did Jack Ruby kill Oswald?
* include a bibliography.

### Part 2

Each student uses the table below to mark a selection of other students’ presentations. Based on one presentation write 50 to 100 words in response to:

* What was it about the presentation that made it persuasive?
* Explain how the sources in the presentation supported the argument being made.

Table 3 – evaluating sources

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student name | How persuasive was the argument about who killed JFK and why? | How well did the sources support the argument? |
|  | 1 – not at all persuasive  2 – limited persuasive elements  3 – somewhat persuasive  4 – very persuasive  5 – extremely persuasive | 1 – sources did not support the argument  2 – limited support from sources  3 – some of the sources supported the argument  4 – all sources added to the argument to some extent  5 – the sources comprehensively supported the argument |
|  |  |  |

### Part 3

Submit 350 to 450 word written responses for the following questions:

* Why is the assassination of JFK still so relevant and capture the interest of historians and non-historians alike?
* What are the difficulties in finding and assessing historical sources regarding the assassination, and how can historians attempt to overcome them?

## Marking criteria

Table 4 – marking criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Criteria |
| A | * Demonstrates creative and critical thinking skills using perceptive analysis and evaluation to propose ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments * Applies highly developed skills and processes to analyse and interpret different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument * Demonstrates extensive knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts by discussing and evaluating differing interpretations and representations of the past * Effectively communicates complex ideas and information of historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in an appropriate and well-structured presentation |
| B | * Demonstrates creative and critical thinking skills using analysis and evaluation to propose ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments * Applies well-developed skills and processes to analyse and interpret different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument * Demonstrates thorough knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts by discussing and evaluating differing interpretations and representations of the past * Clearly communicates complex ideas and information of historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in an appropriate and well-structured presentation |
| C | * Demonstrates skills in selecting and integrating information to propose ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments * Applies skills and processes to explain and summarise different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument * Demonstrates sound knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts by discussing and examining differing interpretations and representations of the past * Communicates relevant ideas to show historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in an appropriate manner |
| D | * Demonstrates skills in selecting and using information to propose ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments * Applies skills and processes to describe and outline different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument * Demonstrates a basic knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts by explaining differing interpretations and representations of the past * Communicates historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in a descriptive manner |
| E | * Demonstrates elementary skills in recounting information to propose ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments * Applies some skills and processes with guidance to describe different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument * Demonstrates an elementary knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts by describing differing interpretations and representations of the past * Elementary skills in recounting information and communicating ideas about historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms |

# References

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