Historical inquiry continuum K-10

## Early Stage 1

1. Question – Students are provided with OR pose direct question/s about the past. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, who, when, find, compare and contrast, describe and retell.
2. Research – Students identify primary and/or secondary source/s, either provided by the teacher or collected with guidance.
3. Analyze – Students discuss how collated primary and/or secondary source/s will be used to answer the inquiry question/s.
4. Evaluate – Students discuss how collated primary and/or secondary source/s will be used to answer the inquiry question/s.

## Stage 1

1. Question – Students are provided with OR pose direct question/s to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, who, when, find, compare and contrast, describe and retell.
2. Research – Students identify primary and/or secondary source/s, either provided by the teacher or collected with guidance.
3. Analyze – Students, with teacher guidance, identify historical source/s that are relevant to the inquiry question/s. Students are guided to develop an historical opinion.
4. Evaluate – Students, with teacher guidance, discuss the reliability of the source/s to the inquiry question/s.
5. Communicate – Students present a historical narrative, using the language of time and primary and/or secondary source/s.

## Stage 2

1. Question – Students are provided with and pose a range of research question/s questions to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include; how, what, why, compare and contrast, describe, discuss, identify, and recount.
2. Research – Students identify and locate primary and/or secondary source/s, with teacher guidance.
3. Analyze – Students identify historical information, relating the source/s to the key content of the question/s. Teachers assist students to determine the usefulness of the source/s to the inquiry question/s. Students are assisted in determining which source/s to include or exclude, by the teacher, and begin to develop an historical opinion.
4. Evaluate – Students are guided to discuss the reliability of the source material, reflecting on ‘believability’.
5. Communicate – Students present a text, such as a narrative or description, using historical terms and concepts that incorporate relevant primary and secondary sources.

## Stage 3

1. Question – Students are provided with research question/s OR may identify and develop their own questions to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, compare and contrast, describe, discuss, identify, and recount.
2. Research – Students identify and locate a range of primary and secondary sources, using some sources recommended by the teacher.
3. Analyze – Students interpret historical information, relating sources to the key content of the question/s. Students determine the usefulness of the sources to the inquiry question/s, taking into account the sources’ origins, historical detail, purposes and points of view. Teachers provide guidance in how to determine which sources to include or exclude, beginning the development of an argument or opinion.
4. Evaluate – Students examine the reliability of the source material, reflecting on potential bias.
5. Communicate – Students present a text, particularly a narrative or description, incorporating relevant primary and secondary sources. Students use historical terms and concepts and identify and describe perspectives.

## Stage 4

1. Question – Students are provided with research question/s OR may identify and develop their own questions to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, account for, compare, contrast, describe, discuss, explain, identify, outline and recount.
2. Research – Students identify and locate a range of primary and secondary sources, using teacher guidance as required. Teacher will provide some recommended source material.
3. Analyze – Students synthesise the collated historical information and align the sources to the key content in the question/s. Students identify meaning and context to determine the usefulness of the sources to the inquiry, taking into account the sources’ origins, motivations, perspectives and interpretations, values and historical detail. Teachers need to provide guidance in how to determine which sources to include or exclude, as students construct an informed argument or opinion.
4. Evaluate – Students examine the reliability of the source material, considering authorship, to answer the question/s.
5. Communicate – Students present a text, organising and presenting their findings about the past, identifying and describing different perspectives relevant to the historical inquiry. Students use historical terms and concepts, identify evidence from sources and acknowledge the sources used.

## Stage 5

1. Question – Students identify and develop their own questions OR may be provided with research question/s to frame historical inquiry. Suitable instructional words may include: how, what, why, account for, compare, contrast, explain, discuss, analyse, evaluate and justify.
2. Research – Students identify and locate a range of primary and secondary sources, using teacher guidance as required. Teachers may provide some recommended source material.
3. Analyze – Students synthesise the collated historical information and align the sources to the key content in the question/s. Students analyse sources to identify the relevance of the historical content to the question/s. Students determine the usefulness of the sources to the inquiry, taking into account the sources’ origins, purposes, motivations, perspectives, values and historical detail. Teachers may need to provide guidance in how to determine which sources to include or exclude, as students construct an informed argument or opinion.
4. Evaluate – Students justify the reliability of the source material, considering authorship, to answer the question/s.
5. Communicate – Students present a text, organising and presenting findings about the past, incorporating their own justifications and interpretations relevant to the historical inquiry. Students use historical terms and concepts, identify evidence from sources and acknowledge the sources used.

## Unpacking analyse

This step seems simple to teachers but is often a challenge for students. Source analysis in Step 3 requires students to ask these questions of a source:

* What is the ‘core content’ that needs to be addressed to respond to the inquiry question/s?
* Does the source’s content relate substantially to the ‘core content’ of the question/s?
* Is this source USEFUL to the historical inquiry?
* A source may be determined as useful because it:
	+ provides an interesting perspective on the past
	+ shows us the values and motivations of people in a particular era
	+ contains historical detail such as dates
	+ helps us to empathise with people’s experiences in the past OR
	+ due to the quantity of relevant, historical information.
* Does the source confirm historical arguments or opinions that you previously held? Does the source challenge you to reformulate your arguments or opinions?

**It is at this step that students begin to use source material to develop an informed argument or opinion that addresses the historical inquiry question/s.**

## ****Unpacking evaluate****

In this step students determine the reliability of each of the sources to be used in answering the question/s. For each source students need to ask, ‘Is this source to be believed?’

Students must take into account the origin, values, purpose and context of the source in order to answer the question/s.

Primary sources and secondary sources can both be considered reliable sources of information. A primary source may be reliable because it is produced by a credible witness to an historical event. A secondary source may be reliable because it is produced by an expert historian, or a trustworthy organisation, who has used quality primary materials to produce the source.

However, sources used will often have issues of reliability, such as bias within accounts of a witness or author. Such sources can still be utilised as long as students include reflections on the sources’ bias, noting the way in which bias places limitations on the use of the sources as evidence.