

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR HISTORY
TEACHING (SASHT)**

*(An association of History educators, organisations, publishers
and people interested in History teaching)*

**eHISTORY TEACHING 1
OCTOBER 2009**

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FOREWORD

Dear History Education colleagues welcome to the first edition of the relaunched South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) newsletter. In the past an SASHT Newsletter was distributed from September 1997 to September 2005 after which the Special Edition of the *Yesterday & Today* was published in 2006 to fill the spectrum of needs. During the recent SASHT executive meeting in September 2009 it was realised that the *Yesterday & Today* cannot fill all the needs and that a regular SASHT Newsletter is required. The idea is to distribute a quarterly electronic newsletter to both members and non-members of the SASHT. The responsibility for executing this decision fell on our shoulders to act as the editors and here is the product. Please note members without email addresses will also receive hard copies via snail mail.

The rationale behind the creation of this newsletter is not only to promote the SASHT and its activities and to provide a service to its members but also to attempt to create a platform for History Educators to share ideas about good practice in terms of teaching and learning in our subject. As such we hope that this newsletter will travel far and wide to both members and non-members and in future become a voice for all History Educators.

In this the first edition we have a potpourri of contributions – mostly from us the editors. This was for purely practical reasons – to get the ball rolling. So please do not despair in subsequent editions the voices of others will be strongly heard. For example in the next edition we will read about the realistic way in which Dee Gillespie of Jeppe Girls' High teaches Apartheid by means of a school-wide simulation. We will also be bringing you the project-based approach used by Claire Bastion of Northlands Girls' High to deal with Heritage.

For more information about the SASHT and its flagship publication the *Yesterday & Today* please visit our website at www.sashtw.co.za. Incidentally, the next edition of the *Yesterday & Today* will be published in January 2010 and will also be available on the SASHT website.



We can also announce that the next annual conference of the SASHT will be held during September 2010 in Bloemfontein at the University of the Free State. More details will be made available early next year.

Happy reading and please let us know what you think and let the contributions roll in for the idea is that this must be a practical publication for use by History Educators. We aim to have the next newsletter out by late February 2010. So please, pass it on to other History colleagues and pass contributions, your thoughts, comments and suggestions on to Simon Haw simonhaw@telkomsa.net.

The Editors

Johan Wassermann & Simon Haw

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We aim to have the next newsletter out by late February 2010. So please send your contributions, thoughts, comments and suggestions to Simon Haw simonhaw@telkomsa.net by middle February 2010.



Please join the SASHT! The home for all History Educators!



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Writing History Examinations – Hints from the real world!

Simon Haw

The following article on tips for writing examinations started life as a piece in *The Star* newspaper, before being subsequently reworked as a PowerPoint presentation. In its present form it is based on the presentation. It is certainly not regarded as being the last word on writing examinations but it is hoped it will be helpful nonetheless.

Don'ts

- No colloquial terms or slang
- Essays – no subheadings, point form, underlining, lists and so forth
- Don't use personal pronouns in essays
- No first names for historical figures
- No personal notes to examiners
- No decoration of your work
- No comments or value judgments not in question
- Do not use etc.
- Only use recognised abbreviations
- Don't use words you do not understand

Do's

- Practise, practise, practise – for example do the exemplars.
- What and when? – Make absolutely certain what you are required to study and when you will be writing it – You must know exactly what is in each paper.
- Get the big picture – look carefully at the major key questions or statements which give direction to the topics.
- Ways of getting the big picture:
 - timeline (following this article you will find a useful example of a timeline covering South Africa 1990 – 1994)
 - world map
 - read your textbook/ do the activities
 - use a dictionary to understand concepts e.g. capitalism
- Specialise – it will be difficult to make choices in the exam – decide beforehand which sections for each paper you are going to focus close



- attention on. For instance for Paper I you may decide that you would like to concentrate on the Cold War (1) and civil society protest in the USA (3)

Hints for Source-based questions

- Scan the sources quickly to get a general idea of what they are about, read questions carefully trying to match them with what you picked up during your scan of the source, now read the sources carefully before going back to questions.
- Pay careful attention to the contextualisation of the source (Who produced it, when, what for and so forth?)
- Number questions correctly
- Use the mark allocation as a guide e.g. 2x2 means 2 facts worth 2 marks each; 2x1 means 2 facts worth 1 mark each.

Hints for Essays/Extended Writing

- Read the question very carefully to make sure that your answer fits the question.
- You must have a good knowledge base to do these extended writing exercises – you cannot rely solely on the sources!!
- If the question asks you to use the sources you must show very clearly that you are doing so. You should do this by clearly citing individual sources in your work e.g. In Source 4A Martin Luther King clearly shows that ...
- Remember the importance of introductions and conclusions.

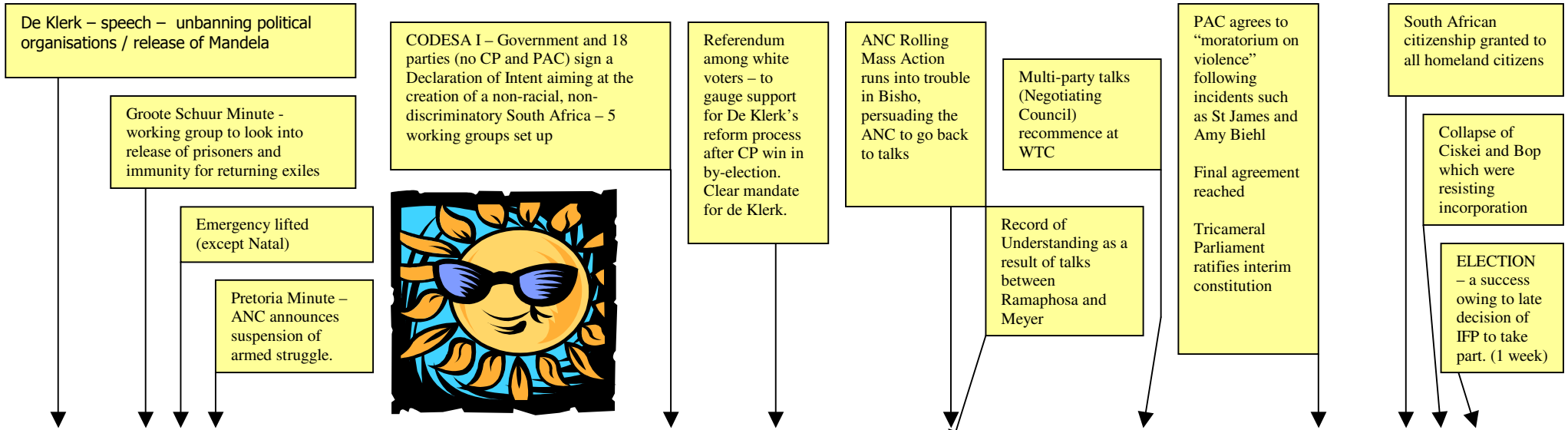
Final Word: Practise! Practise! Practise!

HISTORY FUN WHILE WAITING FOR THOSE EXAMINATION PAPERS!

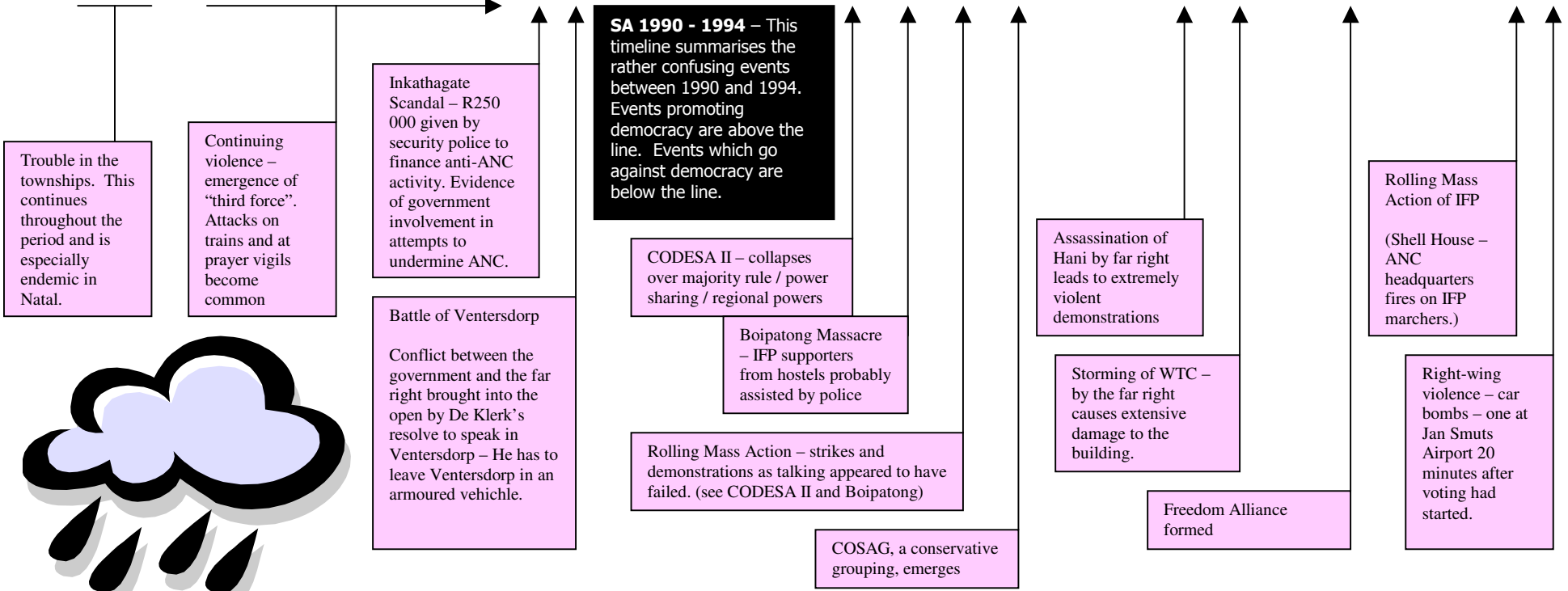
Whether you are a Billy Joel fan or not, you probably remember his great song, *We Didn't Start the Fire*. Here it is, set to pictures. It's a neat flashback through the past half century. Now is the time to learn the words. Turn up volume, sit back and enjoy a review of 50 years of History in less than 3 minutes! Thanks to Billy Joel and some guy from the University of Chicago with a lot of spare time.

The top left gives you full screen – top right lets you pause. Bottom left shows the year. The older you are, the more pictures you will recognize. Anyone over age 65 should remember over 90% of what they see. But it's great for any age.

<http://yeli.us/Flash/Fire.html> <http://yeli.us/Flash/Fire.html>

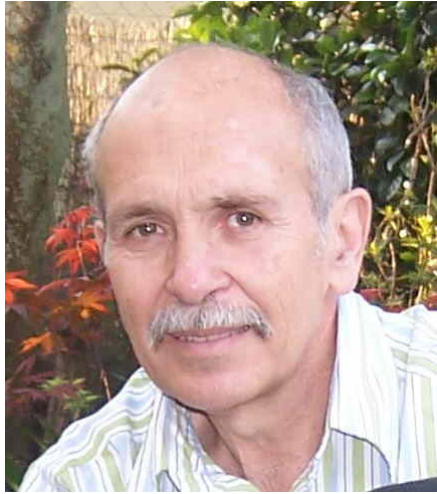


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DEALING WITH SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS



Simon Haw has, after studying at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, taught History for twenty years. First at Wartburg–Kirchdorff High School and then at Maritzburg College. He then worked as an educational researcher and later History subject advisor before retiring at the end of 2007. He is the author of three books as well as being a Social Science and History textbook writer. He has been involved in History examinations for many years. This section of the newsletter is based on his experience as a History examiner and educator.

General Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to work towards a systematic approach to answering some of the more complex source-based questions which you might come across in exams and tests. For instance if you are asked about the **usefulness** of a source or perhaps asked to compare two different sources using usefulness as a criterion, what should you be looking for?

Other criteria handled in this guide are relevance, reliability and bias.

Some general remarks about sources

- Sources take many **different forms**: from artefacts (objects made by humans e.g. clothing, medicines, vehicles etc.), visual sources such as paintings and photographs, to documents which run the whole gamut from various forms of published sources such as government reports or newspapers to unpublished sources such as private letters, diaries etc. The focus of this guide will tend to fall most strongly on documentary sources, although the criteria are applicable to all forms of sources.
- Sources fall into the categories of **primary and secondary**. To make it easier, regard sources that come from the period you are studying as primary, although strictly speaking primary sources usually refer to the sources produced by those who were directly involved in the events



- being studied. Secondary sources are usually the products of historians, journalists, students or writers who make use of the available primary sources as well as secondary sources to construct a view of the historical event or period they are dealing with.
- Sources contain **two important elements**:
 - facts
 - opinions

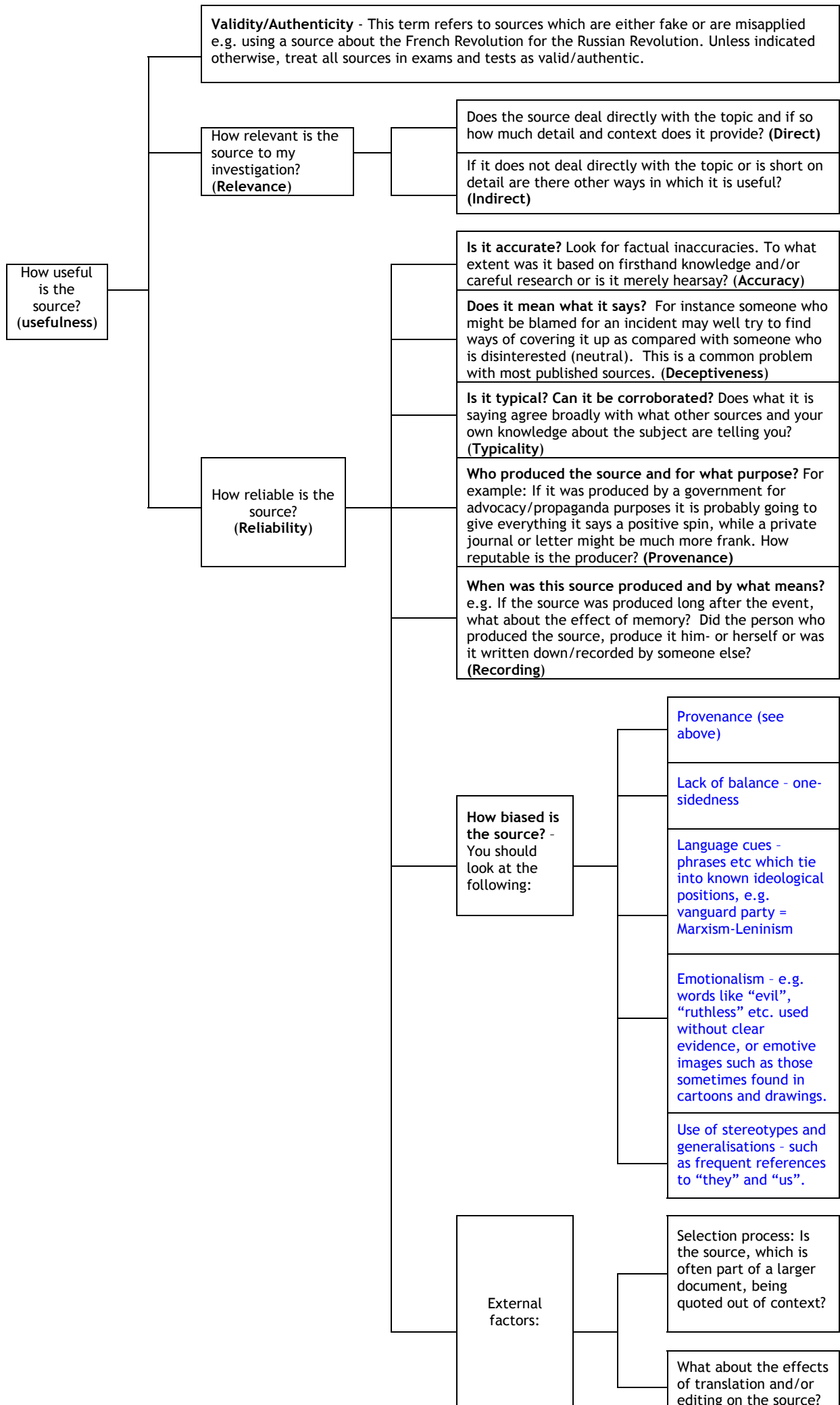
Although obviously important to historians, facts, provided they are accurate and/or not startlingly new, are less interesting to historians than opinions, because it is here that one can get a sense of what different individuals or groups thought about the events that were taking place around them. They also provide important clues as to what motivated a person or people to act in a certain way. Interestingly, even the most factual of sources in a sense contains an element of opinion as the person who produced the source has to decide which facts are important enough to be included and which should be left out, and a whole range of interesting factors often lie behind these decisions.

Using the Source Matrix

On the next page appears the Source Matrix, which it is hoped will give you a systematic way of approaching sources. Basically it works like this:

- If you are asked about the **usefulness** of a source for a certain task, what should you look at? The matrix suggests that you should look at three factors: validity, relevance and reliability and it provides you with all the questions you should ask to evaluate these factors.
- If you are asked about the **reliability** of a source for a certain task what should you look at? Once again the matrix provides you with specific questions to ask about the source to reach a reasoned judgement. The same is true of **bias**, which is treated as a sub-section of reliability.

Have a good look at the Source Matrix and then we will use it to examine specific examples of sources to show you how it works.





Now that you have had a chance to look at the Source Matrix, let's apply it to some concrete examples.

Our first example applies to the Cold War.

The Key Question is: What factors led to the building of the Berlin Wall?

The source we are using was used in the November 2008 paper 1. However, it was never properly contextualised in this paper. We were told only that it resulted from an interview of Charles Wheeler, a West German citizen, and that it appeared on the website: [www.gwu.edu/nsarchiv /coldwar/interviews](http://www.gwu.edu/nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews) (Do not try and use this link as it will not work in its present form, although the site still exists). This really did not supply enough information for those writing the exam to make informed judgments on the source. The contextualisation actually provides wrong information as it says that Wheeler was commenting on Berlin in the 1960s when in fact he was talking about Berlin in the early 1950s at the time of the Berlin Riots. Here then is the full background to this source:

The document comes from the National Security Archives at the George Washington University. This independent archives and research institution was set up in 1985 to make available and study declassified American documents relating to events such as the Cold War. The Wheeler Interview was part of a project to document the Cold War by means of Oral History interviews with individuals who were involved in various ways. Wheeler was the BBC's German correspondent based in West Berlin in the early 1950s. The interview was made with Wheeler in May 1996. The main focus of the interview of which only a small part is reproduced in the source was the Berlin Riots of 1953. An important point that Wheeler makes in an earlier part of the interview is that, as a foreign correspondent, he was not allowed to visit East Berlin.



Having given you the background here is the source.

1. Conditions in East Berlin (in the 1960s) as viewed by Wheeler.

East Berlin struggled to recover from the effects of the Second World War and was feeling the effects of Russia extracting reparations (payments) from East Germany. In fact very little rebuilding took place and despite a huge housing shortage, no building of houses took place, yet money was spent on building prestigious projects like the Communist Party headquarters.

The standard of living was poor compared to the West, wages were low, and there were no consumer goods in the shops, only endless jars of pickles. What production there was, was either going to the Soviet Union or being exported in the interests of the Soviet Union. Conditions here were desperate and people were indeed left destitute.

2. Conditions in West Berlin (in the 1960s) as viewed by Wheeler.

On the other hand West Berlin was a prosperous Western city that was rebuilt as a result of assistance from the Marshall Plan and assistance from other European states. The result of this was evident in a number of ways such as, many people I knew were employed, they enjoyed a good quality of life, most shops were well stocked with several goods and services and they bustled with shoppers. Moreover, there was freedom to travel and unemployment was really very low. Many people were happy with this state of affairs.

It was difficult to disentangle politics from economics. West Berlin thrived as a democracy and enjoyed the fruits of freedom, while East Berlin could not develop because of communist influence.

The bracketed phrases appeared in the 2008 History paper.



Having studied the source as well as the contextualisation (the part which gives you all the background information such as who produced the source? For what purpose? When was it produced? and so forth very carefully; let us use the Source Matrix to answer the following question:

How useful would this source be for a historian studying the factors which led to the building of the Berlin Wall?

Validity – As you will see from the matrix, the examiners are not likely to give you a bogus source, although, as we have seen, they may contextualise it wrongly, so you do not need to concern yourself with this particular aspect of source criticism. In fact in this particular case, because Charlie Wheeler is describing the situation in the early 1950s, this source is invalid for the 1960s.

Relevance – This source would receive a fairly high score on this criterion because, although it does not deal directly with the Berlin Wall, it certainly gives insight into the factors which may have contributed to its building, which is the main focus of the question you have been asked.

However, it should be borne in mind that Wheeler is commenting on the situation in East and West Berlin in 1953 — there were almost certainly some changes between 1953 and the building of the Wall in 1961. One of the changes was that the Soviet Union was no longer directly involved in the running of its East German satellite. This is clearly shown by the fact that Stalin's Soviet Union was directly involved in imposing the blockade in 1948 but had no direct involvement in the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, which was erected by the East German government of Walter Ulbricht. This was very convenient for Khrushchev as, even though the Wall broke several treaty terms, he could claim that the Soviet Union had nothing to do with it, although there is evidence that he suggested the idea to Ulbricht.

Reliability – The following factors should all be taken into account when judging reliability:



Accuracy: There is no evidence of any wrong facts and as the BBC correspondent in West Berlin Wheeler's business would have been finding out as much as he could about the situation.

However, we know from reading the contextualisation that Wheeler, as a foreign correspondent, was not allowed to enter East Berlin. This means that his information on conditions in that part of the city would have had to come mainly from Germans who either worked in West Berlin but lived in East Berlin or refugees who had fled from the Eastern sector. The likelihood would therefore be that most of his sources would view developments in East Berlin in a negative light.

Deceptiveness: As this interview occurred after the conclusion of the Cold War, there would be no reason for Charlie Wheeler to be deceptive in any way. In other words the source means what it says.

Typicality: As learners, the only way we can test whether this source is typical is to compare it with the other sources we have been given in the exercise and with our own knowledge. Judged in this way, it appears to present a similar and therefore typical view of the situation in the two Berlins found in most other sources. In other words the other sources available to us appear to corroborate (agree with) what is being said in this source.

Provenance and Purpose: The main things we can say about provenance is that Charlie Wheeler was English; he was working for the BBC and was living in West Berlin. His access to East Berlin would therefore have been non-existent and he is likely to have approached the situation from the perspective of a supporter of the West. These are indeed factors which might affect the reliability of what he is saying. However, as this was not a propaganda piece, and was recorded after the Cold War had ended, there is no evidence that he has made any deliberate attempt to distort the information he provides. Furthermore, both the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the George Washington University can be regarded as reputable sources with high standards of journalism in the case of the one and scholarship in the case of the latter.



Recording Constraints: In this case Wheeler is being interviewed about events which had taken place 44 years earlier. Unless he kept a journal to which he was referring, of which there is no evidence in the transcript of the interview, distortions may have crept in because of the long period involved. Memory even in the short term can be the cause of considerable distortion. Furthermore, this testimony was obtained using an Oral History interview technique; this might further confound the reliability of the testimony. On the other hand as a seasoned journalist his job would probably have made him a more careful observer than someone in a different line of work.

Bias: Although this is certainly written from the perspective of a supporter of the West – a factor which needs to be kept in mind – it does not exhibit particularly strong signs of bias. Let's quickly look at the various bias indicators:

- Provenance and purpose – see above
- Lack of balance – Although he states that conditions in West Berlin were much better than those in East Berlin, he does provide the political context for these differing situations – Soviet Union extracting reparations vs. the Marshall Plan and deliberate Western reconstruction.
- Language cues – some signs of anti-communism but not very strongly expressed.
- Emotionalism – language appears balanced and is not very emotional – look for lots of adjectives such as evil East German government, enlightened Western powers etc.
- Use of stereotypes and generalisations – only to a limited degree – some attempt to qualify statements such as “Many people were happy with this state of affairs” rather than “Everybody was happy with this state of affairs.”

External factors: A significant distorting factor is that this is a very short extract from a reasonably long interview. However, more importantly the original contextualisation as supplied to candidates in the November 2008 examination suggests that this interview was recorded at the time of the events being described and that it provides a view of conditions in the 1960s, when in fact it dealt exclusively with the 1953 Berlin Riots – the



period immediately after the death of Stalin. These points regarding other distorting factors, however, would not feature in your answer as they have not been provided to you in the original contextualisation of the source.

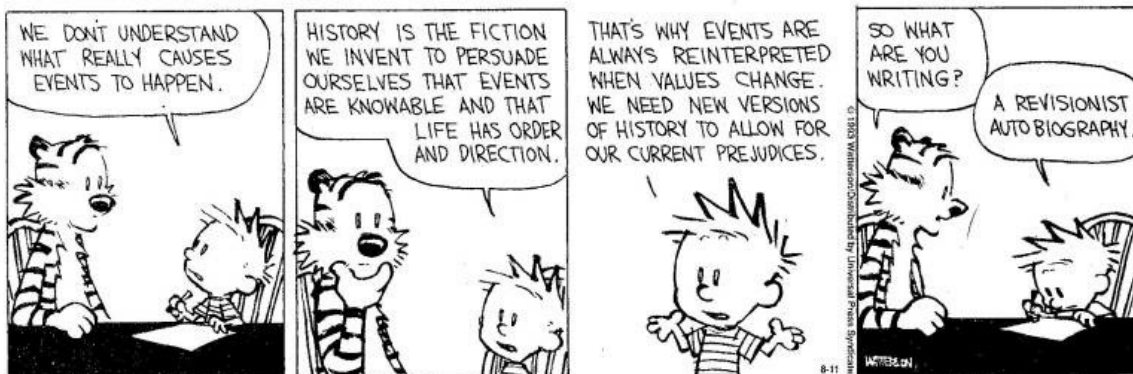
As you can see from the foregoing, you could spend hundreds of words just deciding on the degree of usefulness of a source. So how would you go about answering the original question about the usefulness of this source for understanding factors leading to the building of the Berlin Wall? We suggest that your answer should contain the following points:

- source provides useful details about the different lifestyles in West and East Berlin (relevance)
- worth noting that Wheeler was talking about the situation in Berlin in 1953, while the focus in the question is on 1961 – much can change in eight years. (relevance)
- descriptions of lifestyles in the two Berlins are supported by other sources and by my own knowledge (accuracy, deceptiveness, typicality)
- a degree of bias needs to be taken into account as the author was a BBC correspondent living in West Berlin, who was not allowed access to East Berlin (provenance)
- However, as this was recorded after the Cold War, no ideological purpose would be served by giving a strongly biased account.
- further cautions are that this source is based on oral testimony taken 43 years after the event – memory lapses/distortions should be kept in mind.

If you are asked about how reliable you think this source is, you would leave out the first two bullets concerning relevance – all the others would apply, however.

CALVIN & HOBBS

by *Bill Watterson*





WHAT STUDYING HISTORY AT SCHOOL MEANT TO ME



Lauren Rosenberg – a past pupil of Kloof High School – is a special projects co-ordinator at the Centre for Creative Arts. She studied at the University of Cape Town and previously worked as a junior researcher and online content manager for South African History Online. Her interests, passions and qualifications lie in urban studies, Fairtrade business models, radio production, community development, Web 2.0 and South African public culture.

One of my favourite teachers at high school was Mr Holding, my History teacher, who persuaded my largely uninformed Grade 9 brain to study History. As he said: "If we do not learn from the past, we're doomed to repeat it". I was sold, I wanted to learn and be an informed South African and global citizen who could comment knowledgeably, research critically and win convincingly in general knowledge board games like *30 Seconds*.

What I loved about the History curriculum was the broad overview it gave of the world, touching on major events but also lesser known facts and phenomena. I especially appreciated this when it came to South African History, and I'm not sure whether this is to the credit of my teacher or the curriculum, but to be taught the History of national liberation as a multifaceted struggle with many contributors, facts, figures and flaws – as opposed to a polarised hegemonic narrative – was so refreshing. Now, after four years at university in the Humanities Faculty, I particularly value the attitude of inquiry that History lessons encouraged. It has probably been the most useful skill I've picked up from 12 years of schooling, to probe 'fact' from various angles, to enjoy the richness of texts and to look for connections, overlaps and trends. Particularly important too is the perspective that History gives you: events do not suddenly happen out of the blue and likewise socio-economic differences and inequalities do not just appear overnight. The concept of the palimpsest is useful here – of people,





power and powerful forces within and beyond our control layered one on top of the other, the past inevitably and actively influencing the present. Studying History is a retrospective that often looks and feels like today's current affairs.

Practically what I gained from studying History at school, and which I value even more than winning at *30 Seconds*, are the fundamentals of how to write a good essay. Although I barely passed my first university essay (I made it through by 2% because my tutor took pity on me because it was obvious that I hadn't a clue about the difference between a semiotic analysis and an indulgent opinion piece), I eventually got better at writing academic papers. Instrumental to this was a good sense of how to structure an argument, a skill I attribute solely to my high school History lessons. Learning the basics of arguing from History was really a solid stepping-stone into university level dialectic reasoning and discourse analysis.

In our Grade 11 year Mr Holding introduced an additional module to our History lessons where we did extra academic readings outside of the syllabus on different subjects. We had to examine and make sense of them and present our findings in much a similar way as I did later in university tutorials. Throughout high school I also participated in the Young Historians competition, which I really enjoyed because of the opportunity to explore new and exciting topics that I had never heard of before such as the Anglo-Boer War concentration camps that were built in the community where I used to live or the controversial legacy of MaoTse-Tung. The hours of research, discussion and draft revision done during my years of studying History helped to hone scholarly skills that I will never stop using because, in truth, they are skills beneficial to almost all of life.



EXAMINING PHOTOGRAPHS IN HISTORY EDUCATION – A CRITICAL APPROACH

	<p>Dr. Johan Wassermann is the discipline coordinator for Education History in the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He lectures at both post and undergraduate level. This contribution is based on a course developed for unqualified History Educators.</p>
	<p>Siobhan Sweet graduated from the then University of Rhodesia. She has lived and taught in Zimbabwe, Jamaica and Papua New Guinea. She taught for several years at the University of KwaZulu-Natal before taking-up a teaching position in the Middle-East.</p>

Introduction

In the contemporary world we live in it is important to be visually literate. History Education can, in this regard, play a vital role especially since photographs form a very important part of the evidence on the 20th and 21st centuries. Who does not for example know the famous Sam Nzima photograph of Hector Pieterse or for that matter the photograph of General Nguyễn Ngọc Loan, the Republic of Vietnam's Chief of National Police executed the handcuffed prisoner Nguyễn Văn Lém, a Viet Cong soldier, on February 1, 1968 in front of Vo Suu, an NBC cameraman, and Eddie Adams, an Associated Press photographer. To read photographs as historical evidence is a skill that can be acquired. To assist both teachers and learners of history to just that we have developed the section with the title "Examining photographs in history education – a critical approach." Feel free to use this section to help your learners to get better at reading photographs.



1. The expression “a *picture is worth a thousand words*” is often used. What do you think it means? Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

2. Like a written text – visual images are constructed. The artist / photographer has an agenda. He /she shows us what he / she wants us to see and manipulates the material to influence our interpretation.

- (a) What does the term ‘agenda’ mean?

- (b) Can you think of ways in which a photographer can ‘*manipulate the material.*’ List these below.

-
-
-
-
-

3. Examine the photograph below and answer the questions that follow.





(a) What is the subject of the photograph?

(b) At what time of day do you think the photograph was taken?
Give a reason for your answer.

(c) Where was the photographer standing when he / she took the photograph? Tick the box(es) of your choice:

level with the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>
in front of the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>
below the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>
above the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>
on eye level with the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>
behind the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>

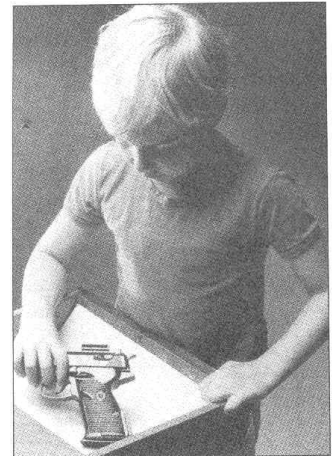
(d) Why do you think the photographer chose this particular angle
from which to take the photograph?

(e) Think about the subject matter, the angle from which the photograph was taken and the time of day at which the photograph was taken. (The subject is seen in silhouette.) How



do you think these factors combine to influence our interpretation of, or reaction to, the photograph?

4. Examine the photograph on the right and answer the questions that follow.



(a) What is the subject of the photograph?

(b) Where does the light appear to be coming from in the photograph? What effect does this have?

(c) The photographer has chosen a blonde subject for the photograph. Do you think the effect would have been the same if a dark-haired subject had been chosen? Give a reason for your answer.



- (d) The photographer has taken the photograph from a high angle – looking down on the subject. Why do you think he or she chose this particular angle from which to take the photograph and what effect does this have? How does this angle influence our feelings towards the subject?

- (e) The outline of the boy is very soft. The outline of the gun is hard and sharp. What effect does this create?

- (f) What message do you think is being communicated by the child holding the gun in the wrong way?



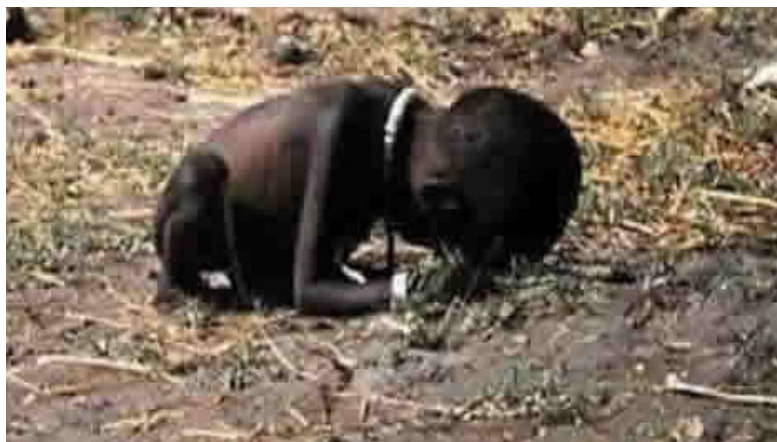
- (g) If people were to vote on whether or not to enforce stricter gun laws, how do you think this photographer would vote? Give reasons for your answer.

- 5. (a) Examine the photograph on the right. What kind of bird is shown here? With what do you usually associate this bird?



- (b) How would you describe the landscape shown in the picture?

- (c) What is the subject of the picture shown below?





(d) What effect does this picture have on you? Why?

(e) Now read through the article below that appeared in an on-line newspaper website before examining the picture that follows.

Kevin Carter (1961–1994) – South Africa Pulitzer Prize winner, Kevin Carter, took his own life months after winning the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography for a haunting Sudan famine picture. A free-lance photographer for Reuter and Sygma Photo NY and former PixEditor of the *Mail & Guardian*, Kevin dedicated his career to covering the ongoing conflict in his native South Africa.



(f) What is your reaction to the ‘whole’ picture now? Do you think ‘haunting’ is the right word to describe it?



(g) What does the picture not tell you? What questions does it raise in your mind?

(g) What do you think Kevin Carter's purpose was in taking this photograph? Do you think this photograph is a 'reliable' source?

(h) The on-line obituary states that Kevin Carter took his own life just months after taking this photograph. Do you think there is a connection between the two events? Give your opinion.

(g) What, in your opinion, is the role and responsibility of a photo-journalist? How valuable is a photo-journalist's work to a historian? Jot down your notes in the space provided below.

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-
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6. (a) Photography was an emerging invention in the 1860s. The American Civil War was the first war to be recorded on photograph.

Brainstorm. What do you know about the American Civil War? Why was it fought? Who were the opposing sides? Draw your mindmap in the left-hand box below. In the right-hand box ask questions about the topic that you would like to know the answers to.

Mindmap

Questions I have about the American Civil War:

-
-
-
-
-
-

- (b) Read through the following facts on photographer Alexander Gardner, one of the first photographers to take Civil War photographs.

GARDNER, Alexander (b. October 17, 1821; d. 1882)
Alexander Gardner was a Scot who emigrated to the United States and was hired by Mathew Brady for whom he photographed the American Civil War. After some years he left Brady's firm and opened his own gallery in Washington DC.

Gardner's photographs are so factual as to be almost macabre. His book, "Gardner's two-volume Photographic Sketchbook of the War" (meaning the Civil War) was published in 1866. The following year he recorded the building of the Union Pacific Railroad. He also documented the execution of the conspirators against Lincoln, and Lincoln's funeral. In addition, he embarked upon making a collection of photographs of convicted criminals, for the Washington police force.

[Source: adapted from <http://www.rleggat.com/photohistory/history/gardner.htm>]



Based on the information above, would you say that Gardner’s photographs would prove a reliable source? Give your reasons.

- (c) Examine one of Gardner’s famous photographs on the right. Around the frame of the photograph write questions you would like answered.



‘The Sharpshooter’s Den’

- (i) What is a ‘sharpshooter’?

- (ii) Why do you think the photographer has called the picture ‘The Sharpshooter’s Den’? (*Hint: Think about the connotations of the word ‘den’.*) Do you think this an appropriate title for the picture? Give reasons for your answer.

- (iii) Brainstorm. To the list below add your own questions about this Civil War photograph. Include at least one question about the purpose of the photograph. Use some of the questions you wrote around the frame of the photograph.

1. Was the photograph taken in proximity to a famous battle?
 2. Was the soldier fighting for the North or the South?
 3. What were the circumstances surrounding his death?



- (iv) Re-examine the photograph. What is your reaction to it?

- (v) What ‘message’ do you think the photographer is trying to get across to his audience? What techniques (e.g. angle, lighting, the ‘mood’ created etc.) has the photographer used to get this message across?

- (vi) In his book *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time*, historian William Frassanito, contends that the soldier’s body was in fact moved to the location of the den. Frassanito claims that when Gardner arrived at the decisive scene of the war at Gettysburg two days after it had been fought, he set about photographing the picture that was originally called ‘Home of a rebel sharpshooter.’ However, before taking the picture he had dragged the body of a Confederate soldier some thirty meters to where he lies in the picture, turning the head towards the camera. Other critics claim that the weapon in the photograph was not one that was used by sharpshooters and that it may have been Gardner’s prop. [Note: *A prop is an object – usually used in a play or a film to create a sense of reality*]

<http://www.rleggat.com/photohistory/history/gardner.htm>

If Frassanito is correct, and other sources appear to confirm that he is, why do you think Gardner ‘manipulated’ the photograph?



Do you think the manipulation of photographs is ethical? [*Remember: Ethics is the study of what is morally right and what is not*] Defend your views.

- 7. Another well-known expression is '*The camera doesn't lie*'. Well, as we have discovered, the camera may not lie but the person using the camera may 'manipulate' the product to suit his / her purposes. It goes further: think back to the two pictures of Queen Elizabeth II that we discussed in the previous unit. The people or organizations that commission the photograph (pay the photographer and decide what kind of photographs should be taken) may have a certain agenda.

- 8. Examine the two photographs below. What questions do these photographs raise in your mind? Pay particular attention to the expressions of the subjects and the wording on the placards.

(a)



(a) Placard reads: "Lcpl Boudreaux killed my dad then he knocked up my sister!"

(b)



(b) Placard reads: "Lcpl Boudreaux saved my dad then he rescued my sister!"



Read through the statements below. As you read, reflect on and discuss the purpose behind the two photographs and comment on the statements.

- In early April 22, 2004, Ibrahim Hooper, the communications director for the Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR), received a mysterious photograph in his e–mail inbox [photograph (a).] CAIR is an Islamic rights group that opposed the war in Iraq.
- CAIR had no idea who sent the picture but in a press release the director implored the (American) government to "take action to let military personnel know that such offensive behaviour harms America's image and will not be tolerated."
- In response, the American military, which determined that the soldier in the picture was a Marine reservist -- Lance Cpl. Ted J. Boudreaux of Thibodaux, La. launched an investigation. News of the probe sparked a small outcry against Boudreaux; his local newspaper said he had "embarrassed himself, the Marine Corps and, unfortunately, his home state."
- Boudreaux told the Marines that the photo is not real
- As investigations got underway, several other versions of the picture began popping up online. Some were obviously doctored – one version has the boy holding a sign that reads, "We wanna see Jessica Simpson!" But at least one other picture found online appears just as real as the image CAIR received – and this one has the boy holding a sign with a decidedly friendlier message: "Lcpl Boudreaux saved my dad then he rescued my sister!" [photograph (b)]
- Using the latest technology, organisations such as the Naval Criminal Investigative Services helped to investigate the photographs. The early results of their investigations were not conclusive
- One media analyst claims we need to bring a sense of caution to the mysterious photograph of Lance Cpl. Boudreaux. "Whether or not the photographs are real in a physical sense is only part of the story." The rest of the story is what happened outside the frame, what the Marine and



the boy and whoever took the picture (whichever picture is real) were thinking at the time. Why are they there, near that hut? Is the whole thing a joke? If so, who is in on the joke? Does the boy know what's on the sign? Are the boys being made fun of, or is the soldier, or are we? "You can't know what's going on without knowing the rest of the story," Mikkelson says.

[Source: http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2004/04/22/doctored_photos/print.html]

9. Discuss the very different views of the two photographers below. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these men?

- To some photographers, the new age of photographic uncertainty is an unsettling development. "My work is about witnessing my time and events," says Ken Light, a veteran photojournalist and a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. "My career as a photographer has been based on seeing America through a lens that is critical of institutions and of the culture." Among other things, Light has photographed the Texas death row, the poverty-stricken Mississippi Delta, and migrant workers crossing the Mexican–American border. Light says it's difficult to shake criticism that comes through a camera ... because people sense 'a deeper truth in photographs' than they do in other media.

But Light worries that the truth we see in photographs will diminish in a digital age. He has two nightmares: First, that fake pictures will be mistaken for true pictures, causing political discord between people and between countries. But a scarier proposition for him is that, in the long run, people will start to ignore real pictures as phonies (fakes). When every picture is suspect, all pictures are dismissible, Light fears that photography's unique power to criticize will decline.

- Pedro Meyer, a celebrated Mexican photographer would like photographs to be treated like any other bit of information. In an interview Meyer said: "We don't trust words because they're words, but we trust pictures because they're pictures. That's crazy. It's our responsibility to investigate the truth, to approach images with care and caution. People need to realize that an image is not a representation of reality." A single photographic image is important, Meyer says, "but we can't rely on it to tell a whole story."



Whew! That was fascinating. It will help me to think carefully and analytically when I choose photographs to use as source material. But can we talk about the skills I had to use in these exercises? Are these the skills I have to teach my learners? And can we talk about how to stage a lesson that uses photos as source material?

Sure. The skills you used in the exercises are skills you will have to teach your learners. These are skills your learners need to tackle for ALL types of sources – not just photographs. Let's talk about these skills first.



The Rough Guide to Life in 16th Century England

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

- Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.
- Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, don't throw the baby out with the Bath water.
- Houses had thatched roofs—thick straw—piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs." The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying "Dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence the origin of the word threshold. (thresh hold)



BOOK REVIEW

P. Dennis and R Ntsimane (editors). 2008. *Oral History in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa*. University of KwaZulu–Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg, 196pp. ISBN 9781869141479

Printed archives greatly mirror the point of view of those in power. As such the voices, memories and histories – the wounds – of the oppressed are silenced. How then to deal with these silences? Although Oral History got underway in South Africa in the 1970s it is in the post-apartheid era that it really came to the fore as a research tool to document, in lieu of the lack of more traditional historical evidence, the histories of those wounded by oppression. Consequently, for example in high school, learners are expected as part of the National Curriculum Statement for History to conduct an Oral History project. This was implemented in an attempt to not only alter the way History is viewed and done but also to reveal hidden histories and give a voice to those who had been silenced and marginalised by the previous regime. As such Oral History has now, in a society where great change has happened and continues to happen, been propelled into the domain of official History while maintaining strong roots with the unofficial History.

Phillippe Dennis, currently Professor of History of Christianity, and Radikobo Ntsimane, a researcher in Oral and Religious History, both at the University of KwaZulu–Natal are ideally placed to act as editors of *Oral History in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa*. This is especially the case since they are the leaders of the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa. Using their positions and experience as both academics and community workers as a vantage point they, along with their fellow authors, have produced a desperately needed reference work cum manual for Oral History as a research tool.

Oral History in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa unpacks in a suitable blend of practice and theory, the nature of the field. The reader or user is in seven chapters systematically taken through the practice of doing Oral History. In the process the authors, all experienced



Oral Historians, interrogates in a sensitive and open-minded manner issues that fundamentally resonate with Oral History in a wounded country such as ethics, truth, culture and gender, rurality and trauma and memory. The abovementioned is supplemented by five appendices which deal with practical issues such as a checklist for Oral History projects and an interview release form. This serves to move the publication beyond the realm of a mere academic work into a user-friendly manual for novice and experienced Oral Historians, be it learners, teachers, students or workers, alike.

What then are the possible shortcomings in a commendable work such as this? In my estimation the publication would have been enhanced if the voices of ordinary Oral History practitioners such as teachers, learners or community workers could have found a place amongst those of the academically orientated authors. That is not to say that ordinary practitioners are silent – Kros and Ulrich for example gives a voice to the work of one such an ordinary practitioner (pp.98–101.).

This minor criticism aside in my estimation every library and History teacher in South Africa should have a copy of what is an accessible and user-friendly publication on understanding and conducting Oral History research in a trans-disciplinary manner in a wounded country.

Dr. Johan Wassermann
History Education
Faculty of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal

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