

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?

## Unit 1 - Lesson 5

### Content Expectations

*6 and 7* Explain how historians use a variety of sources to explore the past (e.g., *H1.2.1*: artifacts, primary and secondary sources including narratives, technology, historical maps, visual/mathematical quantitative data, radiocarbon dating, DNA analysis).

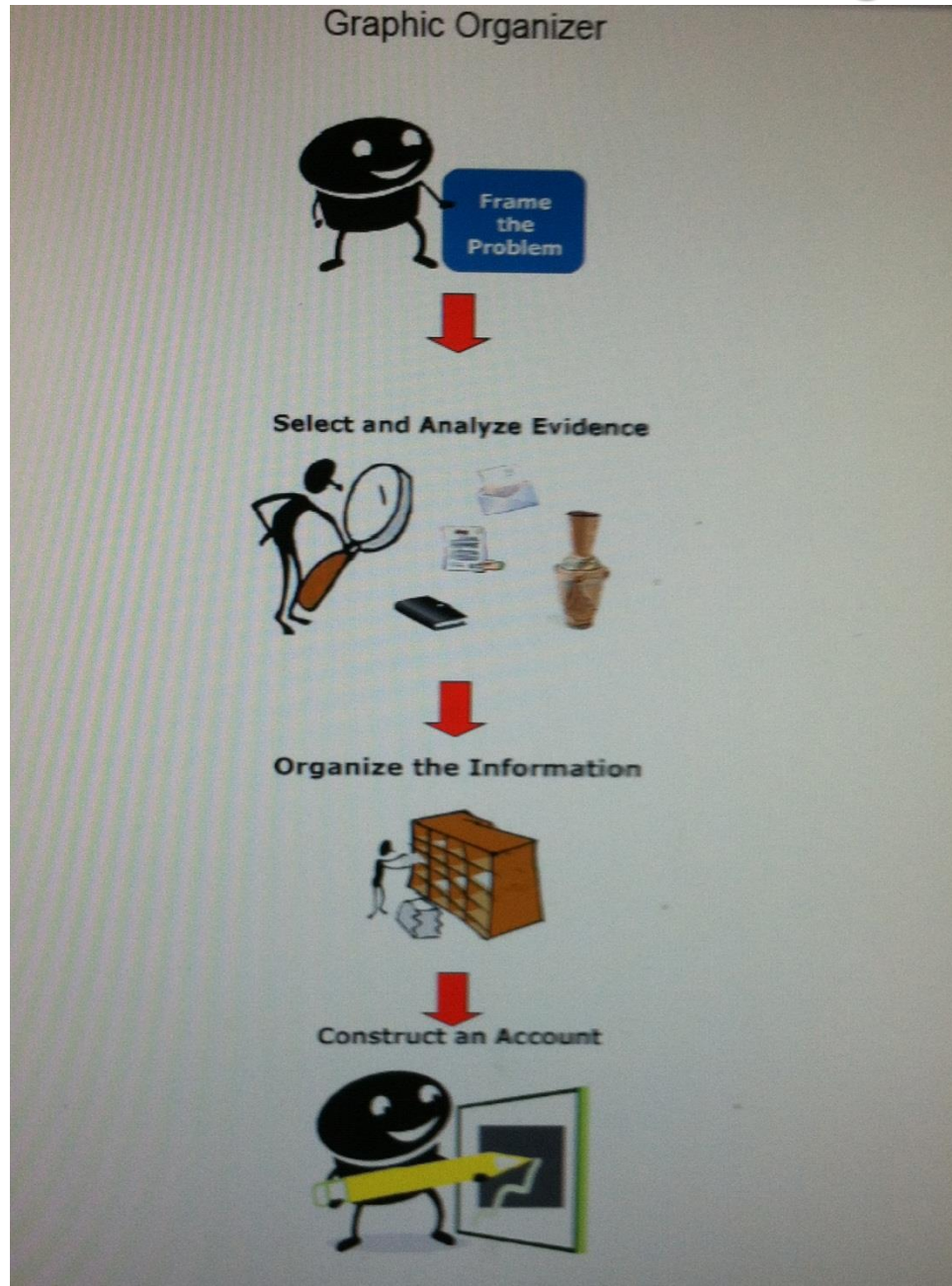
### Common Core State Standards

*RH.6-8.4*: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

*RH.6-8.5*: Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

*WHST.6-8.10*: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?





# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?

Grade Social Studies  
Unit 1: An Introduction to World History

SS070105  
Lesson 5

## Big Idea Card

### Big Ideas of the Lesson 5, Unit 1

- Historians investigate the past by (1) framing problems to study, (2) selecting and analyzing available evidence, (3) organizing their information, and (4) creating the account.
- In answering the historical problem, historians analyze the available evidence by paying attention to who created the evidence and then use other sources to check it against.
- Historical problems or questions help historians select, analyze, and organize information.
- Historical accounts represent the historians' best answers to the historical problems given the evidence they have.

# Learning Targets:

- 1. I can explain that historians investigate the past by (1) framing problems to study, (2) selecting and analyzing available evidence, (3) organizing their information, and (4) creating the account.**
- 2. I can conclude that in answering the historical problem, historians analyze the available evidence by paying attention to who created the evidence and then use other sources to check it against.**
- 3. I can justify that historical problems or questions help historians select, analyze, and organize information.**
- 4. I can summarize that historical accounts represent the historians' best answers to the historical problems given the evidence they have.**



# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?

7th Grade Social Studies  
Unit 1: An Introduction to World History

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## Word Cards

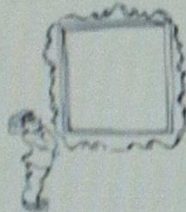
### Word Cards from previous lessons needed for this lesson:

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- Historical account – Word Card #12 from Lesson 3
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- Evidence – Word Card #17 from Lesson 4

24

### framing a historical problem

process used to narrow the focus of historical study from a broad topic to a more specific research question or problem in order to create an historical account



**Example:** The first step in creating an historical account is to frame an historical problem, which gives you a specific question to study, such as "Why didn't Detroit develop a subway system during the 20th Century?"

(SS070105)

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### sourcing

asking questions about a particular source, including: Who created it? When? Why? From what perspective or point of view? What did they know?



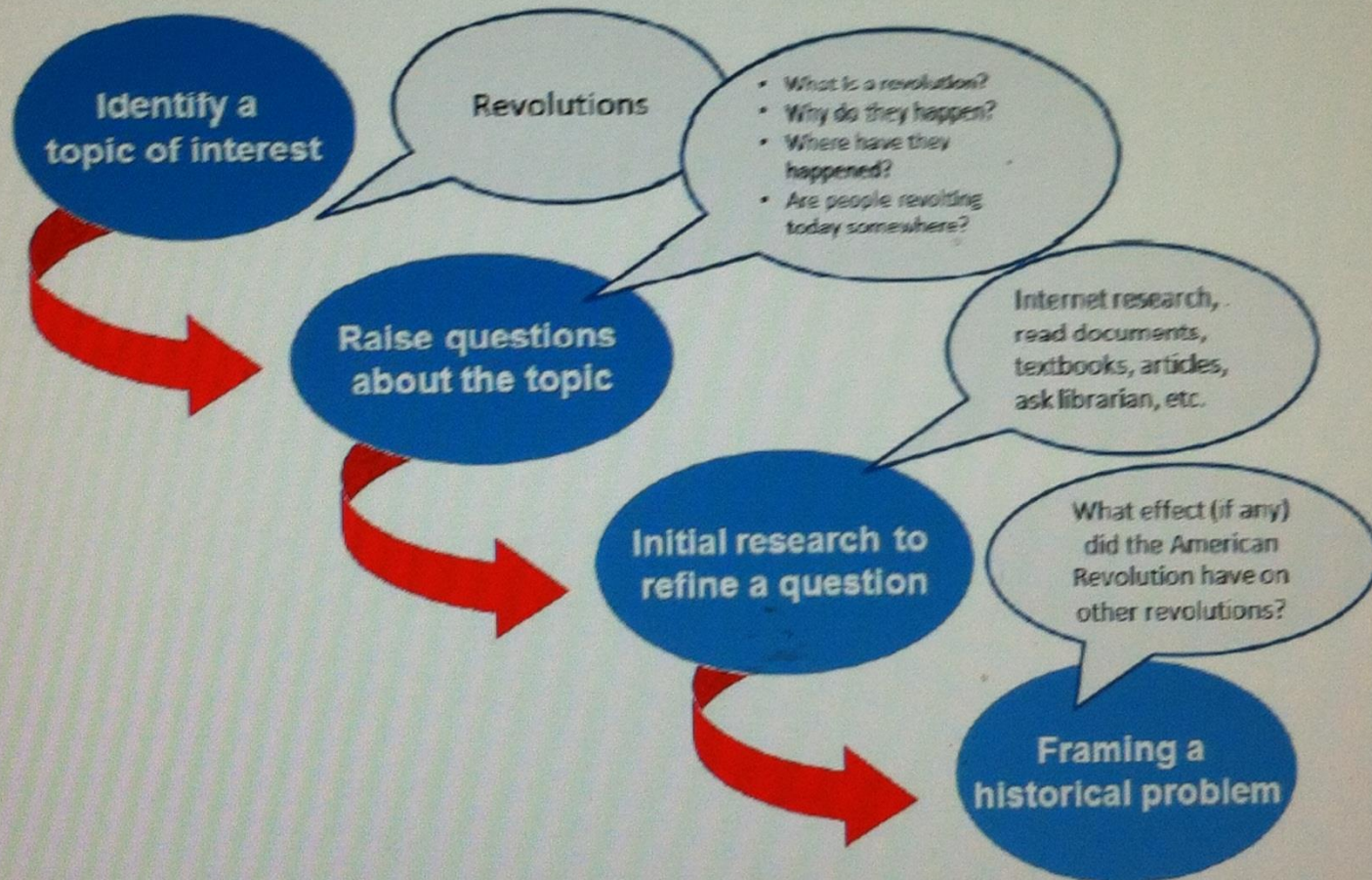
**Example:** Sourcing is one more way in which historians try to establish the accuracy and reliability of a source.

(SS070105)



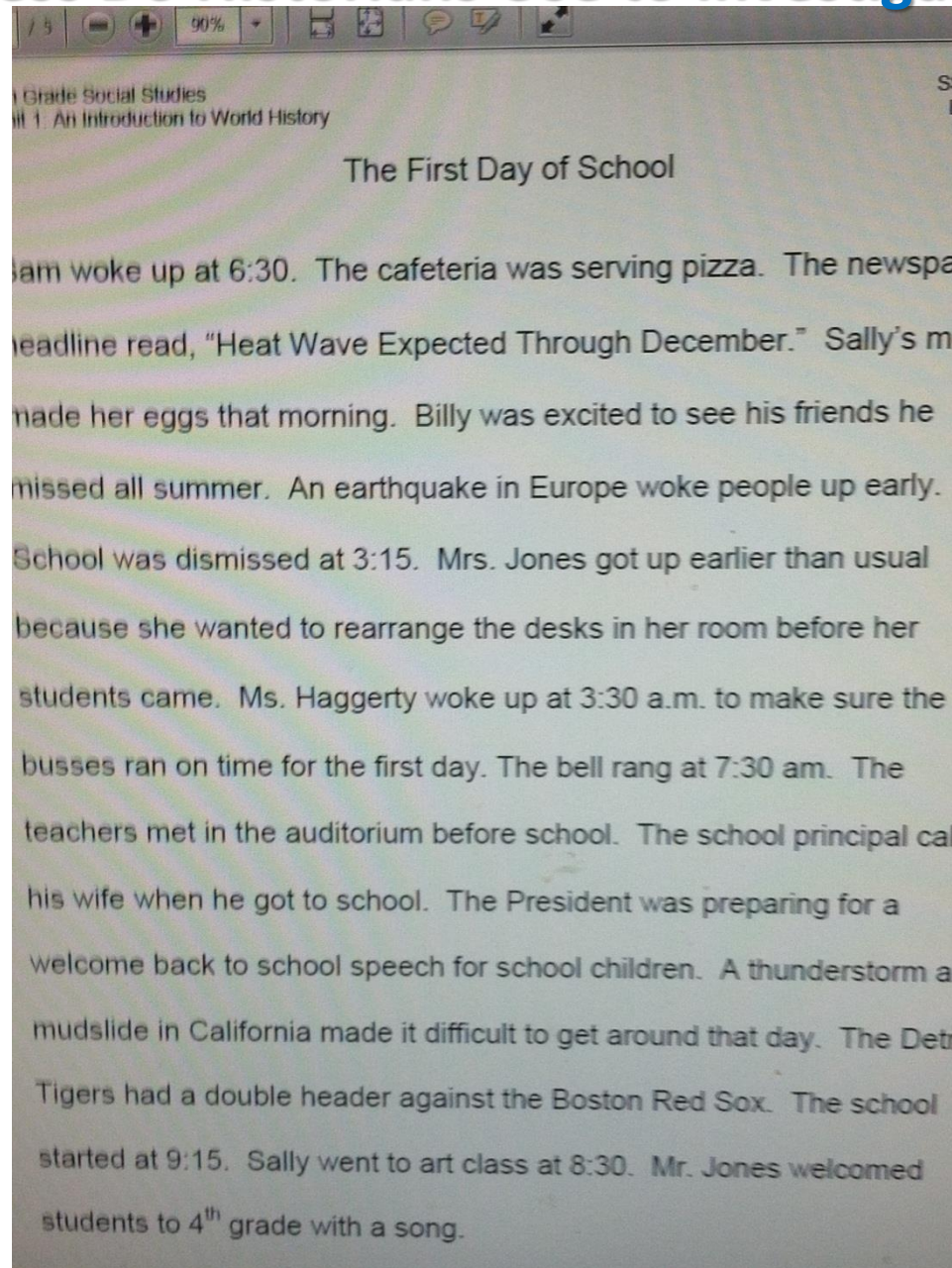
# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?

## Process for Framing A Historical Problem





# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?



1 Grade Social Studies  
Unit 1: An Introduction to World History

## The First Day of School

Sam woke up at 6:30. The cafeteria was serving pizza. The newspaper headline read, "Heat Wave Expected Through December." Sally's mother made her eggs that morning. Billy was excited to see his friends he missed all summer. An earthquake in Europe woke people up early. School was dismissed at 3:15. Mrs. Jones got up earlier than usual because she wanted to rearrange the desks in her room before her students came. Ms. Haggerty woke up at 3:30 a.m. to make sure the busses ran on time for the first day. The bell rang at 7:30 a.m. The teachers met in the auditorium before school. The school principal called his wife when he got to school. The President was preparing for a welcome back to school speech for school children. A thunderstorm and a mudslide in California made it difficult to get around that day. The Detroit Tigers had a double header against the Boston Red Sox. The school started at 9:15. Sally went to art class at 8:30. Mr. Jones welcomed students to 4<sup>th</sup> grade with a song.

# INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Students will randomly read and simplify what was read**
- 2. LISTEN and READ along**
- 3. Take notes in your SS Notebook**
- 4. Your notes may be:**
  - 1. Simplified phrases**
  - 2. Key words**
  - 3. Simple pictures / connections made**
  - 4. Web chart**



# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?

- You will be introduced into the process historians use to investigate the past.
- The goal is to illuminate the discipline of history as something more than just facts and dates.
- While facts and dates are relevant, they also help frame further questions about the past.
- You will explore the importance of framing problems in order to select, analyze, and organize evidence to create an historical account.

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #1

- Distinguish history as an event FROM history as an account.

- What is the difference?

- Turn and talk, THEN... Discuss with the class

Historical EVENT –something that happened in the past

Historical ACCOUNT –a representation of an event from the past

- REMEMBER: There are more “things” in an event than a historian could possibly include in his or her account of the past event.
- BECAUSE OF THIS: Historians must decide what to include and exclude in their accounts, because accounts cannot include everything.



# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #2

**Historians use four basic steps in constructing an account:**

- 1. Framing problems to study,**
- 2. Selecting and analyzing available evidence,**
- 3. Organizing their information, and**
- 4. Creating the account.**

**In this lesson you will discuss how historians frame, select, and organize facts and/or sources.**

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #3

In previous lessons you have been investigating how an historian examines sources.

However, historians do not just jump in and examine artifacts or documents in a vacuum.

## QUESTION:

- How do historians decide what to investigate?
- If you had the opportunity to explore anything that happened in the past, what would you want to investigate and how would you decide to explore it?

Brainstorm with a partner / share with class.

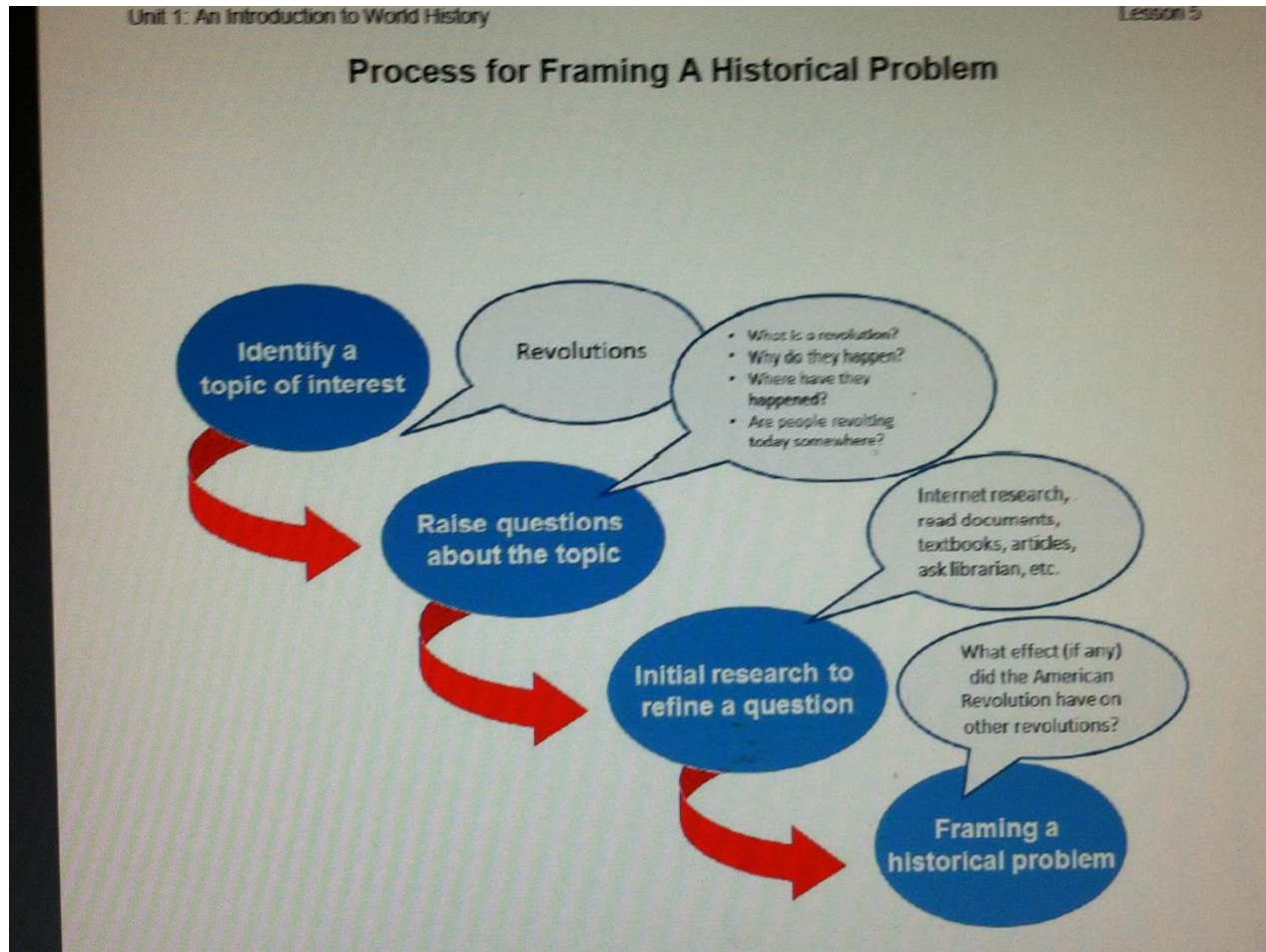


# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #3

## **DID YOU NOTICE?**

**One's interest in a topic may lead them to an investigation of something related to that topic.**

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #4 “Process for Framing a Historical Problem”





# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #4

- The starting point was a topic or item of interest.
- From there, some general question is raised and investigated.
- That investigation results in more specific questions concerning the topic.
- Notice the different resources – people, a book, internet research, etc.
- It is difficult to investigate very broad topics.
- The more specific the question, the easier it is to target the research.

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #4

## For example:

If a student wanted to know about Michelangelo, the next question would be what does the student want to know about?

If they do not know who Michelangelo was, then the following more specific questions would be difficult to come up with:

- How did he become a sculptor?
- What are his most famous sculptures?
- What was his childhood like?
- How did he paint the Sistine Chapel?
- Why did he paint it the way he did?

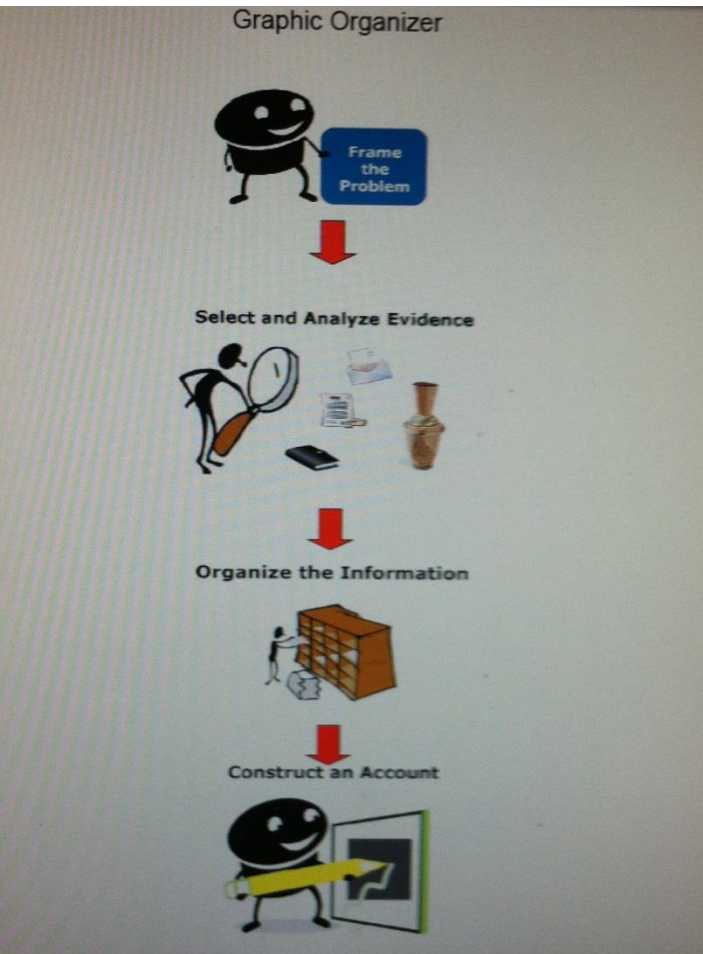
# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #4

- Some initial investigation is necessary to narrow the focus of research.
- Staying with too broad of a topic does not frame the research with a problem for investigation and will likely result in disparate (dissimilar/unalike) pieces of information instead of an historical account.



# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #5

## Revisit the “Graphic Organizer”



1. Framing problems to study,
2. Selecting and analyzing available evidence
3. Organizing their information, and
4. Creating the account.

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #6

1. You have already explored some of the ways that historians analyze evidence.
  - List them.
2. In Lesson 4, you distinguished fact from opinion and tried to determine the accuracy of the sources.
  - Describe the difference between fact and opinion.
3. What methods did we use to establish accuracy?

**INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSISTENCIES WERE USED TO ESTABLISH THE ACCURACY OF A SOURCE**

**This is called corroboration.**

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #6

1. **REWORD**: Both geographers and historians represent places and events.
2. **REWORD**: These are not the actual places and event, but representations or accounts of the place or a past event.
3. **ANSWER**: Why does who created the source matter when examining a source?

**Perspective / Point-of-View , Knowledge, Experiences, etc.**



# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #6

## PUT THESE STEPS IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

When you “source” a re-presentation, you inquire:

1. Who created it?
2. When?
3. Why?
4. From which perspective / point-of-view?
5. What did they know? Etc.

**THESE QUESTIONS ALL RELATE TO WHAT HISTORIANS REFER TO AS “SOURCING.”**

## What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #7

1. Why must historians select and organize sources and evidence?
2. What would happen if a historian tried to include everything that happened, or what people did and thought? Could s/he?
3. What would happen if historians included in their accounts everything that happened in the order in which they found it?
4. Discuss student responses.

Read “The First Day of School.” (Handout)

**DO: Jot notes about what you noticed about this account.**

## **What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?**

### **The First Day of School**

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## What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #8

Read the account of “The First Day of School” out loud to the class.

### **DISCUSS:**

- 1. Was this account easy to understand? Why or why not?**
- 2. How is the account organized?**
- 3. Why do you think the writer included an earthquake in Europe? A baseball game?**
- 4. Was the account internally consistent? How do you know?**
- 5. Why must historians select and organize sources and evidence?**

## What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #8

- Was the account internally consistent? How do you know?

The account indicates two different start times for school. The account is not clear as to which school(s) were being represented in the account, it may be internally consistent. The point here is by including all this information randomly, it is difficult to tell.

- It is important to recognize that the historians can NOT include everything and they must organize it to help people make sense of their account.

# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #9

**How can framing a historical problem help you in selecting, analyzing, and arranging the information you collect?**

**RECORD STUDENT RESPONSES:**



# What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past?

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Write the term.

Write the definition in your own words to help you remember it.

## Word Cards

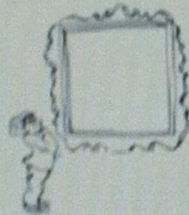
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**Example:** The first step in creating an historical account is to frame an historical problem, which gives you a specific question to study, such as "Why didn't Detroit develop a subway system during the 20th Century?"

(SS070105)

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### sourcing

asking questions about a particular source, including: Who created it? When? Why? From what perspective or point of view? What did they know?



**Example:** Sourcing is one more way in which historians try to establish the accuracy and reliability of a source.

(SS070105)



# **What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #9**

**These questions are located on a Class Copy paper.**

- 1. How would creating a historical problem help you select information?**
- 2. What information in the “First Day of School” account would you eliminate if you were focusing only on the first day at your local school?**
- 3. How would a historical problem help in analyzing the information?**
- 4. How would a historical problem help in arranging the information? How might different historical problems about the first day of school lead to different accounts of the first day of school?**
- 5. Think about what other “problems” could be framed about the first day of school?**
- 6. How can framing a historical problem help you in selecting, analyzing, and arranging the information you collect?**

## DISCUSSION

1. How would creating a historical problem help you select information?
2. What information in the “First Day of School” account would you eliminate if you were focusing only on the first day at your local school?

**Recognize that the earthquake in Europe, baseball game, the mudslide in California, or Mr. Jones’ 4<sup>th</sup> grade class would probably not be included in the account**

3. How would a historical problem help in analyzing the information?

**The account has two different start times for school. By focusing on the problem, this apparent consistency would need further investigation.**

# **What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #9**

## **DISCUSSION**

**4. How would a historical problem help in arranging the information? How might different historical problems about the first day of school lead to different accounts of the first day of school?**

**The accounts would stress different information based on the historical problem. For example, Consider these two historical problems:**

**(1) How was the first day of school the same for elementary and high school students?**

**(2) How did events outside of school affect students on the first day of school?**

**5. Think about what other “problems” that could be framed about the first day of school?**

## What Process Do Historians Use to Investigate the Past? #10

### IN YOUR SS NOTEBOOK:

1. How would your account of the first day of school be different if you created a historical problem to focus your account?

2. Propose a historical problem about your first day of school.

3. What information in your account would you eliminate?



7

## account

a report or description of an event or experience



Example: A map is an "account" of how the person who created the map "sees" the place they are representing. This is influenced by the person's knowledge, purpose, and point of view.

(SS070101)

12

## historical account

a representation of an event from the past



Example: The description of the American Revolution in our history book is an historical account.

(SS070103)

24

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## **WORDS TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND:**

**1. Eliminate - to remove (something that is not wanted or needed) : to get rid of (something)**

**2. Analyzing - to study (something) closely and carefully : to learn the nature and relationship of the parts of (something) by a close and careful examination**