

Historians at work

As we have already discussed, an historian works by asking _____. However, as we are all products of our respective generations, it is inevitable that some of the questions we ask will be 'modern' questions; that is, questions or ideas that have been _____ by modern perceptions and issues, such as political ideologies like feminism and Marxism, and the movement for gay and lesbian rights. This cannot be avoided, and indeed it is one of the ways fresh _____ are brought to our understanding of the ancient _____.

However, _____ ancient societies through modern questions is different from making value judgements about ancient _____ using modern values. Examining, analysing and understanding the role of slavery or the position of women is different from _____ those societies 'sexist' or exploitative. That is, we can understand and empathise with the different values and problems faced by _____ societies even while recognising the _____ between their values and ours. And we can be conscious of our subjectivity and not let it colour our interpretation of the past based on personal or _____ values. Therefore, it is an historian's responsibility to write as _____ as possible with as little bias or prejudice as they can manage.

The first step in writing history involves _____: collecting evidence, evaluating that evidence, identifying the strengths and limitations of the evidence, and recognising the limitations of the information that is available.

Next comes the most _____ process of all: writing history. Writing history involves telling a true _____ of something that has happened in the past. Like all good stories, you need to know:

- when and where an _____ took place
- who was involved
- how or what happened
- why it happened.

The most important step in the process is the last: explaining why something occurred. This is called causation, and will very likely be the basis of your _____ or argument.

However, writing about the ancient past also means understanding that no account or version of what happened can be complete. This is because we seldom have a whole picture of what happened, since no event that has _____ can be recorded fully. As we have discovered, sources from the past are themselves inevitably incomplete; the persons recording events in the past chose what to record and in doing so left something else out. What that historian recorded will be considered as fact, and what was ignored may never be thought of or _____ about again.

Word List

research
labelling
accurately
story
influenced
past
differences
modern
difficult
contention
accurately
questions
ancient
event
occurred
investigating
talked
ocieties
interpretations