

Content Knowledge - History

Definition – teachers’ knowledge of the subject they are teaching.

- History is a study of the past, of different eras and people, places and events belonging to them. Learning history helps children to develop a greater understanding of how we came to be where we are today in terms of social, political, ethical, ideologies etc.
- However, history is far more complex, while facts remain the same, many different narratives surround them. It challenges children to become critical thinkers. Through exploring historical ideas, children learn how to find things out for themselves.
- History requires active engagement with the past and is as much about how we construct our understanding of history, as the history itself.
- It is Important for children to recognise that our understanding of history is not fixed but can change as new evidence is discovered. (Mary Pickford – Derby)
- It is a study of what we have left in the past, that way statements about the accuracy or truthfulness of a historical account are held to relate to the ways in which the historian has used their research materials.

The history NC aims to develop children’s subject knowledge and understanding of the history of Britain and the wider world.

Children will be developed to support an understanding of:

- The complexity of people’s lives
- The process of change
- The diversity of societies and the relationships between different groups
- Their own identity
- Challenges of current times

Children can explore things outside of their own experience, yet still find ways to relate to them. They can engage with, and debate, a range of issues, moral dilemmas and consider why people in history might have made the choices they did.

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Historians...

Historians question evidence from the past which we have available today. They consider what the evidence might tell us about the time it belongs to and they do this through the processes of historical enquiry and interpretation

Historical enquiry is at the centre of history and is the starting point from which everything else stems.

Historical enquiry can be defined as:

1. *Investigation of the past – objects, artefacts, paintings, photographs, oral accounts, written sources, films buildings*
2. *The creation of hypotheses and questions*
3. *Research which follows up*

Historical enquiry is the process of focused questioning and research, which ultimately leads to a reasoned conclusion.

The teachers role is to guide children to raise questions and design enquiries to find the answers. To answer questions children, need to be supported to:

- Raise questions
- Collect sources of evidence
- Interpret evidence
- Present ideas
- Interpretations of history

History is an enquiry-based subject.

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Key Concepts in History

Chronology is the backbone of history, underpinning historical understanding. Developing children's chronological understanding is important, but very complex to master.

Chronological understanding is much more than the ability to sequence events in order. It also includes the following:

- The ability to slot people and events from the past into a mental map that enables children to make connections and draw comparisons across different periods.
- Language and terminology
- A sense of duration - for example understanding that the era of Roman Britain was nearly six times longer than the Victorian period.
- A sense of period – understanding what is distinctive about a period in history, as well as what has happened during this time.
- Timelines are a key resource to use when developing chronological understanding.