

# What is History?

- History is essentially **the study of people** – how they lived, what they valued and how their lives were influenced by the time and place in which they were born.
- The study of history helps us to better understand why our modern world is the way that it is, as we can investigate the **causes and consequences** of specific historical events.
- Historians need to work as detectives – piecing together the clues to be able to come to some conclusions about what life was like in the past.

## Activity 1:

Use the clues in the pictures to suggest what may have been considered important in these societies.



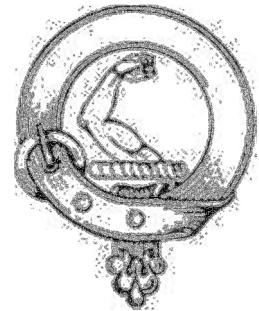
a) \_\_\_\_\_



b) \_\_\_\_\_



c) \_\_\_\_\_



d) \_\_\_\_\_

- The term '**era**' is often used to describe a particular period of history – for example, 'the medieval era'. The term '**circa**' (abbreviated to c. ) is used when an exact date is not known (for example, a photograph captioned 'Brisbane, c. 1950' would mean that the artefact originates from about the year 1950).

## Activity 2:

Match each of these items to the approximate year of its release [choose from the dates in the box].

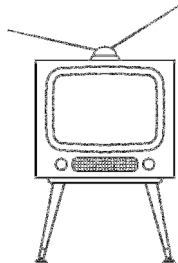
c. 1830

c. 2001

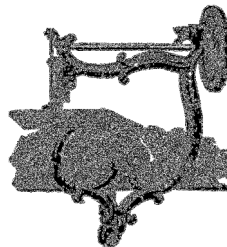
c. 1927

c. 1450

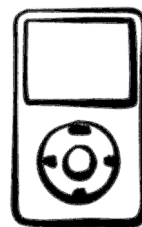
Television



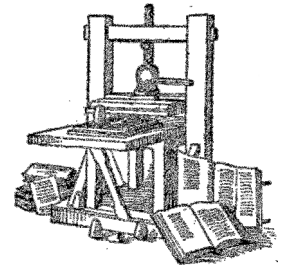
Sewing Machine



iPod



Printing Press



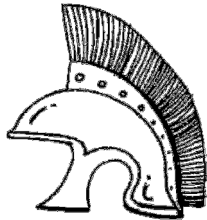
List the above inventions in chronological order (from the earliest to the most recent):

- Historians learn about the past through examining **historical evidence (sources)**. They can then use this evidence to construct a **hypothesis** (argument) which can be used to investigate and explain the behaviour of people in the past.
- Evidence can be either **literary** (written – such as letters, diary entries and symbols) or **non-literary** (not written – artefacts such as vases, buildings and photographs).

**Activity 3:**

Identify each of these historical sources as either literary or non-literary.

Hillary Rodham Clinton  
 John M. Keynes  
 Benetton



- Furthermore, historical evidence is classified as either **primary** or **secondary**: primary sources **originate from the historical period being investigated** (such as an ancient bracelet found in an **archaeological excavation**), while secondary sources are produced later in time, and usually base their ideas on primary source evidence (such as a textbook which describes life in the ancient world).

**Activity 4:**

In the spaces provided, sketch and explain an example of both a primary and a secondary source.

<p><i>Primary Source</i></p>	<p><i>Secondary Source</i></p>

- Unfortunately, historians often encounter historical sources which are **unreliable, incomplete** or offer **varied opinions** about the one topic. In order to support their hypothesis, it is crucial that they find **corroborating evidence** (that is, two or more sources which provide the same information).

**Activity 5:**

In your SOSE book, write a list of ten items that a historian from the future could use to find out about what life was like for teenagers in twenty-first century Australia (think about clothing, food, schooling, recreation...use your imagination!) and then write 2-3 sentences which explain how two or more items from your list could be used by the historian to corroborate their arguments.