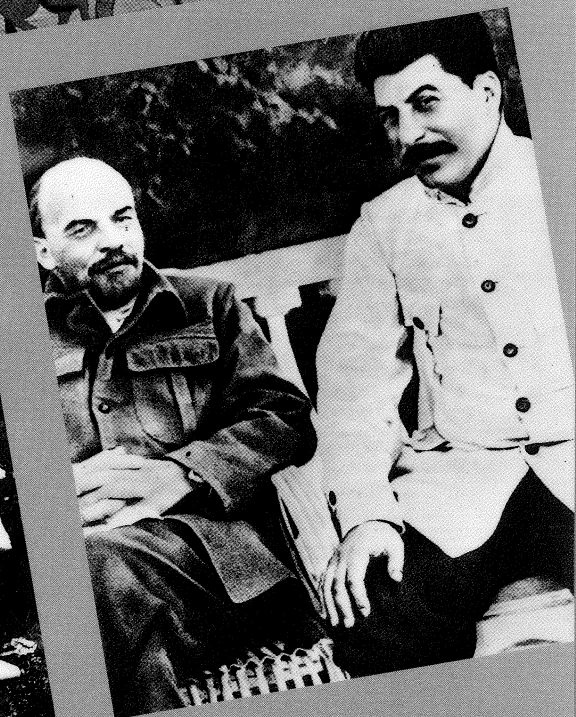


WHAT IS

Evidence?



Chris Hinton

JNK

WHAT IS EVIDENCE?

Chris Hinton

Head of History, Beacon School, Crowborough

JOHN MURRAY

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The Teachers' Book contains detailed notes and answers on each exercise and photocopiable worksheets for use at points specified in the pupils' text. These also form a valuable homework resource.

UNIT 1 SOURCES AND EVIDENCE

1.1 WHERE DOES EVIDENCE COME FROM?

Historians use historical *evidence* to construct a picture of the past. They find the evidence they need to do this in *sources*. A source is anything which survives from the past or tells us about the past. Below are some examples of different kinds of sources.

- List Sources A-G on a chart like the one shown, and say what *kind* of source each one is by putting a tick in the correct column. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.
- Add to the chart other examples of each kind of source e.g. you might write 'photographs' and tick 'picture'.

SOURCE	SPOKEN (ORAL)	PICTURE (VISUAL)	OBJECT (ARTEFACT)	WRITTEN
D (the map)		✓		

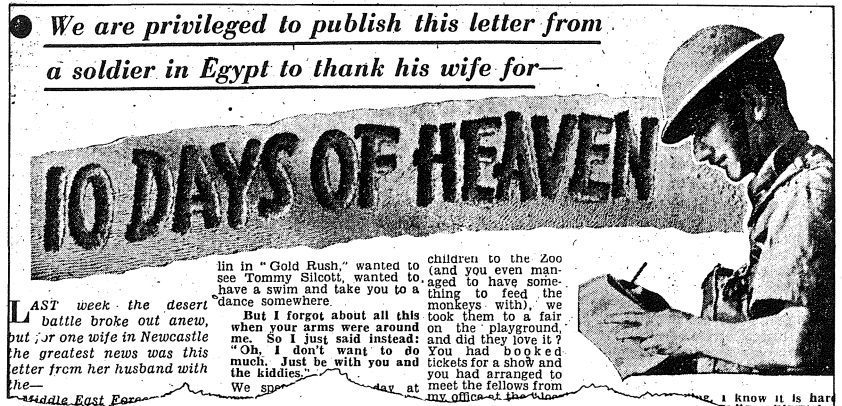


▲ SOURCE A Cartoon by David Low in the *Daily Express*

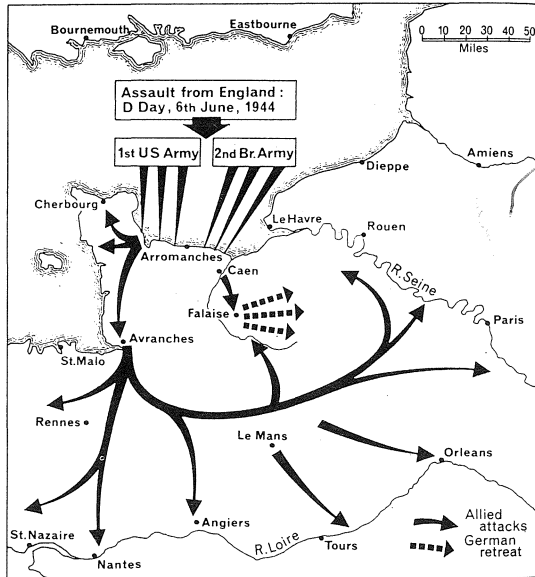


NAZIS INVADE HOLLAND, BELGIUM, LUXEMBURG: MANY AIRPORTS BOMBED
 Allies Answer Call for Aid:
 R.A.F. Planes are in Action

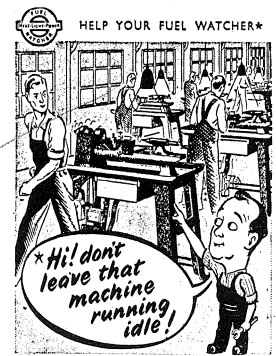
▲ SOURCE B *Evening Standard*, 10 May 1940



▲ SOURCE C Letter in the *Sunday Pictorial*, 6 September 1942



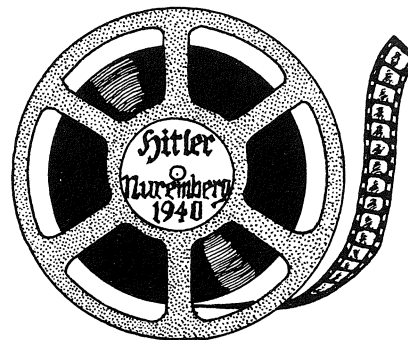
▲ SOURCE D Normandy Landings in *World War II* by C. C. Bayne-Jardine, 1986



SAVE FUEL AT WORK
 ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FUEL & POWER
 ▲ SOURCE F *Daily Mail*, 3 August 1944



▲ SOURCE G Gas mask



▲ SOURCE E Film of Hitler speaking at Nuremberg in 1940

1.2 WHAT DO SOURCES TELL US?

A source is not the same thing as evidence. A source becomes evidence if it is used to answer a question about the past.

For example: look at Source G — a World War II gas mask. This will be useful evidence for the question 'What were people in Britain afraid of during the war?' It shows among other things that people feared a gas attack.

Key things to ask about a source are:

- What do I want to know about the past?
- How can this source help to answer my questions about the past?

- 1 You are trying to find out how people in Britain during World War II were expected to help with the war effort. Which two sources on page 4 could you use as evidence on this topic?
- 2 What do the two sources tell you about how:
 - (a) workers *and*
 - (b) wives could help the war effort?
- 3 Do any of the sources provide evidence on either:
 - (a) who was winning the war, *or*
 - (b) methods used by the Government to keep the war effort going?

Explain your answers.

1.3 CAN WE ALWAYS FIND SOURCES ABOUT THE PAST?

Most of the time historians can find some sources to help them learn about the past.

But there are usually more sources about the recent past (e.g. World War II) than about the distant past (e.g. the Vikings).

And there are more sources about some places than others (e.g. there are more sources about Ancient Egypt than there are about Ancient Britain).

- 1 Why are there usually more historical sources about events that happened 100 years ago than about those that happened 1000 years ago? Give several reasons.
- 2 Why might this not always be true?

Survival of sources

Sources can be kept (or preserved) for historians to use because someone *wanted to keep them*.

- People keep notes or records of everything said in Parliament. Why is this?

Sources can be preserved by *chance*.

- All but one tomb of the Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs were robbed. Robbers of Tutankhamen's tomb were caught at it and fled. Without this good luck, historians would have fewer sources about Ancient Egypt.

- 3 On the right is a list of historical sources which have survived. Were they preserved on purpose or by chance? Explain your answers. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.
- 4 What types of sources do you think might be deliberately destroyed?

Sometimes sources are lost because people *want to destroy them*.

- There is no order for the execution of the princes in the Tower. We don't know if such an order ever existed, but if so it was destroyed. Why might someone do this?

Sources can be lost or destroyed by *chance*.

- The Great Fire of London burned many sources that might have survived.

Even sources which survive can be kept from the public eye because it hasn't suited some people.

- How often have you seen a black cowboy? Look at Source H.

Sources which have survived

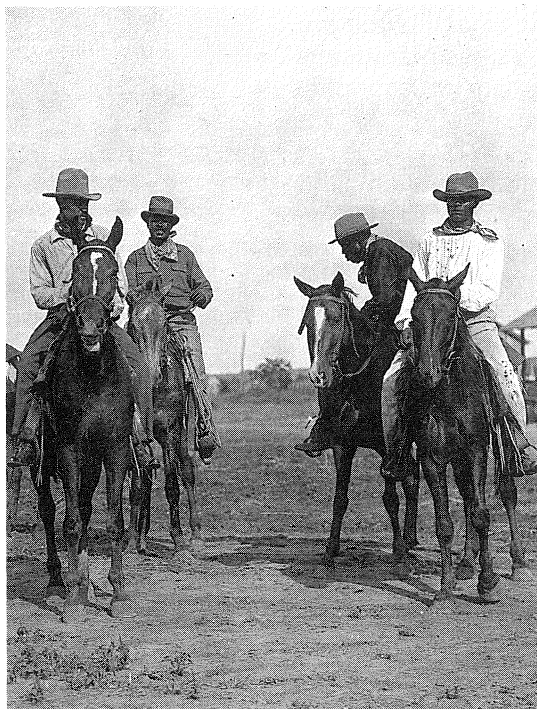
The *Mary Rose*

Records of debates in Parliament

Tower of London

The *Magna Carta*

Body of Tollund Man



◀ SOURCE H
Cowboys attending a fair in Texas, around 1910

UNIT 2

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

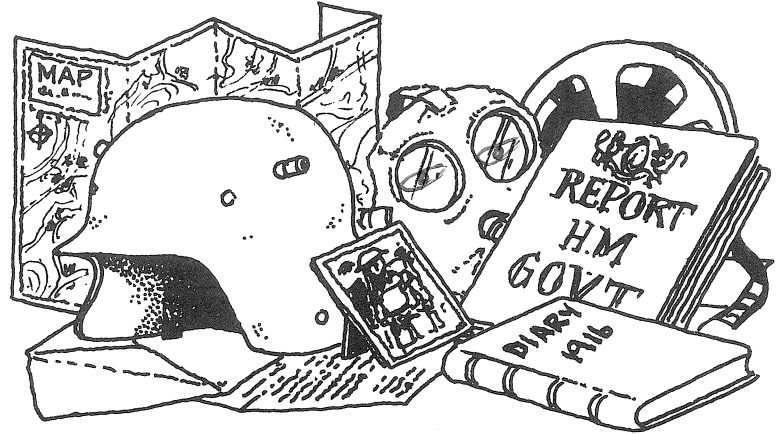
2.1 WHAT ARE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES?

A *primary* source is something which comes from the time the historian is studying. A *secondary* source is produced after the time the historian is studying.

Primary sources are the *raw material* of history. They may be leftovers or *relics* from the past (e.g. a spearhead or a building) or be *records* of what went on, written or drawn by people at the time (e.g. the diary of Samuel Pepys).

Historians use primary sources to find the evidence to answer their questions about the past.

Secondary sources are *products* of the study of history, the things historians make from the raw material. They are always based on other sources.



▲ Sources for World War I

Making decisions about primary and secondary sources

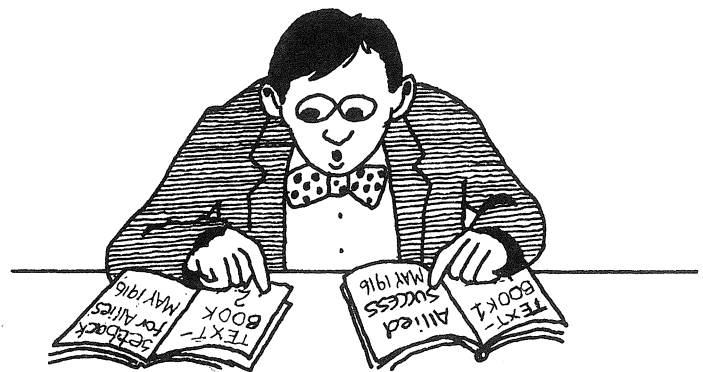
- 1 Are the sources for 19th-century British history on page 7 primary or secondary?

You may have found question 1 quite straightforward, but it is not always easy to decide whether a source is primary or secondary until you know *what* it is you are trying to find out *about*. A given source is not necessarily either primary or secondary in all circumstances. Take Source C, for example. If you wanted to know about the Poor Law in 19th-century Britain, the pamphlet would be a secondary source. However, if an historian of the future wanted to find out how pupils were taught in the schools of the 1980s, the pamphlet would then be a primary source.



- 2 You are about to write two books, one on the New Poor Law in 1834 and the other on emigration from Britain in the early 19th century.

Look at each of the Sources A–G and decide how they can help you in your tasks. For example, Source A would be a primary source for your book on the New Poor Law. Copy the chart on page 7 and write the letters of the rest of the sources in the correct columns. If a source is not helpful for either task, put it in the third column. Comment on any source you are unsure about. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.



▲ A good historian must assess both primary and secondary sources

▼ **SOURCE A** Salehurst Poor Law rates, an extract from the Commission on the Poor Laws, 1832-3

"The rate of Salehurst, now 10s. 5d. in the pound, were once 19s. This reduction has been effected by emigration, of which a gentleman of property has been so kind as to furnish me with the following account:"

"The parish of Salehurst has, since these emigrations been in a comparatively flourishing state to other parishes, where nothing of the sort has taken place."

▼ **SOURCE E** Letter from John Luff, a Sussex emigrant in Canada, 1832

From John Luff, late of Bury, Sussex, aged 15 years. Nelson, July 29th. 1832.

DEAR SIR,

This letter is to inform you of your humble servant, John Luff: we arrived at York on the 23rd. day of June. I might have got three places at Montreal but as I was waiting for Mr. . . . I did not go, so I came to York, and from York about 30 miles up the country; and I went to work on the road, and Mr. . . . did not come for me; so I am living with Jacob Triller, and I am living in the Township of Nelson, District of Gore, County of Halton, the Province of Upper Canada; and I like Canada far better than England.

This lad has neither father nor mother living, and made repeated applications to the Overseer of Bury to pay the expence of his conveyance to Canada.—His request was at length complied with, and the above is addressed to the said Overseer.

▼ **SOURCE B** List of inmates (residents) of Uckfield Workhouse, East Sussex, 1851

Henry WOOD	Porter	U	38	Porter	Mickleham, Surrey
William LAWSON	Nurse	U	41	Nurse	Woolwich, Kent
Abigail BRISENDEU	Inmate	U	46	Pauper	Rotherfield
William CRUTTAL	Inmate	U	10	Pauper, Scholar	Rotherfield
Charity HOLMWOOD	Mother	W	36	Pauper Inmate	Uckfield
Edward HOLMWOOD	Son	U	16	Pauper	London
Eliza HOLMWOOD	G-dau	—	10	Pauper, Scholar	London
Richard BERWICK	Inmate	U	26	Pauper	Rotherfield
Sarah MEPHAM	Inmate	—	7	Pauper, Scholar	Uckfield



▲ **SOURCE F**
Map of the railway system in 1851, drawn in 1987

◀ **SOURCE G**
Years of Change by John Patrick and Mollie Packham. 1989

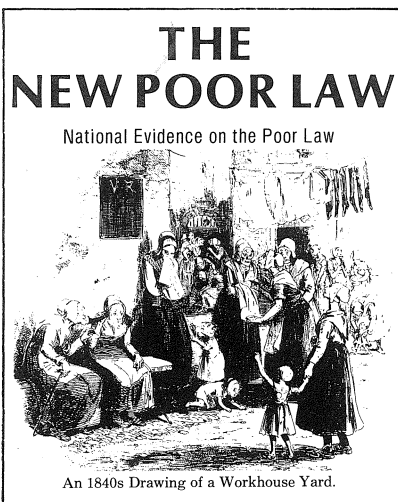
CHECKLIST

Questions to ask about a primary source:

- Is it *authentic*, i.e. is it what it seems to be? (see page 16)
- Is it a *relic* or a *record*? (see Section 2.1)
- If a record, *who* wrote or drew it?
- If a record, how *reliable* is it? (see pages 38-47)
- Is the evidence it gives *typical*? (see page 17)

Questions to ask about a secondary source:

- What sources have been used to produce it? (see pages 6 and 8)
- Are the sources on which the secondary source is based *authentic* and *reliable*? (see pages 16, 38-47)
- Are the historian's sources *typical* i.e. what sources have *not* been used? (see page 17)
- Is the historian *biased* in any way? (see pages 22-27)



▲ **SOURCE C** 'Poor Law' pamphlet from Beacon School, Crowborough, written in 1886



◀ **SOURCE D** A cartoon commenting on emigration, *Punch* magazine, 15 July 1848

New Poor Law		Emigration		Not helpful
Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	
A				

2.2 HOW ARE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES USED TO WRITE HISTORY?

It can sometimes be quite straightforward to decide whether a source is primary or secondary. In itself this distinction between primary and secondary is not very important. What really matters is the use to which the knowledge is put. For example, we have already seen how primary and secondary sources are evaluated (checked) in different ways (page 7). The ability to recognise primary and secondary sources is also important when considering how historians research the past.

The job of the historian is to convert the raw material of history (the primary source) into the finished historical product (the secondary source).

This does not mean that all history books are based only on primary sources. Historians tend to read secondary sources first, to give them ideas on what to look for in studying primary sources.

They will want to include as much evidence drawn from primary sources as they can. However, evidence from secondary sources may also be included, and some primary sources may be left out because they do not offer any new insights.

Let us see how this might work with some primary and secondary sources on the 19th-century cholera epidemics. You must first choose which sources to use.

SOURCE A The cause of the Soho cholera epidemic of 1854

Cesspools and imperfect surface-drains polluted the air, and surely poisoned those who were exposed to the necessity of breathing it.

Illustrated London News, 1859



FATHER THAMES INTRODUCING HIS OFFSPRING TO THE FAIR CITY OF LONDON.
(A Design for a Fresco in the New Houses of Parliament.)

▲ **SOURCE B** A cartoon from *Punch*, 1858

- 1 Copy out the chart on the right. Identify each source and place it in the correct section by filling its letter in the right box. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.
- 2 Choose *one source* from each section and explain how you decided to put it there.
- 3 According to Sources A-J, what were thought to be the causes of the cholera epidemics in the early 19th century, and how did the cholera contribute to the development of public health?
- 4 Is your own answer to Question 3 a primary or secondary source? Explain why. For an historian studying the cases of cholera in the early 19th century, would your answer to Question 3 be a primary or a secondary source? Explain your answer.
- 5 What do you think someone reading your answer to Question 3 would need to know in order to decide whether your answer was reliable or not?

Useful primary sources	
Useful secondary sources	
Source which is not easy to classify as primary or secondary	
Source having little or no use for this task	

SOURCE C

Although doctors were aware of germs, they believed them to be the result of disease. It was not until the later years of the nineteenth century that doctors generally accepted germs to be the cause of disease. So the conditions in which disease thrives were not improved. It was thought that disease travels in bad air, a 'poisonous miasma' as it was called.

Cholera and Public Health, Neil Tonge and Michael Quincey, 1985

SOURCE D

Neglect, ignorance and Laissez-faire prepare the way for a fresh pestilence [cholera]. Most deeply is it to be regretted that at such a time as the present, men should be found to lend the weight of an official position to obstruct endeavours to obtain improvement in the neglected portions of this two-sided metropolis.

Illustrated London News, 1853

SOURCE E A remedy for cholera

All means to restore the warmth of the body should be tried without delay . . . poultices of mustard to the stomach . . . in very severe cases 20 to 40 drops of laudanum to be given . . .

Sunderland Herald, October 1831

SOURCE F

We whose names are undersigned are of the opinion that the streets in which malignant cholera prevailed most severely were those in which the drainage was most imperfect; and that the general health of the inhabitants would be greatly improved and the probability of a future visitation from such malignant epidemics diminished by a general efficient system of drainage, sewerage and paving and the enforcement of better regulations as to the cleaning of the streets.

Resolution passed by the 'medical men' of Leeds in 1833, after reading Robert Baker's report on the health of the city

SOURCE G

Cholera was no respecter of Social Class . . . The thousands did not die in vain.

BBC film *The Cholera is Coming*, 1982

SOURCE H

The deaths either very much diminished, or ceased all together, at every point where it becomes decidedly nearer to send to another [water] pump than to the one in Broad Street. In almost every house which had used the water the disease had appeared while not one of seventy men in the local brewery, who drank beer at work caught it.

On the Mode of Communication of Cholera, John Snow, 1855, on the cholera outbreak in London in 1854

SOURCE I

We do not shrink from saying that the responsibility for this loss of life rests mainly upon those who have the greatest power to remove it — the corporation . . . they can get powers which will enable them to prohibit back to back houses and cellar dwellings; to insist that all houses shall be connected with the new drainage. They could appoint a medical officer, whose business would be to ascertain . . . the special causes of sickness . . .

Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, 1842

SOURCE J

In 1847 Lord Morpeth introduced a public health bill into parliament. However, its opponents argued against it so well that the bill was set aside. Lord Morpeth tried again with a second bill in February 1848 and this time he was better prepared. The most powerful argument on his side, though, was the menace of cholera moving across Europe once again.

Cholera and Public Health, Neil Tonge and Michael Quincey, 1985

CHECKLIST

Write out the following sentences and decide if you agree or disagree with them.

- Primary sources are always more useful than secondary sources.
Agree/Disagree.
- How useful a source is depends on what you want to use it for.
Agree/Disagree.
- Where both primary and secondary sources give useful evidence, the primary is more valuable.
Agree/Disagree.

Explain your answers, referring to specific sources.

2.3 ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

The preserved crucible steel furnace at Abbeydale, near Sheffield

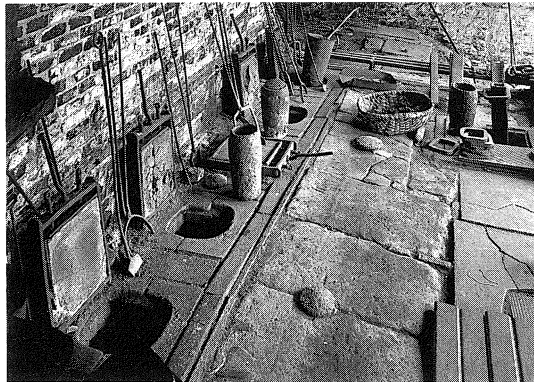
Abbeydale was one of the first furnaces to use the Huntsman method of making steel. The crucible steel melting shop (Source A) was built in 1829.

The building has never been used for anything else nor has it been rebuilt. There has been some restoration, e.g. the chimney stack was partially reconstructed in 1876 and the cement between the bricks has been repointed. All the construction methods of the building are original.

Source B shows part of the inside of the furnace known as the melting floor.



◀ SOURCE A

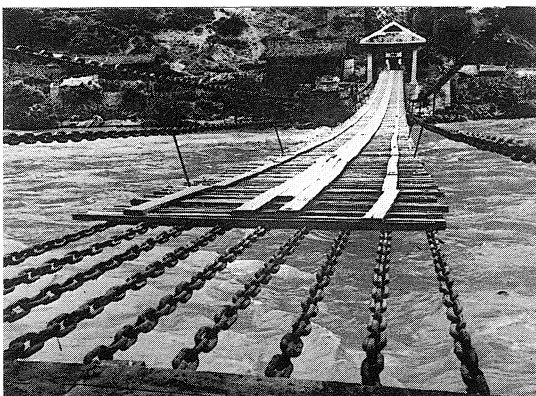


◀ SOURCE B

- 1 Is the preserved steel furnace at Abbeydale (Sources A and B) a primary or secondary source about early 19th-century steel production? Explain your answer.

The Communist Long March in China, 1934

In October 1934 the Communists in China led by Mao Tse-tung set off on a march to a safer part of China to escape from their enemies the Kuomintang (KMT). This proved to be one of the toughest marches in history. Mao's army crossed thousands of miles of the roughest country. When they weren't fighting their pursuers, they were faced by biting cold, landslides or flooded rivers. Agnes Smedley, an American living in Shanghai (China) talked to one of the marchers in 1936. Here she describes what happened when the Communists faced the almost impossible task of crossing the Luting Bridge. She was writing in 1956.



▲ SOURCE C The Luting Bridge

SOURCE D

Platoon Commander Ma Ta-chin stepped out, grasped one of the chains and began swinging, hand over hand towards the north bank. The platoon political director followed and after him, the men. As they swung along, Red Army machine guns laid down a protecting screen of fire and the engineering corps began bringing up tree trunks and laying the bridge flooring. . . Ma Ta-chin was the first to be shot into the wild torrent below. Then another man and another. The others pushed along but just before they reached the flooring at the north bridgehead they saw enemy soldiers dumping cans of kerosene on the planks and setting them on fire. Watching the sheet of flame spread, some men hesitated, but the platoon political leader at last sprang down on the flooring calling to the others to follow. . . The bridge became a mass of running men with rifles ready, tramping out the flames as they ran.

Agnes Smedley, *The Great Road*, 1956

- 2 Is Source D a primary or a secondary source about the Long March? Explain your answer.

The 'Suffragette Derby', 1913

In 1913 Emily Wilding Davison, a militant suffragette (woman fighting to get the vote) was killed when she was struck by the King's horse, Anmer, during the Derby. There has been much controversy about exactly what she was trying to do and historians are still considering new evidence.

► **SOURCE E** Catherine Ireland with the ticket which belonged to Emily Davison and other memorabilia, June 1988



SOURCE F

Return train ticket sheds new light on Derby Day suffragette 'suicide'

A return ticket to Epsom, discovered in a trunk full of suffragette memorabilia has led to a revision of one of the most striking stories of the women's campaign for votes.

The scrap of card and other possessions of Emily Wilding Davison, killed by the King's horse at the 1913 Derby, provide overwhelming evidence that her death was not suicide.

Two new biographies have drawn on an archive of Emily's papers and possessions, which came to light in 1986 after years stored in an attic.

Among purple, green and white flags and dried madonna lilies from Emily's funeral procession were details of her plans for Derby Day and the following week.

Dr Liz Stanley, senior sociology lecturer at Manchester University, said: 'They provide incontrovertible evidence that she did not intend to commit suicide, but was carrying out a protest.'

'She intended to rein in the King's horse, Anmer, and pin two suffragette flags to its bridle, to draw attention to the treatment of Mrs Pankhurst under the Cat and Mouse Act.'

Dr Stanley and her co-author, Ms Ann Morley, whose biography will be published by The Women's Press on June 2, have also drawn on newsreel film, which shows Emily trying to seize Anmer's bridle but being dragged down.

Their views are backed by a retired journalist, Mr John Sleight, whose biography was published yesterday by Bridge Studios in Morpeth, Northumbria, where Emily's grave is to be restored this year to mark the 75th anniversary of her death.

The Davison archive was presented to the Fawcett Society library at the City of London Polytechnic by Ms Ruth Lamartine-Yates, whose barrister, Thomas, represented Emily's family after her death.

The ticket, Emily's marked Derby Day betting card and other items will go on public display if the society can find funding for an archivist and gallery space.

Martin Wainwright in *The Guardian*, June 1988

3 For an historian studying the 'Suffragette Derby', 1913, are Source E (the photograph) and Source F (the written account) primary or secondary sources? It is a good idea to read the article before making your decision.

Use these sources to answer the following questions.

4 Is anything in Source E primary evidence? Explain your answer.

5 Are any of the statements in Source F based on primary evidence? Give an example.

6 'Good secondary sources are based on primary sources.' Can you find any examples in these sources to support that view?

7 Look again at Sources E and F. Are you still happy with your choice of primary or secondary source?

UNIT 3

WORKING WITH SOURCES

3.1 HOW DO WE GET EVIDENCE FROM A SOURCE?

Factual evidence

Sometimes the evidence in a source is straightforward and obvious. Anyone who was trying to find out about the Leeds water supply in the 1830s could find some clear *factual evidence* in the following source.

SOURCE A

Only 2200 houses inhabited by 12,000 persons receive water from the water-works; and a population of upwards of 60,000 in the township alone have no water supply except from wells and rain-water.

Commercial directory of Leeds, 1834

Making inferences

Sometimes the evidence is more complicated and needs squeezing out. This is often called *making inferences* (going beyond the obvious facts).

- 1 What evidence about the Wealden Iron Industry could be squeezed out of Sources B and C to support the following statements?
 - (a) The movement of iron caused the roads to be rutted.
 - (b) People were unhappy about what the movement of cannon was doing to the roads.
 - (c) At least one ironmaster felt guilty about the effects of his business on the local area.
 - (d) The iron industry existed in the Weald for at least one and a half centuries.

SOURCE B

Threescore pounds (£60) to the amending of the wayes leading from Godstone to Lewes.

From the will of Richard Leeche, an ironmaster in the Weald, 1596

SOURCE C

I have gotten 20 9-pounders (cannon) of 9ft to Lewes. These 20 have torn the roads so that nothing can follow them, and the country curse us heartily.

John Fuller, a Wealden ironmaster, 1743

Evidence about the writer of a source

On some occasions, rather than concentrating on the topic being described, it is possible to use inference to establish the *attitude* of a writer to something. Knowing the attitude of the writer will help you assess how trustworthy the source is.

Read the extract below from the Belfast newspaper, *Andersonstown News*.

▼ SOURCE D

ANDERSONSTOWN NEWS

Vol. 9. No. 181. SATURDAY, 27th February, 1982. Price: 15p.

Harrassment of residents in Short Strand and the Markets has been ongoing over the last few weeks.

On Friday night, 19th February, Paula and Bernie Rooney, the sisters of two H-Block prisoners, were on their way home when the backdoors of a passing RUC [police] jeep were flung open and a number of shots fired at them. In their panic the girls did not realise that the shots fired were blanks. The RUC men drove off laughing.

Andersonstown News, 27 February 1982

- 2 In your own words briefly write what this article says happened to Paula and Bernie Rooney on 19 February.
- 3 Try to infer (by going beyond the obvious facts) what *attitude* the writer of Source D has to the police. What evidence in the source supports your view?
- 4 What else would you like to know before accepting the evidence in this article?

3.2 WHAT DIFFICULTIES DO WE FACE IN LOOKING AT SOURCES?

Not all sources are what they seem to be

Historians have to be careful that they are not tricked or misled by sources. Look at Sources A and B (Gary Sprake was the Leeds United goalkeeper during the 1970s.)



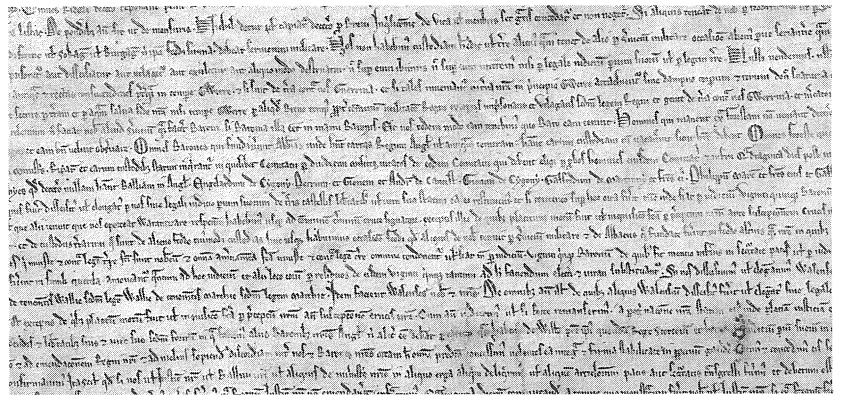
'Keeper Gary Sprake leaps for joy after failing to prevent Chelsea's first equalising goal.



SPRAKE demonstrates his anger after failing to prevent Chelsea's first equalising goal.

Not all sources are easy to understand

Some sources have unfamiliar words.



Can sources always be trusted?

▲ SOURCE D
A section from the Magna Carta, 1215

You are an historian reading the following sources about the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.

SOURCE E

The peasants of Kent came to Blackheath, to the number of 50,000, and they displayed two banners of St George and sixty small flags. And the peasants of Essex, to the number of 60,000, arrived on the other side of the River Thames to help them.

Anonimal Chronicle (probably written by an eyewitness of the events in London), late 14th century

SOURCE F

Crowds of them assembled and began to demand liberty, planning to become the equals of their lords; both old and young were to assemble with what weapons they could find. In a short time so large a body was forced to assemble that it could be reckoned at 5000 of the poorest peasants

Chronicon Angliae (a chronicle) by Thomas Walsingham, late 14th century

- 4 In what way are these two accounts different?
- 5 Suggest reasons why they might be different.
- 6 Is there any way in which they could both be right?
- 7 What else would you like to know about

- (a) the Peasants' Revolt
- (b) the writers of these sources

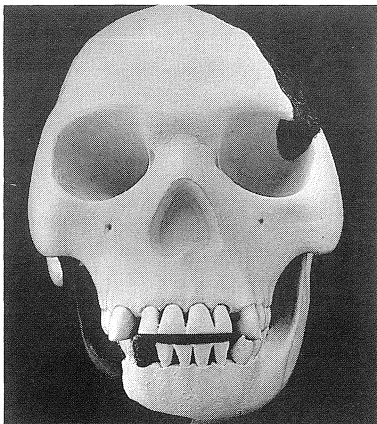
to be able to check this evidence?

▲ SOURCE A

▲ SOURCE B

- 1 What problem would you face if you used these two newspaper sources to find out about Sprake's performance in a match against Chelsea?
- 2 Would you have preferred to have found only one of these two sources? Explain your answer.
- 3 How might the contradiction (disagreement) between the two newspapers' captions have come about?

For 40 years this skull was thought to be evidence of Pleistocene man at Piltdown in Sussex. In 1949, a fluorine test proved it to be the skull of an orang-utan.



▶ SOURCE C

3.3 HOW DO WE MAKE SENSE OF WRITTEN SOURCES?

We have seen that although some sources seem easy to understand, it is more difficult to make sense of others.

SOURCE A

Companies do ride in great routs in divers parts of England . . . beat and maim and slay the people for to have their wives and their goods . . . sometimes come before the justices in their sessions in such guise with great force whereby the justices be afraid and not hardy to do the law.

Complaint of Parliament, 1376

- 1 List three strange words or phrases.
- 2 Rewrite the passage putting modern words and phrases in place of the strange ones.
- 3 Briefly say what the passage means.
- 4 Now look at Source B and try to work out the meaning of three strange words.
- 5 What does the phrase ' . . . thou layest up for thy sonne and heir . . . ' mean?

SOURCE B

Now compare them [the Germans] with thee; and thou shalt see howe happy thou arte. They eat hearbes; and thou beefe and mutton. Thei rotes; and thou butter, chese and egges. Thei drinck commonly water; and thou good ale and beare. They light-lye never see anye sea fish: and thou has thye belly full of it. They paye till their bones rattle in their skin: and thou layest up for thye sonne and heir. Thou livest like a Lorde, and they like dogges.

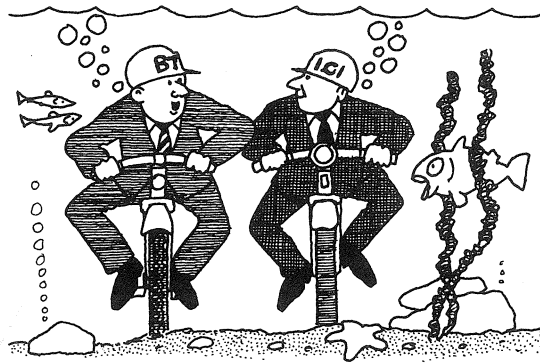
A. J. Aymer comparing the British and the Germans in the 16th century

Sometimes a source may seem easy to understand. However, historians must be careful because the meaning of words may have changed over time.

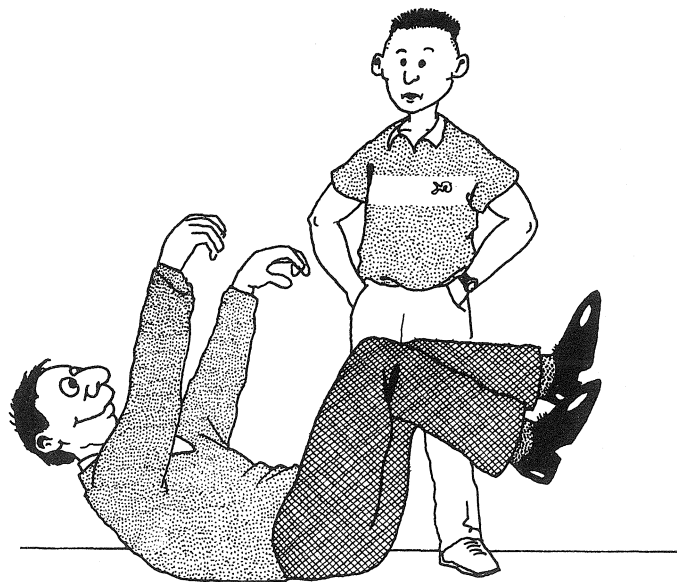
In sources about the 19th-century Poor Law you often find that paupers ' . . . were sent abroad'.

Today 'abroad' means out of the country. In the 1840s, 'abroad' meant to the next village or even to another part of town.

So the historian must check that any important word meanings were not different in the past.

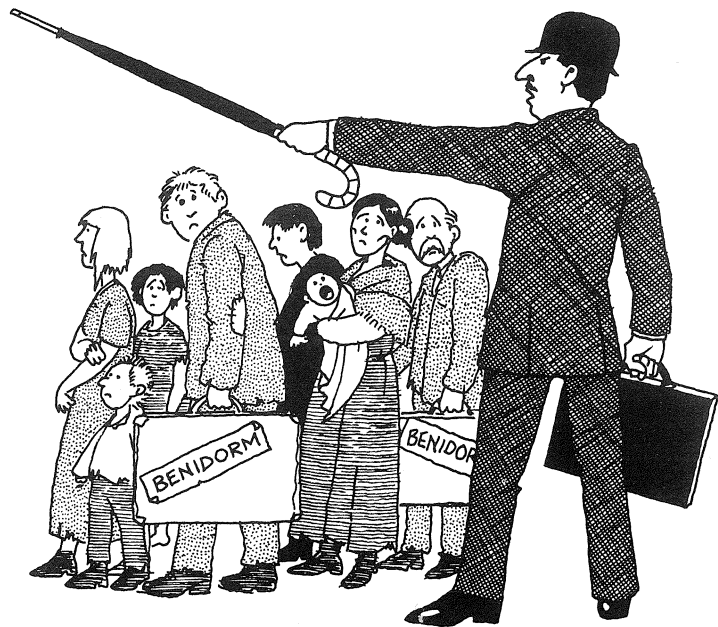


▲ Companies do ride in great routs in divers parts of England . . .



▲ . . . thou layest up for thye sonne and heir . . .

▼ Paupers . . . were sent abroad



Source C refers to an incident which occurred under the Old Poor Law which operated from Elizabethan times until 1834. One of the rules in that system of poor relief was that anybody requiring assistance had to return to the parish of their birth for help. The fewer the number of paupers born in a parish, the cheaper it was for the local ratepayers.

SOURCE C

He whose hands are here underneath, parishioners of Eltham in the County of Kent being met in the vestry the 23rd of January 1749 do hereby authorise and import Mr. George Papsett to prosecute the churchwardens and Overseers of the poor of the parish of Bexley in the said county and all other persons concerned in the permitting and suffering of one Mary Vaughan to go out of the workhouse of the said parish of Bexley after they or some of them had noticed of her dropping a female child in the parish of Eltham.

An extract from the vestry minutes of Eltham parish, 1749

- 6 According to today's meanings what did Mary Vaughan do with her baby?
- 7 This extract shows that Eltham wanted to prosecute Bexley Parish. When you have discovered the meaning of 'dropping', explain why.



▲ ... her dropping a female child ...

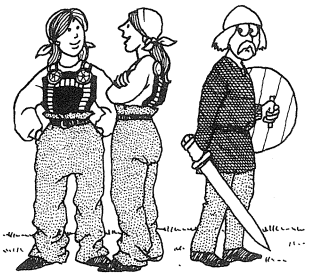
Some sources are difficult to understand because they refer to habits or customs which may have changed.

SOURCE D

Thord declared himself divorced from Ard because she wore trousers like a man.

From the *Laxdaela Saga*

- 8 What seems to be the cause of this Viking divorce?
- 9 Which partner is at fault? Explain your answer.
- 10 Read the information below and see if you need to change your answers to Questions 8 and 9.



▲ ... wore trousers like a man ...

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Among the Vikings, divorces were easy to arrange. Men could separate from their wives if they were bad housekeepers, childless or unfaithful. If a woman wanted a divorce and her husband refused to allow it, she could shame him into agreeing by parading around the district in trousers.

SOURCE E

It is well known that in all armies the women are at least as bad if not worse than the men as plunderers.

The Duke of Wellington during his battles against Napoleon's armies, *Letters of the Duke of Wellington to Mary, Marchioness of Salisbury, 1850-52, 1927*

SOURCE F

(The only way to control the women) is to have plenty of provosts [military police] to hang and flog them without mercy.

George Napier, one of Wellington's friends, *Passages in the Early Life of General Sir George Napier, 1884*

- 11 Are you surprised by anything in these two sources?
- 12 What questions would you like to ask to check the meaning of these two sources?
- 13 Read the background information below. Does it help you to understand these sources better? Explain your answer.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Armies in those days included more than just soldiers. The wives and children often travelled too. In Wellington's army they proved to be a real nuisance. Not only did they plunder houses, but also in one instance started to buy up bread before the official army purchasers could get hold of it!

CHECKLIST

You can often make better sense of historical sources if you recognise and understand:

- Specialist or archaic words. e.g. 'roust' and 'sonne'. (Sources A and B)
- That individual word meanings might have changed over time. e.g. 'were sent abroad,' and 'dropped'. (Source C)
- That the meanings and values of the period are different from those today. e.g. many women travelled with early 19th-century armies. (Sources E and F)
- The culture or unstated assumptions of the period in which the sources was produced. e.g. wearing trousers was the way a Viking woman showed she wanted a divorce. (Source D)

3.4 INTERPRETING PHOTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Historians must be very careful in using photographic sources.

Is it selective?

The Spanish Government was expecting huge demonstrations in Madrid on Mayday in 1936.

- 1 These photographs were all taken in the main street on Mayday, 1936. Does it seem that the Government was right to be worried?

Now look at the worksheet which your teacher will give you.



▲ SOURCE A

◀ SOURCE B

▼ SOURCE C



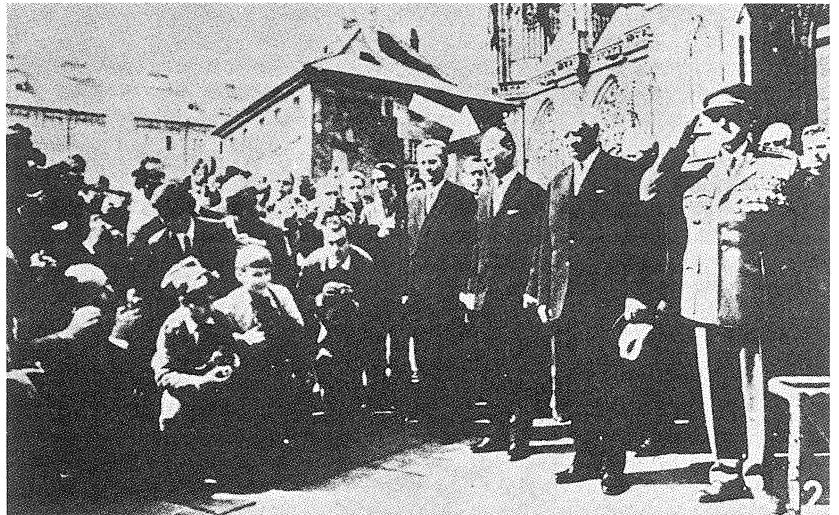
Is it authentic?

The historian's first task is to establish the *authenticity* of a source. In the case of a photograph, the historian has to decide whether it really is what it seems.

An historian needs as much background knowledge as possible to decide whether a source is authentic. Read the information on page 17 and answer the following questions.

- 5 Compare Sources D and E. What might make an historian worry about their authenticity?
- 6 Which photograph is a fake? Explain your answer.
- 7 Who might have planned the forgery?
- 8 For what purpose might they have wanted a fake photograph?
- 9 If they were not happy with the original photograph why was it not simply destroyed?

▼ Two photographs of Czechoslovak leaders



▲ SOURCE D

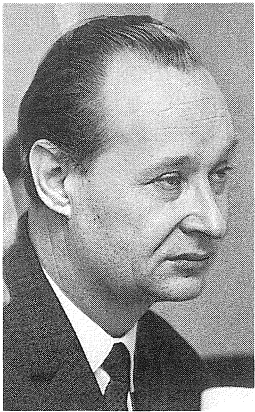
▼ SOURCE E



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Czechoslovakia was strictly ruled by the Communist party with little freedom of speech. The economy was in trouble, there was an acute housing shortage, and a chaotic transport system. Popular discontent grew.

During 1967 there were demonstrations which were harshly put down by the police. A crisis followed in the Communist party leadership which in January 1968 led to the replacement of the old hardliners by the progressives under Alexander Dubcek. They introduced immediate freedoms which brought them great popular support.



▲ Alexander Dubcek, leader of Czechoslovakia, 1968-9



▲ Frederick Husak, leader of Czechoslovakia, 1969-1989

The Soviet Union viewed these developments with concern. It did not want Czechoslovakia to move away from Communism because the idea might spread to other countries, and Soviet control over Eastern Europe would be weakened. Pressure was put on the Czechs by moving troops up to their border.

Some sort of agreement seemed to be made between the new Czech leaders and the USSR but it was not enough and on the 28 August 1968 the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia. With half a million Soviet troops stationed in their country, there was little the Czechs could do but accept the Soviet ultimatum. Soviet troops were to be stationed indefinitely in Czechoslovakia; censorship was to be restored; new political parties were to be banned.

The Soviet action was condemned by the western powers (e.g. Britain and France), but in 1969 Dubcek was replaced by Husak, the liberal reforms were stopped and Party control on lines approved by the USSR was to continue until the reforms of 1989.

Is it typical?

Even if a photograph is authentic, it may not be typical.



▲ SOURCE F

This photograph of Hitler is authentic. However, that does not mean that it is *typical*.

10 How does this picture of Hitler differ from most you have seen?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hitler believed in the supremacy of the Aryan (German) race. According to this belief, Germans had all the characteristics of power and strength, with no physical weaknesses.

11 How do you explain the cross that is to be seen on this photograph?

12 For an historian studying Hitler, which evidence would be most important from this source?

- (a) the fact Hitler is wearing glasses, *or*
- (b) the cross on the photograph, *or*
- (c) both of the above

Explain your answer.

CHECKLIST

- Historians have to be careful that photographs do not give a selective and possibly misleading view of an event. (Sources A, B and C)
- Sometimes the *intentions* behind a source (why it was produced) are more important to the historian than the information in the source.
- Although the three Mayday photographs and Source E are of little use as a source of factual evidence, they can be very useful for what they tell us about the aims of people at the time, and the methods used to achieve them.
- The hiding of a source (Source F) from the public eye can be important in suggesting to historians something about the ideas of people in the past.

3.4 INTERPRETING PHOTOGRAPHIC SOURCES (CONTINUED)

To use a photograph as a source of evidence you need to study it closely. You also need to know something about the circumstances in which it was produced. When these investigations have been completed, you can decide whether the photograph will be *useful for your purpose*.

Northern Ireland, 1972

1 Without knowing anything about the background to Source A, write a brief caption for it.

There are two important questions you should ask of a photograph in order to make the best use of it as evidence.

- What can you see in the photograph?
- What can you find out about the *circumstances* in which it was taken?

2 Look at Source A and answer the question, 'What can you see in the photograph?', using the points below.

- (a) Who and what can you see?
- (b) What appears to be happening? (i.e. what story could it be part of?)

3 If you do not know the circumstances in which it was taken, how useful is this photograph for:

- (a) showing what is going on? *Useful/of little use/not clear.*
- (b) showing why this is happening? *Useful/of little use/not clear.*

Explain your answers.

4 What can Source A tell us when we know the circumstances in which it was produced? Read the background information and go through the points below. (Some of your answers will have to be opinions, because not all the evidence you need is available.)

(a) Who probably took the photograph and why?

(b) Where and when, during the events described, was the photograph likely to have been taken?

(c) The caption (see Background Information) says the people against the fence were 'rioters.' Another photograph of the same incident (in a book called *The Irish Question*, 1977) used a caption which called them 'suspects.' Does this difference of words matter to an historian interested in using Source A as evidence?

(d) What other sources would you like to look at to understand fully what is happening in the photograph?

5 Look back at the caption you wrote for Question 1. Do you think it is an accurate one, or would you now want to change it? Explain your answer.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This photograph was taken in Londonderry, Northern Ireland on 30 January 1972 (Bloody Sunday). On that day many thousands of people marched through Derry protesting against internment and the denial of civil rights to Catholics. The march had been declared illegal but still went ahead. Incidents during the day led to confusion and gunfire; at the end of which thirteen civilians had been killed by army bullets. This photograph appeared with a report of the incident and the following caption:

'Rioters, including women, being lined up against a fence by paratroopers in the Bogside area of Londonderry yesterday.'

Now complete your answer to Question 4.



◀ SOURCE A

A dead soldier in the First World War?

Look at Source B. It is not clear when or where this famous photograph was taken. It is not clear who took it or why.

An historian would worry about this source because he or she does not know its *provenance* (origin).

6 Where do you think this photograph was probably taken?

- (a) on a building site in Brighton in 1956, *or*
- (b) after a gas explosion at Tower Hamlets in 1983, *or*
- (c) near Beaumont Hamel during World War I, 1916.

Explain your answer.

7 Can you learn much from the photograph on its own without any further information? Explain your answer.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This famous photograph is described by some history books as a German soldier killed in World War I and found at Beaumont-Hamel, November 1916.

▼ SOURCE B



Now work out your own interpretation of the source by checking the points below and see if you agree with the history books' interpretation of Source B.

- Are the footprints in the mud old or fresh?
- About how long must the body have been left for it to rot this much?
- Have the hands rotted as much as the head and face?
- Is the left arm attached to the body? (Note where the thumb is.)
- What is the hole or door on the left?
- What is the pole(?) running from the top of the picture to the body?

Answer the questions below when you have checked the photograph.

- 8** In checking the photograph, did you doubt in any way that this was a soldier photographed where he died?
- 9** Why might someone pose a photograph instead of taking a picture of a body where it lay? Give at least two reasons.
- 10** Is a posed photograph an authentic source? Explain your answer.

CHECKLIST

(See Section 3.4, Source A)

When interpreting a photograph, you need to concentrate on what the photograph shows . . .

- Who and what can you see?
- What appears to be happening?

. . . and the circumstances in which it was produced:

- Who took it and why?
- At what time and in what place was it taken?
- Is there a caption or title? How does it help?
- Would looking at other sources help to explain exactly what it shows?

Remember that not all photographs give clear answers to these questions.

3.5 ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

The following sources have meanings that might not be immediately obvious.

Peter the Great



▲ SOURCE A

This is a cartoon commenting on an action of the 17th-century Russian tsar (king), Peter the Great. Peter is the figure on the right.

- 1 What does Peter appear to be doing?
- 2 Does this seem to be a usual activity for a tsar?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In an attempt to modernise Russia, Peter sought to introduce Western European customs. He was keen to improve the education and manners and even change the appearance of his noblemen.

- 3 Can you now suggest which of Peter's measures is shown in this cartoon?

Medieval knights



▲ SOURCE B

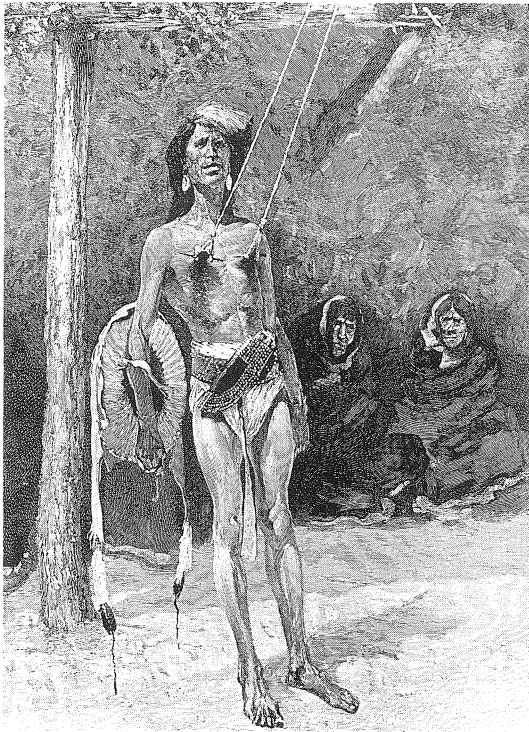
- 4 Describe what appears to be happening in this source about medieval knights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

One of the greatest moments in the life of a medieval knight was the knighting ceremony. There were many important parts to the ceremony, including the wearing of black shoes, the colour of death, which reminded them that one day they would die. The high point was when they had their swords buckled on.

- 5 Would you now wish to change your first description? In what ways?
- 6 Is there anything in this source which you believe remains unexplained?

Sioux Indian



▲ SOURCE C

- 7 What appears to be happening in this picture of a Sioux Indian?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The tribes of the plains had many impressive religious ceremonies. The greatest festival was held at the summer camp, when there was plenty of meat, the berries were ripe, and all the tribes were gathered together. The Sioux called this ceremony the 'Dance Facing the Sun', and white settlers called it the 'Sun Dance'.

Each tribe did the Sun Dance in a different way. A very complex ritual had to be done exactly right, as every object or movement had a sacred meaning.

The dancers formed a circle and kept up the rhythmic movement, taking no food or drink, throughout the four days of the dance. They fixed their eyes on the sun or, in some tribes, on the centre pole. This was already a great test of endurance, but some men went even further. They had their chests pierced by wooden skewers, attached to the pole by ropes. They went on dancing until the flesh broke and set them free.

Adapted from Virginia Luling, *Indians of the North American Plains*, 1978

- 8 What is the most likely explanation for what you can see in Source C?
- 9 With reference to Source C, explain how useful you think picture sources are on their own.

Thomas Cooper

SOURCE D

Don't be deceived by the middle-classes again. You helped them to get their votes, you swelled their cry of 'The bill, the whole bill and nothing but the bill'. But where are the fine promises they made? Gone to the winds! They said when they had gotten their votes, they would help you to get yours. But they and the rotten whigs have never remembered you.

Thomas Cooper, *The Life*, written by himself, 1872

- 1 What is Thomas Cooper complaining about in this extract?

It is doubtful whether you can answer this question properly without going through several stages of thought.

Specialist words must be understood.

- (a) Who were the middle classes?
(b) What was a Whig?
(c) What was a Bill?

Background information must also be considered.

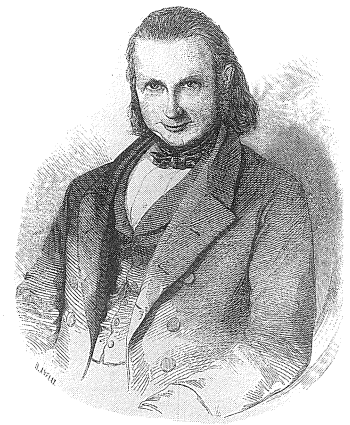
- (d) Who was Thomas Cooper?
(e) When did he write this speech?
(f) To whom was he talking?
(g) What were his beliefs on how best to achieve his aims?

Read the background information, considering all the points above, then answer Question 1 as fully as possible.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many working men felt that they had been let down by the 1832 Reform Act because they had not been given the vote. A movement known as Chartism soon developed, the major aim of which was to get the vote for all men. However, Chartism gained most of its support because of the social and economic distress in Britain, and Chartist supporters around the country had many different objectives.

One of the Chartist leaders was Thomas Cooper. Originally a journalist in the Midlands, he dedicated himself to the Chartist cause, arguing for action such as strikes and violence. He was well known for his rousing speeches to crowds and was eventually imprisoned for his views. This extract comes from an early speech, quoted in his autobiography, written in 1872.



4 BIAS AND RELIABILITY

4.1 HOW FAR CAN WE TRUST WHAT SOURCES TELL US?

To make effective judgements, historians have to decide how useful sources are for the topics they are studying. Some of the important questions they have to ask when deciding on the usefulness of a source are:

- Is the source biased in any way?
- Does the source contain facts or opinions?
- How reliable is this source for the intended purpose?

These questions are dealt with in detail in this unit. The exercises will give you practice in working through each of the ideas.



Bias

Most sources show bias (one-sidedness) to varying degrees. An historian must understand how to recognise bias and what to do about it when it appears. (see 4.2–4.4.)

Fact and opinion

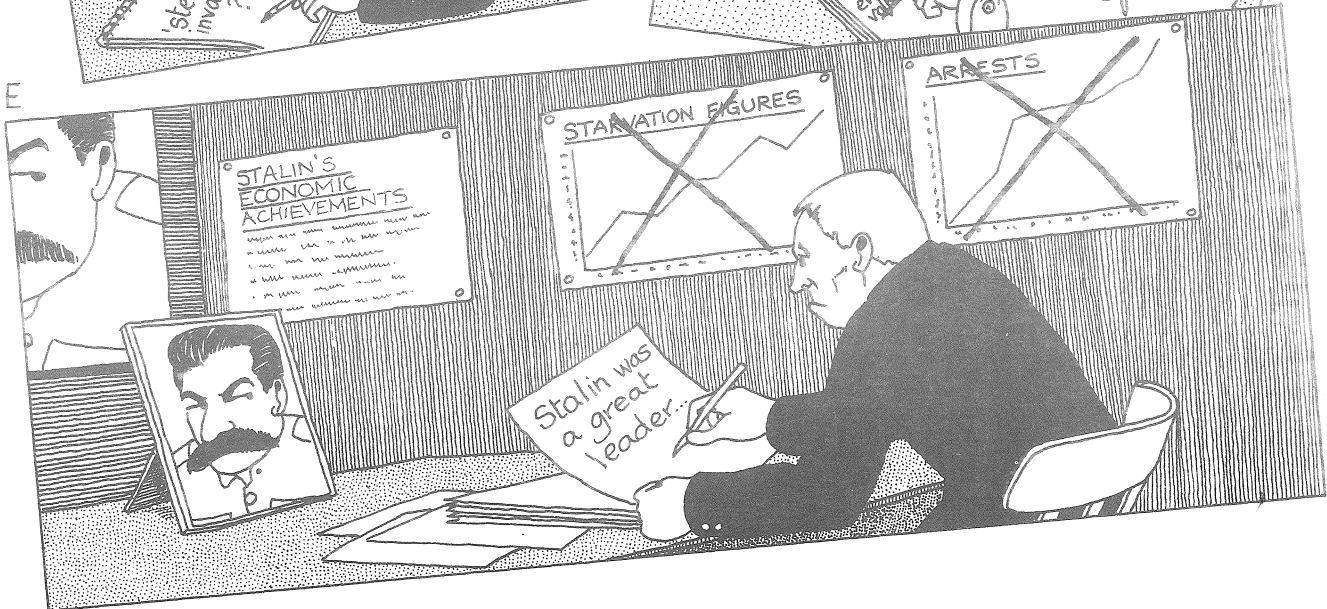
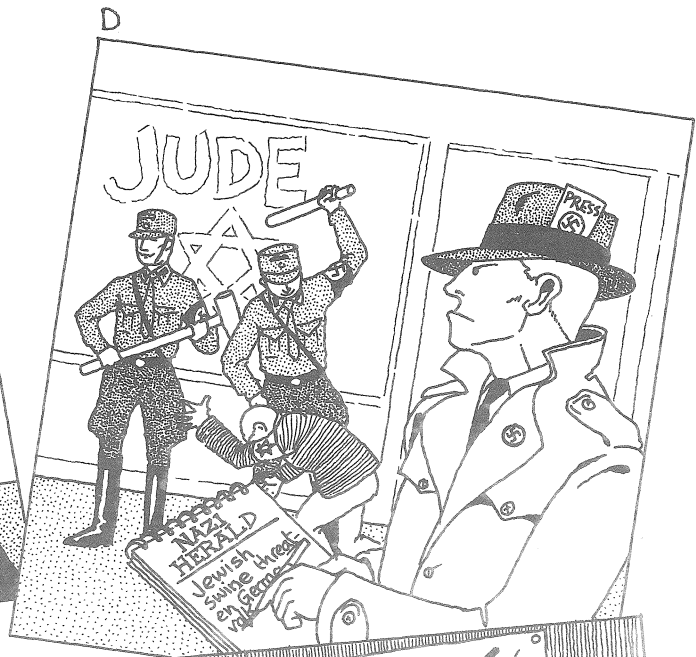
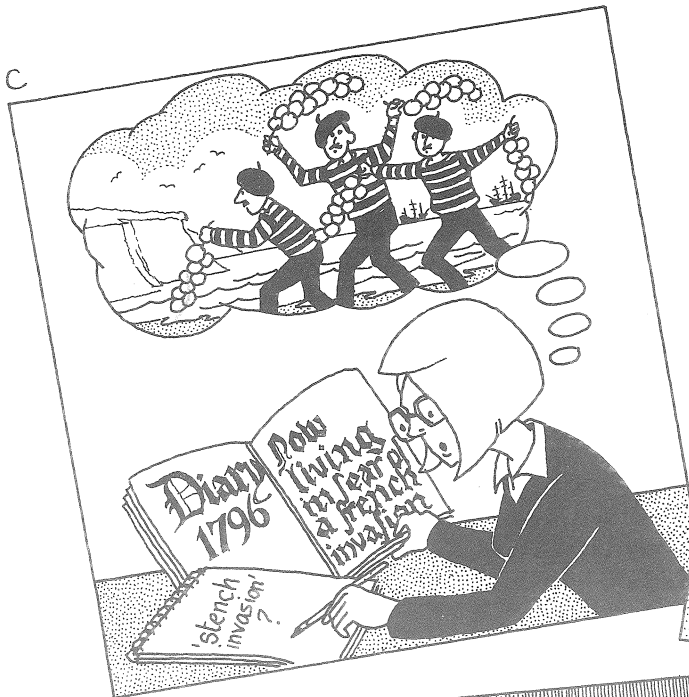
Written sources can include both facts and opinions. It is important to be able to distinguish between fact (something *provable*) and opinion (a *point of view*) because historians need proof in writing about the past. For example in source C on page 37 the writer says when referring to the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 'This is the foulest act of wilful murder ever committed on the high seas and resulted in the loss of 1198

innocent people.' It is a clear fact that the incident happened at sea and the number of deaths is an easily checkable fact. However the statement 'foulest act of wilful murder' is an opinion which could almost definitely not be supported by evidence. Fact and opinion is dealt with in 4.5.

Reliability

Historians have to decide whether a source provides reliable evidence for the intended purpose. (See 4.6–4.9.)

- 1 Look at the cartoons on these pages. What might cause any source produced from the incidents shown to be either biased or unreliable? Explain your answer to each one.



4.2 WHAT IS BIAS?

Bias (one-sidedness) can be found in most historical sources, but to varying degrees and for different reasons. When a source is biased it usually means that it favours one side or gives one particular view of an event. Historians need to be aware of bias and take it into account in their work. It must be emphasised that a biased source can be *useful* to an historian. Don't immediately assume that a biased source is false and of no use, because you could be cutting yourself off from some important evidence.

What an historian does about bias depends on how and why a source is biased. Bias can have several causes.

Intentional bias

One of the most obvious forms of bias to recognise is where the source has been deliberately distorted or falsified. This could be achieved through telling lies, missing out important facts or using extreme language.

SOURCE A A Russian secondary school textbook written in 1938

The contemptible enemy of the people, the fascist agent Trotsky, and his contemptible friends Rykov and Bukharin, organised in the USSR gangs of murderers, wreckers and spies. They foully murdered that ardent Bolshevik, S. Kirov. They plotted to murder other leaders of the proletariat too. The fascist scoundrels, the Trotskyites and Rykovites, caused train collisions in the USSR, blew up and set fire to mines and factories and wrecked machines, poisoned workers, and did all the damage they possibly could. These enemies of the people had a definite programme, which was to restore the yoke of the capitalists and landlords in the USSR, to destroy the collective farms, to surrender the Ukraine to the Germans and the Far East to the Japanese, and to promote the defeat of the USSR in the event of war. These brigands were caught and punished as they deserved.

A. V. Shestakov, *A Short History of the USSR*, 1938

Note: Bukharin was pardoned by the Soviet Government in 1988 because of the false evidence that had been used against him.

- 1 In what way does Source A appear to be one-sided?
- 2 Give three examples of strong language in Source A which help to get across the one-sided view.
- 3 There is a clear purpose to discredit the opposition in this source. In whose interests might this have been written? (Ask your teacher for background information if necessary.)
- 4 Write a piece of deliberate bias on a topic which you know well.

Limited access to information

A source may be based on only part of the evidence available on a topic, or may be produced before the full nature of a subject has become clear. This could result in a rather one-sided account.

In 1927 Winston Churchill visited Rome and was pleased to find an apparently strong government which had overcome the Communist threat. Source B is what he was reported to have said about the Fascist leader, Mussolini, against whom Britain was later to fight in World War II.

SOURCE B

If I were an Italian I would don the Fascist blackshirt. I could not help being charmed, like so many other people have been, by Signor Mussolini's gentle and simple bearing and by his calm and detached pose in spite of so many burdens and dangers. Anyone could see that he thought of nothing but the lasting good, as he understood it, of the Italian people, and that no lesser interest was of the slightest consequence to him . . . if I had been an Italian I would have been with you from the start . . .

Winston Churchill, reported in *The Times*, 1927

- 5 What clues are there in Source B to suggest why Churchill admired Mussolini?
- 6 Do you think a visiting foreign politician is in a good position to comment on how well Mussolini is running his country?
- 7 What else would you like to know before you accept Churchill's opinion of Mussolini?
- 8 Some might argue that Churchill's statement to the Press was not explained by lack of information but by something else. What might this be?

The particular purpose behind a source

People do not often create records for the benefit of historians. They produce them for other reasons. These reasons can cause the source to be biased.

SOURCE C A letter written to a newspaper by a determined factory reformer in 19th-century Britain

Let the truth speak out . . . The fact is true. Thousands of our fellow creatures [children] and fellow-subjects, both male and female, the miserable inhabitants of a Yorkshire town . . . are this very moment existing in a state of slavery, more horrid than are the victims of that hellish system 'colonial slavery' . . . The very streets which receive the droppings of an 'Anti-slavery Society' are every morning wet by the tears of innocent victims . . . who are compelled (not by the cart-whip of the negro slave-driver) but by the dread of the equally appalling thong or strap of the overlooker . . .

Letter to the *Leeds Mercury* by Richard Oastler, 16 October 1830



Oastler was desperately trying to persuade people to take an interest in factory conditions. He consequently concentrated on the worst conditions and used the strongest language to make his point.

- 9 What methods does Oastler use in Source C to put his point of view as strongly as possible?
- 10 Would this letter be a useful source to show how all children were treated in 19th-century factories? Explain your answer.
- 11 Would this letter be a useful source to show what one person thought about children working in factories, and the methods he used to promote his ideas? Explain your answer.
- 12 What opinion given in this source would need to be checked carefully?
- 13 This source was written by a member of the Northern Ireland Government. Do any of his comments surprise you? Explain your answer.
- 14 In what way might this source be very useful?

Beliefs or feelings of the producer of the source

People sometimes report things in a way which is not totally accurate, not because they are deliberately lying, but because their beliefs or feelings blind them from a reasoned and objective view. This can often be caused by prejudice against a particular race (e.g. the Jews), nation (e.g. the Soviet Union) or group in society (e.g. gypsies).

Much evidence from Irish history suffers from this difficulty because of the great suspicion and hostility between the Catholics and Protestants.

SOURCE D A statement by a Protestant Minister of Agriculture 1933-45, who later became Prime Minister of Northern Ireland

Thinking of the question carefully . . . I recommend those people who are loyalists not to employ Roman Catholics, ninety-nine per cent of whom are disloyal . . . You people who are employers have the ball at your feet. If you don't act properly now, before we know where we are we shall find ourselves in the minority instead of the majority.

Sir Basil Brooke, 1934

CHECKLIST (Section 4.2)

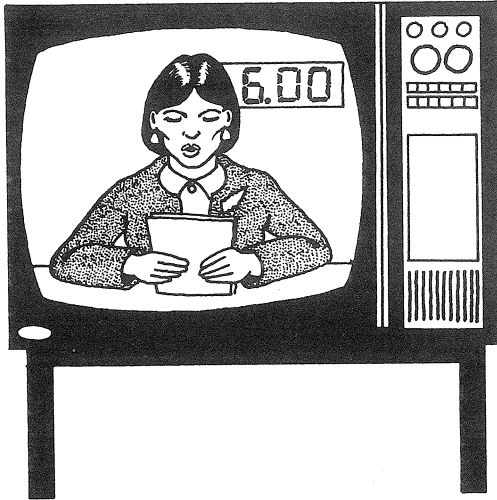
How do you notice bias in a source? In general you should look for three things.

- **Language:** the use of certain words can often reveal a person's bias. For example, when talking about a strike, someone might say: 'As a result of the dispute, 8000 men are *idle*.' On the subject of the Suffragettes, *The Times* said in 1913 'that persons who wantonly destroy property and endanger lives must be either *desperately wicked* or *entirely unbalanced*.'
- **Balance** in the selection of facts: If you have a basic knowledge of the topic being studied, you can look for facts which have been omitted. By leaving out some details and highlighting others, a source can influence the reader in a particular direction.
- **Background:** We all have different views (social, political, religious, moral etc.) and what we see (and say) is influenced by them. Knowledge of the views behind a source will help in the identification of bias.

4.3 HOW CAN WE SPOT BIAS IN SOURCES?

Spotting bias in the media

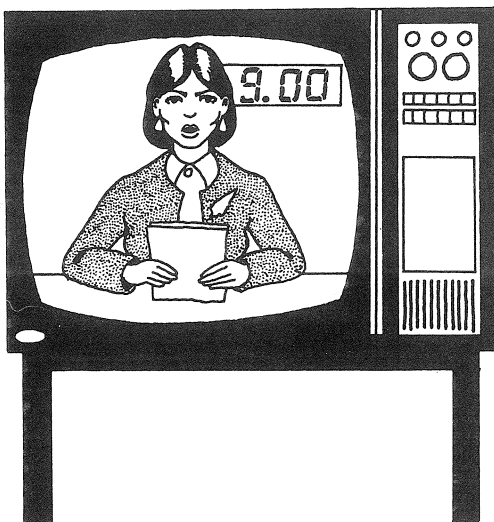
Read the following reports from BBC TV news programmes on 3 January 1975 at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. There is also a summary of the Prime Minister's speech given on ITN's *News at Ten*.



SOURCE A

The Prime Minister, in a major speech tonight on the economy appealed to management and unions in the car industry to cut down what he called manifestly [clearly] avoidable stoppages [strikes].

BBC1 Early evening news, 3 January 1975



SOURCE B

The Prime Minister has appealed to workers in the car industry to cut down on avoidable stoppages [strikes].

BBC1 Late news, 3 January 1975

SOURCE C

Mr Wilson [The Prime Minister] clearly expects a greater degree of restraint from the workforce in firms where the government has stepped in to help and he has appealed directly to working people not to rock an already leaky boat.

ITN *News at Ten*, 3 January 1975

- 1 According to Source A,
 - (a) What problem does the Prime Minister think that the car industry has been facing?
 - (b) He appears to blame two groups of people for this. Who are they?
- 2 These are reports about what the Prime Minister is supposed to have said. If the first report is true, what has been left out of the other sources?
- 3 Source A was read at 6 o'clock, Source B at 9 o'clock. Imagine you work in the BBC news office. What might cause you to change your report about what the Prime Minister said? (Remember what he actually said had not changed.)
- 4 If you were trying to find out about the causes of the 'avoidable stoppages' in the car industry, what would your answer be if you used
 - (a) Source A, *or*
 - (b) Sources B and C.
- 5 Use the table to help you spot any signs of bias in Sources B and C. Tick the relevant boxes. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.

WAYS OF SPOTTING BIAS	SOURCE B	SOURCE C
The reporter is likely to be on one side/take one point of view		
The report is selective — some things were <i>either</i> put in or others left out		
The words used are not fair		

Explain any of the boxes you have ticked.

- 6 If you were to use these news reports as sources of evidence about:
 - (a) The problems facing the car industry in 1975
 - (b) The causes of the problems in the car industry
 - (c) How television news worked in 1975,
 which sources should you use and not use for each one?



A football report

Here is part of a newspaper report about an FA Cup match in the 1984–5 season.

SOURCE D

DAY 10,840 WILL NEVER FORGET

York City 1, Arsenal 0
By Barry Foster

In the best tradition of the game's most glamorous tournament, little homely York City toppled star-studded Arsenal out of the FA Cup with a penalty in the last gasp of their fourth round tie at Bootham Crescent.

But while York had several players who stood out on the snow-sprinkled turf, Arsenal looked a grey lot on the day. Arsenal had no one in their attack to match the power of Walwyn even though the big coloured striker played under the handicap of an Achilles tendon strain; no one with the attacking imagination of the 18-year-old Butler nor Houchen and no one prepared to run as hard as Senior to support both defence and attack.

A football report, January 1985

Before answering any questions, it is important to get everything about this football match clear in your mind. Copy out a chart like the one on the right. Draw lines to match up the boxes on the left with the correct boxes on the right.

- 7 Do you think that Source D comes from (a) *London Evening Standard*, or (b) *The Yorkshire Post*? Explain your answer.
- 8 To spot bias in a sports report you must ask some questions:
 - (a) Who wrote it? Which team is the sports reporter likely to support (see your answer to Question 7)? Why?
 - (b) For whom was the report written? Which team are the readers likely to support?
 - (c) Is it balanced? Does it say as much about Arsenal as it does about York City? If not, how might this show bias?
 - (d) Is it fair? Do the words used show bias? If so, how?
- 9
 - (a) Is the sports report biased?
 - (b) If so, is it very biased or only slightly?
 - (c) Which bits of the article would you trust? Explain your choice.
- 10
 - (a) Only part of the report has been included here. Does that matter if you are trying to spot bias? Explain your answer.
 - (b) How do you think a report of this match by a London journalist would differ from Source D? Explain your answer.

The headline	Arsenal
The sports reporter	Day 10,840 will never forget
The home team	Barry Foster
The score	10,840
Number of Football Fans at the match	York City 1, Arsenal 0
The away team	York City

CHECKLIST

(Sections 4.2 and 4.3)

Bias in sources can often be spotted by asking the questions below.

- *Language*: does the choice of words make things sound good or bad without directly saying so?
- *Selection of facts*: are certain facts, on one side of the argument, used or left out?
- *Background*: has the person creating the source any reason to be one-sided?

Remember, as in the example on this page, a biased source need not show all these characteristics.

Bias in a written source can often be spotted by asking the following questions:

- Is the writer seeking to please or to influence a particular group of people?
- Are all possible viewpoints fairly covered in the source?

4.4 ASSESSMENT EXERCISES – BIAS

Exercise 1

What were the aims and methods of Bernadette Devlin, MP?

Bernadette Devlin was one of the leaders of the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland in the 1960s. A Catholic, she became a highly controversial figure when elected as Parliament's youngest MP in 1968. She fought for the cause of Catholic rights through both discussion and more direct action. Many Protestants saw her as no more than a dangerous troublemaker.

Creating a biased source

- 1 You are a reporter for a newspaper called the *Newsletter*, which is read mostly by Protestants. The editor has asked you to write an article on Bernadette Devlin, a Catholic MP. Using the sources write a *suitable* article for your paper.

Points you might include:

- What were her aims (Source D)
- What sort of person was she? (Source G)
- How did she want to achieve her aims? (Source C)
- What was her attitude to the law? (Source B)
- Was her behaviour what you would expect from an MP? (Sources A and B)

- 2 You are a reporter for the Catholic newspaper, the *Irish News*. The editor has set you the task of writing an article about Bernadette Devlin, a Catholic MP. Using the source provided, write a *suitable* article for your paper.

Points you might include:

- What did she want for Irish people? (Sources D, C and H)
- How did she hope to achieve her aims? (Sources C, F and H)
- Her attitude to Protestants (Source E)

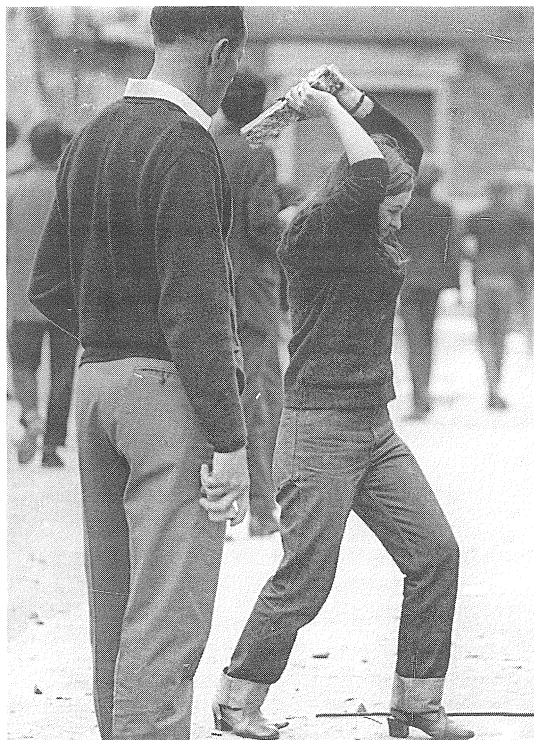
- 3 Compare your report for the *Newsletter* with your report for the *Irish News*. In what ways are they similar and in what ways do they differ?

- 4 How do you account for the differences between the two accounts?

- 5 Look again at the instructions for the exercise and, remembering

- language
- background
- selection of evidence,

explain how the bias came about.



SOURCE B

Miss Bernadette Devlin, MP was carrying bricks today to the barricade of Bogside, organising the removal of women and children, and urging her followers to fight the . . . Royal Ulster Constabulary [the police]. For her critics, who say an MP should not behave in that way, she had a message: 'Tell them that I did not go to Westminster to join their bloody club' . . .

As she talked twenty yards from the barricades, tear smoke swirled around and she doubled up, coughing and crying. Round her face she wore a gauze mask soaked in lemon juice. Her eyes were protected by goggles. Weighing a large stone in her each hand, she shouted to a passing man: 'Is it true the first-aid post has run out of supplies? Phone the Red Cross for more.'

Tim Jones, *The Times*, 15 August 1969

SOURCE C

We will fight for justice. We will try to achieve it by peaceful means. But if it becomes necessary we will simply make it impossible for any unjust government to govern us. We will refuse to have anything to do with it.

Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of my Soul*, 1969

◀ SOURCE A
Bernadette Devlin during the 'Battle of the Bogside', August 1969

SOURCE D

We were socialists, and we believed socialism was worth struggling for. Now I was joining my new-found socialism to my old belief in a united Ireland. Only in a thirty-two county [united] Ireland could socialism ever begin to work.

Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of my Soul*, 1969

SOURCE E

The educational reforms that had been introduced after the war had produced a generation of university students from working class backgrounds.

They organised a movement called the People's Democracy. Instead of more jobs and more houses for Catholics at the expense of Protestants, they wanted more jobs and houses for everyone.

Among their leaders were Bernadette Devlin (now McAliskey) and Michael Farrell and, like the Civil Rights Association, they regarded themselves as a peaceful movement.

The Irish Question, Schools History Project, 1977

SOURCE F

We decided we would work for six aims: one man one vote; a fair drawing of electoral boundaries; freedom of speech and assembly; repeal of the Special Powers Act [which gives the police almost unlimited power of arrest and detention]; and a fair allocation of jobs and houses.

Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of my Soul*, 1969

▼ SOURCE G Cartoon in *Fortnight* magazine, 1970



When she was good, she was very, very good,
But when she was bad she was horrid.



Identifying bias in the sources

Think carefully about all the factors that can create bias (see pages 25 and 27) when answering these questions.

- 6 A photographer might have taken many photographs of Devlin. Why might Source A be the one chosen to appear in English newspapers? What impression does it give you of Devlin's role in the day's events?
- 7 Look at the language and selection of evidence used in the newspaper account (Source B). Do you feel this is a fair or biased account of events? Explain your answer with reference to the source.
- 8 Is Source A or Source B more useful to an historian?
- 9 If an historian was writing an article about Devlin and could only include one photograph, should Source A or H be chosen? Explain your answer.
- 10 'Sources B and I (which your teacher will give you) only mention facts. Therefore they can't be biased in any way.' Explain whether you agree with this statement, referring to the sources.
- 11 Sources D and C are extracts from Devlin's autobiography and state some of her beliefs. With reference to these sources explain whether people's writings about themselves are likely to be accurate.
- 12 A good historian would consider *all* the sources here to write a balanced account of Bernadette Devlin. Try it!

▲ SOURCE H
Bernadette Devlin and Ian Paisley discussing Ulster's problems, September 1971

Exercise 2

Were Stalin's economic plans a success for the USSR?

In 1928 Stalin decided to industrialise the Soviet Union as quickly as possible. The country had always lagged behind western powers and he wanted to be sure that the USSR would be in a position to defend itself. His plan was to force the peasants to join collective farms and to use money from farming to pay for the new industry. Millions of peasants tried to resist joining the new farms and much of their produce was destroyed, leading to starvation. Despite this and many other problems, industry did expand quickly and the Soviet Union was in a position to defend itself when Hitler invaded the country in 1941.

Creating a biased source

Write two speeches:

- 1 About the success of Stalin's economic plans (from the point of view of a Stalin supporter).

Points you might include:

- increases in industrial production (Source H)
- more education was made available (Source D)
- a comparison with Britain (Source A)
- the defeat of Hitler (Source G)

- 2 About the terrible cost of Stalin's economic plans (from the point of view of someone who was against Stalin).

Points you might include:

- the decrease in harvests and livestock (Sources J and I)
- starvation (Sources B and C)
- the lack of freedom in the USSR (Source E)
- unfair arrests (Source F)

Read the sources and decide which one will give you the evidence to support the ideas you are trying to get across.

When writing the speeches think about the best words you can use to get your point across. (e.g. 'tremendous increase' or 'terrible conditions').

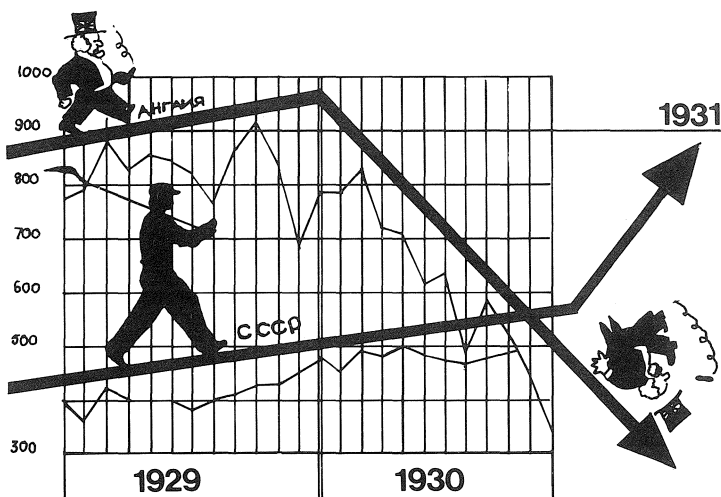
Evaluating your sources

- 3 If someone was trying to decide whether Stalin's economic plans were a success for the USSR, what conclusion would they draw from:

- (a) your first speech
- (b) your second speech?

- 4 Both your accounts are biased. Describe how you brought the bias about.

▼ SOURCE A A comparison of the Soviet and British economies



From *Russia 1900-35: Dreams, Plans and Nightmares*, Tony Howarth

SOURCE B

At each town along the way, we saw hundreds and thousands of starving peasants at the station – with their last ounce of strength they had come from their villages in search of a stale piece of bread. They sat against the station walls in long dreary rows, sleeping, dying, and every morning the station guard would have the corpses removed in waggons covered with canvas.

An actor on tour in the Urals, early 1930s



▲ SOURCE C Peasants starving in the Soviet Union, early 1930s

SOURCE D

In 1938 though the city [of Magnitogorsk] was still in a primitive state . . . it did boast 50 schools, 3 colleges, 2 large theatres, half a dozen small ones, 17 libraries, 22 clubs, 18 clinics . . .

The city of Magnitogorsk grew and developed from the dirty, chaotic construction camp of the early thirties into a reasonably healthy and habitable city. A street car line was constructed and went into operation. New stores were built and supplies of all kinds made their appearance in quantity and at reasonable prices. Fuel, clothing of all kinds, and other elementary necessities became available. It was no longer necessary to steal in order to live.

From *Behind the Urals*, John Scott, 1938

SOURCE E

An OGPU [secret police] agent reported angry criticism of the Party at a factory meeting. It soon became dangerous to make such criticisms. The OGPU were constantly looking for people to bring to trial for 'sabotage', although usually the real crime was to have criticised the Party. The trials were stage managed and everyone knew the prisoners would be found guilty.

John Robottom, *Modern Russia*, 1972

SOURCE F An American tells what happened to his Russian brother-in-law

[His sister-in-law married] a young man in the Soviet navy, a tall, handsome fellow with four wounds and an outstanding record in battle . . . Two weeks after he married her . . . he was arrested. It took his heartbroken wife eight months to confirm his arrest and another six to learn that he had received a sentence of eight years . . . He was accused of 'lack of revolutionary vigilance', meaning that he, an officer in the Soviet navy, had committed the crime of marrying a girl whose younger sister was the wife of an American correspondent.

Eddy Gilmore, an American journalist, in *The Cossacks burnt down the YMCA*

SOURCE G Russia's role in World War II

The Russians tore the guts out of the German army.

Winston Churchill

	1913	1928	1940
Iron Ore	9	6	30
Steel	4	4	18
Coal	29	36	166
Oil	9	12	31

'Kommunist', no. 11, 1967

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Cattle	70.5	67.1	52.5	47.9	40.7	38.4
Pigs	26.0	20.4	13.6	14.4	11.6	12.1
Sheep/Goats	146.7	147.0	108.8	77.7	52.1	50.2

From *An Economic History of the Soviet Union*, Alec Nove, 1972

▼ **SOURCE J** Grain harvests (in millions of tons). Grain was eaten not only by people — it was essential as fodder to keep animals alive during the long winter months.

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Grain harvests	73.3	71.7	83.5	69.5	69.6	68.4

From *An Economic History of the Soviet Union*, Alec Nove, 1972

◀ **SOURCE H** Economic growth in the Soviet Union, 1913-40 (figures in millions of tons)

◀ **SOURCE I** Livestock (millions of animals)

Questions on the sources

- Historians always have to be careful with statistics. For example the *official* figure given by Stalin for the harvest in 1933 was 89.8 million tons (that shown in Source J is the estimated *actual* figure). Why might Stalin want to falsify the figures? Answer with reference to Source J.
- Source B is an eyewitness account written by an actor on tour in Russia. Do you think his descriptions can be relied upon? Explain with reference to the source.
- Sources E and F concern Russians arrested during Stalin's rule. Neither source is an official document and neither was written in Russian. Explain with reference to the sources why this might be.
- Is it possible to conclude from Source G that Winston Churchill was a great admirer of Stalin's USSR? Explain your answer.

Exercise 3

What did people think of the New Poor Law after 1834?

After years of complaints about the Old Poor Law, a New Poor Law was introduced in 1834. There had been many worries about lazy people living off the rates when they were really fit enough to work. The New Poor Law was organised to make this hard and difficult. People needing help would go and live in new large workhouses. These were very strict, so that only those desperately needing help would use them. Consequently the amount spent on Poor Relief would go down and more people would be earning an honest living.

Creating a biased source

- 1 Write a letter to a doubtful friend whom you are trying to convince that the New Poor Law 1834 was a good thing for the country.

Points you might include:

- the amount of money saved (Source B)
- less crime and drunkenness (Source D)
- lazy people now have to work (Source G)
- training was given to the paupers (Source H)

- 2 Now try to convince the same person that the New Poor Law was a bad thing for the country.

Points you might include:

- wrong to split up families (Source C)
- dependent (old/young) poor are being unfairly treated (Source E)
- people lose all self respect (Source E)
- mistreatment in the workhouses (Sources A and F)

Look through the sources and choose the ones which will help you to make your case most successfully.

Write out your letter adding your own phrases to make your case more convincing.

Evaluating your sources

- 3 If someone was trying to decide what people in the 19th century thought about the New Poor Law, what answer would they get from
 - (a) your first letter
 - (b) your second letter?
- 4 Both your letters are biased. Describe how you brought about the bias.



THE "MILK" OF POOR-LAW "KINDNESS."

▲ SOURCE A Cartoon from *Punch*, 1843

▼ SOURCE B The cost of looking after the poor

	1801	1821	1831
Population	8,872,980	11,978,875	13,897,187
	1803	1813	1837
Amount spent on poor relief.	4,077,891	7,870,801	4,044,741
Cost per head of population	9s . 2d	13s . 2d	5s . 10d

Third Annual Report Of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1837

SOURCE C

People in his parish of Stoke Poges were complaining that it was unfair that the paupers had to go four miles to reach the new workhouse. The parish was well organised in looking after the poor and they were unhappy that the paupers had now to be transported as if they were going to a foreign country.

He also believed that the separating of the husband from the wife and from the children was not the law of England.

Report of a speech by the Duke of Buckingham, Parliamentary Debates, 17 March 1835

SOURCE D

The positive good which has been wrought by the new Poor Law is, in the first place, that the public houses and beer-shops are, without question, much less attended than before: that drunkenness is decidedly less frequently seen, and I think practised; and that as I do not believe any increase has taken place in the number of robberies committed in this part of the country, to supply the lacking means [shortages] to the worse part of our pauper population, they are driven to be more moral and more domestic characters than before.

Rev. Dr Wrench, Minister of Salehurst, in Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1836

SOURCE E

These workhouses have a depressing, degrading and harmful effect on the character of all the inmates which leaves them unfit for leading a respectable and self-supporting life. The institution is hated by the respectable poor and in our judgement the imprisonment within the workhouse walls of the non able-bodied or dependent poor, who have no chance of earning their own living, cannot be justified.

Rewritten extract from Royal Commission on Poor Laws, 1905-9

SOURCE F

The rich have all the power and the new Poor Law has made the poor superfluous [not wanted]. The purpose of these workhouses or as the people call them Poor Law Bastilles [prisons] is to frighten away everyone who has the slightest chance of charitable help elsewhere.

In the workhouse at Greenwich, in the summer of 1848, a boy five years old was punished by being shut in the dead room where he had to sleep on the lids of coffins. In the workhouse at Herne the same punishment was inflicted on a little girl for wetting the bed at night . . .

Can any wonder that the poor decline to accept public relief . . . ? That they starve rather than enter these bastilles?

F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Classes*, 1844, responding to conditions he observed in English workhouses. Engels came from a rich German family and supported Karl Marx.



◀ SOURCE H

Paupers learning a new trade, 1860

SOURCE G

The main result of the new poor law is that the labourer, finding himself no longer entitled to a fixed income, what ever his idleness or misconduct . . . becomes . . . stimulated to activity and honesty by the double motive of hope and fear.

Nassau Senior, chairman of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1832-4

Questions on the sources

- 5 'The cartoon (Source A) is clearly biased against the New Poor Law.' Does this mean that it is of little use to the historian? Explain your answer.
- 6 What would you want to find out about Source H before using it as evidence in favour of the New Poor Law?
- 7 Read the background on Engels (Source F: caption). Explain with reference to Source F whether you feel his evidence is biased. What should an historian do before using any evidence from this source?
- 8 Nassau Senior (Source G) was a supporter of the New Poor Law. Is his statement here one of fact or opinion? Answer with reference to the source.
- 9 'Source D is written by a priest. Therefore what he says must be true.' Explain with reference to the source whether you agree with this statement.
- 10 Source B concentrates on the financial cost of the Poor Law, Source C on the human cost. Explain how you might use Source B to support the introduction of the New Poor Law after 1834, and Source C to oppose it.
- 11 Sources E and G both come from Royal Commission Reports. Their conclusions on the New Poor Law are very different. Look at each source carefully and explain why this might be.

4.5 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION?

Sources sometimes provide historians with two sorts of information, *facts* and *opinions*. It is important to be able to recognise the difference between these types of evidence.

A *fact* is a thing certainly known to have occurred or to be true.

An *opinion* is a belief which is not definitely proved.

The danger for the historian is to accept one person's opinion as fact and consequently produce a misleading *interpretation* of events in the past.

1 Look at the following list and decide whether they are fact or opinion.

- (a) Hitler died in 1945.
- (b) Stalin was a bad leader.
- (c) Henry VIII was a 16th-century English king.
- (d) There was a medieval outlaw called Robin Hood.
- (e) The Cold War was important.
- (f) World War I started in 1914.
- (g) World War I was caused by the assassination of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand in Sarajevo.
- (h) The Industrial Revolution began in 1760.
- (i) The Industrial Revolution is a term used by historians.
- (j) Historians have opinions.

You probably found that exercise quite difficult. It can be as hard to distinguish between fact and opinion as it can between primary and secondary sources. However, it will be easier for you to use ideas like bias and source reliability if you are aware of the need to look for facts and opinions in sources.

The Wall Street Crash, 1929

In the 1920s many Americans felt prosperous and optimistic. One way of making money was to buy shares in companies on the New York Stock Market. There are two reasons why people buy shares:

- (a) to give them an annual income from the company dividend (that is a share-out of the company's profits)
- (b) to increase their own capital by selling their shares at a higher price than they paid for them.

The amount of the company's dividend — and the value of the shares on the stock market — varies according to how well the

company is doing. Share values rose rapidly in the 1920s, indeed by as much as 25% between June and August 1928. This encouraged speculators, i.e. people who buy shares expecting that they will increase in value, and who sell them when they can make a good enough profit. Speculation can cause the price of shares to rise higher than the true value of the company they represent.

In October 1929 the Wall Street stock market crashed; everyone wanted to sell and no-one to buy. Many people went bankrupt, causing widespread unemployment and poverty amongst millions who had no connection with the stock exchange. One has to be very careful in looking at evidence on this topic, because in the area of economics where confidence is so important, the boundaries between *fact* and *opinion* can be very blurred.

Look at Sources A-D.

2 Which source is stating facts only? Does this source explain *why* the Wall Street Crash happened?

3 Which other source includes facts which might be easy to check? How might you do this?

SOURCE A

The numbers of inexperienced speculators [people who gamble on the stock market] are being increased by a great many men who have been attracted by newspaper stories. These stories tell of the big easy profits to be made on the Stock Exchange and of millions of dollars being made by people overnight. At first these newcomers risked a few hundred dollars with some broker they knew. They discovered that it could be easy to make money in this way. Finally they would bring with them their entire savings accounts.

These amateurs have not learnt that markets sometimes panic and there are large falls in prices. These suckers speculate on tips, on hunches, on 'follow the leader principles'. When a company rises quickly on the Stock Exchange they all jump for it. They buy or sell at the slightest notice.

A US businessman in 1928, quoted in *Modern America*, C. K. Macdonald, 1987

SOURCE B Share prices in 1929

	3 September 1929	13 November 1929
	\$	\$
Montgomery Ward	137	49
New York Central	256	160
Union Carbide and Carbon	137	59
American Telephone . . . Telegraph	304	197
Anaconda Copper	131	70
Westinghouse	289	102
Electric Bond & Share	186	50

Wall Street Journal, 1929

SOURCE C

Confidence in the soundness of the stock market structure, not withstanding the upheaval of the last few days, was voiced last night by bankers and other financial leaders. Sentiment as expressed by the heads of some of the largest banking institutions and by industrial executives as well was distinctly cheerful and the feeling was that the worst had been seen. Wall Street ended the day in an optimistic frame of mind.

New York Times, 25 October 1929

SOURCE D

On Tuesday 29 October the US stock market collapsed completely. 16 million shares were traded. As hardly anybody wanted to buy shares most of these were sold for very low prices. Some people sold almost all their possessions to raise some money. On 28 October the New York Times Average Share Index fell by 43 points. It was the biggest one-day fall in US history.

C. K. MacDonald, *Modern America*, 1987

SOURCE E

The vital point about the new style economy of the 1920s was the sheer number of goods being produced. In an economy of mass production there must be mass consumption: if one Ford car is made every ten seconds then someone – somewhere – must buy a Ford car every ten seconds. Since many American workers were not earning enough to buy the products they made (in 1929 at least one-third of all personal income was going to the top 5% of society, while as many as 60% of Americans were only making subsistence incomes), America must find enough rich people in other countries to buy her extra goods. In 1929, however, there was no chance of selling more American goods abroad. Her foreign markets were also shrinking fast.

Harriet Ward, *World Powers in the Twentieth Century*, 1978

SOURCE F

The 1920s saw very low interest rates and so it was easy to borrow money, especially 'to play the market.' Most shares were bought not with ready cash but 'on the margin', that is to say a buyer needed to only produce a small proportion of the actual price in order to obtain the share. He borrowed the rest.

This meant that someone with a limited amount of money could actually buy a large number of shares, which encouraged prices to rise. This was profitable for the speculator, and also for the lender of the money, so many businesses including banks, were anxious to lend money and make gains much greater than those which could be made by investing in producing goods.

J. Vick, *Modern America*, 1985

- 4 Could the facts in Source B support any opinion from Source A?
- 5 The newspaper article (Source C) written just before the Crash comments on the state of the Wall Street stockmarket. Is the message of the article fact or opinion? Explain your answer.

- 6 What evidence in Source E makes it surprising that share prices were still rising in the late 1920s?
- 7 Source F explains how many of the shares were bought. What was dangerous about this approach if share prices fell?
- 8 Make your own judgement on what caused the Wall Street Crash.

These sources (A-D) show that there was a great fall in prices (*fact*) and suggest that there were inexperienced speculators (*opinion*) but don't really give us a clear answer on the underlying causes of the crash and subsequent depression.

4.5 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION? (CONTINUED)

Sinking of the *Lusitania*, 1915

The passenger liner the *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine on its way from New York to Liverpool in 1915. The USA was at that stage neutral in the First World War but this incident, in which many Americans lost their lives, is often seen as contributing to America's eventual entry into the war on Britain's side. There has been much controversy about whether the sinking was a ruthless act against innocent civilians by the Germans, or whether Britain illegally carried war weapons on board and didn't do all it could to protect the ship.

Events like this pose particular problems for historians in deciding what are facts and what are opinions. The situation is further complicated by the fact that sources produced in wartime are often censored or used as propaganda.

▼ **SOURCE A** A drawing of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, published in the *Illustrated London News*, 1915

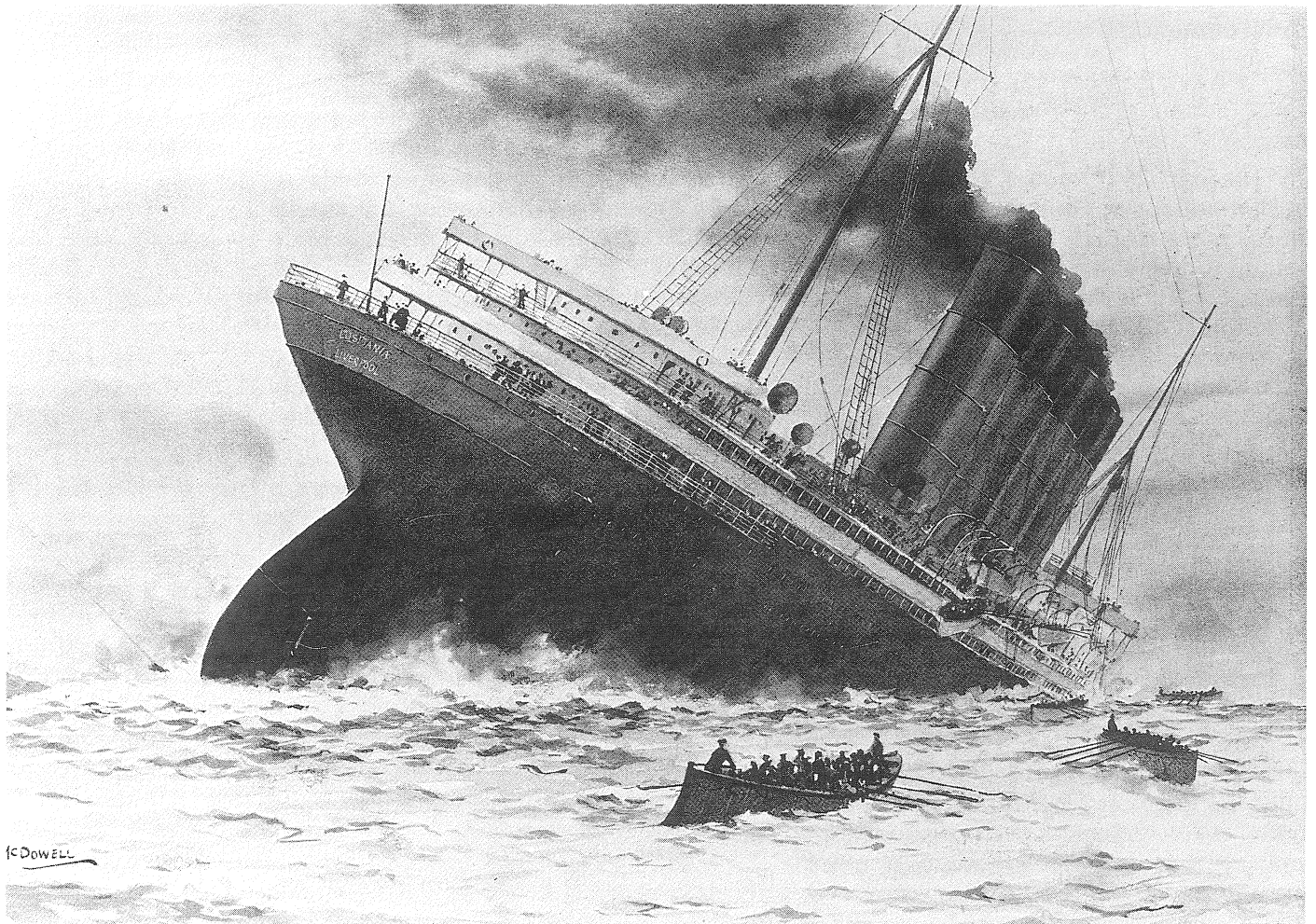
SOURCE B

In the case of the *Lusitania* the German Ambassador even further warned Americans against taking passage. Does a pirate act thus? Does he take pains to save human lives?

Nobody regrets more than we Germans the hard necessity of sending to their deaths hundreds of men. Yet the sinking was a justifiable act of war just like the bombarding of a fortress.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* was for us a military necessity not only because she was equipped for fighting, but especially because we had to protect our brave soldiers from death and destruction by American munitions of war.

A statement issued by Baron Von Schwarzenstein, an official of the German government, published in an American newspaper, the *Washington Post*, 13 May 1915





SOURCE C

The Lusitania was never actually in Government service . . . On May 1, she left New York for Liverpool . . . Prior to the sailing, threatening statements were published in the American press by German authorities foretelling the sinking of the liner . . .

On 7 May, the Irish coast was sighted and at 2.10 p.m. the liner was within 8 to 10 miles of the Old Head of Kinsale. Without the slightest warning, the wake of a torpedo from a German submarine was seen approaching the ship and she was struck between the third and fourth funnels. There was evidence that a second, and perhaps a third torpedo was fired, and the great ship sank within 20 minutes. The doomed liner's SOS was answered within a few hours of the call, and 764 lives were saved. This is the foulest act of wilful murder ever committed on the high seas and resulted in the loss of 1198 innocent people.

It was only to be expected that the enemy would attempt to justify its evil work by proclaiming that the vessel was armed. This was proved to be totally untrue . . . Another German lie exposed.

Extract from a booklet published by the Cunard company, October 1915

SOURCE D

German piracy reached its climax yesterday when the great Cunard liner Lusitania, with 1,978 souls on board, was sunk without warning by a submarine twenty-three miles west of Queenstown. Between 500 and 600 survivors, many of whom were injured and were taken to hospital, were landed last night at Queenstown. Some others have been landed at Kinsale. The liner sank eight minutes after she was torpedoed there may have been considerable loss of life.

Up to a late hour last night only the scantiest details of the outrage had been received in London. Between 500 and 600 survivors, many of whom were injured and were taken to hospital, were landed last night at Queenstown. Some others have been landed at Kinsale. As the liner sank eight minutes after she was torpedoed there may have been considerable loss of life. Many prominent persons had booked passages in the Lusitania, including MP Charles Frohman, Mr Alfred Vanderbilt, Mr D. A. Thomas, Sir Hugh Lane, Lady Mackworth, and Lady Allan, wife of Sir Hugh Allan, of Montreal.

While the incident may impress the imagination by reason of the size of the liner, it will in no degree impair the courage of the nation, and will not have the slightest effect on the course of the war. It is simply an act of piracy and nothing more.

The Lusitania left New York on Saturday last with passengers and mails for Liverpool. Just before she sailed the German Embassy, on instructions from Berlin, published in the New York newspapers a warning to travellers that they embarked in British liners at their own risk. Anonymous warnings were also sent to persons who had booked berths, but little attention was paid to these communications, and the number of passengers created a record for the time of the year. There were on board: First Class Passengers, 290: Second Class Passengers, 662: Third Class Passengers, 361: Crew 665. Total 1978.

Daily Express, 8 May 1915

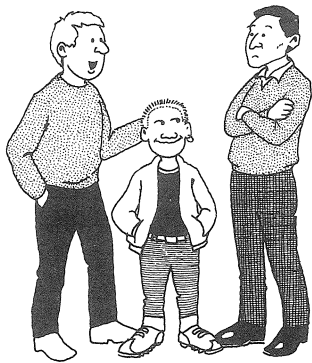
- CHECKLIST**
(Section 4.5)
- When looking at sources it is important to be able to distinguish between *fact*, *opinion* and *judgement*.
 - The identification of the different forms of information in a source is helpful when assessing the *reliability* or *usefulness* of a source.

- 1 Find three facts upon which Sources C and D agree.
- 2 Are there any 'facts' on which they disagree? How might the disagreement have come about? What should the historian do about it?
- 3 Choose two opinions from Source D. Could they be checked in any way and turned into historical facts?
- 4 Does the last paragraph of Source C contain facts or opinions? What might be the purpose of this piece of writing?
- 5 Does Source B make any factual claims which might be checked? How could you check them?
- 6 Why are the opinions in Sources C and D so different from those in Source B?
- 7 Is it possible to write history using (a) facts only or (b) opinions only as evidence? Explain your answer.

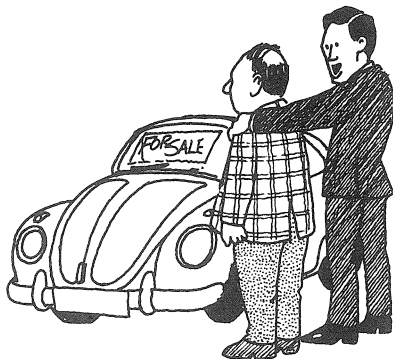
4.6 WHAT DOES RELIABILITY MEAN?

We quite often use the word reliable in everyday life. Thinking about the ways we use it can help us to understand better its use with historical sources.

We use the word reliable about many different things.



▲ About people: 'My son is very reliable. He never forgets any of the shopping.'



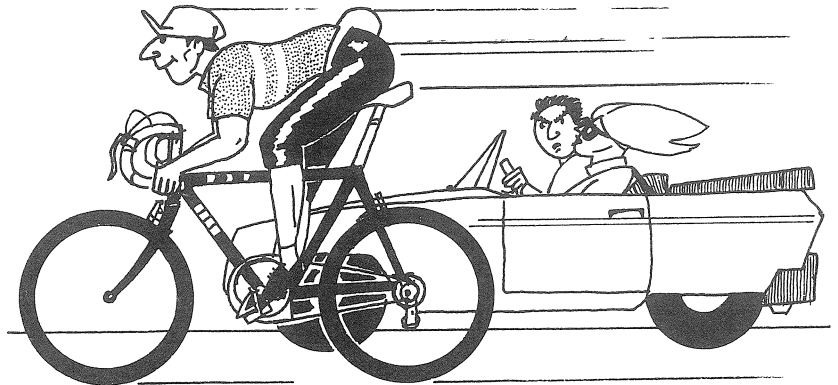
▲ About machines: 'That VW beetle is very reliable. It never breaks down.'



▲ About the weather: 'I'm going to Greece for my holidays this year because the weather is always so reliable.'

Now look at this example.

▼ This brand new 12-gear racer rode perfectly on the open road but received a puncture and twisted wheel within two minutes of going along a glass-strewn dirt-track.



- 1 'This bike was unreliable because its tyre punctured.' Do you agree? Explain your answer.
- 2 If you had to cycle 30 miles on a normal road would you use a BMX cycle or a 12-gear racer? Explain your answer.
- 3 Which bike would you use in a disused quarry?
- 4 If you were a salesman asked about the reliability of *this* bike, for what use would you say it was reliable?
- 5 Because a bike has a puncture, does it mean that all the remaining parts of the bike are of no use?
- 6 Using any examples you like in support, answer the following questions:
 - (a) Can the reliability of something depend on what you want to use it for?
 - (b) Can something be reliable in some parts and unreliable in others?
 - (c) Can something be useful even though it is unreliable?

You will find that historical sources can often be thought about in a similar way.

Reliability in history

One of the most important things to decide about a source is how *reliable* (accurate) it is. There are many different tests to check reliability and these will be discussed later.

However there is one key point to remember when considering the reliability of any source. No source is necessarily either reliable or unreliable for every purpose. A cartoon might prove unreliable in telling you the facts about an event, but it could be very reliable for showing the way people thought about the incident at the time. Therefore it is always worth asking: is this source *reliable for my purpose*?

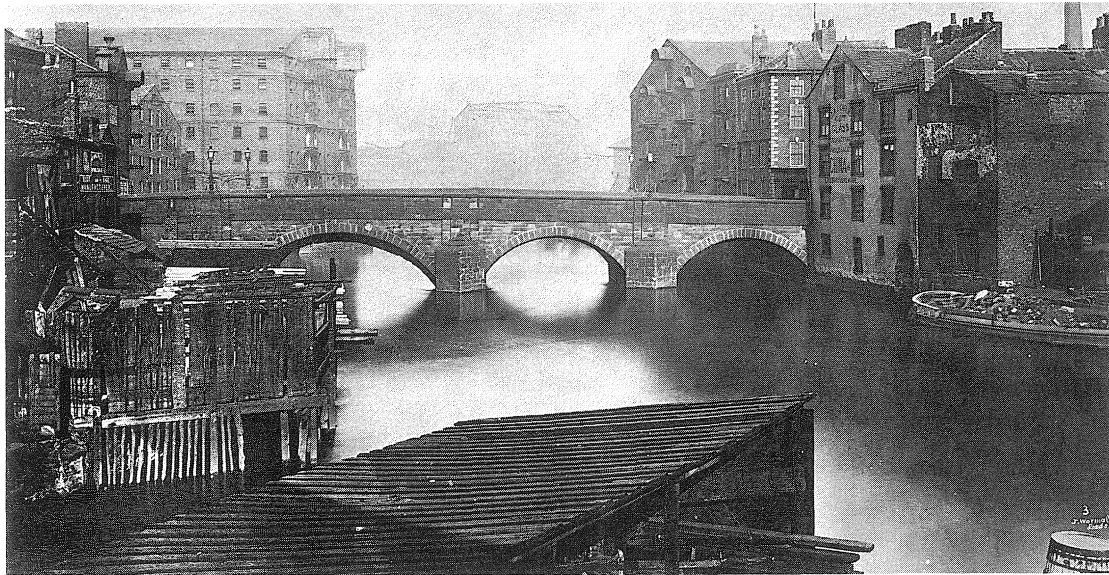
7 Look at Source A. If you were researching Hitler's life you might consider that it showed:

- (a) that Hitler enjoyed throwing hand grenades in his spare time, *or*
- (b) that Hitler was keen on producing propaganda photographs emphasising his military skills.

Explain why Source A might be more reliable for one of these purposes than the other.



▲ SOURCE A Hitler throwing a hand grenade



◀ SOURCE C
Leeds Old Bridge
c.1867

SOURCE B Public Health in Leeds, 1842

75 tons of manure in one yard!

In Boot and Shoe Yard in Leeds there are 34 houses and there dwell in these houses 340 people, or ten to every house. In the days of the cholera the Commissioners removed from it 75 cartloads of manure which had been untouched for years.

Robert Baker, *An Inquiry into the Condition of the Town of Leeds*, 1842

Source B describes conditions in one small area of Leeds.

8 If you were researching public health conditions in 1840s Britain, would this be a reliable source to prove:

- (a) that in Leeds ten people lived in each house of three rooms, *or*
- (b) that in some areas of Leeds, there was overcrowding and unhealthy living conditions, *or*
- (c) that manure was removed from all Leeds streets once every few years.

Explain your answer for each one.

CHECKLIST

(Section 4.6, Sources A and B)

- The reliability of the evidence in an historical source can depend on what you want to use it for.
- An historical source may be reliable in some parts and unreliable in others.

4.7 WHAT MAKES SOURCES UNRELIABLE?

Historical sources can be unreliable for a number of reasons. It is up to the historian to spot the unreliability and make allowance for it in any final written account.

1 Study the following sources carefully. Look at the chart to see for what purpose the historian is interrogating (asking questions of) them.

Decide why each source might be thought unreliable for the stated purpose and then consider what use the source might still have. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.

SOURCE A

Arthur's twelfth battle was on Mount Badon, in which there fell on one day nine hundred and sixty men from the onslaught of Arthur only, and no one laid them low save he alone. And in all battles he was victor.

Nennius, a Welsh monk living in the 9th century (some centuries after the alleged existence of King Arthur)

SOURCE B (i)

On Derby Day, 1913, Emily Davison the Suffragette threw herself in front of the King's horse and died next day. The sacrifice . . . silenced for a while the vulgar writers of the Press, but it brought the vote no nearer.

G. D. H. Cole and R. Postgate, *The Common People 1746-1946*, 1961

SOURCE B (ii)

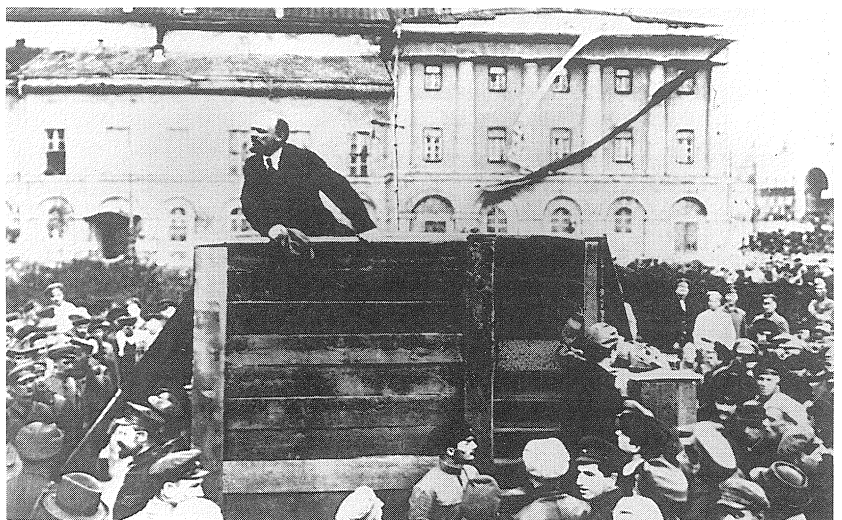
In 1912 the Derby was marred by the tragedy of the Suffragette who threw herself under the King's horse at Tattenham Corner and was killed.

D. D. Lindsay and E. S. Washington, *A Portrait of Britain 1851-1951*, 1952

SOURCE C

I've always said, the Jews are the most diabolic creatures in existence, and at the same time the stupidist. They can't produce a musician, or a thinker. No art, nothing, less than nothing. They're liars, forgers, crooks. They owe their success only to the stupidity of their victims.

Adolf Hitler, 5 November 1941, quoted in *Table Talk 1941-44*



LAMENTATION OF H. LINGLEY.

Within a dungeon in Norwich gad,
One Hubbard Lingley in grief bewails,
His own kind uncle he did kill and slay,
On a Friday morning in the month of May.
For that cruel murder he's doomed to die
On Norwich fatal sad gallows high.

He is doomed to suffer as I relate
On the very tree where Rush met his fate
In health, in vigour, in youth and bloom,
The murderer Lingley must meet his doom.

In the morning early at four o'clock
He fired a sad and dreadful shot
Which caused his uncle's fatal death wound
Where he fell bleeding upon the ground.

A kind good uncle as may be seen
To his wicked nephew he had been;
Reared him up tenderly and used him well,
And in his cottage with him to dwell.

But he resolved he his blood would spill
His uncle Benjamin he wished to kill;
On Friday morn, the seventeenth of May,
The nephew did his kind uncle slay.

Early in the morning, at four o'clock,
To attract his uncle he fired a shot
And by that spot received the fatal wound.
The murderer flew and left him on the ground.

Some labouring men who were passers by,
Saw the murdered in his blood to lie;
Suspicion did on his nephew fall,
And innocent blood did for vengeance call.

Many excuses did Lingley make,
Not having courage to meet his fate;
He before a jury for the deed was tried,
And condemned to suffer on the gallows high.

Hubbard Lingley thought when his uncle died
His place to him would not be denied;
So he was determined to kill and slay,
His uncle dear the seventeenth day of May.

He is doomed to die, nothing can him save,
By the side of Rush in a murderer's grave;
His bones will moulder till the Judgment day,
How could he take his uncle's life away?

At Norwich castle he was tried and cast
And his last moments approaching fast;
The hangman anxious does now await
To terminate Hubbard Lingley's fate.

Oh! all young men a warning take
Think and consider ere it is too late;
How could he slay his uncle as he had,
Base, vile, ungrateful, and cruel man.

▲ SOURCE D
Two photographs of Lenin giving a speech during the Russian Revolution

◀ SOURCE E
A 19th-century ballad or 'broadside' which was sold to people to provide news or entertainment

► **SOURCE F** A photograph taken in 1939 of children being evacuated



SOURCE G From *A True Tale of Robin Hood*

Poor men might safely pass by him,
And some that way would choose,
For well they knew that to help them
He evermore did use.

But where he knew a miser rich,
That did the poor oppress,
To feel his coin his hand did itch;
He'd have it more or less.

And sometimes, when the highway failed,
Then he his courage arouses;
He and his men have often assailed
[attacked]
Such rich men in their houses.

A ballad written in 1632 by Martin Parker. It refers to the outlaw Robin Hood who was supposed to have lived in the 12th or 13th century.

Source	Question being asked by the historian	Reasons why the source(s) might be unreliable to an historian	In what ways or for what purposes the sources might still be useful to an historian
A Nennius	Was King Arthur a good fighter?		
B Two secondary sources about the 'Suffragette' Derby, 1913	When did Emily Davison die?		
C Hitler's views on the Jews	What contribution did the Jews make to German life?		
D Lenin giving a speech during the Russian Revolution	Which other famous leader apart from Lenin was at the meeting?		
E <i>Lamentation of Hubbard Lingley</i>	What were the details of Lingley's crime and punishment?		
F Evacuation photograph, 1939	What did city children feel about being evacuated?		
G 'A True Tale of Robin Hood'	Did Robin Hood ever exist?		

CHECKLIST (Section 4.7)

You might suspect a source provides unreliable evidence because:

- It shows the clear bias of the writer.
- It contains factual errors.
- It contains exaggerated comments.
- It is inconsistent with similar sources.
- It was written a long time after the events it describes.
- It was produced for a particular purpose which might affect its reliability.

Try to match the sources on this page with one or more of these points, after you have filled in the chart.

- But remember —
- A source can still be useful for some purposes even though it might be unreliable for others.

4.8 HOW DO WE FIND OUT IF A SOURCE IS RELIABLE?

Once the historian has decided what topic is to be studied, all the available sources are collected together in order to research it. He or she must decide whether the sources provide reliable evidence so that the final written history is as accurate as possible.

You are trying to find out about the effects of the Great Fire of London in 1666. Source A below is available and you must check it for reliability.

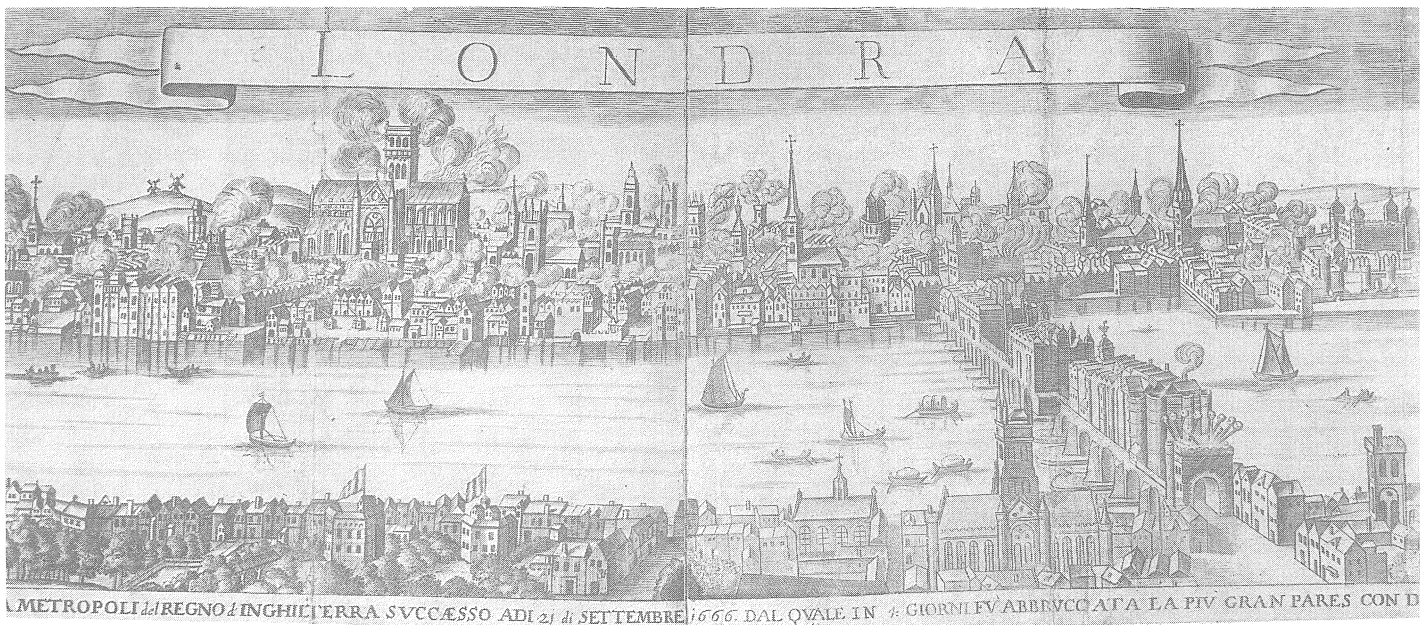
The checklist shows some of the questions we can ask to help find out if a source is reliable. How might those questions help to test the reliability of Source A?

- 1 Suggest two reasons why this picture might not be reliable. (One reason should be based on anything shown in the picture, and the other should be based on what you know about how the source came about.)
- 2 What would you want to check about this picture before accepting that it truthfully shows:
 - (a) the parts of London burnt by the fire
 - (b) that this is what London looked like in 1666? (Look again at the first three checklist points.)
- 3 Would you be happy to accept the reliability of this picture on its own? (Refer to the fourth checklist point.)
- 4 The historian in this case would have to go beyond looking at the source on its own. Choose two features from the picture which you might be able to *cross-check* with other sources.
- 5 The source doesn't tell you:
 - (a) how the fire started, *or*
 - (b) what London looked like after the fire.

Written sources might give you more help to answer these questions. Why are written sources usually more helpful than picture sources?

- 6 Assuming this *was* an accurate picture, what could you learn about:
 - (a) London Bridge
 - (b) shipping on the Thames
 - (c) types of housing in London, 1666
 - (d) how the fire started?

▼ **SOURCE A** An Italian artist's impression of the Great Fire of London. The large building on the left is St Paul's Cathedral and on the extreme right is the Tower of London.



Now let us examine three more specific ways an historian seeks to establish reliability:

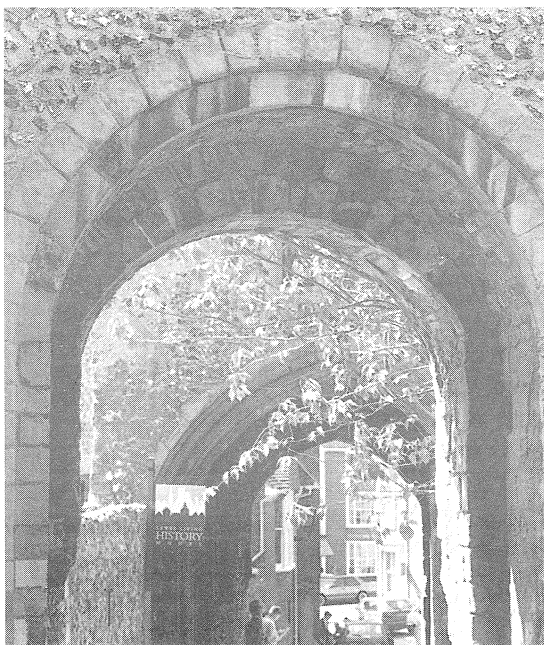
- Site visits
- Cross-checking with other sources from the same period
- Referring to background information

Establishing reliability through site visits

Some artefactual (object) sources (e.g. castles) still exist. One of the most effective ways to check the reliability of written or pictorial sources is to visit the buildings as they are now.



▲ SOURCE C The machicolations of the barbican, June 1988



▲ SOURCE D The arch of the gatehouse behind the barbican.

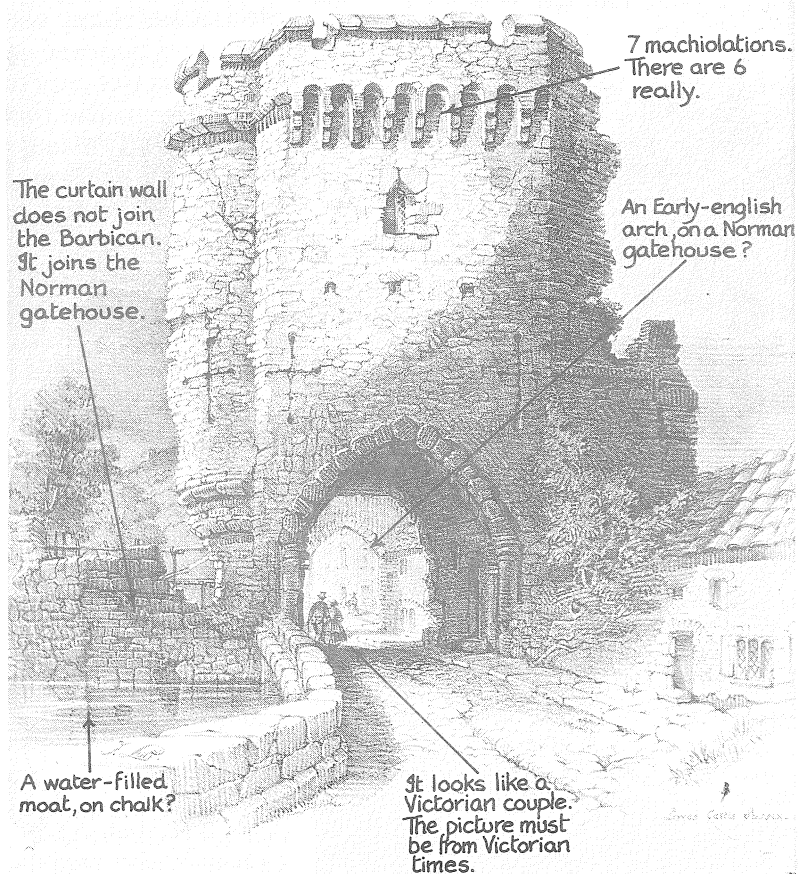
Recently a Sussex schoolboy undertook a study of a local castle. When he visited it he was very surprised to see that a picture he had seen in the castle guidebook did not give a true picture of the barbican (defensive gatehouse). Source B shows the picture from the guidebook and the schoolboy's labels. These indicate how his personal observation differed from the picture. You will see from actual photographs of the barbican (Sources C and D) that many of his observations appear to be correct.

- 7 "The picture in the guidebook must be wrong because the boy checked it against the barbican as it is today." Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- 8 Suggest how an inaccurate picture of the castle barbican might have come into existence.
- 9 What else would you want to find out to decide whether the pupil or the guidebook was closer to describing how the barbican once looked?

▼ SOURCE B Extracts from a pupil's site description of a castle barbican

AN UNRELIABLE SOURCE

This picture is from the Castle guide-book. Historians must be aware of evidence that could be misleading.



CHECKLIST (Section 4.8)

There are several key questions which you can ask of a source in order to establish its reliability.

- Who produced the source and when?
- Was the writer/artist an eyewitness? What were the sources of his/her information?
- Why was the source produced?
- What is the origin of the source? (i.e. where was it produced?)
- Is there consistency in the source? (i.e. does everything in the source make sense?)
- Is there consistency with other sources? (i.e. do other sources agree with this source?)

4.8 HOW DO WE FIND OUT IF A SOURCE IS RELIABLE? (CONTINUED)

Cross-checking evidence for reliability

After the failure of the Chartist petition to Parliament in July 1839, rumours spread of a possible uprising. However it was only at Newport in Wales that any serious incident took place.

SOURCE A From a school textbook

In the early hours of 4 November some 3000 miners, led by John Frost, . . . marched into the town to free local Chartists who had been arrested. The authorities were ready; 40 soldiers and a number of special constables were barricaded into the Westgate Hotel, where the prisoners were held under armed guard. When fighting began, the soldiers fired into the crowd, killing 24 people. A total of 125 arrests were made. The Newport rising was both a failure and an embarrassment to the main body of Chartists.

C. Steer, *Radicals and Protest, 1815-50*, 1986

▼ SOURCE B An artist's view of the events at Newport, 1839. From an engraving in the Mansell Collection



1 How reliable is Source B in portraying the events at Newport?

Points for discussion:

- Describe what seems to be happening in the picture.
- Can you identify the people (e.g. soldiers, constables, etc.) described in the written account above (Source A)?
- What in the picture (Source B) makes you think this is the incident described above and what makes you doubt it?
- Because the picture disagrees with the written account, is it definitely wrong? Explain your answer.

As we have two sources which do not agree fully on the incident, it is necessary to *cross-check* with other sources to work out which gives the most reliable picture.

SOURCE C

The parcel of people I saw in the morning of the riot, were armed; they had guns, sticks, etc; the sticks had iron points, I did not see many with guns. I saw of this body two hundred or three hundred . . . They were not very tumultuous [noisy]. . . The body of the mob stood for a space [time], and asked for the [Chartist] prisoners who were taken before daylight. None of the mob [Chartists] went forward as spokesmen. . . I could only see the steps, to which the mob came close up. The first moment or two they asked for the prisoner Smith; then a rush was made. Then I heard firing and took to my heels. I cannot say whether the mob had guns, pikes or clubs. I cannot tell whether they were armed for the biggest part. I heard someone say, in a very loud voice, 'No, never.' I was distant from the door of the Westgate twenty five yards when I heard the words. I heard no groaning. I could not say where the firing began. No man could judge. You nor I could not tell. Saw no smoke outside. It is likely enough the firing began from the Westgate Inn.

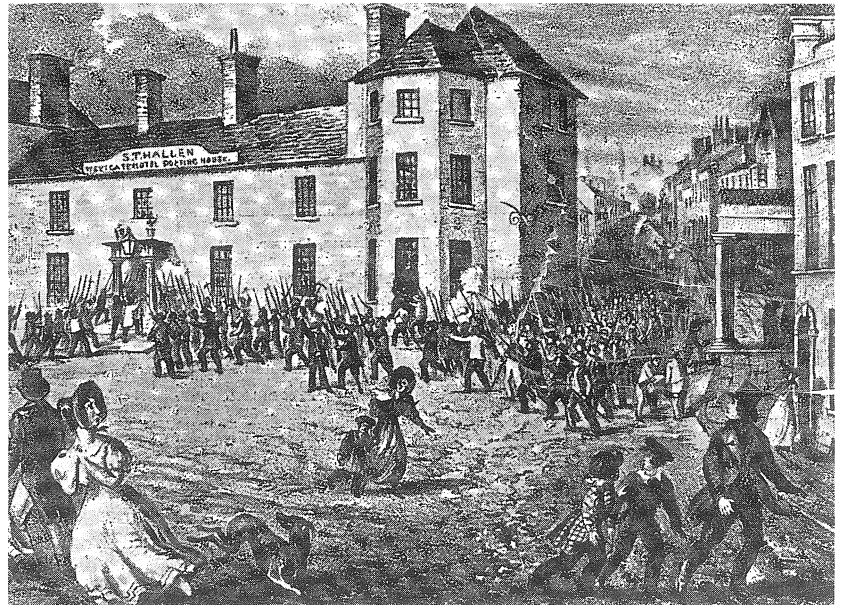
Edward Patton, an eyewitness, giving his views at the trial of John Frost the leader at Newport. *Annual Register*, 1840. Patton was a Newport carpenter who regarded himself as a neutral observer.

SOURCE D

At least eight thousand men, mostly miners employed in the neighbourhood were engaged in the attack upon the town of Newport and that many of them were armed . . . On entering Newport, the people marched straight to the Westgate hotel, where the magistrates, with about 30 soldiers were assembled, being fully apprised of [knowing about] the intended outbreak. The Riot Act was read, and the soldiers fired down, with ease and security, upon the people who had first broken and fired into the windows. The people in a few minutes found their position untenable [hopeless], and retired to the outside of the town, to concert a different plan of attack, but ultimately returned home, without attempting anything more. The soldiers did not leave their place of shelter to follow them. About 30 of the people are known to have been killed, and several to have been wounded.

A Chartist newspaper, 17 November 1839. (The paper did not like violent events like this.)

- 2 What *did* happen at the Westgate? Fill in the chart to help you decide. If you can't answer one of the questions using a particular source, write 'unclear' on the chart. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.
- 3 There is disagreement between the sources, but suggest what, in outline, seems to have happened.
- 4 Where else might the historian look to find out what happened, the number of soldiers involved, how many were killed etc?



▲ **SOURCE E** An artist's impression of events at Newport, 1839

- 5 Assuming your account in question 3 is reasonably close to the truth, how reliable do you think Source B is in showing what happened at the Westgate hotel?
- 6 If Source B is biased, which side do you think the artist was on?
- 7 Why might an artist at the time produce a picture like this?
- 8 What else would you like to know about this picture to test its accuracy further?
- 9 Propaganda is very important during disputes. Compare this picture with Source C on page 48. Both were produced during difficult times for the Government. Which picture favours the Government of the time and which their opposition? Explain your answer.

	Source A	Source B	Source C	Source D	Source E
How many men marched to the Westgate?					
What arms were carried by the marchers?					
Who was in the Westgate?					
Who fired/attacked first?					
Who appears to have won?					
Results. Dead? wounded?					

CHECKLIST
(Section 4.8)

- The reliability of the evidence in a particular source can often be checked by *cross-referencing* it with other sources.

4.8 HOW DO WE FIND OUT IF A SOURCE IS RELIABLE? (CONTINUED)

The importance of background knowledge

Source A shows a planning meeting during the Russian Revolution of 1917. On the left sit Lenin and Stalin surrounded by their Bolshevik (Communist) colleagues.

What impression does the drawing give of the relationship between Lenin and Stalin?

To understand the picture fully you need to know more about the *context* (background) in which it was produced.

After Lenin the Soviet leader died in 1924 there was a struggle for power between Stalin and Trotsky. There are some written sources in existence which show that Lenin himself was worried about Stalin becoming leader.

In his last will and testament Lenin dictated, 'Having become Secretary-General, Comrade Stalin has acquired immense power, and I am not sure that he will always know how to use this power with sufficient caution.'

Lenin even added a postscript suggesting that Stalin should be removed from his job in the Party. Trotsky was probably over-confident and did not build up a lot of personal support. Stalin eventually won the battle and it seems clear that he used pictures and photographs to help him.

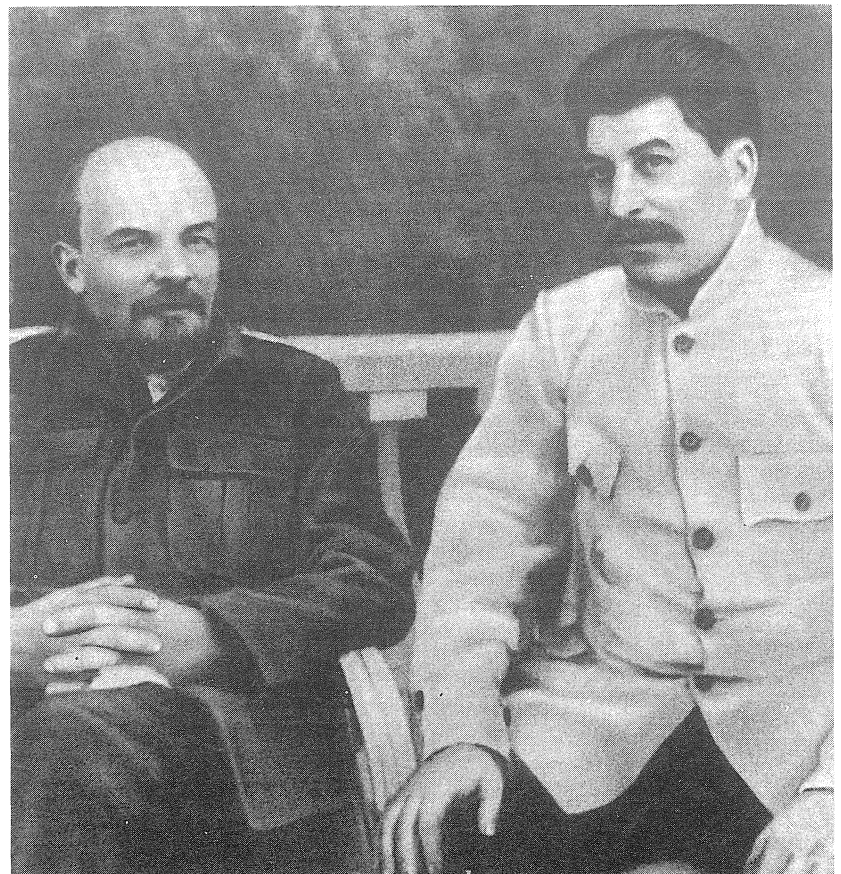
Answer the following questions, bearing in mind that Lenin was leader of the Communist party when it took over in Russia and that anyone associated with him was likely to be respected.

- 1 If Source A had appeared in the Soviet Union during the period of the leadership struggle would
 - (a) Stalin, or
 - (b) Trotskyhave been happy about it? Explain your answer.
- 2 The drawing is believed to have been produced in 1937, long after Stalin had assumed leadership of the Soviet Union. Suggest possible reasons why it might have been drawn.
- 3 'Because Source A is a drawing it is less reliable than if it had been a photograph.' Do you agree?
- 4 What impression is given in Source B of the relationship between these two men?
- 5 Does the photograph prove that they worked well together and respected each other?



▲ SOURCE A

▼ SOURCE B Lenin and Stalin on a seat, Gorki, 1922



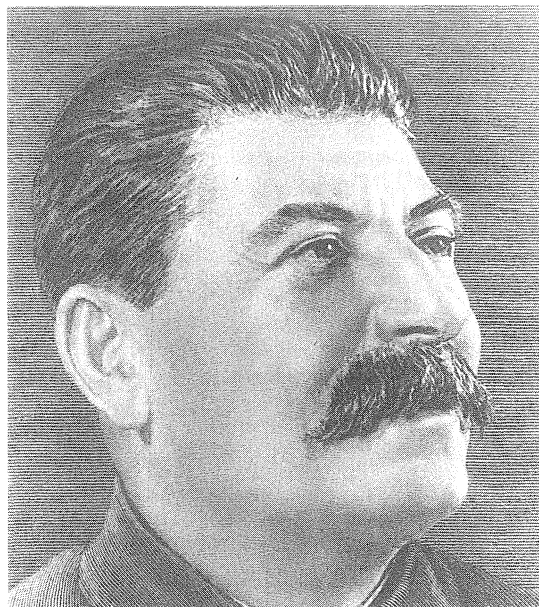
- 6 When you have read the background information, decide whether Stalin would have been pleased to have Source B published after Lenin's death. Explain your answer.
- 7 Look very carefully at the photograph. Is there anything about it which might suggest it could be a forgery?
- 8 Look again at your answer to question 3 and decide whether you want to change it.

In tightly controlled countries such as the Soviet Union under Stalin, it is important to know what sort of information was made available to the public to check on the reliability of some sources. We are very used to photographs of our Royal family or Prime Minister which show them in a way which they would probably prefer us not to see e.g. relaxing on a private holiday or yawning at a public event. In the Stalinist Soviet Union the photographs released to the public were strictly controlled and aimed to always place him in a good light. Consequently we must find out when interpreting sources from the period whether they were seen by the public or not. If we don't, we might make unreliable judgements about the Soviet Union at that time.

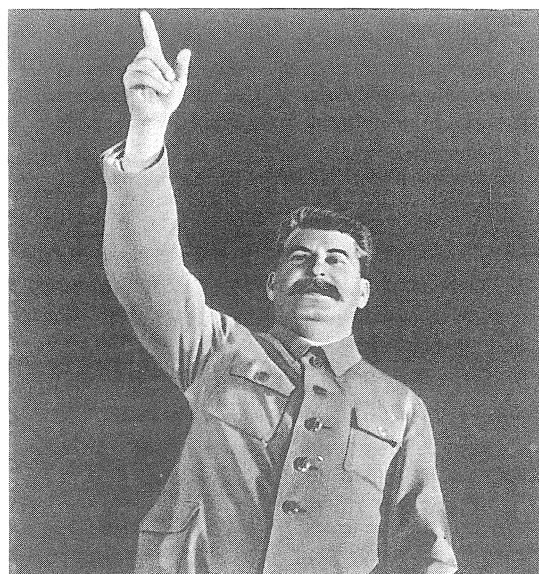
- 9 If you were the leader of a country what sort of image would you want to present to your people? Choose four of the following words: *friendly, weak, caring, intelligent, tidy, powerful, happy, organised.*
- 10 What impressions of Stalin do Sources C and D give? You can use words from the list or ideas of your own.

Did Stalin have everything his own way? The cartoon (Source E) might suggest that people were free to criticise Stalin. Background information would show that this is not reliable evidence to prove that point. This cartoon was actually produced in a magazine written by Russian emigrés in the 1930s. Emigrés are people who leave a country, usually because it is not safe for them to stay there. Source E is trying to show what goes on in the Supreme Soviet (the Russian Parliament).

- 11 What is the message of the cartoon?
- 12 'Cartoons don't contain facts therefore they are of little use to the historian.' Explain with reference to Source E whether you agree or disagree with this statement.
- 13 Which of the visual sources on these pages would Stalin have been pleased to release to the public? Explain your answer for each source.



◀ SOURCE C Stalin



◀ SOURCE D Stalin

▼ SOURCE E
A cartoon from a Paris-based émigré journal in the 1930s.



Заставляя нашего Бухарина читать

4.9 ASSESSMENT EXERCISES – RELIABILITY

Peterloo, 1819

There were many disturbances and riots in Britain in the period between 1811 and 1819. The major cause was social and economic distress, but the Government, remembering all too well the French Revolution, was particularly worried about events getting out of hand.

A campaign by Radicals demanding political reform came to a head in 1819 when four major meetings were planned for the summer months. The last one at St Peter's Fields in Manchester had a tense build-up. The Radicals practised marching so that they would appear to be a disciplined and impressive group, and the magistrates in Manchester prepared for trouble, going as far as consulting the government about their possible actions.

On 16 August thousands of protesters turned up to listen to the Radical Henry Hunt. In the background waited the Magistrates, the King's Hussars and the local yeomanry (a reserve fighting force made up of local tradesmen). Accounts differ about what happened next. What is not in doubt is that there was fighting, at least eleven deaths and many wounded. Most casualties were on the protestors' side.

It is often hard to get close to the truth about events like this, because both the Government and their opponents are keen to have the story written up from their point of view. Consequently it is very important to check all sources for reliability.

Read the following sources describing the events at St Peter's Fields. This incident is now more commonly called 'Peterloo' because the King's Hussars had fought at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

SOURCE A

The meeting was then addressed by several orators, showing much menacing attitude, and the shouts seemed to rend the very air and shake the foundation of the ground. The constables were tauntingly insulted wherever they were observed to stand; sticks and hats always waving on every acclamation.

About half past one the Magistrates deemed it expedient to read the Riot Act, and instantly after the platform was surrounded in a masterly manner. The manoeuvre would have taken place without the bloodshed had not the mob

assailed the military and civil authorities with every resistance in their power, and particularly with missiles. Consequently the cavalry charged in their self-defence; not without first being witnesses to a pistol-shot from the multitude, against one of the gentlemen in our Yeomanry, who now lives in imminent danger.

A letter to *The Courier*, 1819

SOURCE B

Some 10 minutes had elapsed, all was certainly peaceable, when a body of cavalry rode up through the crowd, brandishing their drawn swords, surrounded the hustings and seized Hunt. I was myself a spectator, and the conduct of the crowd was quite peaceable. It is not believed that the Magistrates read the Riot Act; if they did, at least, nobody was aware of it. There can hardly be a doubt, if the meeting had been permitted to take its course, it would have concluded as peaceably as they have always hitherto done; as it is, blood has been shed!

Private letter to *The Times*, 1819

▼ SOURCE C 'Britons Strike Home' by George Cruikshank, 1819



SOURCE D

A posse [group] of 300 or 400 constables marched into the field about 12 o'clock. Not the slightest insult was offered to them. The cavalry drew their swords, and brandished them fiercely on the air: upon which they rode into the mob which gave way before them. Not a brickbat was thrown at them — not a pistol was fired during this period: all was quiet and orderly. They wheeled around the wagons before they came in front of them.

As soon as Hunt and Johnson had jumped from the waggon [to surrender] a cry was made by the cavalry, 'Have their flags'. They immediately dashed at not only the flags which were in the waggon, but those which were posted amongst the crowd, cutting most indiscriminately to right and left in order to get at them. This set the people running in all directions, and it was not until this act had been committed that any brick-bats were hurled at the military. From the moment the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry lost all command of temper. A man within five yards of us had his nose completely taken off by a blow of a sabre.

The Times, 19 August 1819, whose reporter said that he himself very much disagreed with the views of Henry Hunt.

SOURCE E

Before 12 o'clock crowds began to assemble, each town or hamlet having a banner, and some a cap, with 'Liberty' upon it: each party, as they came through the streets, kept in military order, with sticks shouldered. A banner was painted 'Taxation and no Representation is tyrannical and unjust', . . . On another banner 'Die like men, and not be sold like slaves'.

It was 20 minutes after one o'clock before Hunt appeared. 'Gentlemen, I must entreat that you will be peaceable; a great deal depends upon that, and I trust all who hear me will remain quiet.'

The Courier, 1819

An historian trying to decide why violence broke out at Peterloo would have to assess the sources very thoroughly.

Becoming familiar with the sources

- 1 What evidence is there in Source E that some protestors were prepared for possible violence? What does the source suggest was Hunt's view on violence?
- 2 What, according to Source A, was the behaviour of the speakers (orators) and the crowd? Who in this writer's view started the violence?
- 3 What, according to Source B, was the behaviour of the crowd? Who in this writer's view started the violence?
- 4 What, according to Source D, was the behaviour of the crowd? Who in this writer's view started the violence?

Questions on the sources

- 5 Look at Sources A–E. Decide whether each one broadly favours the Magistrates or the protestors, or appears to favour neither side. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.

Favours Magistrates	Favours Protestors	Favours neither side

- 6
 - (a) Choose one source from the first column. Which words or phrases turn the reader against the protestors?
 - (b) Choose one source from the second column. Which words or phrases try to make you sympathetic to the protestors?
 - (c) If you have a source in the third column, explain why you think it favoured neither side.
- 7
 - (a) List one fact which could be checked from each of your three sources.
 - (b) Choose one part of each source which could be called an opinion. If you can't find an opinion in a particular source, say so.
- 8 All these sources are from newspapers or letters to newspapers. What would you want to know about the newspapers and authors before accepting the reliability of what they wrote?
- 9 Now answer the questions on the worksheet which your teacher will give you.

UNIT 5

INTERROGATING SOURCES

5.1 HOW DO SOURCES GIVE US IDEAS ABOUT THE PAST?

Historians use sources in different ways to find evidence about the past. In some cases facts can be read straight out of a source. In others it is necessary to do some more careful thinking before an idea can be extracted from the source.

For instance if you were to ask, 'What can we learn from newspaper advertisements appearing during the Second World War?', the Spam advertisement (Source B) could be quite helpful.

At the simplest level it might give you the clear *fact* that a meat called Spam was available during the war.

You might go beyond the information given and make an *inference*. Study the advertisement carefully and you will see that the company selling the product appear to be worried about something. What is it? Your answer can't be read directly from the source, but by going beyond the information you can make a suggestion.

You might go further and suggest that the British people were not getting as much Spam as they wanted. (Note how the advertisement apologises for the shortage of supplies during the war.)

Finally you could use the evidence in the source to help devise a *theory* (an idea) about the past. You might believe that quality tinned meat was in short supply towards the end of the war. Source B, in suggesting that someone has been trying to copy the quality meat, provides supporting evidence on the matter. Theories are not just dreamed up; they are always tested against evidence.

Look at Sources A-E opposite. These advertisements, which appeared in newspapers during World War II, could give the historian some ideas about the life of people in Britain during the war.

Clearly stated facts

- 1 What was the name of a brand of coffee sold in 1945? (Source A)
- 2 What was the weight of a tin of 'real' Spam? (Source B)

Going beyond the information given/making inferences

- 3 The dog food advertisement (Source D) suggests that food for people was in short supply during the war. Explain how.
- 4 Source E mentions 'hinged wood soles'. We don't often have wooden soles on shoes these days. Why might they have been made during the war?
- 5 Which advertisement could you use to support the idea that 'in some ways life carried on as normal during the war'. Explain your choice.

Developing a theory

- 6 What understanding do you have of the problems caused by the war, from studying these five advertisements? Explain your answer.
- 7 What other sources would you like to find to check your answer to Question 6?

Other points to consider:

- 8 World War II lasted from 1939 to 1945. If you were trying to find out from the advertisements what could be bought by British people during the war, would you need to know on which dates they appeared in the newspapers? Explain your answer.
- 9 Does studying these five advertisements produced during the war give historians a clear idea of what the majority of people bought? Explain your answer.

EVERY BOTTLE makes as many cups of good coffee as ever

'CAMP'

FULL STRENGTH—FINE FLAVOUR

▲ SOURCE A Daily Express, February 1945

"SPAM"
IS A REGISTERED TRADE MARK

The trademark "SPAM" can only be lawfully applied to the product manufactured exclusively by Geo. A. Hormel & Co. "SPAM" is made of pure pork shoulder meat with ham meat added. "SPAM" is sold ONLY in 12 OZ. tins plainly marked with the trademark "SPAM." We are sorry that during the war, supplies of "SPAM" are restricted.

► SOURCE B Daily Mirror, April 1945

▼ SOURCE C Daily Mirror, June 1944

*Kayser
Underwear fits
because it's
tailored*

KAYSER-BONDOR

... and all Kayser-Bondor stockings are full-fashioned *

What's he eating NOW?

The right food for your dog is **"CHAPPIE"**
—and it won't be rationed!

There's never been a dog that kept in perfect condition without meat. Only in very small quantities can a dog take bread or starchy foods and remain healthy. (Scavenging and other dirty habits don't show a dog is greedy but that he is unhealthy from wrong food.)

Yet meat is going to be hard to get from the butcher—no one wants to give a dog 'scraps' that might make another family meal—and no dog can keep fit on just the bits of skin and fat that you leave. So "Chappie", is a godsend. It is made with the lean red meat that is your dog's biggest need, but contains as well whole grain cereal and cod-liver-oil—all in proper proportions.

Get Chappie from Grocers, Corn Chandlers, Pet Shops and Chemists. Your dog will quickly show results—the look in his eye, the wag of his tail, the state of his coat.

A COMPLETE FOOD IN THIS—CHIEFLY MADE OF LEAN RED MEAT. YOU ADD NOTHING TO IT. ENOUGH FOR TWO DAYS. 6d

"CHAPPIE" Dog Food

▲ SOURCE D Daily Telegraph, January 1940

Though long the months
I have to work
And short the weeks
when I may play,
In Sandals with
a hinged wood sole,
My feet are on a holiday.

Clarks

CLARKS of STREET have retailers in nearly every town. Please choose from the styles you find available.

▲ SOURCE E Daily Mirror, June 1944

CHECKLIST
(Section 5.1)

- Clearly stated fact: 'Spam was available in 1945.' (Source B)
- Going beyond the information given and making an inference: 'Other people had been making Spam illegally', or 'British people were not getting as much Spam as they wanted in 1945.'
- Developing a theory: 'Good quality tinned meat was in short supply towards the end of the war.'

5.2 HOW CAN SOURCES BE USED TO TEST IDEAS ABOUT THE PAST?

Many historians, as well as the people involved, have written about the Communist Long March in China. Below are two examples (Sources A and B).

SOURCE A

Of the 100,000 soldiers and officials who had set out from Kiangsi in October 1934, only about 5000 survived the march. But *Chiang Kai-shek had failed to destroy the Communists.*

The Long March is *a wonderful story of heroism and endurance.* It enabled Mao Tse-tung to establish his leadership. The tactics that the Red Army developed showed how a guerrilla force could defeat a better armed and more numerous army. *The Long March also began the partnership between the Red Army and the peasants* that was to play such an important part in the eventual triumph of the Communists.

Communist China, Schools Council History 13-16 Project, 1977

SOURCE B

[The Long March was] a manifesto, an agitation corps and a seeding machine . . . without the Long March how could the broad masses have known so quickly that there are such great ideas in the world as are upheld by the Red Army . . . ? *It has sown seeds in eleven provinces which will sprout, grow leaves, blossom into flowers, bear fruit and yield a crop in future.*

Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, 1935

There are several important ideas (in italics) mentioned in Sources A and B. These give clues as to why the Communists eventually succeeded in China, but there is not much evidence to support them.

Look through Sources C-H and pick out any evidence which you feel supports each idea.

'The Long March is a wonderful story of heroism and endurance.'

- 1 What evidence would you select from Sources C and D to support this idea?

'The Long March also began the partnership between the Red Army and the peasants.'

- 2 In what way were the peasants usually treated by armies during wars? (Source E)

- 3 How were the Communists supposed to treat the peasants? (Source H)

- 4 Does the evidence suggest that they acted like this in practice? (Source G)

- 5 In what practical ways did the peasants and the Red Army support each other? (Source E)

'Chiang Kai-shek [leader of the KMT] had failed to destroy the Communists.'

- 6 Why did Chiang and the KMT fail to gain the support of the peasants? (Source F)

- 7 Chiang was said to be 'bewildered by the spread of Communist influence' (Source F). How would you explain it to him? (Sources F, G and H)

- 8 How far do all these sources provide evidence to support the view (or *hypothesis*) that the Long March was an heroic event in Communist history that both forged a link between the Communists and the peasants and also contributed to the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek?

SOURCE C Crossing the Great Snow Mountain

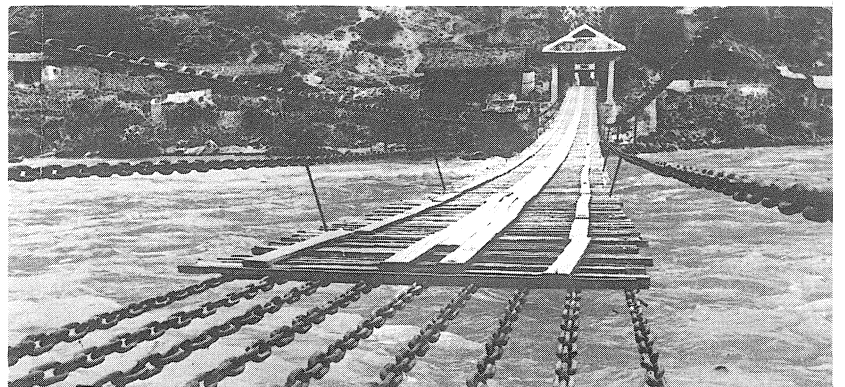
Chiachinsan [Great Snow Mountain] is blanketed in eternal snow. There are great glaciers in its chasms and every thing is white and silent.

Heavy fogs swirled about us, there was a high wind and halfway up it started to rain. As we climbed higher and higher we were caught in a terrible hailstorm and the air became so thin we could hardly breathe. Speech was completely impossible and the cold so dreadful that our breath froze and our hands and lips turned blue. Men and animals staggered and fell into chasms and disappeared for ever. Those who sat down to rest or to relieve themselves froze to death on the spot.

Agnes Smedley, *The Great Road*, 1956

Look back at p. 10 for another description of the Long March.

▼ SOURCE D
The Luting Bridge



SOURCE E The tactics of the Red Army

I remember the winter of 1928, when my forces in Hunan had dwindled to little over two thousand men, and we were surrounded. The Kuomintang troops burned down all the houses in a surrounding area of about 300 li, seized all the food there, and then blockaded us. We had no cloth, we used bark to make short tunics, and we cut up the legs of our trousers to make shoes. Our hair grew long, we had no quarters, no lights, no salt. We were sick and half starved. The peasants were no better off, and we would not touch what little they had.

But the peasants encouraged us. They dug up from the ground the grain which they had hidden from the White (KMT) troops, and gave it to us, and they ate potatoes and wild roots. They hated the Whites for burning their homes and stealing their food. Even before we arrived they had fought the landlords and tax collectors, so they welcomed us. Many joined us, and nearly all helped us in some way.

Peng Teh-huai, quoted in Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China*, 1969

SOURCE F The view of an American general in China

I judge Kuomintang and Communist party by what I saw (KMT). Corruption, neglect, chaos, economy, taxes, words and deeds. Hoarding, black market, trading with the enemy.

Communist program . . . reduce taxes, rents, interest. Raise production and standard of living. Participate in government. Practise what they preach . . .

Chiang Kai-shek is confronted with an idea, and that defeats him. He is bewildered by the spread of Communist influence. He can't see that the mass of Chinese people welcome the Reds as being the only visible hope of relief from crushing taxation, the abuses of the army and (the terror of) Tai li's Gestapo. Under Chiang Kai-shek they now begin to see what they might expect. Greed, corruption, favouritism, more taxes, a ruined currency, terrible waste of life, callous disregard of all the rights of men.

Joseph Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers*, 1948

SOURCE G

Then on Thursday morning the victorious army arrived. The Communists . . . took neither food nor fuel from the villagers, and would not accept any presents or services. They paid with their 'Great Wall' currency for all they needed. Whatever furniture they borrowed, they carefully returned, replacing anything damaged or broken. They carried water and swept the courtyards for their hosts. They chatted cheerfully with everyone, and the air was full of stories of their astonishing behaviour. Peking had known many armies through the past fifty years, but never one like this.

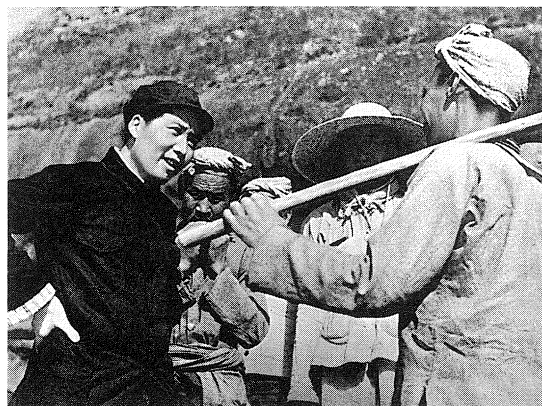
R. and N. Lapwood, *Through the Chinese Revolution*, 1954

SOURCE H

Gradually the Red Army's work with the masses improved, discipline strengthened, and a new technique in organisation developed. The peasantry everywhere began to volunteer to help the revolution. After the 1928 Conference emphatic efforts were made to enlist the support of the peasantry. The Rules introduced were as follows:

1. Replace all doors when you leave a house.
2. Return and roll up the straw matting on which you sleep.
3. Be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can.
4. Return all borrowed articles.
5. Replace all damaged articles.
6. Be honest with all transactions with the peasants.
7. Pay for all articles purchased.
8. Be sanitary and especially establish latrines a safe distance from people's houses.

Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 1963



◀ Mao talking with peasants in Yen-an, 1939

5.3 HOW DO WE DEAL WITH CONTRADICTIONARY SOURCES?

During the 18th and 19th centuries the economy and population of Great Britain grew rapidly. All the major industries expanded, the country became wealthier and its appearance changed as canals and railways were built. These great changes are often called the *industrial revolution*. The coal miners dug out more coal to heat the homes of the growing population and to feed the growing number of steam engines; the iron works produced more iron to make steam engines and railway lines and the textile factories turned out more fabric to clothe the growing population. In part because of the shortage of workers and in part because of the suitability of small children for some of the work, many young children were employed in these new factories. The conditions and health of these children are the subject of much discussion and controversy.

SOURCE A

The cotton mills at New Lanark, employ about 500 children, who are entirely fed, clothed and educated by Mr Dale. The others lodge with their parents in the village, and have a weekly allowance for their work.

The healthy and pleasurable appearance of these children has frequently attracted the attention of the traveller.

The children who reside in the house, and who have their maintenance in place of wages, are lodged in six, large, airy apartments. The boys and girls are kept distinctly apart, not only in hours of rest and refreshment, but during the time of occupation. They sleep on cast-iron bedsteads, the bed-tick filled with straw, which is changed regularly every month. The bedrooms are swept, and the windows thrown open, every morning, and kept open all day.

For dinner they have seven ounces each of fresh beef with barley broth, or alternately five ounces of cheese, and a plentiful allowance of potatoes or barley bread. This part of the table diet is seldom varied, except in winter by a dinner of fresh herrings as a change. Their breakfast and supper consists of oatmeal porridge, with the addition of milk in summer, and, during the winter, with a sauce made of molasses and beer.

From Sir Thomas Bernard's Society for the Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor, 1797

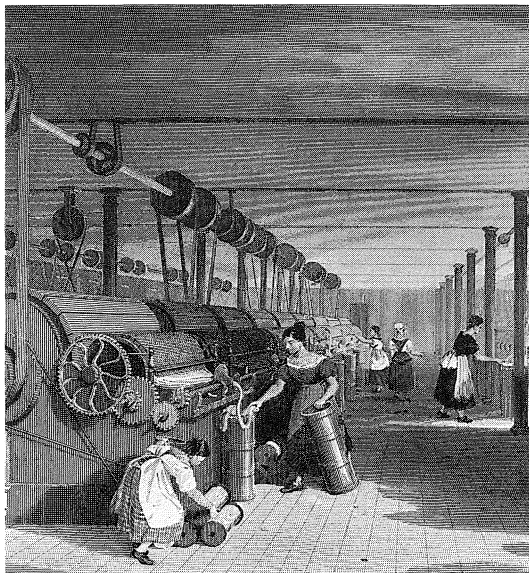


◀ SOURCE B
Frances Trollope, *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy*, 1840

SOURCE C

I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and in the surrounding districts, during a period of several months, entering the spinning rooms, unexpectedly, and often alone, at different times of the day, and I never saw a single instance of corporal chastisement [punishment] inflicted on a child . . . They always seemed to be cheerful and alert, taking pleasure in the light play of their muscles: it was delightful to observe the nimbleness with which they pieced the broken ends, as the mule carriage began to recede . . .

Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures*, 1835



◀ SOURCE D
Child labour in a cotton factory, *Picture Post*, 1820

SOURCE E Samuel Coulson, a factory worker, was questioned about conditions at the mill where his children worked

Questioner 'At what time in the morning, in the brisk [busy] time, did those girls go to the mills?'

Coulson 'In the brisk time, for about six weeks, they have gone at 3 o'clock in the morning and ended at ten, or nearly half-past ten.'

Q. 'What intervals were allowed for rest and refreshment?'

C. 'Breakfast a quarter of an hour, and dinner half an hour and drinking a quarter of an hour.'

Q. 'Had you not great difficulty in awakening your children to this excessive labour [very long hours]?'

C. 'Yes, in the early time we had to shake them before we could get them off to their work.'

Q. 'Had any of them an accident in consequence of [as a result of] this labour?'

C. 'Yes, my eldest daughter when she first went there . . . the cog caught her fingernail and screwed it off below the knuckle, and she was five weeks in Leeds Infirmary.'

Q. 'Were her wages paid during that time?'

C. 'As soon as the accident happened her wages were totally stopped.'

Q. 'Did this excessive term of labour occasion [lead to] much cruelty?'

C. 'Yes, with being so tired the strap was very frequently used.'

Evidence from the Select Committee on Factory Children's Labour, 1832.

SOURCE F

Gentlemen: Let the truth speak out . . . The fact is true. Thousands of our fellow creatures . . . both male and female, the miserable inhabitants of a Yorkshire town are this very moment existing in a state of slavery, more horrid than . . . [conditions of slaves in the West Indies].

. . . [children] are compelled [forced] by the dread of the equally appalling throng of strap of the over-looker, to hasten, half-dressed, but not half-fed to those [homes] of British infantile slavery – the mills in the town and neighbourhood of Bradford.

Thousands of little children . . . from seven to fourteen years of age, are daily compelled to labour from six o'clock in

the morning to seven in the evening, with only thirty minutes allowed for eating and recreation.

If I have succeeded in calling the attention of your readers to the horrid and abominable system on which the mills in and near Bradford is conducted, I have done some good.

A letter from Richard Oastler to the *Leeds Mercury*, 16 October 1830

- 1 Read Sources A–F. Do they give evidence that working conditions for factory children were good or bad? Copy out the chart below and tick the box you agree with. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.

WORKING CONDITIONS			
	GOOD	BAD	NO EVIDENCE
Source A			
Source B			
Source C			
Source D			
Source E			
Source F			

- 2 Choose one sentence or phrase from each written source to support your answer to Question 1.
- 3 Explain how you decided which columns to tick for the picture sources (Sources B and D).
- 4 Andrew Ure says in Source C, 'They [the children] seemed to be always cheerful and alert.' Samuel Coulson says in Source E, '[He] had great difficulty in awakening his children to this excessive labour . . .' These two statements seem to contradict one another.
- (a) How could both be telling the truth?
- (b) Does the fact that the sources contradict mean that both are useless as evidence about child workers?
- 5 Each writer has a good reason for writing about factory children. For example, Andrew Ure (Source C) was keen to show to the British people that factories were a good thing. Why might each of the other sources have been written or drawn?
- 6 The language of a source can often tell you about the likely reliability of its evidence. Pick out two phrases in Sources C and F which suggest that these sources might not be reliable in what they say.
- 7 If you were Richard Oastler, why might you use strong language (e.g. 'horrid' 'abominable') in your article?
- 8 The sources say and show different things about the lives of children in factories. Is one account 'right' and one 'wrong'? Why might they say and show different things about life in the factories? Explain your answers.

CHECKLIST
(Section 5.3)

When historians find contradictions between sources, they must investigate further. They need to check the reliability of the sources by:

- looking at the backgrounds of the authors
- checking for any bias
- establishing why the source was written
- cross-checking with other sources
- looking for gaps in the evidence

Remember, a source that historians might decide is biased or misleading could still have a use, such as showing the opinion of someone at the time. Some sources might not be helpful for one task but can be for another.

5.4 HOW CAN A WIDE RANGE OF SOURCES BE USED TO WRITE A SECONDARY ACCOUNT?

The historian needs to use lots of sources to write a secondary account of the past. If only one or two sources are consulted the historian might write a very inaccurate account of what happened. For example, the attitude of British people to the coming of the railways in the 19th century might be under investigation.

1 If we were looking at the attitudes of people to the coming of the railways what answer would we get from Sources A, B, C and D?

SOURCE A

I am sure that our respectable visitors have no relish for either a railroad or the pleasure of a greater influx of vagrants; on the contrary they generally express their disapprobation [disapproval] of such a measure; and I have heard many of them say that if there is a railroad to Scarborough, they should never come again, as visitors on pleasure.

George Knowles, *Observations on the expediency of making a line of railroad from York to Scarborough*, 1841.

SOURCE B

This counsel [advice] I address – the train eschew [avoid]
Old, young or neither fat, thin, short or tall,
Travel by turnpike or not at all;
Or if you must by railway travel, still,
Think first what may happen and – first make your will.

A contemporary poem



RAILWAY UNDERTAKING.

▲ SOURCE C A cartoon from *Punch*, 18 September 1852

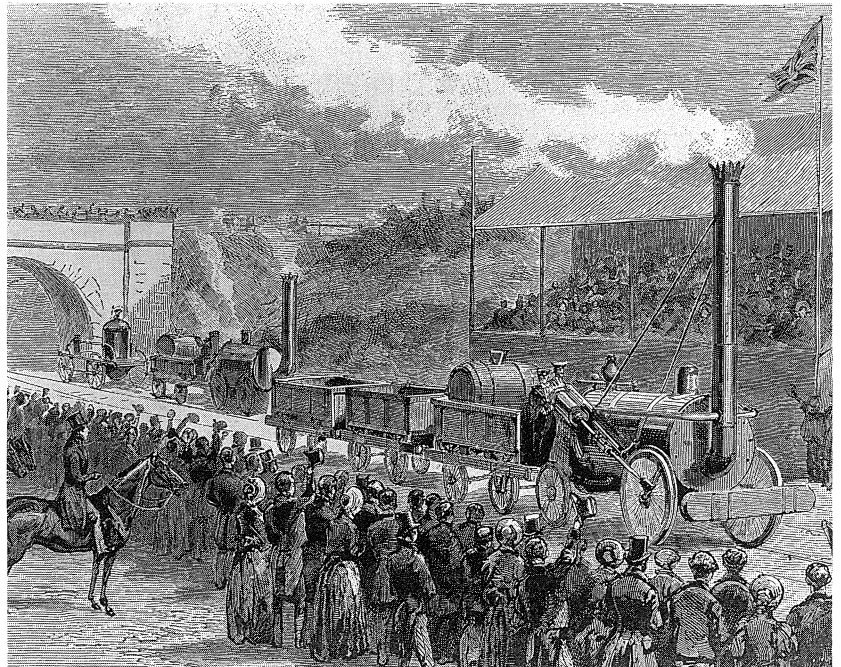
SOURCE D

The people would be smothered in tunnels, and those that escaped suffocation would be burned in the carriages. Eton College opposed it because it would be injurious to the discipline of the school, and dangerous to the morals of the pupils; and it was added, 'anybody who knew the nature of Eton boys, would know that they could not be kept from the railway.' A farmer objected to it because his cows might be killed in passing under an archway. A gentleman objected because no public benefit could compensate for destroying the beauties of his estate.

J. Francis, *History of the English Railway*, 1851

For the balanced view needed to write an effective secondary source, the historian must look at a range of opinion. Now study Sources E to G.

▼ SOURCE E
The Rainhill Trials,
October 6th, 1829



SOURCE F

Ninety thousand men were employed directly, and upwards of 40,000 collaterally; 130,000 men, with their wives and families, represented a population of 500,000 souls; so that 1 in 50 of the entire population of the kingdom might be said to be dependent upon the railway!

Speech by Robert Stephenson, published in *The Engineer*, January 1856.

SOURCE G

The conveyance of the inland mails might be effected at a very trifling charge, compared with the present enormous expense of mailcoaches, as one coach upon a proper construction would take all the mails on the line of the road between London and Edinburgh.

The introduction of fresh fish into the interior of the kingdom would open a source of trade to an immense number of individuals, and very essentially contribute to the improvement of our fisheries as well as to the establishment of new ones.

Very great benefit would arise to all estates in the direction of the railways, by the very easy and cheap conveyance to market towns, but more especially to the metropolis, where provisions and vegetables of all kinds might be sent from distant parts of the kingdom.

T. Gray, *Observations on a General Iron Railway*, 1823

SOURCE H

Railways have accomplished what the far-famed Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, with its long train of noble and ignoble patrons and its penny magazines and penny encyclopaedias . . . could never have effected; they have taught the thorough-bred Londoner almost to discriminate between a plough and a harrow, and to recognise a potato by its stem.

Railway Times, 1837

2 Copy out a chart like the one below and fill it in to identify the main ideas from the sources. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.

	Reasons for opposing the railways		Reasons for supporting the railways
Source A		E	
Source B		F	
Source C		G	
Source D		H	
		I	

3 What were the attitudes of the British people to the coming of the railways?

An historian must also consider the significance of the date when each source was produced. For instance Sources A and D (and possibly B) came into existence *before* the arrival of the railways. Reference to a further source produced after their arrival might show that many fears were unfounded.

SOURCE I

The prophecies of ruin and disaster to landlords and families were equally confounded by the openings of railways . . . the farmers were enabled to buy their coals, lime and manure for less money, while they obtained a readier access to the best markets. Cows gave milk as before, their sheep fed and fattened, and even skittish horses ceased to shy at the passing locomotive.

Landlords also found that they could get higher rents for farms situated near a railway . . . Land was now advertised for sale with the attraction of being 'near a railway station' . . . Even Colonel Sibthorpe [the MP for Lincoln, and one of the staunchest opponents of the railways] was eventually compelled to acknowledge its utility. For a time he continued to post to and from the country as before. Then he compromised . . . by taking a railway ticket for the long journey, and posting only a stage or two nearest town; until at length he undisguisedly committed himself . . . to the express train, and performed the journey throughout upon what he had formally denounced as 'the infernal railroad'.

S. Smiles, *The Lives of George and Robert Stephenson*, 1857

- 4 Why according to Smiles (Source I) didn't the railways turn out to be the disaster expected by the landlords?
- 5 Why was Smiles so keen to mention Colonel Sibthorpe when talking about the success of the railways?
- 6 Smiles wrote his book in support of the achievement of the Stephensons. Is it wise to accept his views as a final word on how the railways were received in 19th-century Britain? Explain your answer.

CHECKLIST

(Sections 5.3 and 5.4)

- Historians usually begin work by asking a question.
- Sources are then collected to find evidence to answer the question.
- The sources are evaluated (tested) to check how accurate they might be.
- Where sources contradict (disagree), the historian has to make a *judgement* on them, or state that there is doubt in the final account.
- The historian's final story about the past is an interpretation based on the available evidence. However much material the historian has to work with, it is never possible to give a definitive answer to the question asked.

5.5 ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Why did children work in textile mills?

Most children were expected to work and help provide for their families in early 19th-century Britain. In textile mills the hours were long and the conditions often unpleasant and dangerous. Why then did children work in them? One way to look at this is to see what other employment was available, and compare it with what was offered in the mills.

SOURCE A

I get up at 5 o'clock. I get 10d [about 4p] a day now. In November there were twenty of us carrot-digging. Each child brings her own tools. I have hoes of different sizes, a muck-fork, a carrot-fork, a twitch basket and a twitch rake.

Elizabeth Hutchings, quoted in *Sixth Report on Children's Employment*, 1867

SOURCE B

I hoe and dig carrots. Digging carrots is very hard work. The ganger takes the work [offers to do it all for a certain price]. We always know when he has taken the work because we all have to work so much harder.

Mary Crampton, aged 13, who worked in a 'gang', quoted in *Sixth Report on Children's Employment*, 1867

SOURCE C

Age	on farms in Dorset	in Staffordshire Potteries	Piecers in Factories	In mine in Yorkshire
8	1/6	1/6	—	2/6
11	2/6	2/6	3/—	5/—
14	3/9	—	4/—	7/6
17	4/6	9/—	5/6	—

Reports on Children's Employment, 1842, 1843 (adapted)



▲ SOURCE D
A child birdscarer

SOURCE E Children's wages in the Isle of Thanet

Boys are employed at: Weeding the corn. Hours 6 to 6. Meals: one hour and a half. Wages 6d a day. Bird-scaring. Age 8. Hours as above. Wages 4d a day.

Girls are employed occasionally at:

Weeding, stone-picking, turnip-topping. Wages from 4d to 8d a day.

Parliamentary Report on women and children employed in agriculture, 1843



▲ SOURCE F Children gleaning

SOURCE H The gang-workers year

- January** Little work except sorting potatoes, picking up stones.
February Like January.
March Pulling 'twitch', the creeping roots of couch grass; spreading manure, planting potatoes, hoeing.
April Like March and weeding begins.
May Weeding.
June Weeding, singling turnips.
July Like June and hay-making.
August Harvest, pulling flax.
September Harvest, gleaning.
October Picking potatoes, spreading manure.
November Picking potatoes, turnips, carrots.
December Little work when frost comes.

Sixth Report on Children's Employment, 1867
(adapted)

SOURCE I

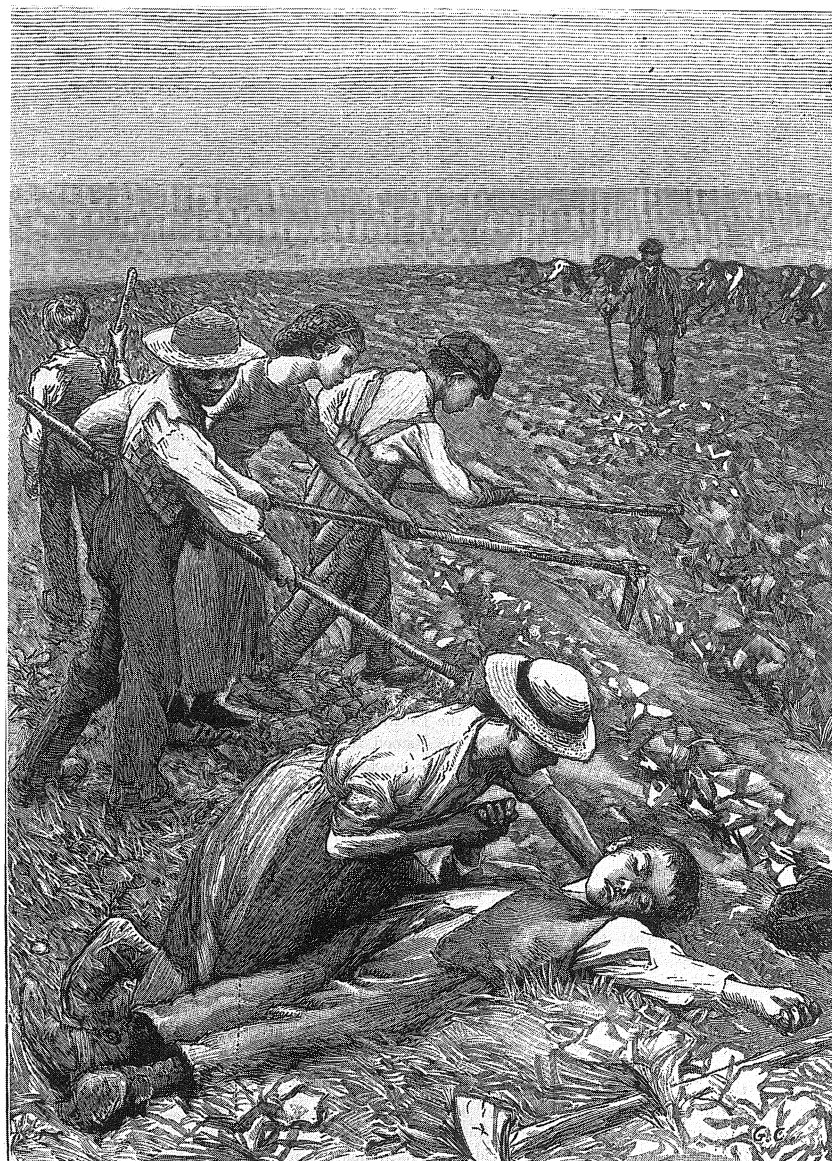
I have seven children; four are of fit age to work. I should be favourable to ten hours for children, but my income now is no more than my outgo [expenses]. I should like to know whether ten hours of my children's labour will give me the same income as I have now. If it won't I should like to stay as I am.

Isaac Pilkington, a spinner in Bolton, Factory Commissioners' Report, 1833

SOURCE J

I have had ten children and lost two; the three who work in factories are pretty healthy. For the sake of their health, I should wish that all children should not be worked more than ten hours a day.

Benjamin Scholefield, cotton factory worker in Manchester, Factory Commissioners' Report, 1833



▲ **SOURCE G** Children working in an agricultural 'gang'

Questions on the sources

- 1 In what ways do Sources A and B suggest that working in the countryside was a hard life?
- 2 Look at the entries for January, February and March in Source H. Which particular problem of earning a living in the countryside is suggested here?
- 3 Using specific examples from Source C, explain whether wages seem to be higher in the countryside or in industry.
- 4 How long are the working hours in the countryside? (Source E)
- 5 Do the parents in Sources I and J seem to want their children to work in the mills?
- 6 What advantages and disadvantages do Sources H and K (on the worksheet which your teacher will give you) suggest there are in working in the countryside? Are you happy to accept the evidence of these two sources on their own? Explain your answer.
- 7 Write a short account, as a child of those times, explaining why you would on balance prefer to work in a mill rather than in the countryside.

Exercise 2

The 'Suffragette Derby', 1913

When they undertake their research, historians are usually trying to answer a particular question about the past. They collect all the useful primary and secondary sources. Then by careful study they try to build up an accurate picture of the past. In the example below, the question being asked is 'What did the Suffragette Emily Davison do during the Derby of 1913 and why did she do it?'

- 2 Read the completed 'Evidence' column of the chart. Can you now easily answer the question 'What did Emily Davison do and why did she do it?' If not, why not?
- 3 Can the photograph (Source B) add to your understanding of the incident in any way?
- 4 Explain from the evidence in Sources A, B and C what you think is the most likely explanation for these events.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Suffragettes were a movement working to achieve the right to vote for women. Before the First World War many of them became involved in direct and violent action. Their purpose was to bring the issue of women's rights to the forefront of public attention.

Questions on the sources

- 1 Draw up a chart like the one below and fill it in. If the source does not answer the question, write 'unclear'. A worksheet may be used to answer this question.

POINTS	SOURCE USED	EVIDENCE
What did Miss Davison do during the race?	Description given in Source A Description given in Source C	
Why did she do this?	Reason given in Source A Reason given in Source C	

SOURCE A

One Suffragette who believed passionately in the cause was Emily Davison. She was present at the famous horse race, the Derby, in 1913. As the horses thundered around Tattenham corner, Emily ducked under the rails and ran on to the course. Clutching in her hand a petition, she threw herself under the hooves of the King's horse, Anmer. Horse, jockey and woman crashed to the ground. Emily's skull was fractured and she died a little later. The Suffragettes had been provided with a martyr.

J. Ray, Britain and the Modern World, 1969

▼ **SOURCE B** A photograph taken moments after the collision occurred, *Lloyds Weekly News*, 8 June 1913



SOURCE C

On 4th June 1913, at the Derby came the only successful Suffragette suicide. Miss Emily Wilding Davison went to the race, dodged the police on the rails at Tattenham Corner and deliberately threw herself at the last bunch of horses. Quite by chance she fell in front of the plunging hooves of the King's horse Anmer the horse was brought down, dragging along the ground the jockey, Herbert Jones.

D. C. Brooks, *The Emancipation of Women*, 1970

Two of the sources above are secondary ones taken out of history books, while the other is a primary source. Recently some new evidence on the event has come to light (Sources D to G); some of which is primary source material and therefore requires careful consideration.

SOURCE D

The possessions Miss Davison had on her were recently found in a trunk by Ruth Lamartine-Davis (daughter-in-law of Rose Lamartine-Davis, a friend of Miss Davison). They included:

half a return ticket Victoria-Epsom dated 4th June 1913 and costing 8s 6d,

a 'marked up' racecard,

mauve, white and green flags,

a helper's pass for the Suffragette Summer Festival taking place 3-13 June.

Adapted from Catherine Ireland of the Fawcett library, quoted on BBC Radio 4, June 1988

SOURCE E

She had even practised beforehand trying to stop horses on the common at Morpeth lane, but obviously she did not fully appreciate the force and drive and speed and weight of a horse racing as in the Derby.

Margaret Johnson, a relative, speaking in 1988 and basing her views on local hearsay in Miss Davison's home village of Long Horsley, near Morpeth

SOURCE F

If she was going to commit suicide . . . she would have thrown herself headlong in front of the galloping horse. In fact all the evidence on film refutes it. She ran on to the race course and she stood sideways on, waiting for the King's horse to come up to her; when it was alongside she thrust out her left hand and tried to grab the reins and of course with the great momentum of a racehorse coming towards her at 40 mph she was flung headlong, badly injured by the horses hooves, striking her head and fracturing her skull.

Her plan basically, had she succeeded, was to remove the hidden flag from her coat and to pin it on the saddle of the horse, and send it galloping forward before King George and Queen Mary who were watching the Derby from the stands.

John Sleight, historian quoted on BBC Radio 4, June 1988

SOURCE G

The family always believed that there was a decision to do something outstanding and that Emily drew the short straw, because a telegram came for her at Long Horsley a telegram which was never found. She received this telegram, read it, and she must have destroyed it, and thereafter was more thoughtful.

Margaret Johnson, relative quoted on BBC Radio 4, June 1988

Developing a theory

- 5 Which of the sources A to G are primary and which secondary? Explain your answer.
- 6 Source C claims that Emily Davison committed suicide. Look through all the sources carefully. What *evidence* supports this view? What evidence suggests another motive?
- 7 Write your version of what you believe Emily Davison was trying to do at the Derby. Support your answer with evidence. (Use words like 'possibly', 'likely' or 'probably' where you are unsure.)
- 8 How does your answer to Question 7 differ from what you wrote in Question 4? How do you explain the difference?

Exercise 3

Protestant and Catholic attitudes in Northern Ireland

The conflict in Northern Ireland is well documented with sources. However these sources have to be carefully evaluated by historians because of the deeply held beliefs on each side. In the following exercise you will learn about Catholic and Protestant attitudes to each other, as well as thinking about the ways in which we have learnt to evaluate evidence.

SOURCE A

The basic complaint in these areas is that the present electoral arrangements are weighted against non-Unionists [Catholics] . . . the complaint is abundantly justified. In each of the areas with Unionist [Protestant] majorities on their council the majority was far greater than the adult population balance would justify. In Londonderry County Borough, Armagh Urban District, Omagh Urban District and County Fermanagh, a Catholic majority in the population was converted into a large Unionist [Protestant] majority on the councils. In the two Dungannon councils a very small Protestant majority held two-thirds or over of the seats of the councils. The most glaring case was Londonderry county borough, where sixty per cent of the adult population was Catholic but where sixty per cent of the seats on the Corporation was held by Unionists . . .

Disturbances in Northern Ireland, Report of the Cameron Commission, in Magee, Northern Ireland, 1969

SOURCE B

Thinking of the whole question . . . I recommend those people who are loyalists not to employ Roman Catholics, ninety-nine per cent of whom are disloyal . . . You people who are employers have the ball at your feet. If you don't act properly now, before we know where we are we shall find ourselves in the minority instead of the majority.

A statement by Sir Basil Brooke, Minister of Agriculture 1933-41, and later Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, quoted in Liam De Paor, *Divided Ulster*, 1970

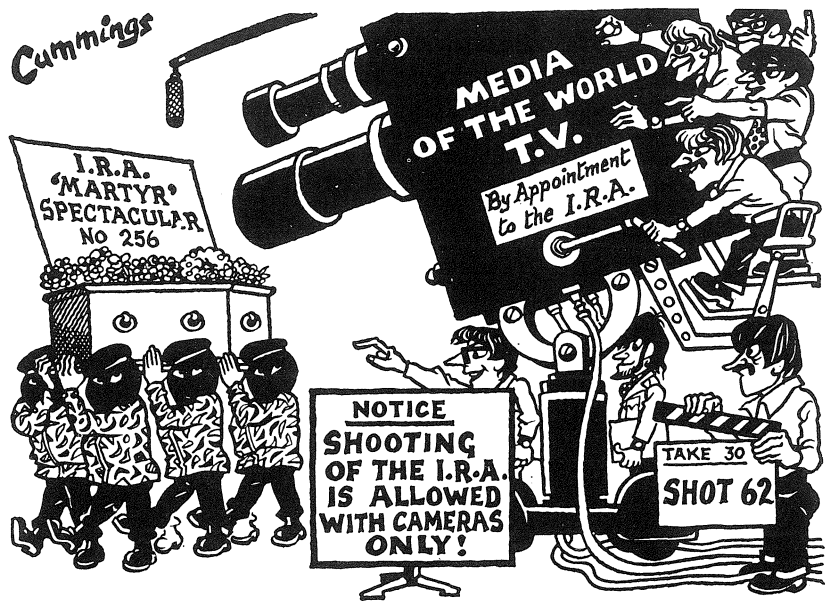
SOURCE C

Let us at least be united in working together in a Christian spirit to create better opportunities for our children. Whether they come from the Falls Road [a Catholic area] or from Finaghy [a Protestant area] . . . let us shed the burden of traditional grievances and ancient resentments.

Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 1963-69, speaking in 1963

▼ SOURCE D

Cartoon in the *Sunday Express*, 1981



◀ SOURCE E

Cartoon in the *Irish Fireside*, 5 August 1885



SOURCE F Allocation of houses and jobs

The expansion of local council activity after the Second World War made town halls and council officers a supplier of [employment and housing . . . in] Derry . . . in 1966, the heads of all city council departments were Protestant. Of 177 salaried employees, 145 – earning £124,424 – were Protestant, and only thirty-two – earning £20,420 – were Catholic . . . Of 10,000 workers in the Belfast shipyard – the biggest source of employment in the city – just 400 are Catholic . . . There are several ways in which Protestant councils have discriminated against Catholics. One has been to put Protestants in better houses than Catholics. Of 1589 houses built by Fermanagh County Council between the end of the Second World War and 1969, 1021 went to Protestant families.

The Sunday Times Insight Team, *Ulster*, 1972

SOURCE G The response of the Orange Order to the Cameron Commission Report, 1972

We do not claim that Northern Ireland has not seen any injustice to either Roman Catholic or Protestant. We simply contend that . . . the Protestant people have bent over backwards to be fair and indeed have acted more harshly against their co-religionists.

Of course, the Cameron report will be held forth as proving that injustice did exist . . . in point of fact, no clear investigation was made into particular points and the weakness of the Commission was that it heard unsworn evidence and there was no real opportunity for cross-examination . . .

Perhaps the reason why some Protestants are not happy working with certain Roman Catholics has come out in these tragic days. Firms have been held to ransom as . . . Roman Catholic employees have refused to work. Ostensibly in an attempt to pressurise the Government they, in reality, were undermining the economy in difficult days . . .

The postal services and telephone links in the Maiden City [Londonderry] were virtually controlled by Republicans. To have dismissed them would have been religious discrimination. To retain them was national suicide as police messages were relayed to the rebel forces.

M. Martin Smith, *The Battle for Northern Ireland*, 1972

SOURCE H

[Many people] died in the fight to free Ireland from British rule, a fight which had paused in partial victory in 1922 when twenty-six of our thirty-two counties won their independence. It was our chance to finish the job, to cleanse the remaining traces of foreign rule from the face of Ireland.

No one was explicit as to how this would be done. Some said that Catholics, because of their higher birthrate, would one day outnumber Protestants in the Six Counties and that we could then vote ourselves democratically into an All-Ireland republic.

Vague confidence was occasionally expressed that eventually the Protestants themselves would re-discover their Irish national heritage. And there were always those who said that sooner or later we were going to have to fight for it.

E. McCann, *War and an Irish Town*, 1974

Questions on the sources

- 1 (a) What appears to be happening in Source E? What is the cartoonist's attitude to the British soldiers?
(b) What is the message of Source D?
(c) How valuable are cartoons as historical sources? Refer to Sources E and D in your answer.
- 2 Are the authors of Source B and C Protestants or Catholics, or is it impossible to tell? In each case explain your answer.
- 3 McCann, the author of Source H, is a Catholic and well-known supporter of an independent Ireland. As we know he favours one side, does this make his evidence written here useless to historians?
- 4 (a) According to Source A, in what ways were Local Government elections in Northern Ireland unfair?
(b) Do you think this source is biased? Explain your answer.
(c) How could you check the statements made in Source A?
- 5 Using Source F to help you, how reliable would you regard the evidence in Source G to be?
- 6 (a) What criticisms does Source G make of the Cameron Commission report?
(b) Which evidence is likely to be more reliable, Source G or the Cameron Commission (Source A)?
- 7 Assuming you had to give a talk about Catholic and Protestant attitudes in Northern Ireland, which three sources would you choose from these two pages to illustrate your talk? Explain your reasons.

POSTSCRIPT

THE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

In some countries at certain times, the history books have been rewritten when new leaders came to power.

Hitler wanted German children to be taught bad things about the history of the Jews and Stalin wanted all his enemies in the USSR to be given a bad name.

Mr Khrushchev, a Soviet leader of the 1960s, said, 'Historians are dangerous people. They are capable of upsetting everything.'

- 1 Is there anything wrong with an historian deciding on the conclusions of a book before looking at any evidence? Explain your answer.
- 2 What is the most likely reason why Mr Khrushchev thought historians were dangerous people?

Now read the following extracts from a newspaper article in 1988.

SOURCE A

Looking forward to a truthful past

Janet Price measures the shock waves caused by the decision to rewrite the history books.

The dramatic decision to cancel history exams in Soviet schools and rewrite the textbooks is the latest evidence of *glasnost* in action.

Pupils will now hear more about the Party's difficulties in fighting to preserve socialism – in the hope that they will learn real lessons from their textbooks.

This may be good news for the youngsters who will take an unmarked oral test, but teachers have greeted the decision with mixed reactions.

On the whole, younger teachers are relieved that they will not have to compromise themselves in the classroom now that history's 'blank spaces' will be filled in.

But the older generation is understandably dismayed to hear that they have devoted their lives to teaching the recent history of their homeland in, as *Izvestia* puts it, 'a monstrously distorted, unrecognizable way'. One history teacher recently appeared on television, admitting that she had asked the forgiveness of her pupils for knowingly teaching them lies.


History teachers, whatever their age or outlook, are having to relearn their subject before September. Coming to terms with a revamped past is a tortuous process and it is not helped by a raging debate on what really happened over the past 70 years . . .

. . . Meanwhile, history teachers are relying on the newspapers to keep them abreast with the latest revelations – a task which is depressingly familiar to Maria Sergeevna, a 58-year-old history teacher in Moscow. She is only cautiously optimistic: 'I can remember when we were given new textbooks to suit Khrushchev, then Brezhnev [both former Soviet leaders]. Now we are going to get Gorbachev ones,' she says. 'I can only hope that each new version is closer to the truth.'

Times Educational Supplement, July 1988

- 3 What does the headline of this article suggest about the truthfulness of the history found in Soviet textbooks in the past?
- 4 What does the article think that the pupils have not been taught about?
- 5 What does it mean by the 'blank spaces' and the 'monstrously distorted' history taught to Soviet schoolchildren?
- 6 If the writers of the new textbooks are to get closer to the truth, what must they be able to get hold of first? Here is a clue from a Soviet professor, Rodionov: 'Before you make a rabbit stew you must at least have a rabbit.'
- 7 Maria Sergeevna is still worried about the new history books. Read her comments (Source A) and explain her worry.
- 8 Some would argue that it is useful to study history because it teaches:
 - knowledge: knowing about details, facts and events
 - skills: how to evaluate information
 - understanding: making sense of the information and variety of evidence

How well do Soviet history textbooks appear to have met each of these objectives in the teaching of history?



'Respect for historical evidence' is at the heart of National Curriculum History.

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