



History

Here you will find several articles that approach different sources to make an argument, as well as links to similar types of sources available online. Your task is to write a short essay (1000 words) that uses one of the sources in a similar way to the example articles.

At the end of the essay, please list any primary and secondary sources that you have used. For the Object Biography and Image options, please provide an image or a link to where it is held along with a short description of including the maker and date and place of its production, if known, and, ideally also what it is made out of, its dimensions, and current location.

Submissions will be judged on creativity as well as argument and analysis.

For copyright reasons, to access some of these articles you will need to [sign up](#) so that we can email them to you. Please note that signing up in this way is not a commitment to submitting an essay!

Words in History

Sara Johnson's article on the *Vocabulaire Congo* provides an example of how a historic dictionary could be used to think about power and relationships. Using one of the historical dictionaries linked here, or even just a dictionary or travel phrasebook you might find in your house, library, or classroom, write a short essay exploring how particular words or phrases might explain a historical relationship, misunderstanding, or power dynamic. What is the purpose of the particular book? What words or phrases are deemed important by the dictionary's author(s)? How might the author have gathered that information?

Sara E. Johnson, "Your mother gave birth to a pig": Power, abuse, and planter linguistics in Baudry des Lozières' *Vocabulaire Congo*, *Early American Studies* 16/1 (2018), 7-40. [Sign up](#) to access.

Here are some examples of historical dictionaries:

- 1) [Church Missionary Society dictionary](#), 19th century, West African language, Temne (Sierra Leone)
- 2) [John Florio's Italian/English dictionary](#), first published in 1611 (NB you can search with Italian words only)

Stuff in History

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's article uses probate inventories to answer questions about labour history. Using one or more of the probate inventories linked here, or looking around at the contents of your own house or family and friends' houses, write a short essay that answers a question you have about how that stuff got there, or what it tells us about the individual who owns it or their role in society. How much of something is there? What looks unique or precious to its owners? What tells us about work or leisure or family roles?

Article: Lauren Thatcher Ulrich, 'Wheels, looms, and the gender division of labor in eighteenth-century New England', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55/1 (1998), 3-38. [Sign up](#) to access.

Here is [an example of a probate inventory](#) and more can be found here:

- 1) <http://www.hearthcook.com/aaInventories.html>
- 2) <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/wills-and-probate-before-1858-further-research/>

Objects in History

Object biography is one way through which historians have tried to understand the individual ‘life’ of an object – who made it and how it was made, who bought or owned it, and how did it find its way to a museum or collection? But, for many objects, the documents required to tell that life-story are not available, especially for objects which were not part of elite or literate cultures. Object biography is therefore also a way to think more generally about the place of kinds of objects within history - at the point of production and consumption, in relation to gender or family relationships, or as part of the history of collection. You might also want to reflect on what studying an object in this way adds to our understanding of history compared to studying other kinds of sources.

The task is to write a ‘biography’ of any object in historical context up to 1000 words. Any object with a history, even a recent history, can be chosen – from an ancient Roman mirror to an early modern leather shoe to a rotary dial telephone. The object can be related to a topic within your A-level/IB syllabus or can be from an entirely new period and from anywhere in the world.

For some object biographies, see:

- 1) <https://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/objectbiographies.html>
- 2) <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/the-attar-casket-of-tipu-sultan/>
- 3) <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/treasuredpossessions/curatorschoice/index.html>
- 4) <https://www.concealedgarments.org/cache/28577/>

Images in history

‘Images’ can be works of art – which carry special resonance and prestige – or more everyday records – photographs, moving images, sketches; the latter can be just as calculated and deliberately loaded with meaning as the former, though they often pass for something more ‘casual’ or even more ‘real’. The French artist Gustave Doré (1832-1883) picked up a passing remark by the historian T.B. Macaulay and turned it into this fantasy about a far-future New Zealander sketching the ruins of London. As Skilton’s article shows, ‘the New Zealander’ spoke to Victorian anxieties about the effects of empire and globalization and the endurance of British civilization. Often imaginative works of this kind are useful to contemporaries who find it difficult to put some ideas into words. What does the artist intend with the image? How different might be its reception by different audiences? What does the image do that text does not or cannot? You can ask the same questions of ‘documentary’ images such as photojournalism.

Article: David Skilton, ‘Contemplating the Ruins of London: Macaulay's New Zealander and Others’, *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, 2/1 (March 2004): <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/skilton.html>

And, here is the link to the image discussed:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/398947>

Here are some image collections:

- 1) <https://artuk.org>

- 2) <https://artpil.com/walker-evans/>
- 3) <https://www.creativeboom.com/inspiration/ken-russells-iconic-photographs-of-londons-teddy-girls-discovered-50-years-later/>