- How does this specific historical period or event impact on your life?
- Where do you live? In the country, a village or a large town? In barracks, a cottage or a large house?
- Who lives with you? Do you have a family?
- What work do you do? Or do you go to school?
- Have you had any education or training?
- What tools or equipment do you use? What are your working conditions?
- What is your daily routine?
- What is your everyday life like? For example, what are your washing, cooking and sleeping arrangements?
- What do you wear?
- What food do you normally eat?
- What entertainment is available? What holidays and festivals do you celebrate?
- How do children spend their time?
- What difficulties do you face? What problems need to be solved?
- Where do you fit into society? Are you rich, poor or comfortably well-off?
- Try to use some words or terms from the period in your final narrative.

Answering questions such as these helps students to create their historical persona but also helps establish the 'flavour' or atmosphere of the historical period. Students could choose to be an actual convict character from historical documents such as the convict shipping lists. Teachers could provide details about where they lived before conviction, the crime they committed, the gaol they were sent to, their trial and sentence, their transportation, any punishments inflicted on them, their arrival in Australia and their subsequent experiences. For more able students, teachers could provide the sources but let students find the information by themselves.

Examine attitudes and beliefs

Trying to understand the attitudes and beliefs of people from another era is quite challenging. Teachers will need to explain that in the past people held some values and attitudes that were similar to those we hold today, but also others that were quite different. Provide relevant examples to support your explanation. For the convict era, for example, you could point out the severity of punishments for crimes against property, the imprisonment and transportation of children, and the popularity of public hanging. The following considerations about perspectives from the convict era could be discussed in class.

- What is your attitude towards being sent to Australia?
- What is your attitude towards others—for example, towards other workers, convicts, soldiers or the governor?
- How has life improved for you in Australia?
- What are your main concerns?
- What do you look forward to in the future?

More able students may be able to incorporate some of these attitudes and beliefs into their story—for example, dreams of freedom or fears of never being able to return to Britain.

Be aware of differing views

Students tend to believe that everyone from the same historical period thought in the same way. A structured role-play between characters with different perspectives could help to show that people in the past may have had quite different attitudes and views. An example of a role-play could include the attitudes towards harsh punishments of a governor of a colony trying to maintain order compared with that of a convict about to be whipped with a cat-o'-nine-tails.

The range of possible empathy activities is very broad. Once students have established their historical persona, they can 'be' that character and perform one or more of the following tasks, using their historical imagination to demonstrate their historical understanding.

- Write a diary entry.
- Write a letter explaining an event from their point of view.
- Describe an episode in their life.
- Make a choice or decision and explain it.
- Argue for or against a position.

The following activities require students to demonstrate empathy and historical understanding in a variety of contexts.

- Interview a historical character.
- Create eyewitness accounts from the perspectives of different historical characters.
- Persuade a historical character toward a particular course of action or dissuade them from one.
- Evaluate a historical character's actions, career or achievements.

Types of history 3

Family history

traditional method of examining family history by using birth and marriage certificates and other family documents.

From Foundation to Year 2, students would have explored aspects of family history: retelling family stories, discussing family artefacts, examining old family photographs or listening to stories by grandparents.

In Year 3, the local community's history could be examined through family history. Students could interview older family members about the changes and the continuities of aspects of life in the local community. Students with family links to colonial times may be able to provide evidence of life years ago through items such as old photographs, family documents, artefacts and memories. They could examine the contributions of their own family and cultural groups to the local community and again pose the question: 'How do we know?' Family traditions can also be investigated in the ways that various national days are celebrated, and then later discussed in class. Students with more recent migrant links may be able to provide stories of how national days were celebrated in other countries.

If using family history in an investigation of the local community, it would be advisable to notify parents. Some families may not wish their children to explore family history in detail. If so, these issues may be avoided by keeping to a general approach, and avoiding the more

Activities introducing historical concepts

- The concepts of continuity and change can be introduced by comparing photographs of parents or grandparents as children in the local area. Students can discuss similarities and differences in clothing, housing, transport or any other 'clues' of change in the photograph.
- The question 'How do I know?' can be used to reinforce the concepts of sources and evidence. 'How do I know about my family's contribution to the local community?' Sources could include photographs, newspaper stories, family stories, street names or family members' names on local monuments.
- Activities comparing different family commemorations and celebrations can be used to introduce the concepts of similarity and difference. Students can produce drawings of their families' celebrations, which can then be displayed and used in class discussion to draw out similarities and differences in family celebrations. Alternatively, students can provide artefacts or photographs from family celebrations, with a brief explanation of what they tell about their

family's celebrations. A class display could be made of these items, emphasising similarities and differences.

- In Year 4, students can investigate cause and effect in relation to the impact of early European settlement on Aboriginal communities and the environment. Differences in social organisation, beliefs and values, especially in relation to nature and the land, between the Europeans and the Aboriginal peoples would need to be examined first.

Guest speakers

Encourage students to talk to their parents and grandparents about their childhoods in the local community, family celebrations or holidays that they enjoyed. This can be done informally or in a structured way with a small number of specific questions. For further details, see 'Oral history', page 33.

Alternatively, invite an older person to talk to the class. The story of a grandmother or grandfather's life as a child in the local community, or a story about how they celebrated events in the past, can be a springboard for many subsequent activities. It is advisable to inform your guest speaker about the areas you would like them to touch on during their talk to the class.

Local history

The value of local history

In Year 2, students would have had the opportunity to examine the heritage of their local area, and in Year 3, they will have the opportunity to build on those experiences.

Local history is very relevant for students as it begins in their known world. It can be conducted mainly 'in the field', through observation and recording, providing learning experiences outside the classroom. Classroom activities can also be conducted, such as handling artefacts, analysing old photographs and listening to and valuing the memories and experiences of older people. Local history is history 'unplugged', seen through students' own eyes rather than through a computer screen. It extends their interest in and experience of their surroundings and helps them to make sense of their world.

Local history provides excellent opportunities for developing important history skills, including:

- observing and recording the remains of the past
- questioning what these remains tell us about the past
- considering whether or not these remains should be preserved and why
- drawing conclusions about the past from a range of sources.

Local history also provides an ideal context for teaching and learning about the concepts of change and continuity; how life in the past was different from or similar to life in the present.

The scope of local history

The scope of local history can be broad or narrow and the range of possible topics is diverse. It provides an opportunity to discover the story of the local community. A local history study could focus on changes and continuities in local education, buildings, streetscapes or transportation. It could be the study of a single event or major change that was significant for the local community, such as the arrival of the railway. Or, it could trace a theme over time, such as the history of the environment, farming, the impact of technology or the contribution of a particular migrant group. A study of the more recent past could involve students conducting oral history interviews. Teachers should choose the most accessible and relevant areas for study, appropriate for the abilities and interests of the students. Additionally, local history can be readily integrated with other subjects such as Geography and English.

Local history for Year 3

A study of the local community, region or state is a feature of the Year 3 History curriculum. This study will vary according to the location of your school, whether it is an old town or a new suburb, in the city or in the country. Each local area will offer something different, yet each investigation should begin with identifying and learning about the first people who lived in the local area, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Who were they? What language did they speak? What natural resources did they use? What evidence of them remains? Do their descendants still live in the area? Contact with the local Aboriginal community or agencies will help you to approach the early history of the local area.

If your school is located in a new suburban development, you may wish to focus your study on an older area nearby, on the broader local region or on another area in your state or territory. However, even if your suburb is newly developed, you may still find evidence of the earlier history of the region through council records or local library archives.

As local history is so varied, it can be tailored to suit your class. There are many ways to introduce a study of the local area; it is yours to create.

Teacher planning

- **Decide on the extent of your study.** You may wish to build on the experiences that your students had in Year 2. The main focus for Year 3 is to examine one example of a change and one example of a continuity in the local community. The examples may focus on transport, work, education, daily life, entertainment or the local environment. Start from the known and easily seen. Walk the area and identify where the most visible traces of the past remain. This could be the route of a future 'heritage' walk for the class. Take photographs to use later in class.
- **Gain background knowledge.** Good sources of local or regional history include the local library and museum, history websites, the local council, historical societies, the local Aboriginal land council, the state library and perhaps older residents.
- **Locate useful resources.** Once you have an idea of the history of the local area, you can focus on more specific resources that may be available, depending on the aspect you wish to investigate, such as aerial maps, old street directories, council maps, land grant maps, old phone books, census data, old newspapers, postcards and photographs. Buildings can provide valuable information—for example, old houses, churches, cemeteries, museums, monuments, railway stations, old roads and signs. Private documents such as letters, diaries and journals may be held in the local library or museum. There may be more resources for one particular time period and you may wish to focus on that.

Begin in the classroom

- It is sound practice to begin with the known. What do students remember from last year? Ask them to identify any visual clues about the past in the local area: What have they seen that is old in the area? Provide photographs of local historic buildings, monuments or remains to encourage discussion of change and continuity. Perhaps photographs or suggestions can be categorised into 'Changed' or 'The same'.
- Read *My Place* by Nadia Wheatley, which traces change and continuity over time in a particular suburban street. If focusing on change in transport or housing, reading the story and carefully examining the illustrations will help establish a sequence of change over time. If the drawings are photocopied and the dates are removed, students can attempt to place them chronologically and explain the reasons behind their sequencing.
- Investigate place names and street names for clues to the early history of the local area. They are often the names of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander groups, early settlers, significant citizens or representations of important events.

Beyond the classroom

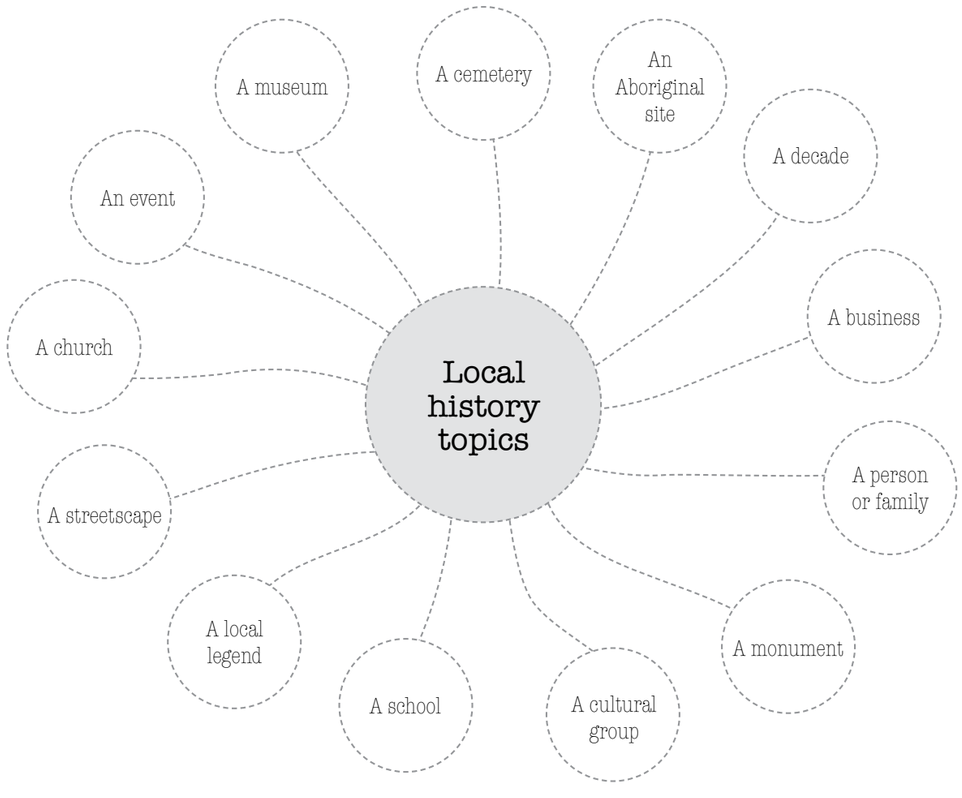
- Take the class on a short 'heritage' walk, asking students to identify historical remains that they have studied previously. Focus on one aspect of change over time, such as buildings, transport or entertainment. What evidence of change can they note? Is there any evidence of aspects of their town that have not changed? Can this be explained?
- Visit a local museum or heritage site. For further details, see Chapter 4 Site studies, page 35.

Back in the classroom

- Create a photographic display of buildings, structures or modes of transport that have changed over time. Try to provide at least three photographs spread over time to show this change. Explain why some things have changed while others have remained the same.
- Invite guest speakers to share their knowledge and recollections of the local area or community. For example, a speaker from the local Aboriginal land council could tell stories about Aboriginal life before European settlement; a speaker from the local historical society could tell stories about early pioneer life; and a grandparent could tell stories about changes they have seen in the area. A member of a particular prominent cultural or ethnic group may wish to speak about their earliest settlers to the area and their contributions to the community. Create an annotated pictorial timeline in the classroom, with decades and significant dates marked, showing events or broad developments in sequence.
- Present to the class a selection of artefacts relevant to various phases of local history. Students could be asked: 'What am I?' or 'What clues do I provide about the history of our area?' Relevant artefacts could include early farming or mining tools, old harnesses or bridles, pottery, a candle holder, a convict brick or any object not used today.

Use narrative

- Focus on a local cultural or ethnic group that has contributed to the local community. Tell the group's story as an individual from that group. Allow students to question you during or after the narrative.
- Set a writing exercise beginning with 'Our community has had many changes over time …' OR 'Some things in our community never change …'
- Conclude with a discussion focusing on the question 'How do we know about our past?' Students could record a list of possible sources or display a photographic or pictorial record.



Oral history

What is oral history?

Oral history is based on people talking about their memories. It is a two-way process where someone shares memories with an interviewer who has planned what questions to ask. People are generally more interesting than documents, so oral history can help bring the past to life. Importantly, oral history highlights the fact that history involves the experiences of ordinary people. It can also be a means of increasing understanding between generations.

The value of oral history

Communication

Oral history can be an excellent way to engage students in the process of 'doing' history through inquiry-based learning. It encourages active student learning and compels students to gain experience in gathering evidence as they interview subjects and record their interviews.

The literacy skill modes of listening, reading, speaking, writing, viewing, creating and communicating are highlighted in the study of oral history. In planning an oral history investigation, students need to identify their subject, plan appropriate questions and create a text for a specific audience. They need to plan and draft their interview questions and edit them for clarity of meaning. A variety of digital forms could be used.

Local identity and oral history

Oral history can help to develop students' understanding of and identification with their local area and the local community through personal contact.

In Years 3 and 4, students may use oral history to further investigate local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander history, interview a local historian on early colonial life, or interview family members or older residents about commemorations from their childhood or their observations of change over time in the local community.

Historical skills

Historical skills that can be developed through oral history include:

- locating relevant subjects and seeking information from people and other sources
- comparing and contrasting sources—for example, official reports, newspaper articles and personal recollections
- developing empathetic understanding of those different from themselves and people who have had different experiences, such as Aboriginal peoples, older generations, migrants and refugees
- detecting prejudice, bias, personal attitudes, exaggerations, distortions, fallacies, omissions and propaganda
- understanding the possibility of different interpretations of a historical event or period
- testing information for relevance, consistency, fact and opinion
- developing an appreciation of the importance of carefully and accurately recording information and acknowledging sources.

Social skills

Oral history can help develop important social skills as well as historical skills. It requires students to design open questions that will elicit information from the interviewee rather than 'yes' or 'no' responses; to be courteous in arranging and conducting the interview; to speak clearly; and to listen attentively. Recording interviews requires students to use appropriate technology, such as audio or video recorders. Acknowledging the interviewee when the information they provided is used in published accounts lays the foundation for ethical scholarship in the future.

Planning a successful oral history interview

Students can conduct interviews at home with family members or friends, or at school where guests have been invited for the purpose. Whatever the situation, the following steps are good practice.

Preparing the questions

- What topic do you want to find out about?
- Who would be a good person to interview? They will need to be old enough to have memories of your topic.

- What questions will you ask? This will depend on what you want to find out.
- Make sure your questions are ‘open’ rather than ‘closed’ questions. A closed question is one that produces a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. For example, ‘Do you remember Anzac Day services when you were at school?’ is a closed question, whereas ‘What do you remember about how Anzac Day was commemorated when you were at school?’ is an open question.
- Make sure your questions are clearly expressed—don’t use slang expressions.
- Where will the interview be held—at school, in the interviewee’s home or in your own home? It will need to be a quiet place where the interviewee will feel relaxed. Who else will be present at the interview?
- What equipment will you use? Do you know how to use it? Is it working and are the batteries fully charged?

Arranging the interview

- Contact the person you would like to interview (in person, by letter, by email or by phone) and ask them if you can interview them about your particular topic. Explain why you would like to conduct the interview and what you will be doing with the information they provide.
- Arrange a time and place and ask if it is okay to record the interview. Estimate how long the interview might take.
- Give the interviewee a copy of your questions a few days before the interview so they will have time to think about them. There may be some questions that the interviewee does not wish to answer and this will give them an opportunity to let you know. It may also give the interviewee time to find photographs or other objects to show you.
- Once the interview arrangements are made, practise your interview technique with a classmate or family member.

Conducting the interview

- Before the interviewee arrives, check your equipment and record a brief introduction, including the name of the person being interviewed, your name, the date, the place and the topic of the interview.
- Welcome your guest and thank them for taking part in the interview.
- Ask your questions and allow time for the interviewee to answer. Don’t interrupt.
- Sometimes you may not get exactly the answer you want, so you may need to ask an additional question for clarification.
- Although you will be concentrating on asking your questions and listening to the answers, try to show interest in what the interviewee is saying. This will encourage them to respond.
- Once all your questions have been answered, listen to or view the recording with your interviewee. Ask the interviewee if they are satisfied with their answers or if they would like to change or add anything.
- Thank the person you have interviewed and make a comment about how much you appreciate them sharing their memories and knowledge with you.

After the interview

- Label the interview tape or file with the name, date, location and topic of the interview.
- Send a thank-you note to the interviewee.
- Acknowledge the interviewee in any work you produce that uses their information.

Cautionary advice

Oral history, with its reliance on personal opinion and memory, may be subject to half-truths, inaccuracies, bias and faulty memory. If the class is investigating changes over time in the local community, they may find that opinions vary with each subject. This can lead to a discussion on the variable nature of historical sources; there is never only one story or version of history.

Ethical considerations and common courtesy are also important. Some community members in small towns may have been approached many times in the past for interviews, and so may be reluctant to be interviewed again. Interviewees may also wish to keep some memories to themselves; the memories may be too sensitive or private. Students must learn to respect that. Interviewees may also be reluctant to speak on certain topics. For example, cultural barriers may prevent interviewees speaking on certain topics. Check the language of questions, keeping them simple and avoiding slang and jargon.

Site studies 4

The value of site studies

Site studies provide the opportunity for students to practise a range of historical skills outside the classroom, particularly observation and recording skills. Examples of real buildings and landscape features can be used to augment classroom discussions on topics such as continuity and change in the local community. Site studies are a practical introduction to the discipline of history, encouraging students to look at their surroundings with fresh eyes and search for clues to answer the question ‘How do we know about the past?’ History site studies can be integrated with Geography fieldwork.

Monuments

A monument is something made especially to remember people or events from the past. Another name for a monument is a memorial. The words memorial, memoir, memorabilia and commemoration are all connected in meaning to remembering. Monuments should make us think about the people or events being commemorated.

Teaching students about monuments can provide them with tangible and useful markers for understanding their local or national history. It also provides valuable opportunities for fieldwork and learning outside the classroom.

Types of monuments

In most communities there will be some form of monument. Within the school grounds, there may be plaques, honour boards or galleries of photographs to remember people who have played significant roles in the school’s history. Cemeteries contain monuments in the form of gravestones, which record details of those who are buried there. In the local area there may be statues or other monuments to commemorate important people and events in the history of the community. At the state and territory and national levels, there are grand public monuments, ceremonies and even public holidays to commemorate significant events from the nation’s past.

The following list contains some of the more common types of monument.

- Gravestones in cemeteries record details of the lives of the people buried there.
- Foundation stones tell us when buildings were erected.
- Plaques record people and events associated with a particular building or location.