

What are sources?

A source is a contemporary document. Sources can include a range of documents, such as letters, sketches, photographs, newspapers, government reports and surveys. A collection of sources form evidence.

What does the research say?

- Correct any misconceptions about bias; a biased source will be useful
- Use relics as well as records
- Shape an entire enquiry around sources that do not speak directly, and teach pupils to question those sources
- Give pupils the opportunity to collect relevant sources to answer a single question.
- Model the interrogation of sources
- Contextual knowledge is essential for this interrogation
- Dive into a single long source
- Show pupils how historians use sources
- Teach pupils to reason with a source rather than describe

(What's the wisdom on sources and evidence, TH176)

Further Reading

TH149, TH113, TH171, TH152, TH155, TH143, TH152

Using sources and evidence



Use objects and artefacts and model the way that historians ask questions of them. Contextual knowledge will be essential for doing this.



Model by diving deep into a long source. Exhaust every detail. Teach key vocab such as certain, probably, possible, impossible



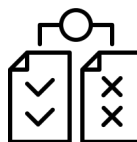
Create an entire enquiry around objects and artefacts. Teach pupils to question these sources.
EQ: How might X end up in Y? How might a skeleton end up in a car park?



Create a collection of sources and craft a journey. As you add new sources to the evidence, ensure that they take your pupils on a journey to something. Not necessarily the answer!

Do's and Don'ts

To really maximise your use of worked examples, follow this guidance on do's and don'ts



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• deliberately delay the use of the word 'bias'• Focus on what can be learned from a source• Focus on a limited number of sources, and consider a range• Contextual knowledge is essential | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid questions about intention• Avoid using acronyms• Allow students to stop when they have described the source• Minimise influence of exam mark schemes |
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In the History Classroom

You can use sources in the classroom to:

- Consider the individual experiences of a wider event
- Consider the impact of a key event
- Introduce a range of consequences of a historic event
- Assess students understanding of the historical context when carrying out a specific enquiry
- Apply students understanding of a historical concept to a new event