

TOK Knowledge Framework – History

Scope and Application

The study of the recorded past
Knowledge shared by a group to create a common heritage.
History is important for understanding current events and how the past influenced them.
As well as understanding Politics today
Does the study of history prevent us from repeating past mistakes?
Is history a narrative? Do we expect history to be a story?
When does history become archeology? Is archeology a tool of history?
Does history allow us to imagine possible futures?

Concepts and Language

Chronology – timelines
Events
Revisionism
Sources
Bias and points of view are good as they allow us to explore different and conflicting perspectives and interpretations
Certainty and Uncertainty
Narrative style of writing to show understanding of the past
Reliability of sources

Subjectivity
Progress
Emotion
Fact

Objectivity
Patterns
Causation/ Narrative
Interpretation

Historical Development

Present preoccupations tend to affect our study of the past
History was different in the past
Consider the development of a history textbook
How has globalization and internationalism affected how we see history?
What is the relationship between History and Human/ social sciences?
How a country, or peoples, for example, become labelled due to past events- stereotyping and self fulfilling prophecies

History

Methodology

The Epistemological fragility of History – how we can never be certain of history because it cannot be observed directly.
So History is different to say Chemistry because we can test and retest Chemical knowledge, whereas with history we cannot.
We use sources to make interpretations about the past. Sources allow us to examine the past.
What counts as a historical fact?
Issues of selection and interpretation of source material – what we choose to exclude.
The discovery of new sources, or the use of new scientific techniques may allow us to further our knowledge and understanding.
Issues of first hand accounts – can we rely on these? The effects of emotion, memory and observation
Individual historical documents may allow us to give plausible motivations to historical figures.
History presupposes a theory for human action
Is history too chaotic and complex to be able to untangle events?
Can we talk about individual's actions being consequential or is there larger struggles, such as class struggles or a zeitgeist at play?

True objectivity is elusive as we all have our own bees in our bonnet. When students read a work of History they should always listen out for the buzzing.

Links to Personal Knowledge

Understanding one's history gives a sense of identity
How collaborative is history?
Are individual historians more important than in other AOK

Knowledge Questions

Is it possible for historical writing to be free from perspective? And bias?
What is the relationship between history and human sciences?
How can we judge the reliability of sources?
What makes one historical account better than another?
When does archeology become history?
Do historical facts exist independently from Historians?
Can we learn from history?
What are the limits of History?
When does History begin? – IB say after 10 years...
When does history end?