

SECTION

1

INTRODUCTION  
AND IMPORTANCE  
OF STUDYING  
HISTORY



# HISTORICAL INQUIRY AND WRITING

## Nature and Scope of History

### Introduction

In this section, you will use relevant historical sources from your surroundings to effectively explain the origins, nature, and scope of history. You will also learn to dispel common misunderstandings about the study of history. Lastly, you will come to appreciate how history benefits both individuals and society.

### At the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Trace the origins and meanings of the word 'history' using conventional and non-conventional sources.
- Investigate some common misconceptions associated with the study of history.
- Justify why the study of history is relevant to individuals and society.
- Analyse the nature and scope of History as an academic discipline.

### Key Ideas

- The **meaning of history**: History is the study of important past events and people that had an effect on human societies.
- **Misconceptions of history** refer to the false, mistaken, and inaccurate beliefs or understanding of history.
- **Relevance** is the benefit of history to the individual and the society. This includes you and the society, including our country, ethnic group, religion, and homes.
- The prehistoric period is the period before the art of writing started in Ghana.

## ORIGINS AND MEANING OF HISTORY

When was the first time you heard the word ‘history’? History has always been with us as people. How is history referred to in your language? History is common to all ethnic groups in Ghana. All ethnic groups in Ghana describe history in their local languages.

The origins and meaning of history help us understand how past events have shaped the world we live in today. By exploring these beginnings, we can trace the development of societies, cultures, and civilisations, gaining insights into the experiences, challenges, and achievements of those who came before us. Understanding history offers us a deeper connection to our heritage and a clearer perspective on the present and future. The word ‘history’ has conventional and non-conventional origins or roots. Let’s delve deeper into these two main origins of history.

### The Non-conventional Origin of History

History is not foreign to Ghanaians; we have always owned our history. This is known as non-conventional history. Its origins can be traced to the indigenous terms used by different communities and ethnic groups in Ghana to describe “history.” The Akans use the phrase ‘abakɔsem’ to refer to past events. The Dagbon people call it ‘Taarihi,’ the Ewes refer to it as ‘gbedenyawo’ or ‘blemanyawo,’ the Gas say ‘blemasaji,’ and the Gonjas use the term ‘Adrashɔŋ.’

As you can see, history is not new to our societies. Despite the different languages, one similarity across these non-conventional descriptions is their reference to significant past events. Though the words may vary, they all carry the same meaning and understanding, showing that history has always been part of our ethnic groups.

Since prehistoric times, Ghanaians have preserved their history through narratives, songs, storytelling, drum language, oaths, and dirges. These sources reflect how Ghanaians understand and value history within their respective ethnic groups. Our understanding of history is shaped by our customs, practices, and traditions, such as chieftaincy, wars, marriages, and festivals.

### The Conventional Origin of History

The word ‘history’ comes from the Greek word ‘historia,’ which means ‘inquiry’ in English. The term became popular and widely used in the 5th century BCE/BC when people began to study history in a more rational and structured way. This was the period when Herodotus described his investigation into the past, focusing on the events that led to the Persian War. Herodotus is often called the ‘father of history’ because of his early efforts to approach the study of history in a logical and systematic manner.



## Definitions and Meaning of History

Now that you understand that history is not new to us as Ghanaians, how do you think history should be explained? The meaning of history cannot be confined to a single definition. Many scholars have offered their own interpretations of the subject.

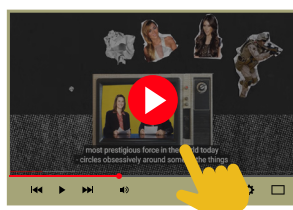
- Some scholars believe history is the study of significant past events and the changes that occurred over different periods.
- Others define it as the study of human beings' past in a more rational way.
- History is also seen as the record of important events from the past.
- It refers to the activities of humankind, explaining what happened, why it happened, and how it happened.

These definitions are not exhaustive, so feel free to search the internet, books, pamphlets, etc., for more definitions.

From the definitions above and those you find through your own research, you will realise that history is not just about recording factual data such as dates, names, and places of events. No, it goes beyond that. Every subject records facts and dates, but history is different. It offers interpretation and analysis of events within their socio-political and socio-cultural contexts.

Historians do not only record the events of the past, but they also focus on important events, people, and places that have had significant impacts on society. These may include, but are not limited to, former presidents, prominent women, renowned educators, chiefs, farmers, legislators, and industrialists.

Click on the links below to learn more about the meaning of historical perspectives.



### Discussion Task

What are some important national and local events happening today that you think could serve as significant historical information in the future? Share with your class the name of the founder or first queen mother of your hometown, or the name of the founder of your family or school.

## How History is Related to Human Activities

History and human activities are intricately connected. They are like siblings. While it is human actions, events, achievements, and activities that form the basis of history, history likewise keeps human memory alive. History keeps the past of humans alive. Without history, the past of humans, including our ancestors such as Yaa Asantewaa, Nana Dokuaa, Okomfo Anokye, Naa Gbewa, Ndewura Jakpa, Togbui Wenya, and Ataara Ofinam, will be forgotten.

History preserves human activities, including social and political interactions, artistic creations, indigenous innovations, technological advancements, economic achievements, and peacebuilding efforts. Studying history enables us to explore the thoughts and actions of our ancestors and other significant historical figures.

## Differences and Similarities Between the Past and History

When we refer to the past, we mean everything that has happened, including human experiences, memories, and insights before the present moment. This includes both significant and minor events. History, however, examines the past in a more organised and formal manner. Studying the past is a key activity for students, researchers, journalists, teachers, lawyers, and others. While history focuses on the past, it differs in that both are concerned with events that occurred before the present moment.

### Activity 1.1

1. Ask your family or elders in your community what word or phrase they use to describe 'history' in your ethnic language. Write it down and note its meaning. Then, compare it with how other ethnic groups describe history, either by asking friends or checking online. Look for similarities between the different words.

Afterward, write a short summary of what you found. Focus on how the different words all relate to important past events.

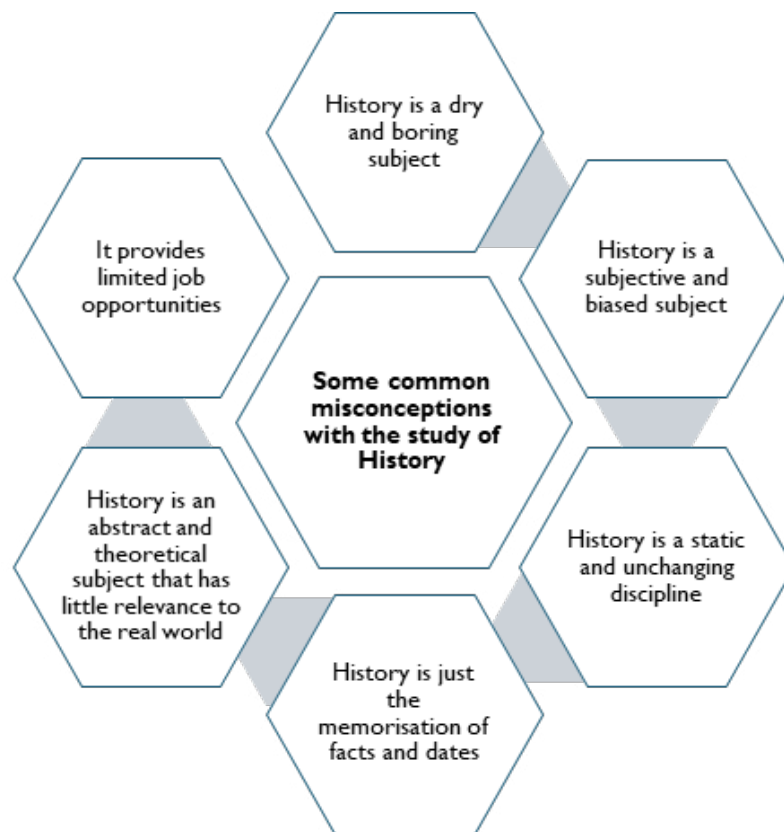
Ethnic group	Description of history
Asante	Abakɔsem
Ewe	
Ga	
Dagbani	
Nzema	
Gonja	

2.
  - a. Using the table provided, explain where the word ‘history’ comes from. Start with the conventional origin from the Greek word ‘historia,’ meaning inquiry. Then, describe how different ethnic groups in Ghana use their own words to describe history.
  - b. Compare the conventional meaning with the words used by these ethnic groups and see if there are any similarities. Do this in your notebooks.
3.
  - a. Visit your school library or explore the internet (if accessible) to find at least one significant historical work by each of the following historians:
    - Prof. Albert Adu Boahen
    - F.K. Buah
    - Prof. Akosua Adomah Perbi
    - Prof. D.E.K. Amenumey
    - Prof. B.G. Der
    - Prof. Irene K. Odotei
  - b. Write a brief summary of the key historical contributions made by each of these scholars. Highlight how their work has helped shape the study of history in Ghana.
  - c. Share your findings with your classmates, and discuss the impact these historians have had on preserving and understanding Ghanaian history.

## Misconceptions About the Study of History

The study of history is often misunderstood, with various misconceptions shaping people’s views of its purpose and relevance. These misunderstandings can create barriers to fully appreciating the value of history. By addressing and debunking these misconceptions, we can develop a clearer understanding of the significance of history in shaping societies and informing the present.

This topic discusses more of the misconceptions and how to correct them. The diagram below (**Fig. 1.1**) shows some of the misconceptions people have for the study of history.



**Fig. 1.1:** Misconceptions about history as a discipline

## Correcting the Misconceptions about the Study of History

How do you think we can correct these misconceptions? Many people hold mistaken beliefs about what the study of history truly involves, often limiting its scope to memorising dates or past events. However, history is much more dynamic and offers insights that go beyond the surface level of facts. By correcting these misconceptions, we can uncover the deeper value of history, recognising its role in understanding societal changes, human behaviour, and the interconnectedness of past and present. The following are some corrections of the misconceptions people hold about history:

1. History is not just about dates, names, and places. It is the study of important events that have had a significant impact on communities, societies, and countries. These events continue to shape the destinies of these groups today. For example, the legacies of colonialism, and the introduction of Islam and Christianity, are still evident in our societies.
2. History is broad and offers a wide range of career opportunities. It is not a dull or boring subject. Instead, history is full of fascinating facts, stories, lessons, and experiences.
3. History is an objective field that deals with facts. The independence of Ghana, for instance, is a real and factual event that took place, which is why historians continue to study it.

4. History is dynamic and brings the past to life. For example, the annual celebration of the *Hogbetsotso* festival by the Anlo-Ewe people re-enacts their migration from Notsie to their current home. This lively re-enactment, through dances and music, illustrates how history is not static.
5. History is more than just memorising facts and dates. It offers interpretations of significant historical events and examines their lasting effects on society. For example, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade continues to impact the lives and cultures of Black people globally, much like colonialism, which still affects governance, education, trade, and culture.
6. History is not an abstract subject. It is practical, like many other disciplines. History students participate in field trips, build portfolios, analyse artefacts, and conduct interviews, leading to the creation of reports.
7. History opens doors to careers in law, diplomacy, teaching, and many other fields.
8. History is the foundation of all subjects. Every discipline has a historical aspect. History provides the memory for every subject. The achievements of individuals or events in all fields are preserved and remembered through history. Whether you are a lawyer, politician, artist, diplomat, or banker, your contributions to society will only be remembered if recorded by history. Otherwise, they may be forgotten over time.
9. History does not merely look back at the past; it investigates and inquires. Just like law, criminology, finance, or chemistry, history involves inquiry into various phenomena. In Ghanaian languages, for instance, the Akan word for 'inquiry' is *nhwehwem*, while the Ewe people refer to it as *numekuku*.

### Activity 1.2

1. Find a classmate who does not study history and have a chat with them about their views on the subject. Ask them about their opinions and any misconceptions they might have about history. Take note of their responses, especially any misunderstandings they have about what history involves. After the interview, summarise the misconceptions you discovered in a short paragraph.
2. Using the information from your interview, create a chart to display the common misconceptions about history that you found. You can use a bar graph, pie chart, or any visual format you prefer. Once you have created your chart, write a brief analysis explaining which misconceptions are most common in your school. Reflect on why these misconceptions might exist and suggest ways to address and correct them.



**Table 1. 1:** The most common misconceptions about studying history.

Misconceptions	Why do people have this misconception?	How can we change this?
<b>Conclusion:</b> What is/ are the most common misconception(s)? Why is this and how can we change it?		

- Design a poster or a digital presentation to challenge the misconceptions about history. Your poster or presentation should include key points, images, and facts that clarify what history is really about. Use manila cards or paper for a physical poster, or tools like PowerPoint or Canva for a digital presentation. Display your work in the classroom or share it with your classmates to help change their perceptions about history.
- Create a social media post using the hashtag #historyforationaldevelopment to highlight the positive aspects of studying history. Share interesting facts, benefits, and how history contributes to national development. Tag your friends who aren't studying history and encourage them to like and share the post to spread the awareness.

## Importance of History to the Individual and the Society

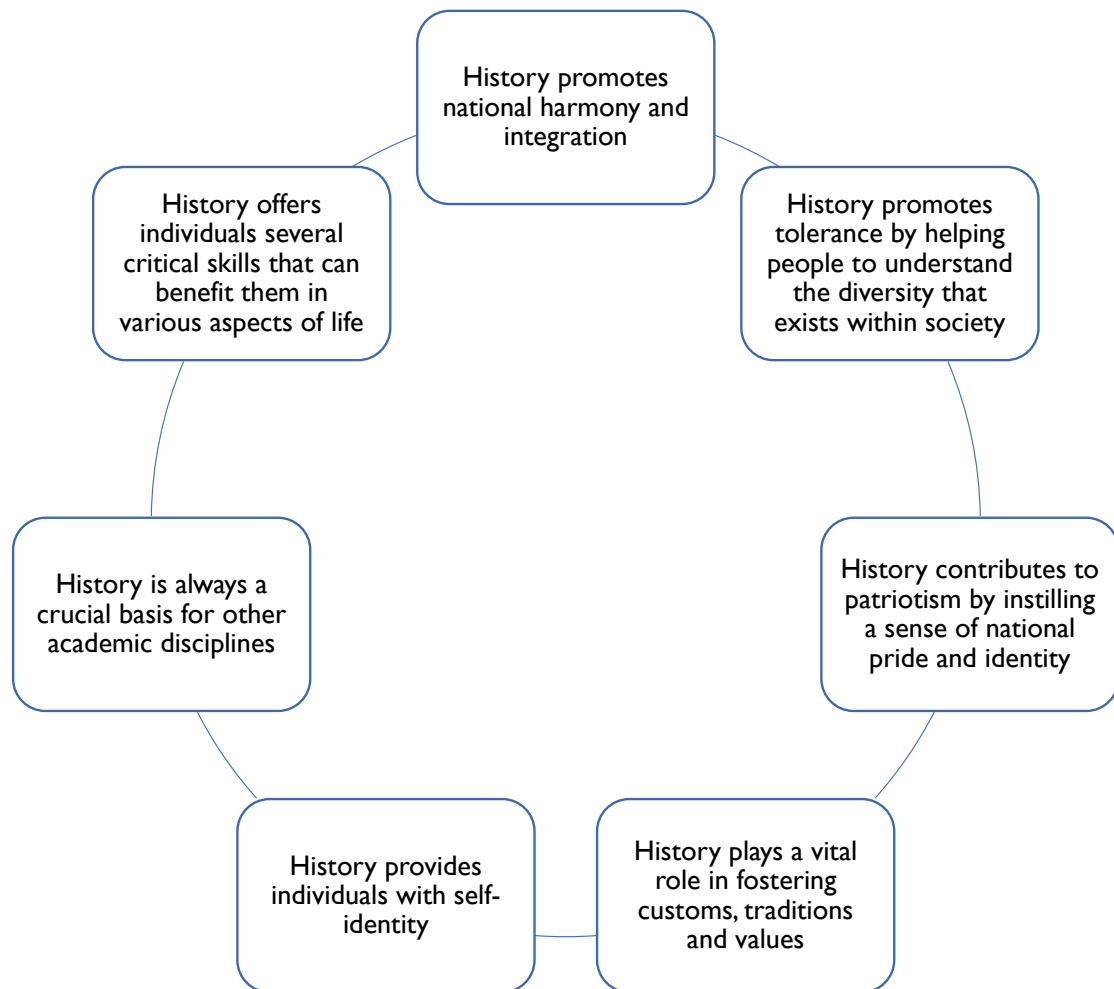
The study of history in schools is a long-standing tradition. In Ghana, history has been a subject of study since pre-colonial and colonial times. For example, the University of Ghana has been offering history courses for over sixty years. You might share with a classmate or friend the names of three notable Ghanaians who studied history. Many prominent figures have pursued history because of its value to both individuals and society. History has always been an integral part of our lives.

History is essential for both individuals and society. It helps us gain knowledge and fosters national integration, tolerance, and patriotism. These values are crucial for socio-cultural development, peaceful coexistence, and strong community relations. Without peace and these values, physical and economic development cannot thrive. Peace allows you and your classmates to attend school and achieve your goals, and it enables your family to provide for you and cover your school fees. Thus, the study of history is vital for maintaining peace.

Historians use various records, such as court documents, personal diaries, birth certificates, and party manifestos, to study history. These records help preserve the past and provide insights into the contributions of historical figures to our country, communities, places of worship, and ethnic groups.

## Some Specific Importance of History

History benefits both individuals and society. By society, we refer to our country, regions, ethnic groups, hometowns, schools, and other important places.



**Fig. 1.2:** The importance of studying history

History offers several advantages to individuals, such as:

1. **Self-identity:** History helps individuals understand who they are and where they come from.
2. **Critical skills:** It equips individuals with essential skills for life, such as critical thinking and analysis.
3. **Patriotism:** History instils a sense of pride and loyalty toward one's country.
4. **Cultural pride:** It allows individuals to take pride in their country's culture and customs.
5. **Career opportunities:** History opens doors to various careers, including diplomacy, research, education, and museum curation.
6. **Pathways to law:** History plays an important role in the study of law, providing context and background for legal frameworks.

## Other Important Contributions of History to the Growth of Ghana

History plays a vital role in Ghana's growth and development. Discuss your thoughts on this with a classmate.

- **Maintaining territorial integrity:** Ghana's boundaries are protected by historical documents like colonial maps and treaties. These records have been essential in maintaining the country's borders with its neighbours. For example, Ghana relied on these documents to resolve a boundary dispute with Côte d'Ivoire at the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This case involved the Cape Three Point, where Ghana discovered oil. Without history, Ghana could have lost the case and the financial benefits from oil exploration. You and your classmates should debate the motion: "Ghana would have lost many opportunities if she had lost the boundary dispute with Côte d'Ivoire."
- **Data-driven decisions and policies:** History helps the government, development partners, and agencies make informed decisions in areas like education, health, employment, and infrastructure. Historical records such as party manifestos, budgets, parliamentary Hansards, and international agreements provide data for policy-making.
- **Conflict resolution:** Historical documents such as land titles, stool and skin succession records, and court judgments are essential for resolving disputes. Land and succession disputes are common in Ghana, but history has helped resolve many through these records, preventing more conflicts.
- **Boosting tourism:** History contributes to tourism, with sites like the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, *Larabanga* Mosque, and *Manhyia* Museum attracting visitors. These sites not only teach Ghanaians about their heritage but also draw thousands of international tourists, particularly African Americans, who come to connect with Ghana's rich cultural history. Tourism brings foreign exchange, which supports the national budget. Historical sites, in effect, are gold mines for the country.

History enables our traditional rulers to collaborate with international development partners to promote tourism and foster development.



**Fig. 1.3:** An image of the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II during the relaunch of the Manhyia Museum in Kumasi

### Activity 1.3

1.
  - a. Listen to or read a selection of presidential speeches from Ghana's history. Pay attention to phrases and sentences that express pride, nationhood, and patriotism. Write down at least five phrases that stand out to you and reflect on how these words inspire unity and pride in being Ghanaian. After collecting your examples, create a list in your notebook under the heading "Patriotic Phrases."
  - b. Imagine you are giving a speech to your school about the importance of patriotism. Write down three sentences you would include to inspire your classmates to take pride in Ghana's history and future.
2.
  - a. In groups of seven, work together to re-enact the historic moment of Ghana's Independence on March 6, 1957. Assign roles carefully, ensuring that each group member plays a key part in the event. You will need the following roles:
    - **Kwame Nkrumah** – Leading the declaration of independence
    - **Nkrumah's Colleagues** – Standing alongside him on the podium at the Old Polo Grounds
    - **The Enthusiastic Audience** – Portray the large crowd of Ghanaians, filled with hope and excitement, listening to Nkrumah's powerful speech

- b. Create role cards that clearly outline each person's role and how they should act. Think carefully about the emotions and reactions each character would display during this momentous event. For example, how would Nkrumah's voice sound as he made the declaration? How would the crowd react to the announcement of freedom?
- c. After the re-enactment, take a moment to reflect on how this moment in history helped to forge a sense of national unity. Write a short paragraph in your jotters or notebooks on how the Declaration of Independence united Ghanaians under a shared purpose and vision for the future.

### Activity 1.4

1. **Pair Activity:** Find a partner and have a conversation about how history helps us understand the present better. Think about what lessons we can learn from historical events that impact today's world. For example, discuss how past political decisions, wars, or cultural movements influence modern-day Ghana.
2. **Share Insights:** After your discussion, gather as a whole class or in a larger group and share your key points. Listen to the different ideas that come up, and notice how your understanding of the present may change after hearing others' perspectives.
3. **Poster Creation:** Design an eye-catching poster that highlights the importance of history for the youth of Ghana. Include facts, quotes, or historical events that show why learning history is valuable. Reach out to a friend for suggestions on how to make your poster more engaging. Consider using bright colours, strong visuals, and clear messages to raise awareness.

### Activity 1.5

#### Use the scenario below to answer questions 1 and 2

Kwame, a bright thirteen-year-old boy from Accra, had just received the exciting news of being admitted to a secondary school in the Eastern Region to pursue the General Arts programme. His mother, Maame Afua, was overjoyed at the thought of her firstborn entering secondary school and couldn't wait to share the good news. Without hesitation, she called Kwame's uncle, who lived in the UK, to let him know. Later that evening, she eagerly shared the news with her husband, expecting him to share in her excitement.

However, when her husband heard that Kwame had been offered History as one of his subjects, his enthusiasm quickly faded. With a frown, he turned to his son and said, "Kwame, what on earth will you do with History? Don't you



know how dull, uninspiring, and outdated that subject is? What kind of job could you possibly get with a degree in History? Our family has a reputation—lawyers, lecturers, politicians—what respect will I have if you end up studying History? Besides, people will tease you at school. History is about the past; it’s irrelevant now.”

Kwame’s heart sank at his father’s words. His excitement evaporated, and he could only manage a quiet, “Thank you, Dad.” The following day, still confused, Kwame confided in his aunt, a seasoned barrister with over twenty years of experience. He explained his dream of becoming a lawyer, hoping for some guidance. His aunt smiled warmly and reassured him, “Kwame, History is an excellent choice for you. It will lay a solid foundation for your future as a lawyer. Many of the critical skills needed in law—research, analysis, understanding context—are developed through the study of History.”

When Kwame’s father heard this from his sister, his perspective shifted. Realising that History could indeed support Kwame’s career ambitions, he softened his stance. With newfound understanding, he agreed to let Kwame pursue History, much to the boy’s relief.

1. What are the key misconceptions about the study of History that are highlighted in this scenario?
2. Provide five ways to challenge and correct these misconceptions, using examples from the scenario.

**Read the scenario below to answer questions 3-7**

During evening prep at St Charles Minor Seminary in the Northern Region, Yayra turned to his classmate Karikari and said, “History is very common in my hometown. My parents and grandparents often share stories about the founding of our town and our family’s genealogy.”

Karikari, who was from Kumasi, nodded in agreement. “It’s the same in Kumasi,” he replied. “We have lots of artefacts, cultural relics, and meaningful symbols. My dad told me that Asante history is well documented in books and texts that are available to the public.”

Nadia, overhearing their conversation, chimed in. “My elder brother studied History at university and is now a lecturer. He reads biographies of famous figures like Kwame Nkrumah, J.B. Danquah, Nelson Mandela, and Jerry John Rawlings at home.”

They all agreed that history is not only deeply embedded in their communities but also a valuable subject studied in schools.

3. What are some examples of unconventional forms of history mentioned in the conversation between Yayra, Karikari, and Nadia?
4. Which statements in the scenario illustrate conventional forms of history?
5. Can you identify three sources of historical information mentioned in the scenario?

6. How can you and your classmates actively promote the study of history within your school community?
7. Why do you believe the founder of your school or the first queen mother of your hometown should be remembered and celebrated in history?

## FEATURES OF HISTORY AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

History as an academic discipline is distinguished by its unique approach to understanding and interpreting the past. It encompasses a broad range of methods and techniques used to investigate and analyse events, contexts, and narratives that have shaped societies over time. The discipline involves critical examination of sources, rigorous evaluation of evidence, and the formulation of coherent arguments based on historical data. Through its study, history not only aims to document past occurrences but also seeks to offer insights into how these events have influenced contemporary issues and future developments.

Every academic discipline, be it chemistry, religious studies, or aerospace engineering, has its own unique features and characteristics. History, being one of the oldest and most popular academic disciplines, also has its unique features and core concerns. It is the unique features and concerns of history that are described or termed ‘features of history.’ Understanding these features helps to appreciate the depth and significance of history as more than just a record of what has happened but as a vital tool for comprehending the world today.

1. History is the study of human activities throughout the ages, offering insights into the collective experiences and stories of countless individuals. It examines the intricate web of human affairs, helping us to understand the complexities of our past. Historians select and interpret “innumerable biographies,” each telling its unique tale, and present them within their social and human context to make sense of how events unfolded over time.

History traces the fascinating journey of human development, exploring how people have lived, adapted, and interacted with their environments. It delves into the evolution of institutions like chieftaincy, legislative systems, courts, and economies. As one of the many academic disciplines in schools, history is also widely studied at the tertiary level. Known as the queen of the social sciences, history boasts several distinct features that elevate it as a rigorous and meaningful discipline.

2. **History and Time:** History is deeply concerned with human activities as they occur within the framework of time. It captures the progression of events and their significance at particular moments. Human history is, therefore, the ongoing story

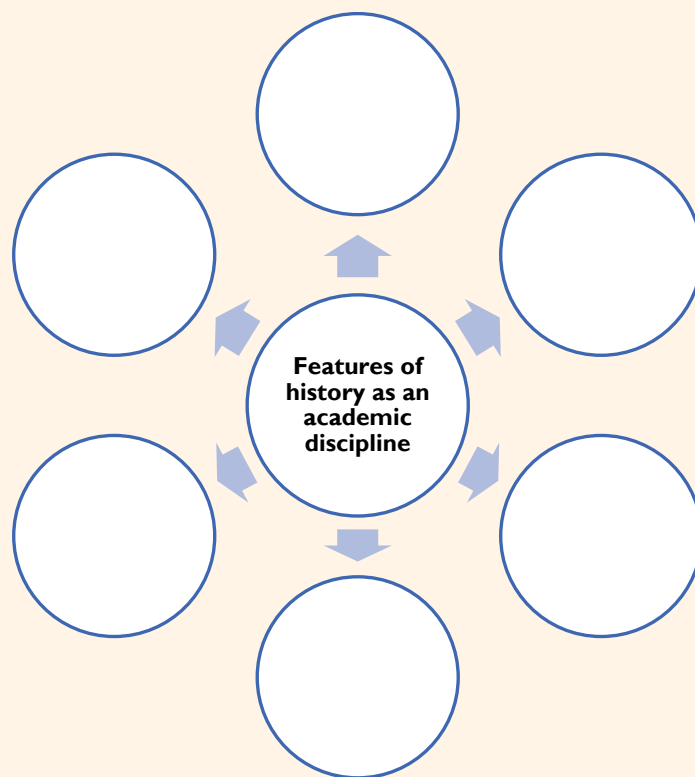
of development over time, with time itself offering a perspective that sheds light on past events, giving them depth and resonance.

3. **History and Space:** The study of history goes hand-in-hand with the physical and geographical spaces in which human activities take place. It highlights the dynamic interactions between people and their environments. Whether political, social, economic, or cultural, these interactions shape the unique trends and achievements of different groups. Thus, history paints a vivid picture of the way nations and societies evolve within their physical surroundings.
4. **The Multisided Nature of History:** History covers every aspect of life within a social group, as these aspects are intricately connected. Whether it's your ethnic group, religion, or country, history encompasses all, not just the political dimension which has long dominated historical discourse. It explores the political, social, economic, cultural, technological, artistic, and literary aspects of social groups, providing a sense of world unity and citizenship.
5. **Critical Analysis, Not Just Storytelling:** History is far more than mere storytelling. It involves a critical analysis of past events and processes. Historians don't just recount human acts; they establish the causal relationships between them. By tracing the connections between events, historians develop general principles and laws, which they compare and contrast with similar events in other societies. This analysis strengthens the reliability and validity of these historical conclusions.
6. **Relevance in History:** History doesn't cover every event from the past, only those that hold relevance to society today. These events, such as chieftaincy, colonialism, and the contributions of women to development, help us understand the present. The selective focus on significant happenings ensures that history remains connected to contemporary realities, offering lessons for today's world.
7. **Illuminating the Present Through the Past:** One of history's greatest functions is helping us to make sense of the present by examining the past. By understanding the cause-and-effect relationships between historical events and contemporary circumstances, we gain valuable insights into our current challenges. For instance, consider how the breakdown of traditional taboos and social control measures has contributed to irresponsible environmental practices today. Reflect on how an understanding of these taboos could guide us towards more environmentally responsible behaviour.

### Activity 1.6

1.
  - a. In your group of five, cut out six pieces of paper. On four of the papers, write down one unique feature of history, such as "History is concerned with human activities in time." On the remaining two papers, write down words that are not related to the features of history, like "Math" or "Science."

- b. Exchange your papers with another group. Turn the papers face down, mix them up, and place them in the centre. Alphabetically arrange the names of the members of your group. Based on this arrangement, each member should take turns picking one piece of paper and showing it to the rest of the group.
  - c. Once a paper is revealed, the group should discuss whether the word or phrase on it represents a feature of history. Explain why it is, or is not a feature. Work together to ensure everyone understands the concepts.
2.
    - a. As an individual student, design a creative and informative poster highlighting at least three key features of history. You may include examples, illustrations, or quotes to make the poster more engaging. Use clear and bold visuals to capture attention. Once completed, display your poster on the classroom wall where everyone can see it.
    - b. Encourage your classmates to take a moment to read and explore your work. Pay attention to their feedback and comments, and reflect on how it might improve your understanding or presentation. You can also engage in short conversations with your classmates about the features you've chosen.
  3. With the aid of the concept map below, examine the features of history as an academic discipline. For each feature, add supporting details or examples.



**Fig. 1.4:** Features of history as an academic discipline

## Branches/ Types of History

History is a vast and adaptable field of study with many branches, each offering a unique lens through which to view the past. These branches allow historians to explore various aspects of human experience, providing a richer understanding of the events and people that have shaped our world. Here's an overview of some key branches of history:

Common branches in history include:

- Political History.
- Social History.
- Economic History.
- Diplomatic History.
- Gender and Women's History.
- Cultural History.
- Environmental History.
- Trans-national History.
- Global History.
- Medical History.

**Political History:** This branch examines the evolution of political systems, institutions, and ideologies over time. It looks at power struggles, the rise and fall of states, empires, and influential figures, and how social and economic factors influence political decisions.

**Social History:** Unlike political history, social history focuses on everyday life and social structures rather than state affairs. It studies family dynamics, religion, and the interactions between different social groups.

**Environmental History:** This field explores how humans have interacted with the natural world throughout history. It highlights the reciprocal influence between nature and human activities, including how human actions have shaped and been shaped by the environment.

**Medical History:** Medical history tracks the development of medical treatments, practices, and knowledge over time. It includes early medical traditions from various cultures, such as those of the Akan, Ewe, Gonja, and Mole Dagbani, who used methods like herbal bandaging for healing broken bones.

**Cultural History:** Cultural history delves into the beliefs, traditions, values, and practices of specific cultures. It examines how these cultural elements have evolved and transformed over time, such as the changing practices of marriage in Ghanaian society.

**Economic History:** This branch investigates past economic systems and practices. It looks at how economies have developed, including trade practices like barter in pre-colonial Ghana and the diverse economic activities such as hunting, crop cultivation, and crafting.



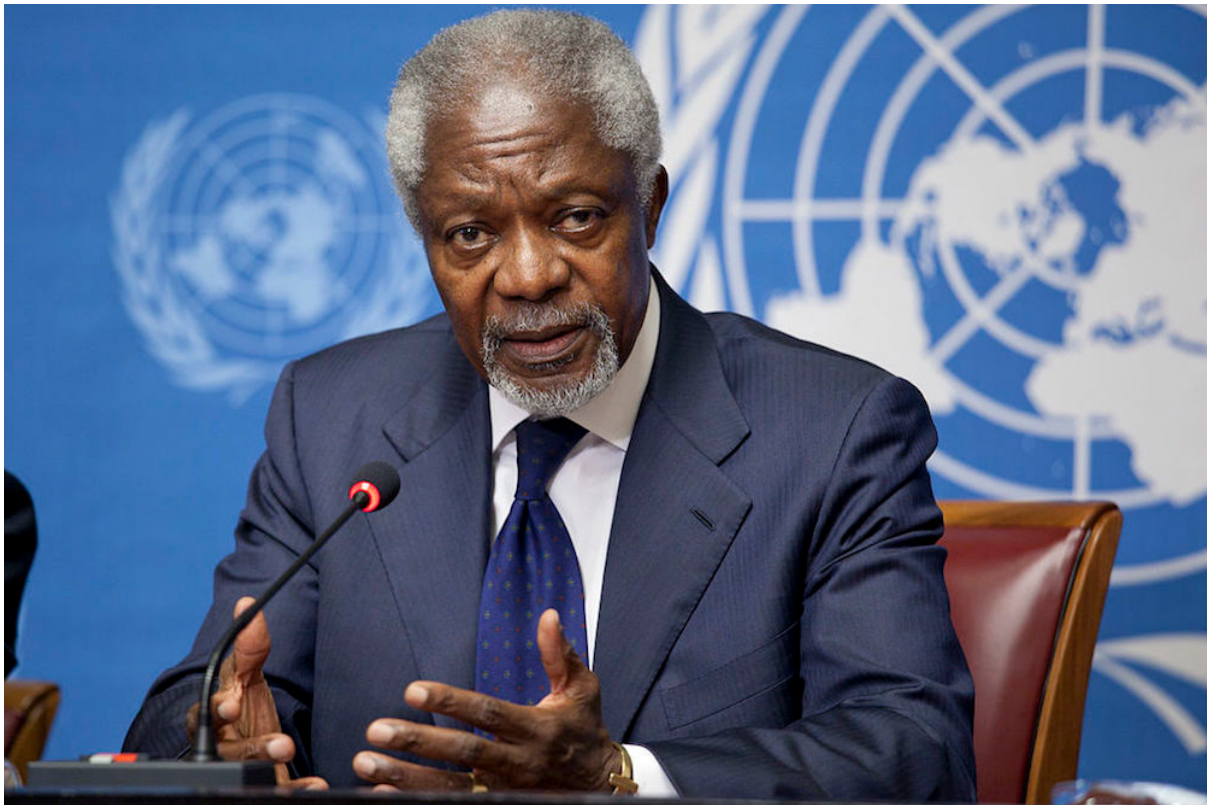
**Gender and Women's History:** This field studies the role of gender, particularly women, in historical contexts. It explores how women have influenced and been affected by historical events. Notable Ghanaian women like Rebecca Naa Dedei Aryeetey and Esther Ocloo have made significant contributions to Ghana's history through their roles in the independence struggle and economic development.

**Global History:** Global history examines historical phenomena from a worldwide perspective, highlighting their global impact and interconnectedness.

**Diplomatic History:** This branch focuses on the relationships between states and their interactions. For example, the colonial history of Ghana has influenced its diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom.

**Transnational History:** Transnational history explores movements and exchanges that cross national boundaries, such as the global impacts of the Cold War and the effects of globalisation.

Each of these branches provides a distinct perspective on history, helping us understand the diverse and complex nature of human experiences across time and space.



**Fig. 1.5:** International Diplomat and Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan (1997-2006)

## How the Understanding of Different Branches of History Helps Us to Gain a Deeper Understanding of the Present

Understanding different branches of history offers valuable insights into the present in several ways:

1. **Providing Context:** Each historical event occurred within a specific context or situation. By exploring various branches of history, we gain a clearer understanding of these contexts, which helps us appreciate the reasons behind past events without unfairly judging them. This perspective prevents us from condemning history without recognising the conditions that shaped it.
2. **Appreciating Cause and Effect:** Knowledge of different historical branches enhances our ability to see how past events influence or predict current developments. For example, many aspects of our current system of government, judicial processes, and religious practices are deeply rooted in our colonial history and interactions with Muslim merchants.
3. **Valuing Technological Advances:** By studying the technological and scientific breakthroughs of the past, we can better appreciate the innovations and technologies we enjoy today. Historical advancements set the stage for contemporary achievements and help us understand the progress we've made.
4. **Understanding Environmental History:** Learning about how humans have interacted with their environment throughout history helps us recognise the impact of our own environmental practices. Awareness of past practices can make us more conscious of the consequences of actions like illegal mining, water pollution, sand winning, bush burning, logging, and charcoal burning. Consider discussing with your classmates the effects of these negative practices on your community.
5. **Grasping Global Issues:** A solid understanding of global history allows us to better grasp contemporary global issues such as trade, economic systems, diplomacy, wars, and international organisations. Today, we are all influenced by global phenomena like capitalism, enhanced security measures, and human rights concerns, which are deeply rooted in historical developments.

### Activity 1.7

1. Complete the chart below using the information that you have learnt so far.

**Table 1.2:** Branches of history

Branch of History	Focus	Source of Evidence	Importance

2. Fill in the table to show how different branches of history are connected and why it's important to consider different perspectives when studying the past.

**Table 1.3**

S/N	Branch of History	Connections and Overlaps	Importance of perspectives
1	Political		
2	Social		
3	Economic		
4	Diplomatic		
5	Gender		
6	Women		
7	Cultural		
8	Environmental		
9	Transnational		
10	Global		

**Task:** Complete the table by filling in the columns. Use your notes, textbooks, or online resources for help. After finishing, share your table with a partner or present it to the class.

3. Categorise each historical event into its appropriate branch of history.

- Nationalist struggles
- History of gold mining in Ghana
- History of the role of women in national development
- Introduction of Formal Education in Ghana
- The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
- History of Pandemics
- History of forest conservation in Ghana
- World War I & II
- Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union
- Pan Africanist Movements

**Instructions:**

- a. **Read the List:** Review the list of historical events provided.
- b. **Identify the Branch:** Determine which branch of history each event belongs to. Use the branches of history discussed in class (e.g., Political History, Economic History, Gender History).
- c. **Categorise:** Write each event under the correct branch of history.

**Table 1.4:** Classification of historical events and their branches of history

1	Branch of History	Event
2	Political History	
3	Trans-National History	
4	Global History	
5	Gender and Women's History	
6	Social History	
7	Environmental History	
8	Diplomatic	
9	Economic History	
10	Medical History	

### Activity 1.8

1.
  - a. Obtain old magazines and newspapers. Examine them carefully to identify different branches of history represented in the articles and images. For instance, look for articles about political events, cultural practices, or economic activities.
  - b. Create a brief report summarising your findings, highlighting how these branches are depicted in the media.

## Key Concepts in History

In historical studies, certain key concepts are used to build an understanding of the past. These concepts help historians to investigate the past and write about it. Let us take a look at three of these concepts in history. These are illustrated below.

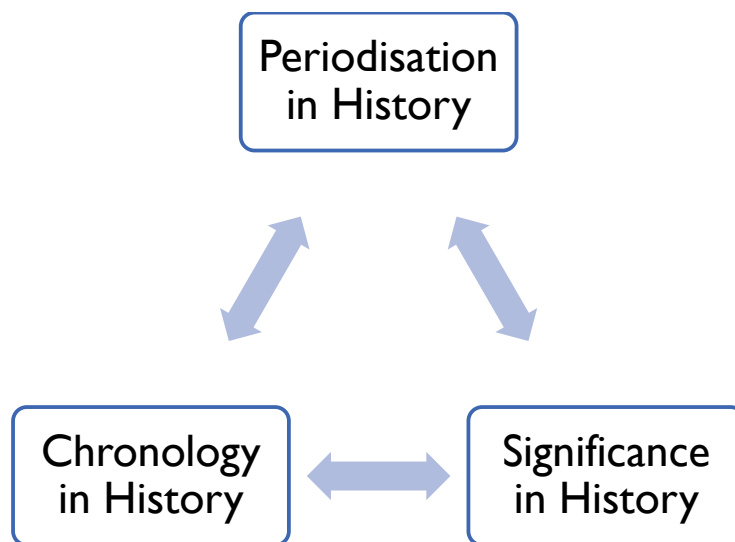


Fig. 1.6: Key concepts in history

### Periodisation/Dating in History

Periodisation in history refers to the division of time into distinct periods to allow for a better understanding of historical events and their significance. There are various periods used in history. These include:



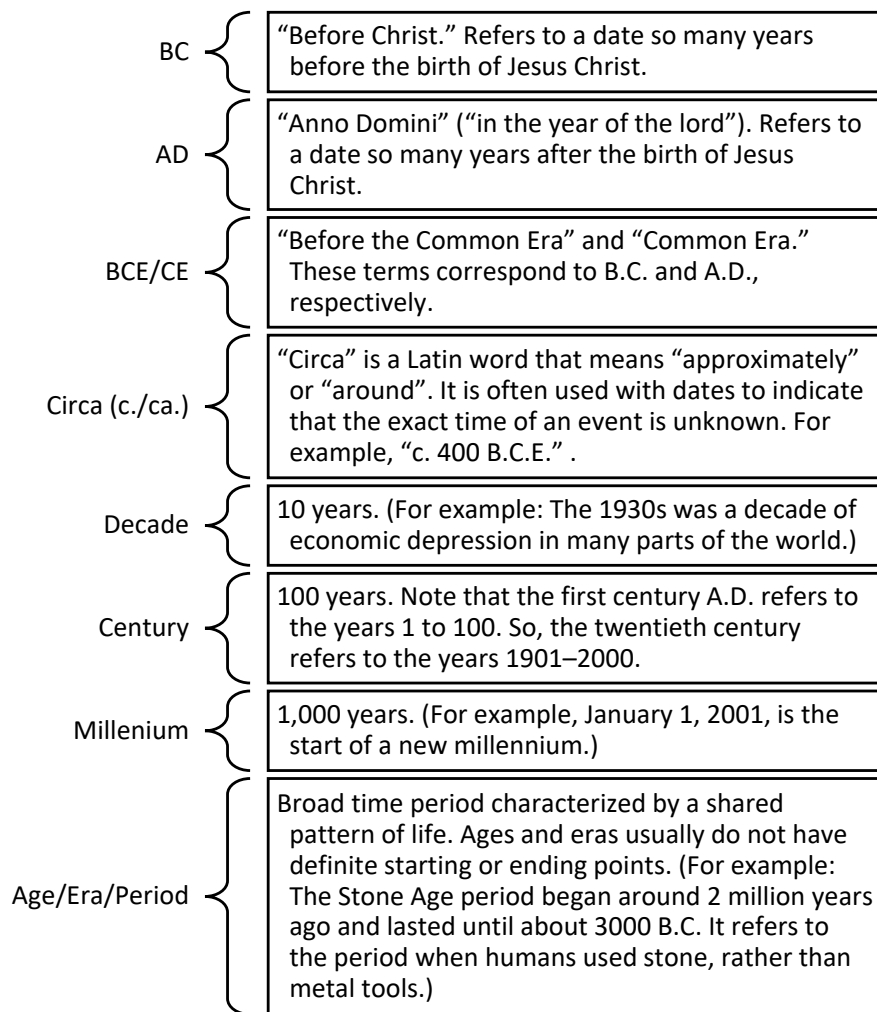


Fig. 1.7: Periodisation/Dating in history

## Some Significant Periods in African/Ghanaian History

**Pre-colonial Period:** This is simply explained as the period before colonialism in Africa. In Ghana, this period spans from the earliest times to the year 1874, when the Gold Coast was pronounced a Crown Colony of the British. This implies that officially, British colonial rule in Ghana began in 1874. Do you know which century this is?

**Colonial period:** This period was characterised by contact with the outside world, specifically Europe. The period marked the eventual establishment of European colonial rule in Africa. In Ghana, this period began from 1874 to 1957, when Ghana regained her independence from Britain. Without using a calculator, you and your classmates should calculate how long the British ruled Ghana.

**Post-colonial/post-independent period:** This is the period after the end of colonialism and the emergence of independent states in Africa and the aftermath of the independence period. We can refer to our contemporary times as part of the post-independent period. In Ghana, this period began on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1957, to the current year.

## Historical Significance

During the first week, we learnt that not all past events can be classified as history. History deals with the study of **significant past activities** that had effects on human societies. How, then, do we determine events that are significant in the past? The chart below provides us with a criterion for determining significant events in history:

**Table 1.5:** Display of historical significance with ‘REC’

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE WITH ‘REC’		
Relevance	Effects	Consequences
<i>Who needs to know about the event?</i>	<i>Who was affected? How long did this event have an effect?</i>	<i>How serious were the results of the events?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One family or a person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many people were affected by the event?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event caused death</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How long did the event affect the community? A day? A week? A month? A year? A generation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event caused loss of jobs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone in the Country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it still affecting the community?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event caused great harm to the environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone in the World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will it affect the future of the community?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event caused conflict between community members</li> </ul>

The REC criterion is a framework used to evaluate the **historical significance** of events. It stands for **relevance, effects, and consequences**.

- 1. Relevance:** Consider the **breadth of the impact** of the event.
  - Was it relevant to only a single person or family, or did it affect a wider community, nation, or even the entire world?
- 2. Effects:** Analyse the **duration and scope of the event’s impact**.
  - How many people were affected?
  - How long did the effects last? Days, weeks, months, years, generations?
  - Does the event continue to have lasting impacts on the community?
  - Will it have consequences for the future?
- 3. Consequences:** Assess the **severity of the event’s outcomes**.
  - Did the event cause significant loss of life, widespread job losses, major environmental damage, or significant social conflict?

By considering these three aspects, the ‘REC’ criterion provides a structured approach to evaluating the historical significance of an event. Events that meet all three criteria are generally considered to be more historically significant than those that meet only one or two.

It is important to note that the REC criterion is not a rigid formula, and the weight given to each factor can vary depending on the specific context and historical period being examined. However, it serves as a valuable tool for guiding and informing judgements about the historical importance of events.

The table below is populated by using the ‘REC’ criteria. The selected event is the independence of Ghana. The independence of Ghana has relevance, effects, and consequences for Ghana.

**Table 1.6:** Using the ‘REC’ criteria to populate a table

Event: Independence of Ghana	
Relevance of....	Every Ghanaian, African, and the World
Effects	All Ghanaians (past and present) were/are affected by the events of our independence.
Consequences	<p>The events leading to our independence caused the deaths of some individuals, including Private Odartey Lamptey, Corporal Attipoe, and Sgt. Adjetye.</p> <p>Events leading to Ghana’s independence included the denial of jobs to some Ghanaians, including lawyers and civil servants.</p>

### Activity 1.9

**Task:** Select a historical event of your choice. You can work individually or collaborate with a partner. If you’re unsure which event to choose, feel free to ask your teacher for suggestions.

Use the blank template below to fill in the details of the event. Focus on the following three sections:

- **Reasons:** Identify and list the key causes or factors that led to the event.
- **Event:** Describe what happened during the event, highlighting the main actions or occurrences.
- **Consequences:** Explain the outcomes or impact of the event on society, both short-term and long-term.

**Table 1.7:** Creating a ‘REC’ table

Event: .....	
Relevance of....	
Effects	
Consequences	

## Chronology in History

Chronology is a fundamental concept in history that refers to the arrangement of events in the order in which they occurred. It involves the study of time and the sequence of events in history.

### Importance of Chronology in History

1. Chronology helps historians make sense of historical events and establish cause-and-effect relationships between them.
2. It enables them to create a timeline of events, which is a graphical representation of the sequence of events in history.
3. Chronology is essential for understanding the context, significance, and impact of historical events.
4. It allows historians to create a narrative of history that is based on a logical and chronological sequence of events.

To understand and use the concept of chronology, there is a need to develop the habit of creating and using timelines.

A *historical timeline* is a visual representation of significant events that occurred in the past, arranged chronologically. It is a useful tool for historians and students of history to understand the sequence of events and the context in which they occurred. Creating a historical timeline involves several steps, including identifying significant events and arranging them in chronological order.

### Steps in Creating Historical Timelines

Here are the steps in creating a historical timeline using examples from the history of Ghana:

**Step 1: Identify significant events.** In Ghana's history, significant events include the formation of states and kingdoms, the arrival of the Europeans, the declaration of the coastal regions as a colony, the annexation of Asante and Northern territories, the 1956 Plebiscite in the Trans-Volta Togoland (excluding Tongu/Anlo and parts of Adaklu areas), the Independence of Ghana, the declaration of Ghana as a Republic, etc.

**Step 2: Arrange events in chronological order.** The events should be arranged in the order in which they occurred. **For example:**

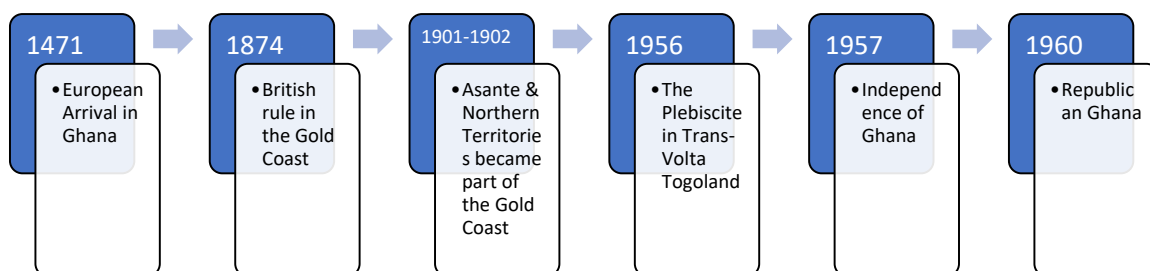


Fig. 1.8: Steps in creating historical timelines

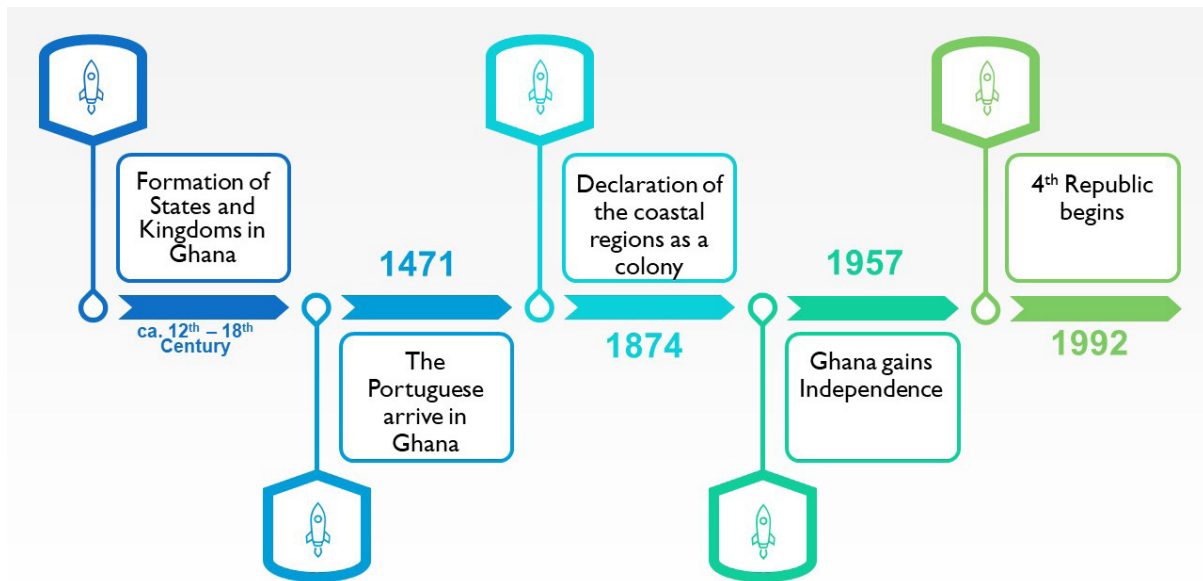


Fig. 1.9: A chronological timeline of key events in Ghana

**Step 3: Add visuals and details.** Adding visuals like pictures and symbols can make the timeline more engaging. Additionally, details like dates, names, and locations can provide context and enhance understanding.

### Activity 1.10

Follow the instructions below and complete the activity.

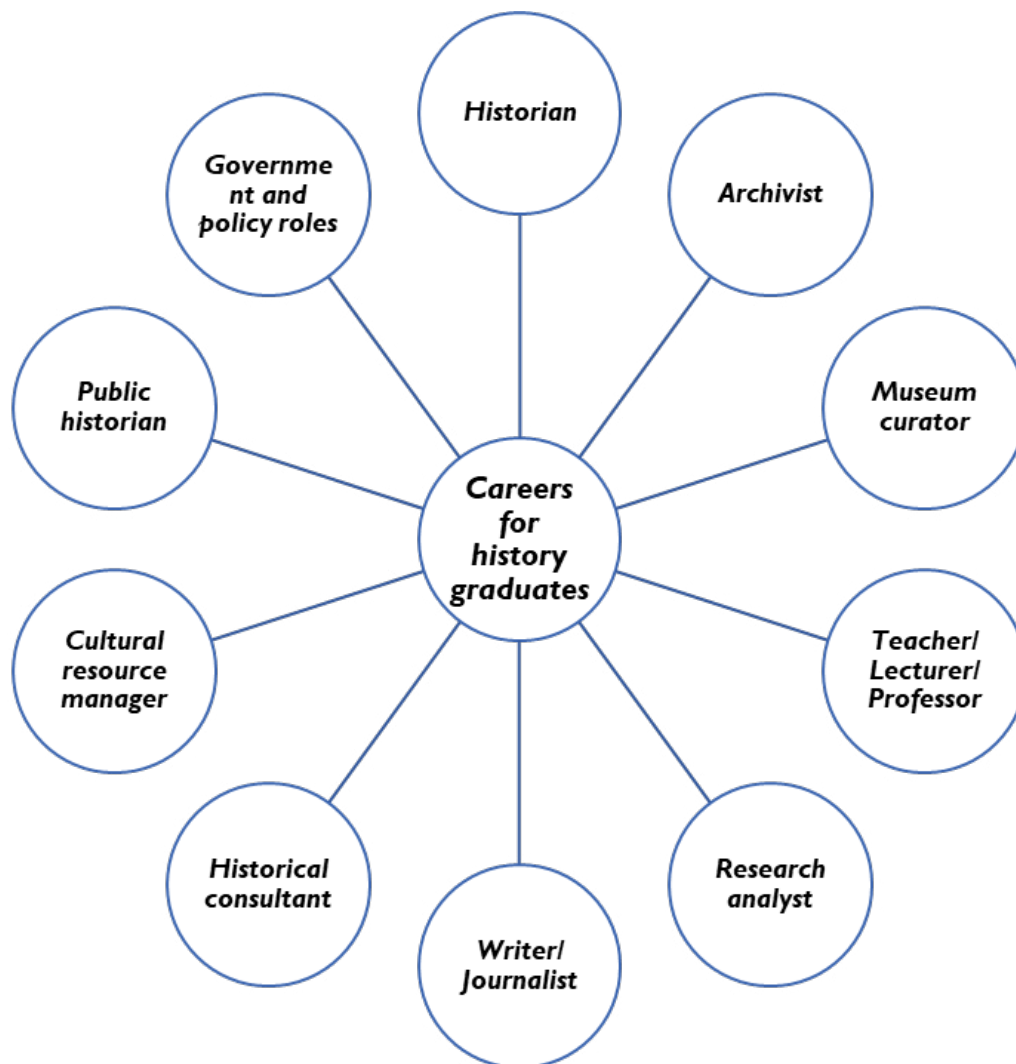
#### Instructions:

1. **Choose Events:** Select 4–5 important events from Ghana’s national history or your local community’s history.
2. **Draw Your Timeline:** On a blank sheet of paper, draw a straight line. Mark points along the line for each event in the order they happened, from the oldest to the most recent.
3. **Label the Events:** Write the name of each event next to its point on the timeline. Include the date the event took place.
4. **Explain Why It’s Important:** Underneath each event, write one sentence explaining why you think that event is important.
5. **Add Colour:** Use colours to make your timeline more creative. You can add small drawings or symbols that represent each event if you like.



## Job Prospects of Studying History

History as a subject offers a wide range of career opportunities for graduates. When history graduates are well equipped with strong research, analytical, and communication skills coupled with other soft skills, history graduates can enter various fields. They can contribute meaningfully to a lot of fields. History also offers career pathways into other professions such as law, journalism, diplomacy, nursing, and politics, among others. Students who read history in secondary school can go ahead to read courses in business, law, education, journalism, and tourism, among others. Let us now look at some job prospects that history graduates can consider:



**Fig. 1.10:** Careers for history graduates

These are just a few of the careers. Explore more careers in history from your library or the internet. Share your findings with your friends who are not history students.

Did you know that reading a history course can make one a historian, researcher and politician? An example of Ghana's renowned historian is the late Prof. Albert Adu Boahen, a distinguished Historian, Scholar, Researcher and Politician



**Fig. 1.11:** Prof. Albert Adu Boahen, a distinguished Historian, Scholar, Researcher and Politician

## Skills History Offers to Individuals

By studying history, you are equipped with several critical skills. These skills can benefit you in various aspects of your life. The list of these skills is not exhaustive. But let us take a look at some of them.

- Critical thinking.
- Research and analysis.
- Writing and communication.
- Empathy and perspective-taking.
- Problem-solving.

## Other Skills and Competencies that History Offers:

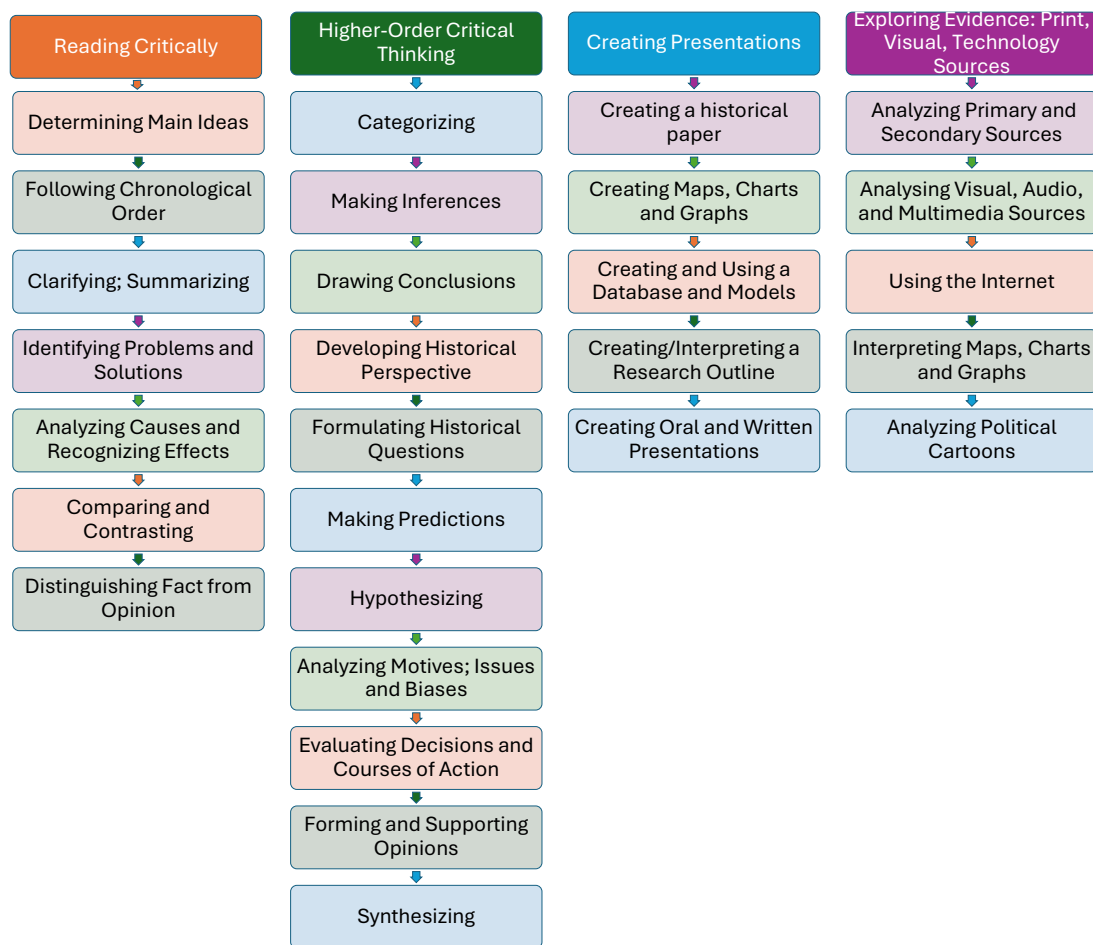


Fig. 1.12: Historical skills

### Activity 1.11

1. Imagine yourself as a future Environmental Historian. How would you help prevent floods and reduce water pollution in our country? Think about the role you could play in shaping environmental policies and protecting natural resources.
2. As a Gender Historian, how could you use your knowledge to promote inclusiveness and equality in society? Reflect on the ways in which history can inform social change and highlight the contributions of underrepresented groups.
3. Women played crucial roles in Ghana's fight for independence. Research the involvement of Ghanaian women in this struggle, then organise your findings in a detailed chart, highlighting their contributions and the impact they had on the movement.

**Table 1.8:** Report on the contributions of women to the independence of Ghana

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# Review Questions

1. Explain the similarities in the way the various ethnic groups referred to history.

**Table 1.9:** Similarities in the way the various ethnic groups referred to history

Ethnic Groups	Similarities in the explanation of history

2. Argue for or against the motion that ‘Herodotus cannot be considered the father of African history.’

**Table 1.10:** Debate on why Herodotus cannot be considered the father of African history

For the motion (provide your evidence),	Against the motion (provide your evidence)
Conclusion reached from the debate:	

3. How can the misconceptions about the history be corrected?

**Table 1.11:** Correction of misconceptions about history

Misconception	Correction
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

4. How can the study of history contribute to the peace, stability, and development of Ghana?

**Table 1.12:** How the study of history contributes to the peace, stability, and development of Ghana

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Investigate one current issue and trace its historical root and its consequences on Ghana.

5. Analyse key events in Ghanaian history and categorise them into different branches. Example: The Colonisation of Ghana by the British: Political History

**Table 1.13:** Analysis of key events in Ghanaian history based on branches of history

S/N	Event	Branch of History
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

6. Discuss the significance of cultural history to the development of Ghana.



## Extended Reading

The links below provide additional information on the meaning of history and the branches of history. They are additional reading materials that can aid your research.

- [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=M3iE\\_gdhD\\_w&pp=ygUgU291cmNlcyBhbmQgYnJhbmNoZXMgb2YgaGlzdG9yeSA%3D](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=M3iE_gdhD_w&pp=ygUgU291cmNlcyBhbmQgYnJhbmNoZXMgb2YgaGlzdG9yeSA%3D)
- <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=U6ocWBrua4M>
- <https://wasscehistorytextbook.com/1-historiography-and-historical-skills/>
- Kuffour, P.A. (2017). Concise notes on African and Ghanaian history, K4 Series Investment Ventures.
- [https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA\\_history/Paper\\_06.pdf](https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_history/Paper_06.pdf)
- <https://testbook.com/articles/types-of-history>
- <https://www.mindler.com/blog/branches-of-history/>

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9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2F4Lgf27no&pp=ygUgZGlmZmV yZW50IHBlcnNwZW50aXZlIG9mIGhpc3Rvcnk%3D>.
10. <https://www.mindler.com/blog/branches-of-history/>
11. [http://www.recogin.com/newsdetails.asp?id=153&cat\\_id=1](http://www.recogin.com/newsdetails.asp?id=153&cat_id=1)
12. <https://www.africanews.com/2017/06/10/ghana-s-first-female-chief-justice-retires-10-facts-about-georgina-wood/>

## Acknowledgements



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