

history in practice

history
and
literacy
in

Y7

building the
lesson
around the
text

christine
counsell

Hodder Murray

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This is the first of three books exploring extended reading in history for 11- to 14-year-olds. The practical activities in this book relate to those topics commonly taught in Year 7 (11- and 12-year-olds in England and Wales). Books 2 and 3 use topics commonly taught in Years 8 and 9 respectively.

All three books build upon my earlier work on extended writing (Counsell, 1997) and upon a range of work from the wider history education community. They also draw upon methods that pupils now experience in the primary phase, including some arising from the National Literacy Strategy implemented in England in the 1990s. For example, some chapters suggest ways of exploiting pupils' familiarity with explicit discussion of sentence structure or creative experimentation with stylistic convention.

Planning for progression

Texts and longer-term progress

These three books explore the place of longer texts in making progress happen. They are based on the premise that a positive experience of tackling texts will change pupils. A text can inspire and a text can make us think. A text can absorb and engage. It might disturb, challenge or delight. It might become a fresh lens through which to see a difficult idea. I have argued elsewhere that this gives a text a power greater than that of a teacher (Counsell, 2004). If we really get pupils enjoying the prose of compelling story, mischievous argument, cautious discussion or opinionated rant, we will change them as learners.

These books deliberately avoid any assumption of a single, tidy, linear progression model for learning history, however. The reasons for this and the problem of defining progression are discussed in Chapter 2. My view is that any history teacher with an eye on long-term goals of rigorous, reflective, informed historical thinking, can and should design the journey towards those goals, in whatever way he or she judges best.

A scholarship of practice: every teacher's property

How can we teach at all without some concept of possible progression underpinning the learning paths that we create for pupils? Progression is something that history departments need regularly to discuss and to reflect upon. Each chapter is therefore written with such professional discussion and reflection in mind, inviting teachers to draw upon a range of sources and authorities, as well as their own experimentation and evaluation, in order to build their own thinking about what progression is and how to secure it.

And if we judge that texts matter, then we need to build them into our thinking about progression. What earlier learning might lead up to effective work with a longish text? What imaginative medium-term plan will bring pupils to the point where they can and will read such a text? What kinds of future historical learning might be unleashed by successful engagement with this text? To

reflect on progression is to say, 'Where would I ideally like my pupils to be in their thinking, knowledge and practice by this time next year? In two years' time? By next month?' and then, 'What kinds of experiences are likely to bring them to that point?' Consideration of the role of reading any text will be woven into that set of professional reflections.

Reflective history teachers thus construct invaluable knowledge about definitions and practice in successful subject learning, all the time. I hope that these books will encourage more teachers to share that knowledge publicly so that we tease out, connect up and debate these different sources and styles of professional knowledge. It is this vision of a constantly renewed 'scholarship of practice', sustained by history teachers in a strong subject-professional culture, that motivated me to write these books. The tricky issue of progression, in particular, will always need both personal and collective professional enquiry. If this is demanding, it is also empowering and exciting. It is also a more honest response to the problem of progression than reliance on a single ladder with neat gradations of difficulty, a one-size-fits-all hierarchy of stages, which we lazily or uncritically borrow.

Discipline matters

A way of reading as a way of thinking

What are subjects for? Within a particular field of enquiry, a subject provides rigour in the quest for knowledge or truth. By making sense of a subject's practices, pupils gain a way of enquiring, an understanding of the conditions under which valid claims can be made and a sense of the scope and limits of enquiry. A subject is not a collection of information. Subjects are different ways of thinking and ways of knowing. Surely they are also ways of reading?

The different theories of knowledge that subjects embody are increasingly made explicit in our curricula. As far as history is concerned, in much of the UK since the late 1980s, we have been emphasising the 'how' as much as the 'what' of our discipline. To teach history without at least *some* reflection on epistemological concerns – how historical knowledge is formed – would now seem unthinkable. But I now wonder if this trend has actually been countered by the unintended consequences of initiatives fostering 'cross-curricular skills'. Of course, it is sensible to get pupils to think outside of subject boxes, to see how skills developed in one setting operate in another, but clarity about the distinctive purposes and practices of our disciplines remains essential. Sam Wineburg (1991) warns against homogenising the curriculum: 'Although we carve up the school day into separate periods, hoping thereby to teach students to be polyglot in multiple ways of knowing, we too often end up teaching in a single tongue . . . knowledge is detached from experience, it is certain and comes shorn of hedge and qualification, its source is textbooks and teachers, and it can be measured with tests and have a single right answer.' Wineburg criticises some American teacher education guidance which

encouraged history teachers to teach reading using the same methods as those used in science: ‘... approaches to reading history that equate reading about the structure of DNA to reading about the structure of the American Revolution obscure the underlying assumptions that give texts meaning’ (Wineburg, 1991: 514). The problem arises from equating knowledge with information. Knowledge itself becomes generic, classified according to the number of facts and relationships represented in a kind of all-purpose semantic net. But disciplines go beyond compilations of facts. For Mink (1987) they are, ‘unique and irreducible modes of comprehending the world’. They are different ways of organising experience and conducting enquiry into who we are.

Reading is not merely a way to learn new information; it is an engagement in new kinds of thinking. Whilst the British government’s Key Stage 3 Strategy has been good at emphasising the link between language and thinking, we must now bring to this a greater subject sensitivity.

In praise of knowledge: giving literacy a period context

One thing that subject sensitivity achieves is to get us beyond the idea of a subject being chiefly about ‘skills’. (Anyone assuming that because this book addresses historical thinking it will play down historical knowledge or content is much mistaken!) I consider growing knowledge of historical context, its stories and period characteristics, important both as a tool and as an outcome in its own right. With the work on Horace, in Chapter 1, for example, knowledge about period values and textual traditions will help pupils to interpret the text. Knowledge of political context, chronology and cultural diversity will also support pupils’ work on source evaluation. Likewise, the critical, reflective or evaluative work will result in transformed or extended period knowledge.

The most powerful lesson objectives always seem to me to integrate historical knowledge with historical thinking or skill. A teacher’s learning objectives for a lesson in the Horace sequence (Chapter 1) might refer to building pupils’ knowledge about contemporary debates on Roman values and customs, whilst integrating this with the evidential thinking that comes from studying a satire. Pupils cultivate period-sensitivity in order to engage with the satire. And they use the satire to cultivate period-sensitivity.

Therefore, in order to discuss the satire as evidence, pupils need so much more than decontextualised ‘inference skills’. They need to climb into the views, debates and practices of Horace’s time. The exercises in Chapter 1 illustrate this continuous interplay between gaining knowledge and learning to think.

Historical thinking: the subject’s structure, concepts and practices

What we used to call ‘historical skills’ is really to do with learning how historical knowledge is formed, structured and tested. Since 1991, the National Curriculum for history in England and Wales has included the ‘second-order concepts’ of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, diversity and significance. It also includes rules and methods surrounding evidential thinking and work with contemporary sources, as well as analysis of modern interpretations and representations of the past.

Activities enabling pupils to engage with a text will therefore be affected by whether we are discerning change, defining continuity, seeking pattern in diversity, weighing the importance of causes, questioning significance, wrestling with an evidential problem or whatever. Throughout this book, it is assumed that any activity involving a text will be rooted in a lesson sequence that works towards the resolution of an intriguing ‘enquiry question’ (Riley 2000). Such a question is likely to enshrine one or more of these concepts or processes.

This has huge implications for supporting literacy. For a pupil to reflect on a text as *source*, for example, might lead to a consideration of intended and unintended message or ideas about certainty and uncertainty in historical claims. Thus, in history, pupils find themselves exploring the meaning of words such as *infer*, *inference*, *suggest*, *suggestion*, *implies*, *implication* in the context of discipline-specific practices. The careful, focused word-level and text-level work that happens naturally in a good history lesson has potential to serve cross-curricular literacy very directly. It therefore seems a missed opportunity when literacy activities are bolted on and not grounded in the rigour that the subject offers. If we fail to be sensitive to subject, we not only stop doing history but we miss the chance to serve the goals of literacy with our subject’s full potential.

Why ‘reading for information’ just won’t do

In the end, history can serve literacy best by being itself. A common problem that emerges when literacy techniques are deployed without subject-sensitivity is the treatment of text as ‘information’. I think this is even worse than a missed opportunity, for it undoes the history teacher’s careful work of helping pupils to move beyond a concept of history as ‘information’ and into ideas of ‘evidence’, ‘source’, ‘evidential information’ or ‘interpretation’.

Where pupils are encouraged to see history as free-floating facts, and texts as buckets of information from which to pluck them, then it is hardly surprising if, wherever there is cause for doubt, pupils slip back into that well-documented helplessness of, ‘I wasn’t there so I don’t know’ (Shemilt, 1987). I found it depressing when early cross-curricular literacy work that came from outside the subject in the 1990s moved us back to these pre-SHP ideas of ‘information’ and ‘reading for information’. Historical helplessness is bound to worsen when pupils think that history is about Romans eating dormice and what colour the togas were. This is not history; it is antiquarianism. We are left with mere information, shaped only by a ‘find out about...’ question. By contrast, a genuinely *historical* question will launch the search for a historically significant conclusion, allowing pupils to see – if not actually to carry out – aspects of the knowledge-construction process. This may require attention to the status of the text as evidence or as interpretation, to the author’s deliberate *choice* of detail from a myriad of accurate details, or to the qualifying, speculative language in which a narrative or a problem of historical causation clothes itself. Whether contemporary source or second record, pupils need to read texts for argument, for position, for deliberated construction, for unwitting or witting message. And (this book will argue) these are precisely the things that fuel motivation to persevere with a demanding text and, above all, to *enjoy* that text, as much for its texture as its plot.

Chapter summary

- * This chapter argues that longer sources and source extracts increase pupils' access to history. This is an argument against prevailing practice. Traditions of source evaluation in school history since the 1970s, together with anxiety about poor literacy, have fostered ever shorter gobbets and ever easier vocabulary. This has made things *harder* for pupils, denying them the interesting features of a source and often rendering work on source utility dry or pointless. Longer texts can transform motivation and understanding.
- * All practical activities are based on one text – Horace's *Satire 2:8*.
- * The chapter builds upon the work of history teachers writing in the 1990s, especially those who have improved pupils' constructive use of sources through intriguing enquiry questions, more use of period knowledge and direct teaching of tentative, speculative language.
- * The approach specifically encourages reflection upon evidential thinking so that pupils learn to think, write and talk about inferences from sources with precision and care. It argues the particular value of a *literary* text for overcoming pupils' difficulties in this area.
- * Practical activities include: experimentation, in pairs, with the effects of changing oral emphasis; breaking down types of historical inference and putting them back together in cohesive paragraphs; reflection upon patterns of general and particular in pupils' own writing about a source; imitation of epic style; and exploration of the characteristics of satire. Pupils draw together their learning by making judgements about the value of one literary text as a source.
- * National Curriculum areas include the relationship between evidential understanding (Key Element 4) and wider knowledge, especially the big picture of continuity and change (Key Element 2c) in Roman literary traditions and cultural practices. Pupils also reflect upon how to communicate claims about the past (Key Element 5).
- * The activities are designed to stretch the full range of ability.
- * Enquiry question chosen as the setting for activities:
What use is Horace when he's being horrible?

Context

A Eating Horace whole

● How we make sources unnecessarily confusing for pupils

Tiny extracts from the first-century Roman poet and satirist Horace litter our history textbooks for 11- to 14-year-olds. Little gobbets of Horace's wisdom on Roman roads or Roman food pop up all over the place in boxes called Source A or Source F. Pupils are expected to use these either as *stimulus* (a bit of colour to spice up the textbook's account of Roman life?) or as *evidence* (to consider whether the source can be judged reliable or useful – an impossible task without the wider text or its provenance) or, in bizarre contradiction of the latter, as *information* (to pluck out a fact or two without any consideration of reliability whatsoever). Isolated mini-gobbets are as mystifying to pupils as the internal contradictions in the purposes to which gobbets are put.

As with so many of our source-based exercises, we are missing two tricks. First, how does a *whole* Horace satire work *as a text*? Second, how does learning more *about the text* help us with reconstructing the past? Related to both questions, how did it work as a text, for its hearers or readers, *then*? And to return to our

starting place, how does knowledge of its hearers and readers, the wider historical context, help us to understand how it works as a text?

Thus the journey into history becomes a journey into genre, style and form. This is one reason why we can claim history's intrinsic support for literacy, especially for text-level work, but also for word- and sentence-level work that flows from a text's structure and style.

● Putting the history into Horace

Satire 8 in Book 2 of Horace's *Satires* describes a (probably) fictional dinner party (see Resource Sheet 2A on page 16). The dinner party host, Nasidienus – a show-off and parvenu – goes over the top in bad taste. He takes himself so seriously that he is unaffected by the mounting hilarity and chaos. Napkins have to be stuffed into mouths to avoid laughter. When the canopy collapses on top of the food, comic farce escalates. The guests eventually escape, unable to endure any more of this travesty of a Roman dinner party.

But this is just the surface story. Underlying it is both witting and unwitting commentary on Roman social practices, cultural values, literary traditions, moral debates and, at the centre of it all, the place of food and dining in Roman life. This chapter explores ways in which we can teach pupils to think, talk and write about the evidential value of this text. It treats the text as source.

It is sometimes with source work that we can see most clearly how this History–English relationship works both ways. Only by a journey into language can we investigate the values and customs of a strange era. A direct focus on the language serves the history. (What would the Romans have found funny in Horace’s style? What is an epic simile, why on earth did Horace use one here and what does this tell us about the Romans?) And only a concern for rigour in historical thinking will properly serve ‘literacy’ – pupils’ ability to understand, use, evaluate and enjoy the text.

● Eating Horace whole makes him more digestible

So it is no good nibbling at Horace’s fingers and toes. Pupils need to eat him whole. The expectation that pupils could comment upon the reliability or utility of such a text, from a brief gobblet and without surrounding knowledge, is totally unrealistic.

There is an important paradox at work here. It flies in the face of a common and understandable assumption that shorter gobblets and easier words make sources easier for pupils. They may well make something or other ‘easier’ – the completion of a task, perhaps – but my contention is that such methods actually put history, and especially evidential work with historical sources, further and further out of the reach of our struggling pupils.

Longer texts are not harder. Quite the reverse. They actually create *more* access for pupils. Pupils gain a fuller picture, soaking up atmosphere, story or message. Texts are tools to think with. As we engage with them, they transform us. This is why I am careful to avoid saying that longer texts are ‘easier’, since this is surely not our goal. We do not want to make anything *easier*, if that just means that the difficult historical work is avoided rather than taught. I prefer to say that longer texts make history more *accessible*. I mean this in a specifically professional sense, in that they create more access points for teachers who are trying to raise pupils’ game.

Longer extracts and full texts make it possible to lift the level of pupils’ thinking, to approach demanding and complicated historical ideas. We only want access if it makes challenge possible.

● Longer texts are more fun

Besides, whole texts are so much more enjoyable. We should not be surprised when pupils of average and below average ability cannot see the point of dry little exercises on short source extracts. Complete texts or longer extracts evoke a mood, encapsulate an argument or relate a narrative that is not even approached if we look only at a tiny extract.

So ‘Horace whole’ is going to help pupils, especially weaker readers, much more than ‘Horace dismembered’. The story and the viewpoint it embodies, the fun of the characters and the skill with which they are tersely drawn, start to appear before us when we invest time in a substantial text such as *Satire 2:8*.

It is odd that we do not generally invest time in longer texts when we consider that work on sources is a pivotal part of our tradition in the history education community. But it is, perhaps, a tradition gone wrong . . .

B Rethinking the source evaluation tradition in history education

A number of problems have arisen from ‘traditional’ source work or ‘skills-based’ work in history, beginning in the 1970s and becoming widespread in the 1980s. These are well-documented within the profession itself. Many history teachers have reflected upon the damage to historical learning caused by tiny gobblets, a lack of contextual knowledge and an overemphasis on atomised exercises on bias and reliability (e.g. Lang, 1993; Hake and Haydn, 1995; Counsell, 1997; Byrom, 1998; McAleavy, 1998; LeCocq, 2000). Specific reference to such problems figures in the hard-hitting criticisms of senior HMI in official reports on the early years of the National Curriculum (e.g. Ofsted, 1993).

● Using the solutions emerging from classroom experience

The activities in this chapter are designed, collectively, to tackle four main problem areas that I see as closely linked. These are summarised in Figure 1.1 (overleaf), which is offered tentatively and as stimulus for further debate. Already, there exists a head of steam of effective solutions that preserve the tradition of critical evidential thinking and the fascination of documentary source work at its best, whilst avoiding the pitfalls that have given source-based activities a bad name. Many teachers have written about their practice or shared it on in-service training with influential effect.

In this chapter, I aim to use activities on our Horace text to build upon some of this well-documented best practice. The activities themselves are based upon my own approaches to using this particular satire – and other Roman writings – with Year 7 groups in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I want to analyse them in the light of some more recent techniques and debates, and so to integrate some issues that have been raised in isolation but have not always been drawn together.

Specifically, I want to present some approaches to making historical inferences and to show how these can make greater use of the distinction between ‘big points and little points’. Now a common practice in supporting extended writing, this emphasis upon distinguishing between the general and the particular is only rarely applied to source work.

Additionally, I want to highlight stubborn and persistent problems that pupils appear to have with stating and using their inferences from sources, and to suggest that these relate to hidden difficulties with ‘historical distance’ – a fairly basic idea that we could teach much more directly.

● Encouraging pupils to be positive and constructive

Many history teachers have adopted an approach similar to Byrom’s (1998) use of substantial chronicle extracts on the Peasants’ Revolt in order to help pupils reconcile conflicting material residing in different places. Byrom’s approach involved temporarily suspending considerations of reliability and bias altogether. He simply got pupils to find a way out of the contradictions by creating a

1 Drawing out the value of a literary source

● **Figure 1.1** *Ways in which history teachers have been renewing and transforming the source evaluation tradition*

Known weaknesses in our practice within the source evaluation tradition that began in the 1970s	Isolated solutions already emerging from professional knowledge constructed by teachers in the 1990s and 2000s
Pupil negativity (writing sources off as biased) and historical helplessness (how can we possibly know anything for certain?), arising from excessive emphasis on assessing the reliability of sources and the demonising of bias.	Adoption of positive and constructive approaches to pupils' discussion of source utility, most famously argued for by Lang (1993) and implemented in contrasting ways by history teachers (e.g. Byrom, 1998; LeCocq, 2000; Smith, 2001).
History teachers not noticing that pupils are held back by their blurring of the general and particular when making inferences from sources.	Emphasis on big points and little points (e.g. Counsell, 1997); use of visual devices to show distinction between main points or arguments and supporting detail or evidence (e.g. Mulholland's evidence sandwich (1998) and Banham's burgers (1998)).
Pupils' lack of contextual knowledge or inability to <i>apply</i> wider knowledge to the practice of source evaluation.	Use of sources as part of an enquiry or lesson sequence built around a single, driving question (answered in a final analysis, narrative or substantial discussion) rather than as separate exercises or decontextualised skill assessments (e.g. Riley, 2000; Banham with Culpin, 2002; Ofsted, 1993, 2004).
History teachers' assumption that short sources are easier for less able pupils and the mistaken view that gobblets can therefore create access to demanding evidential work.	Emphasis on using longer sources. Unlike the three developments above, this is not yet well-embedded but valuable examples are emerging all the time. See the successful work of Woolley (2003), for example, in using a Thomas Hardy short story with 'low ability' Year 8 sets. Of course, some argued for this use of longer written sources well before it caught on, notably McAleavy through in-service training and consultancy for curriculum authorities (NCC, 1993; SCAA, 1994, unpublished).

narrative that made sense to them. In a mixed-ability Year 7 class, the historical puzzle drove pupils to persevere with the texts and the challenge of producing a coherent account.

LeCocq (2000) also focused upon being constructive with sources, but in an entirely different way. Far from ignoring notions of bias, position or message in a source, she made these centre-stage, concentrating (like Lang, 1993) on how bias of any kind was *useful*. Indeed, she argued that we should avoid using the word 'bias' (although not the idea), as pupils assume the word to be pejorative, lumbering them with misconceptions that they hang on to for the next five years.

The activities on Horace in this chapter seek to be constructive in LeCocq's rather than Byrom's sense. This is a vital distinction. The activities are designed to help pupils see, from the outset, that Horace has a viewpoint, openly held, that his work is laden with a particular position and that this makes the source both interesting and historically valuable. There is therefore no question of pupils assuming that the source is 'unreliable' just because Horace is trying to please a certain kind of Roman audience or to ridicule practices of which he disapproves.

The tendency of pupils to assume that all sorts of positioning, perspective and persuasion can be lumped together crudely as 'bias'

and the offending sources expunged is a problem of epidemic proportions in school history (e.g. Lang, 1993; Byrom, 1998; Smith, 2001). Getting beyond it is a central challenge in any work with contemporary sources.

● Inference and historical distance

All the above has been written about a great deal and is often discussed. But I have a further concern – one that history teachers rarely theorise explicitly. It seems to me that we have not appreciated the extent to which making inferences or stating inferences from sources is an *historical* problem for our pupils. It is a difficulty with historical thinking, rather than purely a language or literacy issue. Pupils need to build, steadily, a sense of what constitutes an historically significant inference, something that tells us about the period, its practices or values – a 'big' inference if you like, as opposed to a trivial one. We cannot just bolt the literacy on, pulling in the language of inference as though this were the sum of the problem. Instead, we need to work out what kind of historical thinking needs to take place, so that pupils understand, and become more reflective about, the process of historical inference itself.

In other words, a failure to *use the history* to help the literacy is probably one reason why many pupils do not make progress with

demanding source work. If we reduce the problem to literacy, we do not get very far.

When first using contemporary Roman texts at Rednock Comprehensive School in the 1980s, I also noticed that amongst the many muddles in the weaker pupils' writing, they seemed to be fundamentally confused about the status of their inferences. As a result, I made special efforts to force them to distinguish between inferences that would have been made at the time and ones that we make now. (Activity 3 in this chapter enshrines the most successful of those experiments.)

This also became my spur to greater use of literary texts such as Horace's satire – or, in other years, Chaucer, Pope or Swift. Anything that helped pupils to see that a piece of writing was designed to entertain *a contemporary audience* was very fruitful, for it allowed me to make a strong teaching point about the differences between inferences likely to have been drawn then, by a contemporary audience, and what this all suggests to us now, as historians.

Horace is conveying a message to a contemporary audience. He does this indirectly and it requires inference on the part of hearers. That is one phenomenon. Then there is our work as modern historians or students of history. This is an utterly different project. Horace had no idea that he would be used for such a project and we must not impute irrelevant motives to him. We need to be clear to pupils that *we* are choosing to extrapolate conclusions, not only about what Horace was saying, but about whether or not it can be judged as evidence for prevailing (or at least significant) views and debates at the time.

Breaking it down, being clear about the status of the claim and its place in the hierarchy of generality, helps pupils to see how this works. It is another 'hidden' difficulty that needs to be taught, but which invariably does not get taught because it seems too obvious to state.

● Language use is helped by a focus on historical distance

Making this distinction between types of inference helped my pupils' oral and written work in unforeseen ways. Crucially, I observed pupils' greater thoughtfulness over tense ('The Romans might have concluded ...' 'The Romans would have enjoyed ...') and a greater self-awareness about the quality and strength of the claims they were making ('This suggests to us now that ...'). I also found myself feeding in much more direct teaching on tentative, speculative language, such as the use of conditionals.

In turn, through this language emphasis, I found myself better able to help less confident pupils to cope with the uncertainty of historical enquiry. I could not claim to have tackled this as systematically as Wiltshire (2000) in her teaching of Year 6 pupils to express uncertainty, nor to arrive at the brilliant insights of Carlisle (2000) who teased out the implications of 'tells' and 'suggests' with his Year 8 classes. But by making this distinction, a number of things came together – practice in drawing inferences and in stating them as such, an ability to show more clearly (in their fumbling prose) how the big issues were distinct from the small examples, and a clearer sense of the nature of the historical endeavour itself.

● Inference and its relationship with 'big points' and 'little points'

One practical idea whose potential in the context of source work I did not fully realise at that time, was that of 'big points' and 'little points'. (See Chapter 2, Activities 9 and 10).

In *Analytical and Discursive Writing*, I have explained how and why I first found myself designing 'big points' and 'little points' activities (Counsell, 1997). My pupil, 'Michael', was having all kinds of problems, manifesting themselves in muddled, inconsequential, undeveloped answers to questions about sources, full of randomly extracted detail from assorted extracts. It was only when I observed that it was *the relative status of the particular and the general* that Michael was unable to bring out, and translated this into practical teaching techniques, that I began to move him forwards. I realised that Michael was not just muddling extraction and inference. I concluded that he could not see the difference between a significant historical claim, and a mere detail or example from the past that gave rise to it.

I went on to use the 'big points/little points' idea extensively in helping pupils construct extended analytic writing. It did not occur to me, however, at that early stage (despite its origin in Michael's source struggles) to link this directly with the kinds of generalising inferences that we require in basic source work.

Yet the connection is strong. When they make their tentative claims arising from a source, pupils are often stating a relationship between the particular and general. It makes sense to transfer the stark clarity of 'big points' and 'little points', or at least the principles underlying it, to help pupils with the generalising process that takes place in this kind of historical inference. This is a key principle underpinning the practical examples in Activities 2, 3, 5 and 6.

C Investigating the ancient world through its writings

The activities in this chapter also emphasise the need for contextual knowledge when puzzling over texts. So let us take a closer look, with a history teacher's eye, at Horace, at his writing and at the ancient world in which he lived. What is the value of studying ancient historical texts for pupils' general historical development?

● 'I wasn't there, so I don't know'

Our knowledge of the ancient world is precarious. It rests on uneven evidence. Architectural and written sources are rich but they bring into our view only certain slices of life.

Yet at the same time, modern analysis 'can reveal more about the ancient world than the ancients knew themselves, just as, one day, historians will reveal more about our own society than we can now know' (Beard and Henderson, 1995: 45). People living at the time were limited in what they were prepared to see. Historians may have only limited and partial records but they can make connections and have the opportunity of interpretation.

Contrast this with those words with which pupils still drive us mad, sometimes even at GCSE: 'I wasn't there, so I don't know.' Here they reveal a total absence of understanding about the

historical process, a sort of historical helplessness. Instead, we should be trying to help them say, 'I wasn't there: so I'm in a very *good* position not only to work out what happened, but to say something sensible about the nature and significance of these events. I wasn't there, so I am capable of knowing a lot!'

● Enjoying the puzzle of an ancient text

Ancient texts are therefore the perfect place to build secondary pupils' evidential understanding and to investigate the puzzles of the past using source evaluation. The temporal and cultural distance from the ancients' worldview is stark. As teachers, our starting point and constant refrain to the pupils has to be: 'This is a puzzle. It's tricky. The evidence is thin and partial. We will have to use clever techniques to work things out. We will have to cope with uncertainty, with might-have-beens and could-have-beens. We will have to use imagination ...' The way we *present* the puzzle of the ancients' writing to pupils is thus transformed.

And just as the puzzle of writing distances us from the past, so it is also the gateway into it. Helping pupils to see a text as a puzzle is an excellent way to make them less frightened of it. It is *supposed* to be confusing. It is a puzzle! It comes from 2,000 years ago, so of course we have got to hunt, guess, apply techniques, link it up. How much can we work out? Can we really surmise this grand conclusion, or shall we settle for this small suggestion? This is the spirit and the energy of the classroom discourse that needs to underpin our elementary work with Year 7.

Moreover, we need to think not only about how or why a text was written in the past, but also about how it was *read* in the past. As Beard and Henderson (1995: 46) put it, 'Greek and Roman writers discussed, debated and defined their own culture ... Self-reflection ... runs through much of Greek and Roman writing.' To study a classical text is to engage with a culture that was engaged in studying itself. When we read ancient texts we are having a debate with an ancient world that is having a debate with itself.

D Horace: ideal for Year 7

● Concrete and comic

Horace offers the best of all worlds for younger teenagers. Many of his satires are full of concrete language and vivid imagery that pupils will enjoy. We can then look behind these into the abstract issues. It is ready-made scaffolding.

I particularly like to work with *Satire 2:8* because it is easy to visualise the sights, sounds and smells of the dinner party. The descent into comic farce makes Horace's viewpoint clear. The work of imaginative reconstruction – that key to pupil engagement – can begin straightaway. Once pupils are 'into' that, you can sneak everything else in through the back door.

● Moving backwards and forwards from Horace: how the Romans used the Greeks

Horace looks backwards and forwards across the span of recorded human history. To gain some understanding of the traditions within which he sits is to build foundations of knowledge that will serve pupils well in other historical and literary settings.

Horace's writing is steeped in Greek mythology. This collection of stories that make up Greek myths and legends has had a powerful hold not only over the Romans but over many artists and writers across 2,000 years. Greek mythology is very marked in Horace, since he presented his verse as a conscious imitation of Greek poetic themes and forms. Activity 4 helps pupils to understand that Horace was borrowing high-flown epic language (from both Greeks and Romans) and using it to deal with earthy, basic matters like food. This incongruous use of language was where some of the humour resided for a Roman audience.

● Horace and the development of satire

Horace certainly did not invent satire. We know that he was influenced by Lucilius, for example. But Horace did develop satire as a form. He directly influenced later satirists such as Pope and Swift.

Roman satire, like conversation, is invariably a talk to someone, either to an addressee able to respond, or between partners in a staged dialogue. Satire's talk is in verse and is free-flowing, Horace's word for its style being 'pedester' (walking). This is a double image, for satires 'go on foot, on the ground, in contrast to the poetic flight of the higher genres' (Muecke, 1993). Our warm-up play on *Satire 2:8* (see Activity 1) nicely reinforces this to pupils, as our only two speaking characters are literally going for a walk, round and round, as the action unfolds in the circle that they draw.

Satire aims to entertain and amuse, and, to a lesser extent, to inform or reform, although Horace seemed rather unbothered by any desire to do the latter. In the satires themselves, Horace sets out the stylistic requirements of the genre he is using. He makes his own rules. The fact that he writes these rules very explicitly makes it possible for pupils to examine and apply some of them (see Activity 5).

A full history teacher's guide to Horace's satire can be found in the Genre Spot on page 30.

● Horace, food and 'natural limits'

But why was Horace so obsessed with food?

Like many Roman writers, Horace seems to have been interested in human desires and needs. This is one reason why he writes a lot about food and also about sex – social and cultural practices that are surrounded by all kinds of normative expectations and are therefore hard to get right. Food offers any satirist multiple perspectives on human behaviour.

Horace's food satires sometimes contain views on culinary preparation and sometimes discussion of the social environment. *Satire 2:8* focuses heavily on hospitality. It is about the moment when food reaches the table and how it is presented. Here, Horace was influenced by the Epicurean ideal of natural limits, and in other satires he explicitly expressed support for it. This was a belief that desires should be limited to what natural needs require.

In *Satire 2:8*, Nasidienus, the host, offends against these principles. Defined by the food he serves and also the way he serves it, Nasidienus is going beyond 'natural limits' and so becomes Horace's satirical target. The guests' refusal to finish the meal seems cruel. But it is Horace's poetic justice.

● Food, dining and the Romans' ideal of 'a common life'

To understand why dining was such a big deal for the Romans, we need to go to Cicero. Horace was steeped in a tradition of dining that was about so much more than food. Twelve years before this satire was written, Cicero sent a letter to his friend Paetus urging him not to give up the habit of dining out:

I am thinking of the life and living in common and of the mental relaxation which comes above all from friendly talk. This kind of talk is at its most pleasant on convivial occasions. Here, our countrymen have been wiser than the Greeks, for the Greeks call such occasions 'drinkings together' or 'dinings together', but we call them 'livings together' (*convivia*), because then we most truly share a common life.

Cicero Fam. 9.24.3

Nasidienus' dotty banquet offends against this, too. His dinner party is nothing to do with 'the mental relaxation which comes from friendly talk'. It is presented as a kind of perversion, the background to which was a great increase in the elite's wealth and luxury during the first century BC – a development that is well documented by Seneca and Tacitus.

Cicero's letters show us that the Roman dinner party was a symbol of a way of life. This rosy Ciceronian view of 'common living' is not unproblematic, however. Roman dining was always as much about status, exclusivity, hierarchy and the affirmation of elite power as about ideals of common life. What we see in Horace's world, perhaps, is these contrasting underlying meanings, symptoms, perhaps of differing contemporary interpretations of dining as a social practice. What Horace's food writings show us clearly is that food was a setting for competing cultural values: 'on the one hand, the pursuit of pleasure or prestige through competitive and ostentatious extravagance, on the other ... moral condemnation prompted by the traditional association of luxury with decadence' (Muecke, 1993: 10).

● The timelessness of *Satire 2:8*

If we can use this text to show pupils that the past is strange, we can also use it to show how the past is familiar. It is remarkable how quickly pupils start to understand what Horace is commenting upon. He is making a point about lavish and foolish ostentation, something that was certainly not peculiar to the Romans. Nasidienus stands for a type that always appears in literature when guardians of tradition start to worry that new wealth is being acquired without education or a social conscience.

As a piece of social criticism, *Satire 2:8* has a very wide field of reference. Much commentary on social practices surrounding food is timeless. Compare Cicero and Jamie Oliver on dining. Oliver is also keen to emphasise that cooking and eating are about so much more than mere food; they are about values that he wishes to preserve:

Good food's not just about eating. To me it's about passing the potatoes around the table, ripping up some bread, getting tipsy and enjoying the company of good friends or family. Pass us the mustard, Dad.

Oliver (2000: 10)

We can use Horace's satires to show pupils the past breaking through into the present, and the life of the present living in the past.

■ Arriving at a good enquiry question

Whether you want to focus on the first century BC or more broadly across both Republic and Empire, the possibilities for using this text to deepen and broaden pupils' sense of period are rich.

We could go in the direction of leisure and entertainment. A deceptively easy question like *How did the Romans amuse themselves?* would justify a close look at this satire. The layers of 'amusement' turn out to be multiple. We swiftly get beyond food and dinner parties and into satire itself as entertainment. Such an enquiry question would allow us to focus very directly on the inferences that a Roman audience would make from the text and the literary touches that made it clever and funny.

Equally, we could focus narrowly on food, with something like *Why did the Romans fuss about food?* This satire is very much about fussing. Horace's judgement is that food is important but that Nasidienus' fussing is the wrong sort. Alternatively, with so many references to ingredients from many parts of Italy and the wider empire, the satire could also play a part in an enquiry examining trade, communications and transport. It would be a surprisingly useful source (surprising to the pupils – *they* thought it was just about a dinner party) for unwitting evidence that would support an enquiry entitled *How big was the Romans' world?*

Or the satire could simply take pupils into a special focus upon art, literature or high culture generally, with *Why did the Romans like poets?* It would be possible to broaden out into architecture with a question like *How did the Romans show off?*

Yet for this chapter, I wanted a much more directly evidential learning focus in the wording of the question. Questions like *How useful is Satire 2:8?* are terribly dull, however. *Who can tell us the most about Roman food?* or *How much can Horace tell us?* is getting closer. It has more pith and at least it makes Horace sound interesting. But whilst the present tense is important in reminding pupils that we are talking about utility *now*, the 'tells us' can create problems because it can suggest that Horace was setting out to help *us*, 2,000 years later! Horace's satire certainly 'tells us' things, but the common figure of speech '*Horace tells us ...*' might not be the best to remediate the worst pupil confusions about historical inference.

A straight reliability question, on the other hand, about an over-the-top, probably fictional party, in which Horace is clearly having a bit of a dig, might result in pupils writing off the source as unreliable, essentially trivial and useless. And our pupils do have a

1 Drawing out the value of a literary source

tendency to write off a source that is anything do with entertainment (Mastin, 2002). So why not make use of this and challenge pupils' preconceptions? This led me to: *Can we trust Horace when he's being horrible?*

But it is still not quite there. There is too much emphasis on reliability and it also invites a 'yes' or 'no' answer. It could invite a kind of pointless negativity about the poem. Instead, let's get beyond reliability-driven source work. Broadening out into utility in general, let us build our activities around:

What use is Horace when he's being horrible?

Activities

Six activity clusters now follow.

Activity 1 is a simple play crossed with a mime. It is designed to give pupils access to the satire by making it visual and aural, and also by teasing out some of the period meanings.

Activity 2 is designed to help pupils understand the ridiculousness of Nasidienus and the humour of the satire to Roman ears. It quickly familiarises pupils with the satire, giving them confidence to find their way around it.

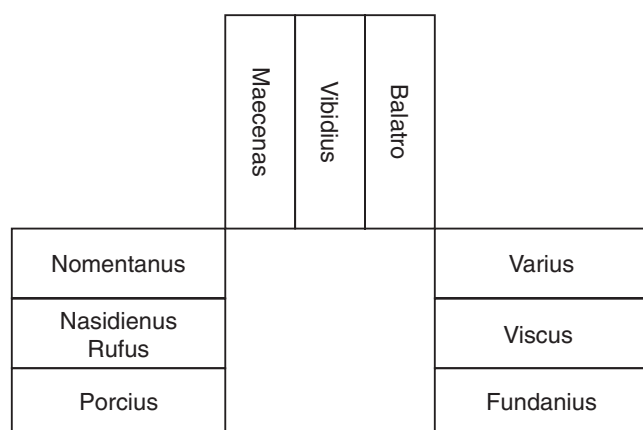
Activity 3 helps pupils to tell the difference between period inferences and modern historical inferences. It requires direct teaching about the general and the particular and allows pupils to develop and demonstrate this understanding through writing.

In Activity 4, pupils produce some of their own Roman humour. They copy (and outdo) Horace in using epic (or heavenly) language to talk about earthly things. In this way, they use their growing understanding of the genres of epic and satire to get closer to a Roman period 'feel'.

In Activity 5 pupils write their own conclusion to the satire. Scholars have often commented on the strange or perhaps unsatisfactory conclusion to this satire. Here pupils draw upon their growing period and genre knowledge to have a go themselves.

Activity 6 allows teachers to assess some specific evidential understanding developed throughout earlier activities. Pupils have to integrate thinking about reliability

● **Figure 1.2** *How to arrange the couches and the characters*



and utility to make judgements about the satire's historical value.

The activities in this chapter draw together four things:

- (i) the need to be **constructive** about the views and assumptions that the source embodies, seeing the historical value of these things, rather than writing them off with the pejorative term 'bias';
- (ii) plenty of opportunity to **clamber into the source**, to understand its content and enjoy its stylistic devices;
- (iii) helping pupils to see **the general and the particular in their own writing**;
- (iv) an awareness of the scope of valid **historical claims**.

Activity 1

The warm-up play

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

With long texts such as *Satire 2:8*, pupils need, as swiftly as possible, to gain a sense of the whole. Reading round the class or, worse, a slow trawl through 'difficult words', goes down like a lead balloon. Instead, we need the big picture, and we need it fast. Only then do we want to go back and examine the details.

There are many ways of gaining this initial holistic grasp. One would be for the confident teacher simply to tell the story in a crisp and lively way. But some pupils need more. This is how the idea of the warm-up play arose. It is based on the text, sticking closely to its details (Resource Sheet 1B).

The warm-up play is easy to perform as the pupil-actors simply mime, their challenge being to listen hard to the conversation going on around them. I use the play *before* showing pupils the text. After a discussion about the play, they are then ready to look at the text itself.

■ Activity procedure

Move the desks to make nine couches arranged as in Figure 1.2. Distribute the character cards (Resource Sheet 1A), choosing your pupils carefully.

Horace and Fundanius should be played by two teachers, or a teacher and a teaching assistant. These parts require good reading and plenty of acting. Alternatively, choose two capable pupils and give them the play in advance to practise.

The other characters are going to mime. Show them how to do this, especially how to mime speech. Encourage them to imagine it is a silent movie. Emphasise that they should be responding *to each other* during the mime. They must listen to Fundanius the narrator and carry out the actions that his story suggests. (Remember that Fundanius will be played *twice*: as narrator and as a guest at the dinner party.)

Nasidienus Rufus

You are serious and pompous throughout the dinner party. You may smile, in an over-the-top way, when the food appears but *never* laugh or giggle. Keep smiling politely at your guests to persuade them how lovely the food is. Point to different dishes as you hear them mentioned. Smile whenever Nomentanus speaks.

Sometimes put a hand on his shoulder gently to thank him.

Above all:

- Look horrified when some of your guests start drinking too much.
- When the canopy collapses on the food, you must look even more horrified and distressed. Wave your arms about and look as though you are crying (but don't make a sound – this is a mime!).
- When the guests all leave, collapse on one of the couches, weeping, moaning and thrashing about in despair.

Maecenas

You are very important. You are relaxed and at ease. Nasidienus (your host) is keen to please you, but you are not impressed. You give him pitying looks and shake your head. You think Nasidienus is an idiot. You find yourself joining in the giggling, but you are much more dignified than Vibidius, Balatro and Hog. Turn, sometimes, to talk with Vibidius.

Nomentanus

You need to please Nasidienus at all times. (Remember that you rely on people like him to provide you with dinner!) Sometimes you help him out by pointing out the excellent food dishes and explaining how special they are to the other guests. This will please him very much. *Never* join in with the laughter of the guests. Nod seriously and smile at Nasidienus all the time. Copy him as much as you can. When he is distressed, you are distressed. When he is proud of the food, you look proud, too.

Vibidius

You are a friend of Maecenas. When Maecenas turns to talk to you, listen properly – nod, change your expression, smile and so on. Copy everything Maecenas does: laugh when he laughs; eat when he eats. When Balatro asks you to listen to his jokes, listen hard and fall about laughing (silently). When you hear, 'Vibidius called for larger drinking cups', wave at the slaves impatiently and mime your request for larger cups. When the cups arrive, pour whole jugfuls of wine into them. Keep doing this, from time to time, for the rest of the play.





Porcius (Hog)

You are very greedy, as greedy as a pig. About once a minute, pick up a cake and swallow it in one go. Then look around and grin at everyone. Your eyes get bigger when you see food arrive. You can hardly eat it fast enough. When Balatro makes jokes, listen hard, laugh and then eat another cake.

Balatro

You and Vibidius are like two naughty boys. You keep giggling together. You think it is very funny when Vibidius calls for larger cups. You join him in drinking far too much. Listen carefully when Nasidienus is talking about the food. Stare at him and pull silly faces. In the play, you will sometimes hear Fundanius call you 'a buffoon'. Make sure you do the things that he says the buffoon did!

Varius

You laugh more and more as the party goes on. Stop eating and listen when Balatro makes jokes. Then laugh a lot. (But remember, not a sound!) When the canopy falls down on the food, you want to laugh so much that you have to stuff your napkin in your mouth.

Viscus

You giggle a lot (*but silently*). You keep *trying* to pretend you are not giggling. You think Balatro is very funny. Smile politely at Nasidienus as he tells you about the food. Then turn to your neighbour and giggle secretly, behind your hand. If your neighbour talks to you, turn and listen to him, nodding and giggling.

Fundanius

You are relaxed and thoroughly enjoying yourself. Nasidienus (your host) is desperate to please you, but you are not impressed. You think Nasidienus is an idiot. Smile at him, rather falsely, when he looks at you. But when he is not looking, give him pitying looks and shake your head at your neighbour. You find yourself joining in the laughter, but you aren't *quite* as riotous as Vibidius. Sometimes you turn and speak with Viscus. You are not greedy, but you do keep tasting new dishes.

Dinner party guests are frozen – don't bring them to life yet.

Horace and Fundanius on either side of room, walking towards each other.

Horace: Fundanius! Fundanius! There you are!! [*They greet warmly.*] I've been looking for you everywhere and then I heard ... [*slow down, mischievous tone*] that you've been eating and drinking at the house of Nasidienus Rufus! What on earth have you been doing there? And since *midday*?

Fundanius: Oh Horace, I've had such a good time. You'd never believe it. You know, to be honest, I've never had such a laugh in all my life.

Horace: Oh, do tell. [*Fundanius appears to protest a little, out of modesty, while Horace persists.*] Oh, go on. Tell it to me right from the beginning. What was the first offering to calm your raging bellies?

Fundanius: [*Now persuaded, jolly, complicit ... ready to revel in the tale.*] Oh, all right then ... [*with mounting glee*]

Dinner party suddenly comes alive. All guests now animated and in role (but silent). First action: sitting up, smiling, rubbing hands in expectation as slave comes in carrying the Lucanian boar. Guests respond in an exaggerated way to each detail in Fundanius' account, according to individual guidance on character cards.

Fundanius: [*Gesturing in direction of imaginary slaves*] First, there was a wild boar from Lucania. Our host – the proud father of the feast – kept on telling us that this boar was caught in a soft – oh so *gentle* – southerly breeze.

[Fundanius and Horace simultaneously display gesture of incredulity with their hands and roll their eyes to heaven at the absurdity of it.]

Around it all sorts of things were carefully placed in order to assist our tired appetites: lettuces, spicy turnips, radishes, skirret – [*to the audience*] that's a kind of water parsnip – and wine-lees: *Choan* wine, that is, of course.

Horace: [*In mock, exaggerated agreement*] Of course!

Fundanius: Now, when all this was cleared away, a boy in a rather [*raises eyebrows*] *brief tunic* [*Horace raises eyebrows*] wiped the marble table with a crimson cloth, while another swept up scraps and anything else that might annoy the guests. Then [*pauses in his walk a moment to capture surprise and solemnity of the moment and steers Horace's eye to the entrance from which the slave is about to appear*] another slave, with long hair and an Eastern look, entered. But not like an ordinary slave. Oh no. Nothing ordinary about this. It was as though he were in a procession, as part of a religious sacrifice. We guests all fell silent. [*Gravely, slightly hushed*] The occasion demanded great reverence. For he carried the food on his head, in a basket, just like the basket of offerings the Greeks used to carry, when they were worshipping the god Ceres in Athens. The slave, we were told, was called Hydaspes.

Horace: Hydaspes!! Oh, go on! You're having me on now ...

Fundanius: [*Shaking his head and laughing*] I am not! This was some slave. We are talking *expensive* ...

Horace: Well, well, well – what will Nasidienus spend his money on next?

Fundanius: Er ... another slave? I'm not joking. After the dusky Hydaspes, in came Alcon carrying Chian wine.

Horace: Oh, I see – a slave has to have a *Greek* name to carry a *Greek* wine.

Fundanius: Precisely. Now, our host, Nasidienus Rufus, was obviously concerned that we should know that he had a very full cellar of wine. So he turned to Maecenas ...

Horace: ... the most *important* guest ...

Fundanius: ... and said, 'If you prefer Falernian wine or Alban wine to what has been served, Maecenas, then just say. I have both varieties and can give you whatever you like.'

Horace: Oh, the miseries of wealth! But do tell, Fundanius, [*eagerly, pressing, speeding up with greedy urgency*] who were your fellow guests on this great occasion?

Fundanius: [*Pointing out each guest as he explains*] I was at the top, with Viscus next. Below, if I remember rightly, was Varius. On the middle couch was Vibidius with Balatro (the buffoon) next to him. Vibidius and Balatro were just two shadows who came with Maecenas. Vibidius certainly liked his drink. Our host, Nasidienus, had Hog to his right. Hog amused us by swallowing whole cakes at a time. Lastly, there was Nomentanus, on Nasidienus' left.

Horace: Who's Nomentanus?

Fundanius: Oh, some hanger-on of our host. And my goodness he was almost as stupid. Nomentanus was given a special task. He helped our host out by making sure that all the guests knew every last detail about the food. We were all treated like the ignorant mob who had to have all details pointed out with great seriousness.

Horace: Such as?

Fundanius: Oh, the fact that the fish contained a flavour totally different from anything we had tasted before, the fact that the honey-apples were red because they'd been picked by a waning moon ... but all this kept getting interrupted by our naughty guests. Vibidius, the drinker, turned to the Buffoon and whispered loudly, 'Let's drink him out of house and home!' He then called loudly for larger drinking cups, waving at the slaves to bring them quickly. Hearing this, our host stood up and went white with horror.

Horace: [*Very mocking*] Poor Nasidienus ...

Fundanius: Indeed, but Vibidius and the Buffoon took absolutely no notice of our host's discomfort and started pouring whole jugfuls of wine into their large cups. Things really got out of hand then because everyone else started copying them. Wine was sloshing everywhere. Only Hog and Nomentanus held back. Being our host's hangers-on, they wouldn't have offended him.

Then the centrepiece of the whole feast was served. Our host rose to welcome it and explained every detail proudly as the slaves slowly paraded in. It was a big eel from the sea, stretched on a dish, with prawns swimming all round it. You should have heard our host's speech, we all listened open-mouthed. Even Hog paused in mid-cake. We were told that the eel was caught while still pregnant (after spawning the flesh is *so* inferior), that the oil was Venafran (only from the *first* pressing, of course), that the fish sauce was made from the guts of the *Spanish* mackerel, that the wine in the sauce was five years old (and must be grown and made in *Italy*) and so on and so on. He even tried to show off about which cooking practices he had introduced himself. Apparently he is the first person to have *boiled* fresh green rocket in the sauce ...

But then – right in the middle of this speech – the canopy suspended over the table collapsed. It crashed down, landing right on the food, wreaking absolute havoc [*with a mock-tragic tone*] ... and the food was ruined! Ruined! Huge clouds of black dust went everywhere. Oh, it was worse than being on the fields of Campania when the north wind blows. Nasidienus, our poor host, broke down completely.

Horace: [*Very mocking*] Poor Nasidienus! What a *tragedy*!

- Fundanius:** You'd have thought it *was* a tragedy. The rest of us struggled out from under the canopy [*very mocking, illustrating with struggling actions, and all guests doing likewise at the same time*] and we found our host weeping as though this was the greatest tragedy. You'd have thought he'd lost a son – he was that distraught. That fool, Nomentanus, comforted his friend with a ridiculous speech, straight out of a Greek tragedy: 'Oh Fortune, no other god can be more cruel to us than you! Oh Fortune, why do you always enjoy making sport with human affairs? Oh great gods ...!' and so on. As though someone had died!
- Horace:** And all over a dinner party!
- Fundanius:** I can tell you it was too much for Varius. He was laughing so much he had to stuff a napkin in his mouth. The Buffoon then stood up and made a mock speech, flailing his arms about, mimicking Nomentanus, for *his* silly speech. Our host Nasidienus listened with delight and was so daft that he actually thought the Buffoon was being serious! Then he left to get his slippers.
- Horace:** I'd love to have seen it. It sounds like a first-rate comedy. Anyway, go on. What was the next laugh?
- Fundanius:** Oh, it all got totally out of hand. Vibidius wasn't getting enough to drink, so he asked the slaves if the jug was broken as well as the cups. The Buffoon was encouraging us all to make jokes so that we'd have an excuse for laughing so much when Nasidienus came back in. Then he *did* come back in, determined to rescue the whole event, and followed by yet another procession of food: a huge dish with a crane on it (a *male*, already carved), the liver of a white goose (a *female*, fattened on figs), some hare's wings on their own (*much* nicer than when served with the back), blackbirds (with their breasts *slightly* charred) – all very tasty, if we hadn't had to listen to an endless lecture on how they were cooked. So we all paid him back by not tasting anything at all! We all made excuses and left as fast as we could, coughing and laughing and stumbling our way out of the room, as though the party had been breathed on by the witch Canidia, whose revolting breath is even more poisonous than an African snake's.

Note

Slaves are optional. It is possible to have some pupils play the slaves but this will require some rehearsal to get right. The play works well enough – and sometimes flows better – if the slaves are left to the imagination. On the other hand, if you do choose to use slaves, dress them up with wigs, tunics and make-up as this adds to the humour.

Activity 2

Horace jokes about food in order to show his point of view

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

If we are to help pupils to taste something of the purpose and mood of the satire as it was understood at the time, we need concrete and engaging starting points. But we need concrete starting points that will swiftly take us *beyond* the concrete.

The food descriptions are ideal. Food – its origin, trade, preparation and social practices – is always a gateway into a culture. Not one of Horace's food descriptions is neutral. Food descriptions are the indirect means through which the host, Nasidienus, is showered with ridicule. If pupils are to do any worthwhile and demanding work with this satire, if they are to read it in more than a decoding, face-value, plucking-at-information sort of way, then they need to gain the satire's sense of the ridiculous and sense of fun. This is at its most obvious in the food descriptions.

It is also at its most subtle. We have to know what we are looking for if we are to uncover the mocking tone. Nasidienus, our party host, attaches far-fetched significance to ways in which the food was picked, caught or prepared. Horace doesn't say it was far-fetched; he just gets Nasidienus to give far-fetched details that automatically sound ridiculous. Sometimes these details come from Nomentanus, who also takes it all most seriously. Whether in the mouth of Nasidienus or Nomentanus, ridiculous food descriptions dominate the satire.

Activity 2 helps pupils to understand the role of these food descriptions in creating humour. Oral work is central, both in pairs and in plenary, both listening and speaking. By listening to the teacher using patterns and rhythms to convey exaggerated emphasis, and by experimenting with the effects of oral emphasis for themselves, pupils can start to feel the edge of Horace's humour and the substance of his critique.

The first part of the activity, where pupils collect food descriptions, also enables pupils to familiarise themselves with this long text and to gain a sense of achievement quickly. Hunting for references to food is not particularly challenging in itself but in the lower attainer it builds the confident belief that the text is penetrable and comprehensible. It also helps to prepare pupils for the later, more reflective activities.

■ Activity procedure

Starting in pairs, pupils collect food descriptions from Horace's text (Resource Sheet 2A). Specify one or more of the following methods for collecting:

- transcribe them on to a page;
- write them on separate cards;
- collect them on a mini-whiteboard;
- import them into a word-processing document.

In their pairs, pupils discuss and agree on the one word in the food description that they think needs most emphasis to capture the 'over-the-top' quality of the description. They highlight, italicise, underline or colour that word.

Pupils can read out loud their suggested emphasis and then, having considered its effects, change it. Whilst all pupils will gather virtually the same collection of food statements, they will differ in their choice of word to emphasise. Supply some completed examples and/or incomplete starters (see Resource Sheet 2B for ideas) so that pupils know exactly what to do and what kinds of outcome will result. Choose some of these for whole-class explanation and modelling. (Further background on the foods mentioned in the satire is given in Resource 2C.)

Both the hunting and the discussion about emphasis will work best in pairs. Threes can dissipate the energy and focus of what should be a fairly intense, speedy activity. Take care not to drag it out.

■ Ensuring pupils are ready for the activity through effective modelling

So that pupils hit the ground running, make sure that you model *both* the collecting process *and* the choosing of emphasis, before they begin. The collecting process is important to model in its own right. It builds pupils' confidence to go hunting in a long and possibly daunting text. Take care not to skip over this. Using OHP, whiteboard, projector or monitor, model the process of hunting for the food statement in Horace's text and extracting the little bit that you want.

Then move on to consider the effects of emphasis, exaggerating that emphasis to the whole class so that they hear the deliberate derision in your voice, as well as the effect of changing the emphasis.

Give pupils as much or as little scaffolding as you think they need. You might need only one or two ideas from Resource Sheet 2B, just to get pupils going on their own. But for pupils of lower ability I might use more of Resource Sheet 2B. Some incomplete items could provide clues as to where to look in the text: 'The vinegar was made from ...'

Don't *overscaffold* pupils, however. You do not want them simply filling in words or the activity will turn into a worksheet – something to be completed, rather than a tool to think with. You want them to search with interest, to say the description out loud and to experiment with oral emphasis to each other. Tell each pair that they must experiment orally and *reach agreement* on where to place the emphasis. Pupils need to be made to think about *how* to read statements aloud for themselves. Their own attempts at oral rendition are crucial. Their aim is to sound as precious and ridiculous about the food as they can.

The best way you can help them is to provide plenty of initial *oral* modelling yourself. Extensive written scaffolding can be confusing or even remove the challenge so, if you use Resource Sheet 2B at all, adapt it to get the challenge just right.

■ Points for discussion

1) What shall we emphasise?

After some intensive paired work, bring the pupils back into plenary. Have them listen to each other's food descriptions, delivered with over-the-top emphasis. Open up three or four ideas to whole-class discussion, and invite wider comment on where emphasis is best placed for the most over-the-top effect. What is the deliberate silly detail in the blackbird description:

- the fact that the blackbirds' breasts were *charred*?
- the fact that they were *slightly* charred?
- the fact that they were *blackbirds*?
- the blackbirds' *breasts*?

They will throw themselves into this. I found that pupils with limited confidence and pupils who struggle to read aloud with fluency were greatly helped by the requirement to practise reading aloud a single sentence with varying effects. They will also enjoy the gratification of instant audience response.

2) Timelessness or sense of period?

You will also find, as I did, that pupils shoot off in their lunch hour and start talking about the colour of their Crunchies, the flavour of their Marmite crisps or the moment at dawn when the chicken in their sandwiches was killed – all in the same 'pseud' manner. I was struck by how amusing they could be. Pupils from all backgrounds can grasp the timeless idea of affectation, snobbery and the mocking of it.

I would limit, however, the use of such modern examples. It can encourage anachronism or waste valuable lesson time that could be used to get 'into' the period. Indeed, you might also *lose* sense of period. As ever, this is the finest of balancing acts for history teachers – how to prevent reflection on the timelessness of the issue from slithering into a lack of period sensitivity.

3) So what does Horace think?

It is important to link the exercise back to the wider objectives concerning Roman values, practices and debates, and to pupils' evidential thinking about the utility of this kind of source. For whilst it is necessary to get pupils engaged in a very primary, direct way with a text, such engagement immediately carries a risk. For example, if a pupil cannot get past comments like,

'I don't think it's terribly funny'

or

'Why didn't they just tell Nasidienus he was stupid?'

then you know that you have more work to do (see the following activities) in helping pupils to make the shift into seeing the value of the text as *an historical source*. We have made a good start, but we need to lift pupils into a more developed interest in *what the source tells us today as students of history* or *as historians*.

We need to shift pupils on from their own enjoyment and appreciation of Horace's writing into *Roman views* of the text and from there back into our views of its value as a *source*. If we lose sight of this goal, then discussion about the text might be enthusiastic but it will go nowhere. In history (as opposed to English) judgements about aesthetic and stylistic success are always tangled up with judgements about historical value and our efforts to reconstruct the past. Sometimes we need a clear steer into the latter. Therefore, build the post-activity discussion around questions such as these:

- What point is Horace trying to make?
- *How* is he making it? Why was this approach so *effective* in conveying a point of view?
- Why would the Romans have found it funny?
- What can we learn about Horace's views from this source?

Pupils need time to explore these issues and you need time to reinforce the kinds of thing that pupils might not naturally understand. In particular, such a post-activity discussion creates an opportunity for emphasising the distance between Roman values or practices and our own.

Pupils need time to climb into such a difficult idea through talk and discussion. Most will not pick this up if you simply tell them. Equally, they need clear distinctions and explanations from the teacher, judiciously placed, in order to move them on.

During your discussion, aim to tease out, explain or work towards some of the following key points. Have them at the back of your mind as guiding ideas for the discussion:

- Horace is saying that this is the way some hosts nowadays show off at their dinner parties.
- Horace is implying that this is foolish and unworthy of the Roman tradition of dining. It invites ridicule.
- Horace makes it funny by the smallness of the food detail and the seriousness with which the food details are described. This makes the host look silly. It makes his concern for food seem out of proportion.
- Horace's text helps us to understand something about how important dinner parties were to the Romans. It suggests that there were different views about dinner parties and what they were for.

Progress on just one of these points will help pupils to be ready for Activity 3: 'Horace says a lot with a little: the triple inference challenge'.

● **A satire by Horace (Book 2: Satire 8)**

'How did you enjoy your smart party at Nasidienus's house?
Yesterday, I was trying to get you to dine with me, but was told
You'd been drinking there from midday.'

in all my life!' 'I've never had such a time

5 'So tell me, if it's not *too* much trouble,
what was the first dish to appease the raging belly?'

'First, there was a Lucanian boar. The father of our feast kept telling us
it was caught in a soft southerly breeze. Around it, were sharp tastes
that stimulate a tired appetite – lettuces, spicy turnips,
radishes, skirret, fish-pickle, and the lees of Coan wine.
10 When this was cleared away, a boy in a brief tunic
wiped the maple table with a coarse crimson cloth, while another
swept up scraps and anything else that might annoy
the guests. Then, like a girl from Athens bearing the holy
vessels of Ceres, in came the dark Hydaspes carrying
15 Caecuban wine, then Alcon carrying unsalted Chian.
Then his lordship said, "If you prefer Falernian or Alban
to what has been served, Maecenas, we do have *both* varieties."

'Oh the miseries of wealth! But do tell me Fundanius,
who were your fellow guests on this magnificent occasion?'

20 'I was at the top, with Viscus from Thurii next: below,
if I remember rightly, was Varius. On the middle couch was Vibidius
with Servilius Balatro – two 'shadows' who had come with Maecenas.
Our host had Nomentanus above him and Hogg below.
The latter amused us by swallowing whole cakes at a time.
25 Nomentanus's role was to point out anything that might have
escaped attention. For the ill-informed mob (that is,
the rest of us) were eating fowl, oysters and fish that contained
a flavour totally different from anything we had known before.
This became clear early on when Nomentanus offered me

30 filets of plaice and turbot which I hadn't previously tasted.
He then informed me that the apples were red because they'd been picked
by a waning moon. If you wonder what difference *that* makes, you'd better
ask the man himself!

'Vibidius turned to Balatro:

35 "If we don't drink him out of house and home we'll die in vain."
And he called for larger tankards. At this, a ghastly pallor
appeared on the host's face. He detested strong drinkers,
either because their wicked humour gets out of hand
or because fiery wine dulls the subtle palate.
But Vibidius and Balatro proceeded to tip whole jug-fulls of wine
40 into mugs (of the type made in Allifae). The rest followed suit
except for the host's clients, who refrained from hitting the bottle.

'Then a lamprey arrived, stretched on a dish, with prawns swimming
around it, at which his lordship remarked "this one was caught
while she was still pregnant: after spawning the flesh is so inferior."
45 The sauce has the following ingredients: Venafran oil (*the first*
pressing of course), fish sauce (from the guts of the *Spanish* mackerel),
wine that is five years old, but grown in Italy (this
to be added in the course of boiling; after boiling, Chian
is better than anything else), *white* pepper, and one mustn't
50 forget the vinegar, made from fermented Methymnaean grape.
I pioneered the practice of boiling sharp elecampane
and green rocket with the sauce. Curtillus uses sea-urchins –
unwashed, for the liquor provided by the shell-fish is better than fish-brine."

'As he spoke, the canopy hanging overhead collapsed on the dish,
55 wreaking appalling havoc, bringing down bigger clouds
of black dust than the North wind stirs up on Campanian fields.
We feared worse, but on finding there was no danger we emerged.
There was Nasidienus Rufus, his head in his hands, weeping as if
his son had died still young. How would it all have ended
60 if that philosopher Nomentanus hadn't succeeded
in pulling his friend together: "Alas, Fortune,
which god is more cruel to us than you? How you always enjoy making sport
of the plans of men!" Varius struggled to stifle his laughter
with a napkin. Balatro, who turns up his nose at everything, said
65 "This is the law which governs life. So it is
that your best efforts will never achieve the fame they deserve.
To think that, just to entertain me, you should be plagued
and tormented with worry, in case the bread should be over-baked
or the sauce be served without proper seasoning, and that all your boys

70 should be properly dressed and neatly groomed for waiting at table.
To say nothing of other hazards, like the canopy falling as it did
just now, or a clumsy oaf tripping and smashing a dish.
But as with a general so with a party host: bad fortune
has a way of revealing his genius; while good fortune hides it.”

75 ‘Nasidienus answered, “May heaven send you all
the blessings you pray for! you’re a fine man and a delightful guest!’
And he called for his slippers. Then on every couch heads could be seen
leaning forward to ears, and a buzz of whispering arose.’

80 ‘I’d love to have seen it. It sounds like first-rate comedy.
Anyhow, go on. What was the next laugh?’

‘Vibidius

wasn’t getting the drinks he ordered, so he asked the servants
if the jug was broken as well. We were making jokes to provide
an excuse for our laughter, with Balatro egging us on, when behold
Nasidienus re-enters wearing the face of a man
85 determined to find a way of setting the bad luck right.
Behind follow slaves carrying a huge dish with a crane
(a male, ready-carved, liberally sprinkled with salt and meal),
the liver of a white female goose fattened on figs,
and hare’s wings on their own (allegedly nicer thus
90 than if you eat them with the back). Then we saw blackbirds served
with breasts slightly charred and pigeons without their rumps –
tasty things if only our host hadn’t insisted
on lecturing us on their origins and ingredients. We paid him back
by getting away without tasting a thing, as if the banquet
95 had been blighted by Canidia, whose breath is more deadly than an African snake’s.

Where did this translation come from?

Horace wrote this satire in Latin in the 1st century BC. This English translation is based very closely on a translation by a modern scholar of Latin language and literature. He is called Niall Rudd. Horace’s satires were a kind of poem. Rudd’s translation is verse translation. This means that he has tried to

keep the patterns, rhythms and flow of Horace’s poem. Here, a few words have been changed, however, to make it a bit easier for you to understand. Another translation, by Frances Muecke, was sometimes used to find some alternative words and phrases.

Horace: Satires and Epistles. A verse translation with an introduction and notes by Niall Rudd, Penguin Books, 1973.
Horace: Satires II, with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Frances Muecke, Aris and Phillips, 1993.

- The boar was caught in a 'soft *southerly* breeze'.
- The Chian wine was *unsalted*.
- The apples 'were red because they had been picked by a *waning* moon'.
- The lamprey was caught 'while she was *still* pregnant' ('after spawning the flesh is *SO* inferior'!)
- The Venafran oil was from 'the *first* pressing, of course'.
- The pepper was ...
- The vinegar was made from ...
- The sauce was made with ...
- The sea-urchins were ...
- The crane was *male*.
- The *female* goose, whose liver they ate, was white and fattened on *figs*.
- The hare's wings are 'nicer *on their own* than if you eat them with the back'.
- The blackbird's breasts were *slightly* charred.
- The pigeons were ...

Line 5: Lucanian boar

Lucania was a region in southern Italy. Nasidienus is keen for the guests to know that the boar was caught in a soft, southerly breeze. The 'southerly' wind was warm enough to flavour the meat but also 'soft' – that is, not so hot that it would go off quickly.

Line 15: Ceres

Ceres was the Roman goddess of agriculture and all growing plants. The cult of Ceres was celebrated by young women in secret rituals.

Lines 15–16: The slaves, Hydaspes and Alcon

One of Nasidienus's ways of showing off is to have slaves from a long way away or to give them foreign and exotic names. Alcon is a Greek name. Hydaspes is the name of a river in India. A slave from so far East would have been a luxury. Wine-bearing slaves were a sign of wealth and status. Wealthy Romans liked them to be pretty young boys with very long hair.

Lines 15–17: The wines, Caecuban, Chian, Falernian, Alban

Caecuban was the very best Roman wine. It came from a vineyard in southern Latium, the region around Rome. Chian was wine from the Greek island of Chios. Unusually, it had not been treated with salt water – the usual way of preserving Greek wine. Alban and Falernian were the two next best Italian wines after Caecuban.

Lines 22–23: Some nicknames, 'Balatro' and 'Hog'

The word 'Balatro' in Latin means jester or buffoon. It is probably a nickname here: Servilius the Buffoon. Modern translators often use the word 'Hog' to translate the name 'Porcius'. Porcius is a Roman name that comes from the word 'porcus' meaning pig or hog, so Horace almost certainly meant it as a nickname to make this guest seem greedy.

Lines 31–32: Apples picked by a waning moon

There are ancient superstitions in many countries about the effect of the moon on plants. Some Romans believed that plants were nourished by dew which was sent down by the moon. A waning moon would affect the colour of the fruit by reducing the moisture.

Line 40: mugs made in Allifae

Allifae was a town in Samnium where special earthenware mugs were made. Samnium was further south than Latium but north of Lucania. Notice how many different places are mentioned in the satire. Nasidienus wants his guests to know that food, objects and slaves at his dinner party come from all over Italy and beyond.

Line 42: lamprey

A lamprey is an eel. In a luxurious Roman meal, fish was the most expensive item.

Line 50: Methymnaean grapes

The vinegar was made from Methymnaean grapes. This was seriously expensive vinegar: it came from Methymna on the Greek island of Lesbos.

Line 51: elecampane

Elecampane was a bitter herb that the Romans believed would help digestion.

Line 95: Canidia

Canidia, the witch, often appears in Horace's writings. Usually described as horrifying and terrifying, she seems to have been a poisoner and is often linked with bad food. She might be based on another character in Greek or Roman stories but scholars are not sure.

Activity 3

Horace says a lot with a little: the triple inference challenge

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

Part of Horace's genius was to say a huge amount in very little space. When I say 'say', I do not mean surface information but rather the message or cultural comment that Horace packs in – a comment that can be picked up only by inference.

Indeed, the mature reader is making *several inferences at once*, sometimes from the tiniest bit of text. Horace says, 'Hog amused us by swallowing whole cakes at a time.' From this, we can infer things:

- about Hog's character (he's greedy);
- about Horace's view (he thinks that Nasidienus' party invites comic farce);
- about Roman debates and values at the time (social practices to do with food mattered to the Romans).

These are three very different sorts of inference (see Resource Sheet 3).

Making inferences is tricky enough for pupils, but when they have to jump from random, fictional, humorous remarks about greedy guests eating cakes through to big claims about Roman attitudes, customs and values, they can easily lose their way. No wonder weak GCSE answers are full of the juxtaposition of small and large inferences without any sense of their relative value or interplay.

Of course, the mature and experienced reader rarely needs to separate out these stages of inference in this analytic way. Such a reader instinctively knows the status and appropriateness of any of these types of inference. The struggling pupil is not like this.

Horace offers an ideal text with which to clarify our thinking, as teachers, about what we are trying to get pupils to see. When we are using an ancient literary text as an historical source, the pupils need to be especially clear about the difference between inferences that would have been drawn at the time by Romans enjoying and interpreting the satire as art, and the kinds of wider inference that we draw from it *now* about Roman society. Of course, the latter embraces the former, but it will be phrased in a very different way.

We need to tackle the complexity of such multiple inferences head on. To ignore this complexity, to reduce the idea of inference to a single tier of language work or some 'skill', is not going to help our weakest pupils. Yet there is a real danger that some history teachers focus upon stylistic convention only, on hypothetical language such as the use of conditionals, and imagine that once pupils start producing such language in their source work

they have grasped the nature of historical inference. It is not that style is unimportant; the popular history teaching practice of choosing between 'this suggests that', 'this tells us that' or other degrees of uncertainty can undoubtedly help pupils to understand the provisionality of their claims about the past (e.g. Wiltshire, 2000; Carlisle, 2000; Riley, 1999). But this simple technique is not enough. It does not help pupils to dwell upon the status of different types of inference.

Stage 1 of the following activity is one way of breaking the process up. Starting in an easy place, the pupils make inferences from a single sentence in Horace's satire. They then infer things about Horace's view, through the characters Horace has created. These are two inferences that would have been drawn at the time. There is then a third inference: what can we, as students of history in the twenty-first century, infer about Roman practices, values, customs or debates at the time? Only with the third type of inference do the pupils get a feel for historically significant inferences from the satire *as historical source*, inferences made by *us* – different people in a different setting.

But we must not leave it there, or it will remain an atomised 'exercise'. This is the reason for Stage 2. Here, pupils craft a paragraph in which they move, consciously, between inferences big and small, between general and particular, putting their inferences together to build a developed comment on our Horace text.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 1

Articulating different types of inference

First, using pupils' own ideas, recap and reinforce the meaning of 'inference' from their Key Stage 2 English work, from their current Key Stage 3 English work or from earlier history work. If they have not come across it before in history, you might need to introduce it with some simple speaking frame games using visual sources: 'I can see ...' contrasted with 'I can infer that ...'.

Then, using either whole-class teaching (explanation, modelling, questioning and discussion) or, after some clear modelling, some mini-activities for pupils to do on their own, ask pupils to think about what each of the three short extracts in the left-hand column of Resource Sheet 3 suggests to us:

- about the three characters concerned;
- about Horace's point of view.

Make sure that you keep these crisply separate, emphasising the distinction if pupils choose to slither between the two.

The second inference is more challenging than the first, so give pupils plenty of oral sentence stems which scaffold them into thinking more directly:

Horace thinks that ...

Horace is suggesting that ...

Horace's point is ...

1 Drawing out the value of a literary source

One could well challenge my choice of the present tense here. It would be just as legitimate and might be more appropriate to say 'Horace thought that ...' 'Horace was ...' But my reasoning is that pupils are helped with the distinction between this and the third and final type of inference, if the latter clearly includes the use of the past tense, at least in the clause that directly describes the Romans. This helps pupils to 'feel' the difference between commenting on the Romans' view of the satire and commenting, now, as historians. There are no hard-and-fast rules; it is simply a profitable area for teacher discussion, reflection and evaluation. What builds pupils' thinking best? What clarifies things for them? You decide.

Where pupils are less certain, make a virtue of their uncertainty by helping them to show it. Give them greater tentativeness by modelling:

I think Horace *might* be saying ...
Horace *seems* to be saying that ...
We *could* infer that Horace thinks ...

By modelling the language, pupils can be lifted up into the thinking.

This then prepares pupils to think about the wider and much more demanding inferences in the final column. Don't worry if by the time you reach these you need to feed the points in, to support pupils' thinking heavily or simply just to *tell* the pupils what it is we might infer. What matters is that pupils feel the different type, purpose and nature of the inference and that they understand why you are making a fuss of this. Don't labour it by expecting them to reach all the inferences in the final column for themselves. If the earlier discussion has gone well, they will be receptive to a brisk, intriguing explanation from you, perhaps linking it in with your wider narrative of how Roman life was changing.

Note that the first inferences are peculiar to the individual statements from the text. The second and third inferences are drawn from a range of statements put together. When working on the third and final inference, you could stick with dinner parties, food and snobbery, or range more widely, depending on what pupils have covered already or what new knowledge your current objectives require.

Figure 1.3 on page 24, whilst designed to support you in working with the very able, will also give you more ideas up your sleeve to boost your confidence when leading discussion with all pupils.

Getting the best out of Stage 1: 'completing a chart' is not 'learning'

You could gather pupils' ideas in a simple table like that shown on Resource Sheet 3, or you could avoid the table

altogether. Sometimes, listening and concentration will be enhanced by doing it all orally and avoiding the visual and the written. Some teachers might prefer simply to draw pupils' attention to the relevant section of the text, invite ideas, discuss them, amplify them and move swiftly on.

If you do decide to build up a chart, use an OHP, PowerPoint or an interactive whiteboard for whole-class discussion. This will also work as a quickfire activity sheet for individuals or pairs on paper or a computer document. But if you make a sheet, see it as a thinking tool for quick scaffolding of thinking and temporary recording, an alternative way for you to do some in-lesson monitoring of pupils' learning, not as an end in itself.

Whatever you do, do not let pupils drift into 'filling in a chart' for a great chunk of the lesson, on their own. Remember the golden rule: if the pupils can already do it, then they don't need to do it! If they cannot do it, then they probably need oral work.

The chart is useful only if it supports pupils' thinking. The headings of the last two columns, for example, can be helpful in reminding pupils of the purpose of their paired work or their whole-class discussion. But it must be just that: a discussion and an exploration. If the chart detracts from this, and pupils think they have to 'fill it in', the whole activity will lose energy.

There is a fine line between an activity supporting pupils' thinking well, and slipping into drudgery. Only expert teacher judgement, informed by intellectual clarity about the learning focus, can decide where that line is. The activity must not be routine. It must be a revelation.

Stretching the very able

Figure 1.3 is designed to indicate the levels we might aspire to for the very able, gifted and talented.

What has been included in the third and fourth columns is also designed to give teachers background information that they need but may not necessarily want to introduce directly to pupils. The points in the third and fourth columns are deliberately varied, ranging from straightforward conclusions that most pupils can understand, through to much more developed points about Roman society and culture. You might want to aim just to build up understanding of one or two of these points. I have included a wide range to choose from.

The Latin snippets are included in case you want to use these to create additional curiosity in pupils. Some pupils are fascinated to see the text in the original language. Play etymological guessing games:

- Which modern words do you think come from *ridiculus* and *risum*?
- Looking at the English translation of the whole sentence, can you guess what *totas* might have meant?

Things Horace's characters do	What could a Roman listener or reader infer about this character?	What could a Roman listener or reader infer about Horace's point of view?	What could we infer, now, about Roman society at that time?
<p>'Hog made us all laugh by swallowing whole cakes at a time.'</p>	<p>Hog</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is very greedy • likes to show off • thinks the dinner party is a big joke 	<p>Horace thinks that Nasidienus deserved all he got. The guests were right to laugh at his dinner party.</p> <p>Horace is suggesting that some dinner party hosts now go over the top.</p> <p>Horace seems to be saying that ...</p> <p>Horace thinks ...</p>	<p>This might suggest that the Romans ...</p> <p>Historians could use this source to examine ...</p> <p>This tells us that better-off Roman people ...</p> <p>Romans reading this satire might have enjoyed ... because ...</p>
<p>'Varius struggled to stifle his laughter with a napkin.'</p>	<p>Varius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		
<p>'Vibidius called for larger tankards.'</p>	<p>Vibidius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		

1 Drawing out the value of a literary source

● **Figure 1.3** A guide to the fully developed responses a teacher might seek to elicit (through discussion and questioning) from very able, gifted or talented pupils

Extract	Inferences about the character in Horace's satire for pupils to work out	Inferences about Horace's point of view for pupils to work out and/or teacher to explain	Inferences we can draw about Roman culture and society at this time for pupils to work out and/or teacher to explain
<p>'Hog made us all laugh by swallowing whole cakes at a time.'</p> <p><i>Porcius ... ridiculus totas semel absorbere placentas.</i></p>	<p>We might infer that Hog:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is greedy • likes to show off • likes to play the fool • likes his food • puts food before conversation • thinks the dinner party is a big joke 	<p>We might infer that Horace thinks:</p> <p><i>(either focus on specifics:)</i></p> <p>Nasidienus deserved all he got. The guests were right to laugh at his dinner party.</p>	<p>We might infer that:</p> <p>The Romans had strong views about the proper ways to behave at a dinner party.</p> <p>Dining with others was very important to the Romans. It was part of a long tradition.</p>
<p>'Varius struggled to stifle his laughter with a napkin.'</p> <p><i>Varius mappa compescere risum vix poterat.</i></p>	<p>We might infer that Varius:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can't stop laughing • knows it's impolite to laugh but still can't help it • wants to make others laugh, even though he is trying to stop laughing himself • thinks Nomentanus is an idiot to take Nasidienus seriously (Remember that his laughter gets out of control after Nomentanus' silly speech about the collapsed canopy.) 	<p>Nasidienus takes food snobbery too far. He takes perfection in food so seriously that he makes food and dinner parties ridiculous.</p> <p>Nasidienus doesn't really know anything about good food and wine or the art of dining well.</p> <p>Nasidienus is guilty of vulgarity, stupidity, social ambition, pretension, vanity and bad taste.</p> <p>Nasidienus is pathetic in his eagerness to please.</p>	<p>There must have been hosts something like Nasidienus for Roman readers or audiences to find this satire funny.</p> <p>There were debates at this time about the behaviour of new groups of people who had become wealthy but who did not respect the old traditions.</p> <p>Horace is taking part in the Roman debate about the conflict between the pursuit of pleasure, on the one hand, and moral condemnation of luxury. In this satire, it might be argued, he is joining in moral condemnation. The satire might show that some Romans at the time were worried about decadence.</p>
<p>'Vibidius called for larger tankards.'</p> <p><i>Vibidius ... calices poscit maiores.</i></p>	<p>We might infer that Vibidius:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likes his drink • sees the party as an excuse to get drunk • behaves rudely in front of his host • doesn't care what his host thinks • ignores the discomfort of his host • eggs others on to drink more • is deliberately pushing the dinner party out of control 	<p><i>(or generalise:)</i></p> <p>Some dinner party hosts are now over the top. Food snobbery is not what dining together should be about.</p> <p>Hosts like Nasidienus don't deserve to be taken seriously.</p>	<p>Horace is taking part in the Roman debate about the conflict between the pursuit of pleasure, on the one hand, and moral condemnation of luxury. In this satire, it might be argued, he is joining in moral condemnation. The satire might show that some Romans at the time were worried about decadence.</p>

■ Practical tip

Use the pupils who earlier, in the warm-up play, played Porcius, Varius and Vibidius. While each character is discussed, ask that pupil to come to the front. Talk about the character as though the pupil were that character. This visual focus aids concentration. Pupils can literally 'see' Vibidius in front of them.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 2

Moving our writing from particular to general or from general to particular

An intensive mini-writing exercise can further assist in shaping and refining pupils' thinking, quite apart from the obvious pay-off for pupils' developing ability to master paragraph cohesion.

It is also an opportunity, which we should seize at every turn, for pupils to put things back together again. Pupils need to say something, as Jamie Byrom (1998) said in his challenge to traditional source work: 'In a word, they [must be] *constructive*.'

The idea behind this activity is simple:

- One group of pupils is going to produce a paragraph that works from left to right across the chart.
- The other group of pupils is going to produce a paragraph that works from right to left.

This is also a useful device for getting access and challenge right across the ability range. If you work with a wide ability range, my strong advice for your first experiment is to get the lower-attaining group to work from left to right: that is, to work from particular to general, and to get the more able to work from general to particular. This is not the only way of doing it, but it seems to get the pitch just right for moving both groups on in their ability to notice the difference between general and particular.

In some ways, this just builds upon successful and motivating work in linking evidential understanding to paragraph cohesion, notably Dale Banham's work on burger paragraphs in Year 7 (1998), Margaret Mulholland's work on the evidence sandwich in Year 11 (1998) and Richard Harris's use of PEGEX in Year 12 (2001). See also Maria Bakalis' work (2003) on developing paragraph cohesion with very weak writers. This paragraphing work builds upon these, but works a little harder at gradations, nuances and general flow across the paragraph itself, as well as reinforcing the need for tentative language in certain types of historical claim. The big advantage for the average or below-average attainer is that it allows them to start with the concrete, *but it does not let them stay there*.

You can provide as much or as little scaffolding as you like. My view is that as long as the scaffolding becomes modelling – that is, you are thinking out loud through

teacher demonstration, or perhaps including pupils in shared writing – it can only raise pupils' game.

Figure 1.4 gives the bare bones of a paragraph that moves from particular to general or, if you like, from 'small concrete' to 'big abstract'. Figure 1.5 shows an example by one of my own 'low-ability' pupils (or a pupil designated as such by being in set 3 of four sets) in 1988.

- **Figure 1.4** *A structure for a 'less able' pupil working from left to right across the chart (small concrete to big abstract)*

Hog liked to make everyone laugh by swallowing cakes all in one go. This *tells us that* he Hog's silly behaviour was Horace's way of saying that Horace *seems to have thought that* This source *suggests to us that* some Roman people thought . . .

- **Figure 1.5** *Example of completed work by a 'less able' pupil using the scaffold provided in Figure 1.4*

Hog liked to make everyone laugh by swallowing cakes all in one go. This tells us that *he was greedy and a big joker*. Hog's silly behaviour was Horace's way of saying that *this kind of dinner party is a big joke*. Horace seems to have thought that *people who show off about expensive food and slaves have forgotten the point of eating and talking together*. This source suggests to us that some Roman people thought that *dinner parties had gone wrong*.

Figures 1.6 and 1.7 mirror this with incomplete and completed paragraphs that move from general to particular. Figure 1.7 is the work of a very capable pupil, writing in 1994.

One way of rounding this activity off with some final reinforcement and reflection is to use coloured crayons. Give them some carefully graded shades:

red, orange, bright yellow, yellow . . .

or

dark blue, light blue, turquoise, green, very pale green . . .

Ask them to shade across the paragraph to show the movement from big statements about Roman life through to small examples (or vice versa).

- **Figure 1.6** *Example of a paragraph start (which may well be unnecessary) to get a more able pupil going from right to left across the chart (big abstract to small concrete)*

In the first century BC, dining together was still very important in the customs of the better-off Romans. Romans often talked and wrote about dining. Horace's writings provide evidence for Roman views and debates at that time. Horace seems to have thought . . . For example, in Satire 2:8, Horace . . .

● **Figure 1.7** Example of completed work by a more able pupil, using the scaffold provided in Figure 1.6

In the first century BC, dining together was still very important in the customs of the better-off Romans. Romans often talked and wrote about dining. Horace's writings provide evidence for Roman views and debates at that time. Horace seems to have thought that some of the newly rich were taking expensive food too seriously and missing the point of dining together. Horace uses his characters to make a point about dinner parties that were in bad taste. For example, in Satire 2:8, Horace pokes fun at Nasidienus, a dinner party host who goes over the top in showing off unusual and expensive food. Horace does this by making the dinner party guests behave very badly. One character in the satire stuffs cakes in his mouth to make the guests laugh, one has to stuff a napkin in his mouth because he cannot stop laughing and they all drink far too much.

With this activity – both Stages 1 and 2 – the challenge for the teacher is to get beyond the usual spoonfeeding without leaving pupils floundering. Two things will help you: first, clarity about the *historical* thinking you are trying to achieve; second, as usual, judicious use of modelling and explicit structure. Two things will make learning happen:

- *experimentation* within that structure;
- explicit *reflection* afterwards.

Activity 4

Horace uses heavenly language for earthly effects: epic and satire, Homer and Horace

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

Aspects of humour for the Romans will be lost to us, not so much in translation, but in the absence of a little knowledge about the Greeks. And a little knowledge about the Greeks is something that most Year 7 pupils do have. Asking them to recall what they did on the Ancient Greeks in primary school yields patchy and imperfect knowledge, but usually there are enough pupils who will tell you something about the epic poets and you might even get someone to recall the name Homer.

This short activity helps pupils to 'feel' the earthiness of satire by contrasting it with the loftiness of epic poetry, such as Homer's. This is exactly what Horace does. Your pupils just need to know what to look for.

Classicists describe epic poetry as a very 'high' genre. Epic does not concern itself with everyday things, let alone slapstick about collapsing canopies and silly games with

cakes. Imagine therefore, the sense of contrast that educated Romans – who knew their epic poets – would have felt on hearing the characters in this satire calling upon the gods and using epic language. The juxtaposition of 'over-the-top', heavenly, other-worldly language and down-to-earth matters (like food) is a contrast that is so stark that pupils will be able to spot it once they have seen how. They will also be able to imitate it. This gives them huge satisfaction!

The idea has a further value, as it ties in with our theme of 'walking'. Remember that Horace's word for the style of satire is *pedester* ('walking'). Satires go on foot, on the ground. The higher genres 'fly', if you like. What a lovely concrete image with which to deepen pupils' interest in how this kind of text works, and how fitting that Horace often has his characters *walking* and talking in a rambling, discursive sort of way.

■ Pre-activity explanation and discussion

Briefly remind pupils that Horace is poking fun at Nasidienus. Better still, get the pupils to recall and briefly discuss this. Then explain carefully, intriguingly, that there is yet another way in which Horace does this; yet another device lurking in the text. Do this as though you are about to introduce an absolute thunderbolt – you are!

I would start by seeing if they can recall from primary school anything about Homer and epic poetry. If they cannot, then simply tell them a little about it. This is not a problem. I first did this activity before the National Curriculum was in place and when the chances of pupils studying the Ancient Greeks at Key Stage 2 were very slim indeed. A map of Greece and some quick discussion about Greek gods and Greek heroes was enough to help them understand the influence of Greek culture on the Romans. Having introduced the subject of Homer and epic poetry, throw in your thunderbolt. Explain that Horace's satire is full of mock epic style.

Ooze fascination and amazement yourself: 'Yes, Year 7, lurking beneath this text is yet another comic trick. I just need to let you in on a few of the Greeks' secrets – ones that a Roman audience would have known about.'

This is easy to explain, as pupils do understand the idea of mimicry and imitation. You could give modern examples of incongruous use of popular music or any other form of cultural imitation and they will soon get the point.

Now you are ready to explain a couple of features of epic style, to show where this happens in the text and to devise some simple activities to deepen pupil interest and understanding. More detail is included here than you are likely to use, but this is so that you feel confident to take the discussion further if necessary, and so that you develop your own intellectual interest in the text, without which it is impossible to teach well. For more background, see the Genre Spot on page 30.

■ Epic style 1: invocations to the gods

After the collapse of the canopy, Nomentanus seeks to console his host. Remember that Nomentanus is a lackey of his host and seeks to flatter him. Nomentanus says: 'Alas, Fortune, which god is more cruel to us than you? How you always enjoy making sport of the plans of men!'

Nomentanus sympathises with Nasidienus but mocks him by exaggeration. Pupils need to hear you, the teacher, declaim those words with the seriousness of a priest! It is just a collapsed awning, for heaven's sake. Such a response is over the top. Pupils will need to hear that over-the-top tone. 'Alas' (*heu*) is mock epic. 'Fortune' is a reference to the gods, and Fortune's sport is often alluded to by Greek and Roman poets. Both Nasidienus and Nomentanus are treating the collapsed canopy as if it were a great tragedy, deserving of an epic account.

Balatro then picks up this theme, mocking both of them. Nasidienus takes Balatro's silly speech completely seriously. For him, his dinner party really is as significant as great events. He genuinely believes that the gods would be concerned with it.

■ Activity procedure

Having explained the above example, ask pupils to create their own epic touches that are in keeping with the events and the tone of the poem. There is scope here for a lot of fun.

Give them examples (see Figure 1.8) and then let them outdo each other with the contrast between heavenly language and earthly domestic details. To help them, supply them with a variety of epic invocations and then let them complete (see Figure 1.9). Emphasise the contrast. Emphasise the trivia.

To give them more scope, allow them to make events up (for example, what might go wrong at *another* dinner party), but drawing upon the kinds of period detail that this poem supplies. Figure 1.8 contains some examples that you could model to the pupils, thinking out loud to them as you concoct your fine epic invocation over some silly food incident.

● **Figure 1.8** *Examples of imaginary epic invocations in the style of Horace's food satire, which you could model to pupils*

Oh Great Gods, how could you have blackened the breasts of the blackbirds?

Oh Fate, were you ever more cruel than when the vinegar was made from the wrong grapes?

No other god is more cruel. You have brought destruction upon me. How could you allow my slave to forget the spicy turnips?

Oh Cruel Fortune, how could you allow dust to get into the fish sauce?

● **Figure 1.9** *Examples of invocation starters*

Oh Fortune ...

Shame on you, Lady Luck. How could you ...

Oh Great Gods ...

Oh Fate, what tragedy have you brought upon me? How could you ...

When pupils have compared their amusing examples, they can judge which is the best. Give them clear criteria for this judgement – the best are those that draw the starkest contrasts between the heavenly and the earthly. Emphasise, yet again, the earthliness (and earthiness) of satire as a genre.

■ Epic style 2: epic similes in silly places

The collapse of the canopy is described with a fine epic simile: 'As he spoke, the canopy suspended above collapsed on the dish, wreaking appalling havoc, bringing down bigger clouds of black dust than the North wind stirs up from the Campanian fields.'

Pupils have been spotting and making up similes since Year 4 or earlier. Remember that, unlike a metaphor, a simile makes the comparison explicit, using 'like', 'as' or 'more than' to spell out both parts of the comparison.

For the more able, or for those pupils who have brought quite a bit of knowledge of an epic poem from their primary schools, go full steam ahead. Encourage them to look up an epic poem or draw upon Key Stage 2 knowledge of the behaviour of Greek gods. If, however, you think this adds in too much of a challenge, causing them to lose focus rather than sharpen it, then you could modify the demand and simply draw upon their wider knowledge of Roman life. The goal is then simply to create a simile that *sounds Roman*.

■ Activity procedure

After a quick recap on similes, taking on board lively ideas from the pupils, show them the 'Campanian fields' example in the text and explain that this is yet another device borrowed from Greek poetry – all part of Horace's wit. Keep emphasising that this is the kind of allusion that Roman audiences and readers would spot.

Then ask them to make up their own similes, such as Horace might use in another satire. Give them some simple, firm rules:

- It must be a proper simile (as you have chosen to define it).
- It must sound Roman – that is, it must draw upon Roman life, language or culture.
- It must work in one sentence.

If pupils are to make their similes sound Roman, you really must draw upon or feed in some historical knowledge.

1 Drawing out the value of a literary source

Only if this happens will they tackle the exercise with some period feel and historical sensitivity. Without sufficient emphasis on contextual knowledge, the activities lead to limp unhistorical responses in which pupils simply reduce the text to their own experience. They have not gone on an *historical* journey; they have just imported their own preconceptions into the text.

Figure 1.10 shows some of the most effective similes that my Year 7s produced in the years 1988 to 1991. (There were plenty of ineffective ones, too, so don't let Figure 1.10 make you feel daunted!). Remember, too, that this was before the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools introduced similes, so I had hastily to teach them about similes, too. This is easier now.

● **Figure 1.10** *These pupils were encouraged to make their similes sound Roman by drawing upon knowledge of Roman life and religion*

Then the snooty slave paraded in, behaving like Apollo on a mountain top.

Nasidienus made such a stuck-up speech that he sounded like Caesar in the senate house.

The lamprey was so difficult to catch that it was as though Hercules himself had caught it.

Hog looked as though he was going to be as sick as Lucius the barber's dog.

Vibidius made everyone drink so much it was as though he were a wine-seller on the streets of Pompeii trying to make lots of money.

You will be strengthening pupils' historical knowledge because, as they think about searching in textbooks or earlier work for ideas, the activity has the effect of making pupils connect up different aspects of Roman life. Whether it is a very able pupil drawing directly upon Greek mythology after some research at home on the internet, or your weakest pupil studying some simple written or pictorial sources or a good story in the textbook, this is a great way to encourage pupils to make strong links and to sound Roman.

Pupils can then compare their similes, classifying them or testing them out. For example:

- Which ones are in epic style and which are not?
- Which ones sound really Roman? What makes them sound Roman?
- Who used the picture/source/story on page whatever of the textbook? How did pupils use it differently?

Share and discuss thoroughly afterwards. I remember the 10 minutes of whole-class work after pupils had finished making their similes as some of the richest in my teaching career. This is a gift of a whole-class plenary with which to

conclude a lesson, monitoring their learning, re-teaching as necessary and leaving them on a 'high'. Try these:

- Gather the similes on the board in order to compare them.
- Move them about and classify them on the interactive whiteboard or computer screen.
- Declaim them from the front of the class, competing to see who can keep the most serious face.

Activity 5

*Horace experiments with the form of satire:
detecting the patterns*

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

There are different types of writing within satire as a whole. Some teachers like to do work on the form or 'shape' of a text right at the start. I prefer to wait until pupils have become fascinated by the subject matter and steeped in the mood. It all depends on your teaching style and your preferred methods for keeping pupils motivated.

When it comes to the typicality of the form of *this particular* satire, we are in murky waters. The question arises as to whether we are looking at the form of *this* satire, at the form of Horace's satire generally, or at the form of Roman satire generally. The scale of typicality is relevant here because our chosen learning objectives for pupils relate to the utility of a source.

This satire is typical in some respects, but atypical in others. For example, other satires in Horace's Book 2 are more symmetrical. One might, therefore, have expected Horace to conclude *Satire 2:8* with more conversation between Fundanius and Horace. He does not. Scholars argue about both the significance and the literary merits of this.

Of course, it is acceptable to be a little vague here, and for pupils to be speculative and leave it at that. After all, we are doing this as a taster activity in classical texts with 11- to 14-year-olds of the full ability range, not as an A-level set text! Nonetheless, the issue of 'typicality' is a subset of 'utility' in Key Stage 3 work on source evaluation, so we cannot ignore it. Canny history teachers have always focused hard on this at Key Stage 3, knowing that it pays dividends at GCSE (e.g. Banham with Culpin, 2002).

But it is precisely this atypicality that gives us our golden teaching opportunity. What might Horace have put at the end if he had chosen to complete the satire with a final comment from him as interlocutor of Fundanius?

This activity prepares pupils to write their own conclusion. First, they must become a little more familiar with the shape of this satire and realise the absence of a

conclusion. Then, in Stage 2, we can set them up to add a short conclusion of their own.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 1

Using either paper copy of the satire and some crayons, or a computer-based version of the text and the colour functions, ask pupils to work out where the following begin and end and then to highlight each section:

- 1 Introductory conversation between Horace and Fundanius
- 2 Narrative by Fundanius
- 3 Intervention by Horace
- 4 Narrative by Fundanius
- 5 Intervention by Horace
- 6 Narrative by Fundanius

This might seem rather obvious and easy, but pupils need to look closely to make sure that they do not confuse conversation within the narrative with conversation outside of it. It helps pupils to feel the form of the piece and to find their way around it.

When they have finished, draw pupils back into plenary to share and compare. Then elicit their reaction to how the text ends. What is odd or unexpected about it? Is the text symmetrical, or not?

Some pupils will throw up the fact that there is no concluding conversation. Point out that such a conclusion is, in fact, more common in Horace's other satires and that you are now going to ask them how *they* might conclude it in Horace's usual style.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 2

Tell pupils that in writing their conclusions they must work within the following constraints:

- It must be only four lines.
- There must be a comment by Fundanius and a comment by Horace (in whatever order they like, and they might like to think about which has the best effect).
- The style must be free and conversational.
- It should be light-hearted and humorous, not heavy and didactic (see the Genre Spot on page 30).

Launch the activity with a brief brainstorm or mini-discussion about the relative merits of different focuses for these last four lines:

- Should they talk about the bereft Nasidienus, staring at his fleeing guests?
- Should they focus on the departing guests?
- Should they talk generally about the issues that the satire raises?
- What would Horace have done?

Now you can see why I preferred to do this activity much further on in the lesson sequence, when pupils are sufficiently familiar with matters of subject and style to do it well. I do not think that they can do it cold.

Enjoy this activity. It was my favourite. The discipline of the task will make pupils witty. A plenary on this activity makes for another good lesson conclusion. In your monitoring and assessment of quality, look for period feel, use of period features and appropriateness to the Roman context. Specify that this is what you want and reward pupils for it in your comments or recording method. It is a good way of assessing the effectiveness of your earlier teaching.

Equally, do not be depressed if your first attempt yields anachronistic bits of nonsense. Perhaps you did it too early? Perhaps you did not feed in enough knowledge? Learn from pupils' weaknesses and plan for improvement next time.

Activity 6

Concluding activities: what use is Horace when he's being horrible?

Enquiries that are chiefly evidential in their learning focus can be tricky to conclude well. Most enquiries, whether building towards a narrative or an analysis, will use some sources along the way. But when the main learning focus has been upon evidential understanding, driving an in-depth look at a source or source collection, the final activity needs to help pupils to solve an evidential problem or at least to reflect upon an evidential issue very explicitly.

Two alternative concluding activities are suggested here. To do both would be a little laboured. The first activity (6A) invites pupils to draw conclusions; the second (6B) offers ready-made conclusions for comment and reflection.

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity: Resource 6A

The layers of inference diagram shown in Resource Sheet 6A allows pupils to distinguish between strong, firm claims that we can make about Roman life and weaker or more tentative claims. It does not require hard-and-fast answers, but it does give pupils a very clear framework.

Effective use of the layers of inference diagram is heavily dependent on medium-term planning. Claire Riley's work on this original idea of Hilary Cooper accelerated its use among history teachers from 1999 (Cooper, 1994; Riley, 1999; Smith, 2001). Whilst many history teachers use it well, it is too often used cold, or in isolation, with nothing to prepare for it or follow it up. It is all very well to work out that the source 'definitely tells us' this, 'might tell us' that and 'suggests' the other. But so what? What happens next? How does this affect our pursuit of the enquiry? What puzzle does it help us with? Latched on to as a great literacy activity, the literacy is not helped by it if the historical thinking is poor.

It is much better to use it towards the end of an enquiry where the chief focus is the nature of evidence and the

● GENRE SPOT

A teacher's guide to the characteristics of Horace's satire

Form

Loose, conversational (the 'walking' style), with the sense flowing from one line to the next, and pauses within verses. Horace likes enjambment – the running over of a sentence from one line of verse into the next.

Mood

Unsentimental, humane. The moral point is discernible, but the poems are never didactic or hectoring.

Subject

Enslavement of men to money, ambition and sex (although I chose *Satire 2:8* for detailed work with 11- and 12-year-olds partly because it avoids this!), 'natural limits', how happiness is acquired, vices and follies such as avarice and gluttony, struggles for power and an obsession with gastronomy.

Horace was not being particularly original here: he was using traditional ideas about power, money and so on, in order to judge the faults of his own time.

Horace was totally disillusioned with politics and you won't find any comment on it. This was typical of the first century BC, after the bloody upheaval of the ending of the Republic, through which Horace lived. So, for Horace, *politics was nonsense* ...

... *and so was religion!* In Horace's view, the gods did not direct human affairs. This is the kind of thing that is really useful for a teacher to know. Some pupils will start to notice Horace's irreverence for the gods. They want to know why he did not buy into Roman religion. A teacher needs to know enough to explain that. Horace's interests were focused entirely upon man and personal relations.

Style

It is difficult to climb fully into this in a history lesson where the overwhelming majority of pupils will have no knowledge of Latin. So comments on Horace's use of metre – which is actually critical to his skill and purpose – probably have to be sidestepped. However, you can at least make pupils aware that Horace chose to work within a traditional form up to a point, and that this included use of metre, which can be simply explained as a pattern of syllables and stresses in a line.

Another feature of Horace's satire might be described as 'neatness'. It is hard to capture this completely without looking at the Latin, but pupils can at least see how he says a lot with a little (see Activity 3 on page 21). When talking 'style' you are looking for signs of rapidity, elegance and ease.

We are helped here by Horace's own comments on what he saw as good style in a satire. Here is an extract from *Satire 10* in Book 1:

So it's not enough to make your listener bare his teeth in a grin – though I grant there's some virtue even in that. You need terseness, to let the thought run freely on without becoming entangled in a mass of words that will hang heavy on the ear. You need a style which is sometimes severe, sometimes light, now suiting the role of an orator or poet, now that of a clever talker who keeps his strength in reserve and carefully rations it out. Humour is often stronger and more effective than sharpness in cutting knotty issues.

Horace, Satire 10: Book 1, lines 7–15

Very able pupils will enjoy looking for such characteristics in *Satire 2:8*, allowing you to set intriguing little activities such as: *Does Horace practise what he preaches?*

Horace also constantly parodies the epic style. This would have been very clear to a Roman audience. It is a clever device because it allows Horace to treat Nasidienus' affectations with grandiose irony.

The host's reappearance in line 84, after recovering from the collapsed canopy episode, is hailed in the time-honoured, epic manner, full of solemnity:

'Nasidiene redis, mutatae frontis'

A Roman audience would have known that this crisp bit of Latin sounded just like Virgil or Homer. It is completely dotty to talk like this about Nasidienus – as though he were a great hero. A strict translation would come out something like this:

'Oh Nasidienus, thou dost return with altered countenance!'

Purpose

If you ask pupils to guess Horace's purpose in the light of the knowledge gained from some of the activities, they will probably say that it is moral (without necessarily using that word) that Horace wanted to persuade people against bad behaviour.

But here your pupils' very sensible guess will be wrong. Although Horace offered a critique of vice and folly, he was not a reforming satirist. He was not setting out to influence society at large. He did aim to stimulate moral awareness, but he had no missionary zeal and he never sought a wide audience.

The purpose of his work was not didactic. He wrote to give pleasure, to entertain people with his deft presentation of ideas, his amusing anecdotes and his skilful adjustment of metre to the rhythms of educated conversation.

Horace's method is to work on the intellect of his hearers. Many of the other satires take the form of an argument or debate.

evaluation of sources. This gives a real point to a layers of inference diagram. Its open-endedness makes it an ideal way for teachers to monitor and analyse pupils' real understanding. The diagram becomes a tool for pupil reflection on the status of their own claims.

■ Activity procedure

After some whole-class discussion and/or teacher modelling, put pupils into pairs or threes and set them a challenge to fill the diagram with as many statements as they can. Emphasise that they will have to defend their choice of layer for each statement.

You can adapt the layers and their labels limitlessly. You could simplify it by reducing it to just two or three layers, or you could add in further layers. Alternatively, ask certain pupils to concentrate on certain layers.

Share and compare pupils' ideas in a concluding discussion, drawing their thinking together by asking them to summarise their response to the enquiry question.

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity: Resource 6B

On Resource Sheet 6B I have included a mixture of statements requiring responses that range from definitely 'yes' through to definitely 'no' with some very debatable matters in between. The learning will emerge from the initial wrestling and be teased out further and consolidated in discussion.

Activity 6B is just a way of doing Activity 6A backwards. It might be a better starting point for pupils who find abstract ideas and inference really difficult, and you can

feed in further challenging statements in order to stretch the very able.

Another idea is to give most of the class Activity 6B and the very able the open-ended Activity 6A, but don't assume that 6A is automatically harder than 6B! The way you set it up and the kinds of intervention you employ will raise or reduce the demand limitlessly.

■ Activity procedure

I would be tempted to get pupils to have an initial stab at Resource 6B on their own. It gives you a short, fairly formal assessment opportunity, in order for you to establish what issues of knowledge or technique need to be reinforced or retaught. See it as a monitoring device. After a lot of pair, group and whole-class work, now is the time for some silent wrestling.

Build pupils' confidence first by emphasising that many of the statements are debatable and what you will be interested in is how much they have thought about it. This is important if they are not to give up and start guessing.

Assessing how far lower attainers have really moved forward in their evidential thinking is very tricky. I tend to assess my effectiveness in such activities by seeing if these pupils really have grasped the outside extremes. Indeed, in order not to allow lower attainers' new understanding to break down, you might want to give the more debatable statements to the higher attainers only.

Whether you do Activity 6A or 6B or a mixture, draw out the learning in plenary discussion. Ensure strong and continual reference to your enquiry question: *what use is Horace when he's being horrible?*

Layer 4 What kinds of thing can Horace's satire *not* tell us?

Layer 3 What questions would you now like to ask about Roman life?

Layer 2 What does Horace's satire seem to suggest about Roman life?

Layer 1 What does Horace's satire definitely tell us about Roman life?

**Horace's
satire**

Horace's satire provides reliable evidence for enquiries about:	Yes	No	Possibly
1 the names of real people at a real dinner party			
2 the kinds of writing that gave Romans pleasure			
3 what Roman dinner parties were like			
4 Roman tastes in food			
5 where Roman food came from			
6 the food that better-off Romans ate			
7 the sorts of food that poor people and slaves ate in Roman times			
8 earlier Greek and Roman influences on Horace's writing			
9 what made the Romans laugh			
10 whether or not the Romans ate meat			
11 the range of meats available to the Romans			
12 the geographical areas that wine came from			
13 the work that some slaves did in houses			
14 the names slaves were normally given			
15 what all Romans knew about Greek poetry			
16 what some educated Romans liked about dinner parties			
17 Roman sauces and seasonings			
18 Roman women			
19 Roman attitudes to the gods and religion			
20 Roman cooking methods			
21 Romans who had become rich and who liked showing off			
22 what some people thought about Romans who had become rich and who liked showing off			

■ Sample lesson sequence

Summary of one possible route through an enquiry, incorporating some of the activities

Prior learning

Assume earlier enquiries in which pupils have gained knowledge and understanding about the geography of the Roman Empire, something about the life and leisure of the Roman political classes, and a clear outline chronology of Roman political change. Some knowledge of Roman religion will also be helpful. Pupils will need enough background knowledge to make their creative work 'sound' Roman.

Enquiry question

What use is Horace when he's being horrible?

Outline of learning flow

Five 45-minute lessons over 2½ weeks.

What use is Horace when he's being horrible?

Lesson 1	Kick off with Activity 1 , dropping only an intriguing hint or two about where the lesson sequence might be going. Debrief on the play, encouraging pupil speculation: Who is making fun of whom? Why might they be doing this? How does this fit in with our existing knowledge of the Romans? Hint at Lesson 2, telling them the play was based on a real Roman text, one that they are going to examine over the next four lessons, but keep the purpose and enquiry question secret.
Lesson 2	Introduce the enquiry question and briefly explain the background to the text and satire in general. Locate Horace in time and place. Introduce pupils to the text using Activity 2 and then debrief.
Lesson 3	Hook pupils in by surprising them with the fact that what we did in the previous lesson only scratched the surface. Build the lesson around Activity 4 on epic and satire.
Lesson 4	Activity 3 with stage 2 (paragraph writing) modelled in lesson and completed for homework.
Lesson 5	Compare paragraphs from Activity 3 and relate them to the enquiry question. Conclude with Activity 6B . The whole class then discusses their response to the enquiry question.

Chapter summary

- * This chapter presents teaching approaches that enable pupils to create their own extended, causal explanations. Already familiar with the narrative, pupils are prepared for a final writing activity in which they leave narrative shape behind and produce a thematic analysis.
- * Through the activities, pupils discuss and compare different ways of classifying and organising causes. They experiment with these analytic activities until they have satisfactorily *explained* the quarrel.
- * The work of *explanation* is also the work of *argument*. All pupils must convince themselves that they have the most powerful explanatory model. Oral and visual tasks cultivate pupils' determination to find the most effective structure and to persuade others of its effectiveness.
- * The chapter offers nine practical methods from which teachers might choose just two or three. Whilst one activity builds upon another very effectively, the activities are independent of each other and there is no set or best route through them.
- * The nine activities can be used repeatedly, in different settings and within increasingly demanding causal problems and enquiries, across a whole year or Key Stage. The activities therefore create a repertoire of techniques that history departments can use to *make progress happen*.
- * Historical causation (NC Key Element 2c) forms the conceptual framework. At the same time, by experimenting with structure and by trying out concepts as organising tools, pupils address principles of organisation and transformation (NC Key Element 5).
- * Each activity will work across the ability range. Each will elicit different levels of response, depending upon the way the teacher sets it up, the pupils' prior knowledge, the pupils' prior experience of causal reasoning, the stage in the enquiry or the use of whole-class teacher interventions.
- * Enquiry question chosen as the setting for the activities:
Why did Henry and Becket's quarrel turn bitter and fatal?

Context

A Historical causation in school history

● Comprehension masquerading as causation

There is no one model that can be used to explain the causes of past events. Yet up until 1988, many examination boards and syllabuses for 16+ examinations in England and in Wales required pupils to do little more than produce a memorised list of causes. If there was an expectation that this was to be organised in an essay, the structuring of that essay was entirely predictable. Its organisation did not require any stretching of pupils' historical reasoning about the naming or interrelationship of causes. Mark schemes rewarded recall of the requisite number of causes, not any attempt to link, prioritise or weigh.

The model of explanation was predetermined rather than problematic. If the essay resembled an argument in any sense, it was not one that the candidate had sweated to construct. The assumption was that pupils should simply be reproducing a given model.

This is very far from the way we try to develop an understanding of historical causation now. Imagine treating 'Why did William win the Battle of Hastings?' as though this were a comprehension question. Candidates might as well have been explaining how a bicycle works or supplying a clear account of an agreed process like photosynthesis – a test of understanding, perhaps, and choices to be made about clarity, perhaps, but no real work of explanation as we understand it in history. Explanation in history involves addressing a deep *problem* – a problem for which there are many answers and for which any answer must be justified by an argument supported by evidence.

Without appreciation of such a problem it is hard for most pupils to see the point of wrestling with a question of historical causation or to be motivated to construct a causal argument. It is hard for pupils to get excited about an argument when there is nothing to kick against. Worse, it is simply unnecessary to wrestle with the multiple possible ways of classifying or naming causes if those causes must simply be reeled off in their entirety for an award of full marks.

● A change of professional emphasis

The new history criteria for the new GCSE, first examined in 1988, enshrined a change of emphasis, one that was already well developed in some quarters. The second-order concept of causation

was now to be assessed very differently. This was followed up in 1991 by the first National Curriculum for History, in which one entire strand of one 'Attainment Target' was devoted to causation and consequence – the analytic variety. Classification, prioritisation, linking and many other attributes of causal analysis were named explicitly in such new criteria.

I am not holding these developments up for unqualified praise. New hierarchies of attainment were undoubtedly flawed, and the idea of *assessing* causal reasoning as a discrete element was (and still is) contested. Nonetheless, in so far as errors were made, they were fertile ones. They bred subsequent reflection, classroom experimentation and soul-searching in the light of experience in the history education community (e.g. Hammond, 1999; Howells, 1998; Chapman, 2003; Counsell, 2003a). Generally speaking, if you talk about causation or causal reasoning to history teachers in the UK, most will know what you mean and they will associate it with thinking.

● Thinking historically and writing analytically: the same thing

The construction of a causal argument (it can only ever be an *argument*) involves a certain kind of reasoning – one that needs to be modelled in reading, explored and tested out through talk, and expressed either diagrammatically or in continuous prose. Indeed, many historians and students of history from 9 to 19 find it helpful to move *between* diagram and prose, until they get both analysis and its communication just right.

To discuss these areas of literacy – whether writing process or group talk – as separate issues from the demands of causal reasoning is to miss many points about the properties of this kind of historical learning. When I hear either teachers or policy-makers say, 'It is not the *history* that pupils are having difficulty with, it is the writing process', I have to question this. It seems to me that this is a non-statement, for what is 'the writing' apart from 'the history'? It is precisely 'the history' that the pupils are having difficulty with. It is therefore precisely 'the history' that needs to be addressed and taught.

'The history' is the practice of causal reasoning, the choices about how to cluster causes and how to name them, the making of judgements about which causal model has the most explanatory power, the judgement about the status of the causes – general or particular – in terms of the period issues, their interrelationship and their relative importance.

Such basic Key Stage 3 work on historical causation is thus at the same time the work of choosing themes for paragraphs, deciding how to order those paragraphs into a thematic analysis, exploring the best supporting evidence within those paragraphs and, above all, understanding the power of a paragraph when it becomes cohesive.

● Raising expectations by experimenting with the impossible

In my 1997 pamphlet, *Analytical and Discursive Writing at Key Stage 3*, drawing upon my own and others' practice, I explored ways in which pupils across the ability range had been taught, quite systematically, to construct their own, extended causal analyses with

growing independence (Counsell, 1997). The methods were based on a professional diagnosis of pupils' difficulties with extended writing and a linked set of remedies that addressed those incapacities very directly. I was finding these so powerful in my practice that they completely altered my expectations of Key Stage 3 writing and learning.

The practical ideas in that pamphlet grew out of the problems I observed in my own pupils, particularly (though not exclusively) those of average and below-average ability and those with poor concentration, poor behaviour and low expectations of their own writing. The resulting activities were designed to teach pupils to see a range of organisational possibilities for an array of historical propositions. In each activity, pupils played with different organisational arrangements. Thus, they came to see that organising their ideas in response to a question is no straightforward matter, and that controlling, shaping and naming those ideas is within their power.

● Choosing to teach structure before style

Crucially, both the diagnosis of difficulty and the explicit teaching intervention related to one central issue – the organisational demands of the text. In *Analytical and Discursive Writing*, in line with my own practice at that time and the practice of the teachers I was managing, I deliberately played down an emphasis on the teaching of stylistic conventions, convinced that the much more fundamental difficulty had to do with the pupils' inability to see that there was an organisational problem in the first place. There is a need to show pupils *that there is an organisational problem*, at the same time as enthusing them about unravelling the puzzle of its solution.

My focus was on structure, not style, not because the latter is not an issue (it certainly is) but because, as a history teacher, I just could not be persuaded that the mastery of mature, stylistic convention was the root cause or the best solution for the pupil who cannot yet see what a causal explanation is *for*. Although, in that pamphlet, I discussed complementary methods, such as the work of Lewis and Wray (e.g. 1994) on writing frames and so on, I felt strongly that these bypassed the pivotal learning difficulty – a difficulty that is pre-eminently about *historical* learning. Pupils must engage with the structural problem in an explanatory text. In so doing, they engage with the analytic problem inherent in a subject-specific concept or question. In contrast to the use of a writing frame, which models both style and structure (and sometimes pre-empts the latter), my starting point was in an entirely different place, focusing chiefly upon pupils' ability to create their own structures and to see the point of doing so.

Six years on, I would now go further. Writing frames – especially when used as filling in the gaps and not in the more reflective and interactive way that Lewis and Wray (1994, 1997) advocate – can worsen the problem if they have the effect of de-problematizing, in pupils' minds, the structure of the text that pupils are supposed to create. Used well, they model a possible structural outcome, but if pupils simply follow the given structure, they fail to grasp that causal reasoning requires decision making not merely about the content of the paragraphs, but about their *positioning and interplay*.

The practical ideas in *Analytical and Discursive Writing* (Counsell, 1997) are now extended and developed in this chapter, with the primary learning focus still upon structure but in the context of the medieval topic of Henry II and Becket's quarrel. These activities were first published, shortly after trialling, in a more limited form in a 'thinking skills' journal (Counsell, 2000a).

B Causal reasoning and pupil progress

● Avoiding tidy hierarchies

As I write this in the early 2000s, many teachers, scholars and policy-makers alike would now acknowledge that mistakes have been made with attempts to assess causal reasoning (in the curriculum designed for schools in England and Wales, at least). In the 1991 curriculum there was an attempt to reduce expected progression to a set of 'statements of attainment', presuming a hierarchy of causation ideas, in which pupils were supposed to move from mono-causal reasoning to multi-causal reasoning to a number of supposedly higher-order attributes, carefully parcelled out into stages, such as prioritisation or linking of causes (DES, 1990). The resulting disaster is well documented (Haydn, 1994).

In 1995, these atomised statements were replaced with generalised Level Descriptions. References to causation were loose, general and supposed to be interpreted only in the context of the wider Level Description (DfE, 1994). This was designed to free up assessment, to provide only the loosest of integrated goals for the end of the Key Stage, and to free teachers to define and plan for much more detailed progress journeys as they saw fit. Teachers were not supposed to see them as the main guidance on how they would actually *plan and teach* causal reasoning – or indeed anything

(DfEE, 1994, 1999; Ofsted, 2002). Instead they were now expected to think more broadly about what they wanted progression to look like and what kinds of learning path might secure it.

Sadly that vision has not been fully realised, as other pressures have since caused history teachers to use the Level Descriptions with a degree of precision (for example, in target setting) for which they were never designed and cannot serve. I remain convinced, however, that the bigger vision for professional decision making should be reclaimed: history teachers need to do their own thinking on things like causal reasoning – what it is and how to get pupils better at it. No neat hierarchies will do that thinking for us. No neat hierarchies can possibly exist. There is no substitute for intelligent reflection on the kinds of causal reasoning in which pupils must gain practice and discuss, as they move forwards through the Key Stage.

● Doing our own thinking instead

There are plenty of sources to draw upon here. Many studies can help us. These range from the theoretical (e.g. by historians such as Carr, 1961; by history educationists such as Scott, 1990) and the empirical work of scholars (e.g. Lee, Ashby and Dickinson, 1996; Lee, 1998) to the descriptions, analyses and reflections of experienced or influential history teachers actually making these things work in the classroom (e.g. Howells, 1998; Clark, 2001; Chapman, 2003). A well-trained PGCE trainee will have spent considerable time studying these, experimenting in the classroom accordingly and discussing such things with their mentor; there is no better foundation for developing skill in worthwhile assessment.

Some of these models are very helpful, provided we do not treat them as holy grails or try to do mechanistic things with them. For example, in 1990 the Teaching History Research Group described five stages of thinking in causal reasoning across the secondary years (Scott, 1990). Figure 2.1 contains an extract from a loose, five-stage model, with stages 4 and 5 representing possible goals for

● **Figure 2.1** Extract from the Teaching History Research Group's five-stage model (Scott, 1990: 8)

Stage 4

At this stage pupils will see that the order/sequence of causes and their relationship is of significance. They will picture causes as resembling a net, where the relationship of the knots to each other is important. They will have a clear understanding of the distinction between sufficient and necessary conditions and, knowing that the historian has to make a choice, will be aware of some of the criteria for selection used by historians. They will have a very clear distinction between causes and motives and have a good grasp of several common causal factors such as social, economic, political, physical, psychological. They will be able to offer a sensible hierarchy in practice, and to explain their choice of factors and the criteria used.

Stage 5

This stage will contain all the elements of Stage 4 but will also recognise the historiography of causation – that assigning causes is bound to period; thus they will have a very clear understanding of the difference between a historian's and an agent's view. They will see that dimensions, properties and relationships between causes change over time. They will also have a good understanding of the ways in which value judgements influence how both historical characters and historians have explained events, and how influences of this sort might be considered in giving the widest possible causative account. They should also be able to discuss the role of chance and the concept of inevitability and the extent of freedom/determinism. They will see the difference between cause in history and in science and the dangers of applying general laws in history.

able 14-year-olds or average 16-year-olds, although the authors emphasised that such stages should never be tied rigidly to age, or even to assessment models. They could only represent ‘tendencies’ in pupils’ thinking, as a guide (Scott, 1990: 6). It is up to us to devise paths towards these achievements and to assess pupils’ progress *en route*. Stage 5 is useful not only because it gives us ideas about what the very able, gifted and talented pupils might be doing but, more importantly, because it gives us a sense of the deeper, more enduring or underlying purpose of the easy, basic activities that we devise for younger or weaker pupils.

Awareness of what historians have written about causation and also what teachers have experimented with – through national systems and individual experimentation – is essential. A deep understanding of the issue helps the teacher to define short-term goals in the context of an overall vision, without falling into the trap of imagining that there is an easy or independent hierarchy ‘out there’, if only we could find it. Consider, for example, Gary Howells’ thought-provoking account of how he builds pupils’ reflection on the idea of inevitability in Year 9 (Howells, 1998).

● Some wrong turnings in assessment

But reflection such as that of Gary Howells has not been at a premium in professional development structures. At the time of writing, Ofsted continues to report teachers’ substantial difficulties with assessment. Part of what has gone wrong in recent years is that models such as the Teaching History Research Group’s have been misused. If you try to tie learning paths or assessment levels to such models (which its authors warned against), you end up with simplified distortion. The 1991 National Curriculum model, loosely based on that group’s work – a set of spurious, simplistic stages of moving from mono-causal to multi-causal to links to prioritisation and so on – led to precisely such distortion.

If the 1995 National Curriculum model of integrated Level Descriptions was an attempt to escape from such rigidity and to look at pupils’ causal reasoning in a wider context of knowledge, thinking and practice (DfE, 1994), it was never given a chance to succeed. The subsequent trend towards atomising the Level Descriptions has worked against the very goal they were designed to secure. This has now created a much more serious problem – a reliance on the deliberately generalised loose statements about causation in the Level Description (which were never intended to be used in isolation) to plan for and measure progress in causal reasoning. Level Descriptions are being forced into service where they were never designed to serve. They are treated as sufficient for progression and assessment, when they cannot do one-tenth of the work of progression and assessment. Zipping through to the surface signs of prescribed ‘levels’ of achievement is no substitute for re-engineering pupils’ thinking.

We need to think more carefully about what makes pupils get better at causation, and clearly prescribed hierarchies or increments that purport to do professionals’ thinking for them are never going to get us there.

But how do we break away from progression and assessment models that look like ladders? This is difficult, as pressures of accountability have ingrained the assumption that there must be some pre-ordained learning path. The existence of such a path is

rarely questioned. It is judged necessary in order for us to measure how quickly or efficiently pupils are moving along it! (Or, in the world of ‘assessment for learning’, in order to give pupils themselves the ‘next step’.) But there must be a better way of ensuring that learning has direction. And there must be a better way of supporting that learning with regular, helpful assessment. Surely it is possible to move forwards without knowing in advance *exactly* what steps or route we will have to take?

Perhaps the starting point is to countenance the idea that a statement about progression (and about ways of securing that progression) does not have to be a hierarchy of incremental stages. Such a statement could define attributes that we look for in pupils’ learning – attributes that all centre on an underpinning conceptual idea. At the end of this chapter, I have attempted a simple statement of such attributes, all rooted in causal reasoning and the construction of causal explanation (see *Progress in practice*, p.54). These attributes are presented as things we might deliberately and explicitly teach. They are the ideas we teachers try to inject into or elicit from pupils’ talk about causation.

My *Progress in Practice* statement draws upon theory about causation for its rigour, but is rooted in practical, professional experimentation and reflection. It is designed simply to link teacher interventions with some possible learning outcomes, rather than to prescribe any hierarchy of those outcomes.

Such a statement can also be used for *assessing* progress. This is because it points to the attributes we might *look for* in pupils’ writing or talk. Only if one is hanging on to the notion of a ladder (with levels or stages), is this a problem. What the statement does is to describe *those things that we might define as achievements* without precluding the need to revisit, re-learn and re-shape that area of mental activity many times and in many historical settings.

● Progress: finding it or designing it?

There have been attempts to tackle progression in learning by looking for a better understanding of children’s ideas in areas such as causation (most notably Lee, Ashby and Dickinson, 1996; Lee, 1998). These research-based models are most helpful in getting us to define what we mean by causal reasoning or ideas about causation. They can also be helpful in getting teachers to think about misconceptions that pupils encounter and how we might replace less powerful ideas with more powerful ones.

But such models relate more to what is found than to what one might want to create. What is being proposed in this chapter is much more interventionist: let us teach pupils what we would like them to be able to do. Let us create progress for ourselves – its definition and its reality. I focus here on types of thinking and reasoning that we might like pupils to be able to do, and focus less upon the ideas that pupils hold than the ways in which they can be taught to refine those ideas, through explicit techniques. The *Progress in Practice* summary on page 54 captures these ideas.

Progress in history is as much about revisiting and re-using as about doing something new. This is why I would avoid the search for the holy grail of an incremental hierarchy of discrete skills. It would be appropriate for a pupil to have the same objective in three years’ time, in different content and with a different causation question. Other variables, outside of causation, would ensure that

the degree of intellectual demand, *even within causation itself*, increased.

When we are looking to secure progress, what do we hope will result? Sometimes we are looking for the simple carrying over of an old technique into a new setting; sometimes, the ability to ask questions or choose techniques that show pupils are comparing the new causation with the old; sometimes, the deployment of categories that were given before; sometimes, the construction of new categories. Where we need to see constant improvement is in the pupils' recognition of old problems in new settings. We need to see their developing language for talking about the interplay of causes and the categorisation process – the patterns of historical thinking that recur.

● Knowledge and causal reasoning

As well as abandoning simple hierarchies or increments of skill, another shift I made in my own practice was to start to explore the link between getting better at causal reasoning and pupils' growth in knowledge. I noticed that the pupil who assimilated a range of detail, or who held stronger ideas about the period in his or her head, simply constructed more confident and more plausible analyses. They moved about within their knowledge as they struggled to decide which cause was more important. Changing one's mind about how to arrange a group of causes is the heart of the ideas in this chapter. It is easier to change one's mind if the knowledge base is strong enough to present differing options.

In turn, all that wrestling and processing starts to cement knowledge in the head, more readily than dry memorising for no particular object. Knowledge and thinking serve one another. See Counsell (2000b) for a fuller discussion of this.

C Wrestle, process, argue

Wrestling and processing are key. The card-sorting methods developed in this chapter work best if pupils are aware that they are trying to find methods to solve a problem. Rachael Rudham argues that a card-sort should never be 'an obvious tabulation exercise', where pupils constantly put cards under headings supplied by the teacher, without any obvious puzzle. It is easy to misunderstand a card-sort and to make a mechanical task out of an intellectually exhilarating one (Rudham, 2001a).

The wrestling and processing activities in this chapter are all ways of teaching pupils to engage with problems of structure and organisation. In particular, they invite pupils to open up (and to strongly connect) two related puzzles – the organising power of a single word and the organisational challenge lurking behind the formal essay.

● Getting at the organising power of a word

If you think of an abstract noun like 'Church' or 'Parliament' or 'power' and ask *why* it holds secure, accurate and flexible meaning in your head, the answer will not be that you have learned a definition, been given a glossary or looked it up in the dictionary. The answer will be that you attach a hundred stories and pictures to the word in your head. Through long and confident use, in many settings, you have refined the meaning of the word for yourself.

Moreover, the word has probably changed meaning for you over time as you have worked out what other words or ideas it embraces or excludes. This chapter includes activities such as 'lumping' (see p.47), where pupils are being asked to do just that. They think about the scope and limits of a word. They test the organising power of a word. They play about with what 'fits inside' the word and what does not. They play with the boundaries of the concept.

This is a way of accelerating or making explicit the natural concept-forming process by which we all learn to describe the world from an early age – we realise that certain objects have enough similar characteristics to be called 'tables', to be described as 'red' or to be called 'squares'. This is exactly what Vygotsky was getting at in his work on concept formation later published posthumously as *Thought and Language* (1962). Like must be grouped with like and a suitable grouping label must be found.

This process is very similar to the work of organising a paragraph – we have to decide how a set of things are similar, to group them, to decide what to call them and to work out whether our new label is a true or helpful grouping. Words need to do their proper history job – they are *organisers*. So let us let pupils play with their organising potential. Then we really start to get at the relationship between word-level and text-level work.

One form of play is argument. In many of the activities in this chapter, pupils are arguing with each other about the best way to cluster causes and the best words to capture the cluster. Arguing about causes is a very good method for getting inside the organisational power of a word. (See Counsell, 2001a, for an example of a lesson sequence focusing on the organising power of words but with a conceptual focus on diversity rather than causation.)

● The essay as a means to an end

The practical activities in this chapter are often used as a prelude to writing an essay (although following up with an essay is by no means essential). What might pupils of about-average ability be experimenting with and exploring in their essay-writing towards the end of Year 7? I stress, 'experimenting with and exploring', rather than *achieving*, because the latter, paradoxically, can lower standards. If we say, 'This is the kind of essay a Year 7 pupil should be able to write' we may end up running the risk of helping her to write that essay. We simply winch her up into a performance with plenty of scaffold. Instead, we want our pupil to grow in the causal reasoning, meta-thinking, conceptual growth or stylistic control that *underpins* that essay, and to do so with increasing independence and sophistication.

The essay needs to be a *means towards* and a *sign of* that causal reasoning. It is not an end in itself. The essay will be good if the historical reasoning is good. To learn to delineate, classify, weigh and arrange causes, to demonstrate the relationship between a causal point and supporting, valid historical evidence, is to write a good essay.

The activities here seek to capture those processes. They help pupils to get arguing. Thus by the time they tackle the essay, pupils have argued their way into understanding the historical problem, and considered possible essay structures at the same time.

■ Arriving at a good enquiry question

Who was responsible for the death of Thomas Becket? or even *Why was Becket murdered?* always seems slightly unsatisfactory to me as a way of advancing causal reasoning. Pupils get tangled up in questions of blame and rather superficial or distracting discussions about moral responsibility (especially in the first).

Part of the problem is that the murder gets in the way: it becomes a distraction. This is why I prefer a question that gets away from questions about knights charging to Canterbury in the nick of time and instead focuses on deep-seated factors leading to this type of quarrel between church and state. One example is *Why did Henry and Becket quarrel so bitterly and for so long?* This downplays the short-term causes of the murder itself. Teachers may not want to go that far, but it does prevent the drift into ‘murder mystery’, which can be a distraction from the big historical issues.

If you want to include short-term causes in the analysis but avoid the danger of drifting into a ‘whodunnit?’, then I would recommend: *Why did Henry and Becket’s quarrel end in Becket’s murder?* Pupils initially think that this will only involve the short-term causes, but closer inspection soon suggests that the question can be interpreted as *Why did the quarrel turn very nasty?*, thus drawing in all kinds of contextual and longer-term factors.

To that end, perhaps the very best question would be: *Why was it so difficult for kings to control the Church?* This encapsulates the wider knowledge that you want pupils to glean from this story and gets to the deeper reasons why so many history teachers judge the story as important in pupils’ learning. The story becomes a vehicle for learning about substantial and significant institutions and trends in the Middle Ages. This is what Dale Banham calls ‘overview lurking in the depth’ – a small story to illuminate much bigger ones in an intriguing and memorable way (Banham, 1998, 2000).

But such an enquiry question is really something to lead up to. It is extremely ambitious. For the moment, we will stick with the more manageable and conventional:

Why did Henry and Becket’s quarrel turn bitter and fatal?

In this question, pupils argue with each other a good deal about whether or not the events immediately prior to the murder *are relevant*. It leaves that kind of decision very open. And this is what we want – worthwhile, energetic argument around a genuine problem.

■ Activities

Nine activities now follow.

Activities 7 to 10 build upon and develop those advanced in *Analytical and Discursive Writing*. They involve the arrangement of cards to make shapes that represent different ways of selecting and organising causes.

Activities 11 and 12 link word-level work and text-level work to strengthen pupils’ understanding in both. A difficult abstract noun is a device for organising ideas. Some things will ‘fit into’ it, and others will not. The work of organising and labelling ideas to fit into a paragraph is therefore strongly linked to the work of gathering and organising facts and ideas to ‘fit into’ a word. In Activities 11 and 12, pupils judge the effectiveness of the label – the word as an organiser.

In Activity 13, pupils develop words or phrases into sentences that could be used as topic sentences at the start of paragraphs. This is used as another means of testing out the effectiveness of the theme advanced by the paragraph.

Activity 14 is a suggestion for how pupils might link up these skeletal structures with wider evidential substantiation. This is not a main theme of this chapter, but it is important to show that work on outline structure and organisation needs to be complemented with research and reading.

Activity 15 is a quickfire, fun activity to develop pupils’ thinking about relevance. Pupils must think about how events or developments in the story shift as subtle changes in the question occur. It could be used at almost any stage in an enquiry in order to look again at the distinctive properties of their own enquiry question.

■ Understanding the rationale for the activities

The overall aim is to show pupils the problems involved in breaking out of a narrative structure in order to create a different kind of discourse shape – one that is driven thematically. I have worded this carefully: ‘to show pupils the problem’, not to help them to bypass, avoid or fail to notice the problem. Most pupils find activities *too* difficult simply because they do not know *why* they are difficult. The teacher’s job is to find ways of showing these pupils *what the difficulty is*. The following activities are based upon this central premise: that pupils need to see the difference between the shape of a narrative and the shape of an analytic, thematic argument.

Most of the activities require pupils to test (and sometimes to discover) assumptions. Pupils will start by plumping for something (a choice of one cause over another, or a classification, a type of wording or the position of one card vis-à-vis another), but as soon as they do this, they will run into problems. Card-sorting reveals, graphically and immediately, the problems and inadequacies of particular arrangements and choices. History teachers have always set up deliberate traps to provoke mental wrestling, but it is not always easy for pupils to see such problems quickly. They are encouraged to rush to the solution before ‘seeing’ the scope of the problem. The beauty of card-sorting is that it sets out assumptions in a graphic, visual way. Pupils are then very clear about what they are arguing about. They can ‘see’ (in

both senses) the proposed argument in the form of a very physical device. They are therefore able to move items and to challenge others' arrangements in ways that will make sense to the whole group because everyone is looking at a very physical repository of their pooled thinking.

■ Pupil organisation in all the activities

Organise pupils into groups of three. Each group will need a very large sheet of paper. This is the pupils' 'zone of relevance' – a vital teaching tool in the history lesson. Make sure that all pupils can reach every part of the 'zone' comfortably and without bashing each other.

■ Role of the teacher in all the activities

Each activity consists of a structured, problem-solving task involving the arrangement of a set of cause cards (see Resource Sheet 7). Pupils will be talking to each other in short bursts, moving cards about as they explore organisational possibilities. Preparatory explanation is therefore critical, not merely for clear understanding of the overall activity and each stage of it, but in order to motivate pupils by shining a spotlight on the points of fascination.

Watching and listening to groups, the teacher can 'see' aspects of the group's thinking in the card arrangements. This helps the teacher in two ways:

- The teacher can sharpen up the small group's discussion or refocus it: 'Why do you think that card belongs there? If another group challenges that arrangement, how will you argue back?'
- The teacher can glean ideas for driving a subsequent whole-class discussion or post-activity 'debriefing'. Such a discussion, rooted in the earlier small-group discussions, will then build upon real learning experiences to which the whole group can relate.

Whole-class discussion and review are crucial, but they are sometimes best carried out in short bursts during the activity. I think that we should avoid being dogmatic about when such a debriefing phase should occur. To interest pupils in the abstract is to undertake challenging teaching. It is vital to give pupils a positive experience so that they will want more. So motivate, clarify, energise. If things drag on, pupils just become restless.

■ Access and challenge

The level of challenge can be altered by reducing or increasing the number of cards, by changing the wording on the cards or by shortening or lengthening time spent on each stage.

Most activities work with only a small selection (say ten) cards, and random selections will usually work, too. Feed in further cards according to the way you want thinking to develop, or in line with your choice of enquiry question. Very high-attaining pupils particularly enjoy working with all the cards at once, however, especially in Activity 15.

In using these activities, the teacher is not trying to avoid the abstract. Sadly, such avoidance too often happens in the name of 'differentiation'. So-called 'lower-attainers' need teaching, not avoidance. The central role for the teacher in all these activities is not to help pupils to avoid intellectual effort; it is to make intellectual effort interesting.

The medieval Church was very powerful.

Henry wanted to strengthen the structure and power of his government.

Becket often wore a hair shirt under his robes.

After Becket became Chancellor in 1155, Becket and Henry often went hunting, hawking and riding together. They became good friends.

As Chancellor, Becket always supported Henry. He even helped Henry to fight wars and in 1159 led 700 knights against the King of France.

Just before Becket died, he is supposed to have said, 'For the name of Jesus and the protection of his Church I am prepared to die.'

In 1162, Henry got a big shock. His old friend Becket stopped wearing fashionable clothes. He began to pray all night. He washed the feet of poor people. Becket now wanted to serve God.

In 1162, Becket resigned as Chancellor. He told Henry that he did not have time to be his Chancellor *and* Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1163, Henry and Becket quarrelled over what to do with a priest accused of murder.

When Henry wanted to end the power of the church courts, Becket would not help.

Henry was always flying into rages.

The four knights wanted to please Henry.

The Archbishop of Canterbury was a great landowner. The rent from his lands made him one of the richest men in the country.

The messengers whom Henry sent to stop the knights did not reach them in time.

The knights knew how to use their swords.

The knights *thought* that Henry wanted Becket dead.

Becket was very determined and could be stubborn.

In 1164 the king forced Becket to sign the Clarendon Rules. These rules gave Henry greater control over the Church, including the church courts.

Thomas went to Rome to discuss his worries about the Clarendon Rules with the Pope.

Henry was so furious at Becket for going to see the Pope that he put Becket on trial. A council of nobles found Becket guilty of treason.

When Becket was found guilty of treason in 1164, he refused to accept the verdict. He fled to France and stayed there for 6 years.

The four knights knew where to find Becket.

While Becket was Chancellor, he served Henry loyally. Henry had trusted Becket completely.

In 1170, Henry and Becket patched up their quarrel. Becket was allowed to return to England. But when Henry got the Archbishop of York to crown his son as the next King, this made Becket cross again.

When Becket returned to England in 1170, he excommunicated all the bishops who had taken part in the coronation of Henry's son.

English kings often quarrelled with Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury.

The Church in England had its own law courts.

English kings wanted to be in charge of everything that went on in their own kingdoms.

Four knights overheard Henry in a rage. He is supposed to have said, *'What cowards do I have in my court, that not one will free me of this low-born priest?'*

The four knights rode to Canterbury on horseback.

Becket was not afraid to stand up to the king.

The four knights got to Becket before they could be stopped.

Becket and Henry were always quarrelling.

Becket believed that he was doing the will of a higher authority than the king – God.

The church courts were not as harsh as the king's courts.

Becket was the son of Norman settlers living in London.

Becket's father was a merchant, but he liked to entertain noblemen in his house. Becket soon learned how to behave like a nobleman.

Becket spoke politely and was very witty. Up until 1162, he dressed in fine clothes and washed in scented water.

Becket was over 2 metres tall and had black hair, bright eyes and a big nose.

Henry was ruler of a huge empire. He was King of England, Duke of Normandy, Count of Anjou and Duke of Aquitaine.

Henry spent much of his time travelling around, keeping order and judging legal cases.

Henry had short red hair, a freckled face and grey eyes.

Henry had a harsh voice, wore dirty, muddied riding clothes and often swore.

When Henry became king in 1154, England was in a bad way. There had been a civil war. Robber barons controlled the country.

Soon after he became king in 1154, Henry sent judges around the country to restore law and order. He wanted to show everyone that he was a strong king.

Activity 7

Making a relative importance continuum inside a 'zone of relevance'

■ Activity procedure

Using a small selection of the cards (don't attempt this with all of them at once), ask pupils to arrange the cards in the pattern shown in Figure 2.2, explaining that their final outcome in about 10 minutes' time will be to produce a diagram something like this. Tell them that they are to arrange the cards in their order of *importance to the question*. Emphasise that their goal is to judge which cards are *most critical in helping us to answer the question*. This needs careful and emphatic wording. Vague instructions to choose the most important cards will not help pupils to embrace the central challenge. Emphasise legitimate diversity of response.

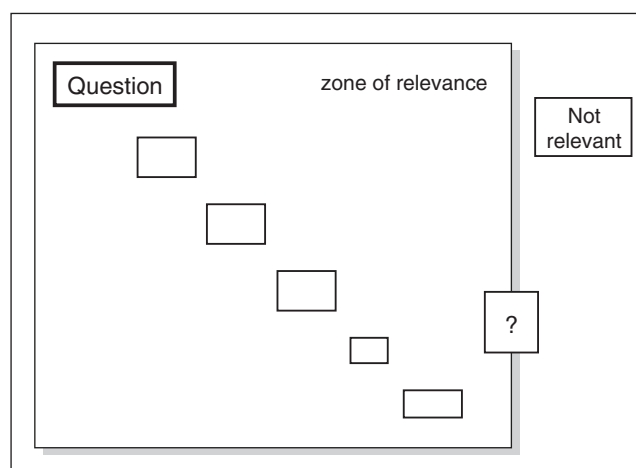
Additionally, explain to pupils that they must use only those cards that they judge are relevant to the question. Those cards that are not relevant to the question at all (note that they can be relevant to the *topic*, but not relevant to the *question*) should be placed outside the 'zone of relevance' altogether.

Circulate and listen to some groups. Ask them questions about why they are placing cards in particular places. Throw in ideas to make them see additional complexities ('Why might that have made things worse?', 'How much difference do you think that fact makes?'). Make sure that you intervene to teach. Don't just chivy them to stay on task or, worse, to hurry up. You don't want to hurry them up. You want to slow them down.

After about 5 minutes, gather the class' attention, praise and intervene. Highlight interesting discussions that you have overheard. Ask some pupils to share their reasoning or to explain what the group is currently arguing about. Prevent those who might finish early from drifting away by highlighting the forthcoming challenge – they are going to have to *defend their card order to the whole class*. Suggest ways of doing this, such as taking it in turns in the group to defend the position of each card, in readiness for an attack by someone else in the class. Then, having re-energised and refocused the class, tell them to resume the task, and warn them that they will be stopped in a further 5 minutes' time.

At the end of the 10 minutes, invite groups briefly to share what they have chosen as their top two cards. This normally reveals wide diversity. Do this well and the revelation of the diversity gives the pupils an appetite for a friendly whole-class fight. There might be groans of surprise or mock reproof at others' choices. Launch a disciplined whole-class discussion for anything between 2 and 10 minutes (as long as it is profitable), as they challenge or defend each other's arrangements.

● **Figure 2.2** *Relative importance continuum inside a 'zone of relevance'*



■ Getting the best out of the activity

It is important for the teacher not to overload the discussion with *too many* fascinating observations! The choice of learning objectives will help to focus you here. Here are two examples:

- If you are aiming to build pupils' thinking (in this and subsequent lessons) about how causes are linked, you might want to show special fascination in their comments about how causes seem to be acting together and cannot be compared in isolation.
- You might want them to notice that they are using conditionals ('if that hadn't happened, that could not have happened'; 'if there hadn't been any ... then the officials would not have been able to ...') because you have plans to tease out this use of language in a subsequent writing task.

Pupils' arguing will throw up a huge range of linguistic, technical and conceptual issues, either directly or indirectly. Although you will want to be flexible and to exploit their enthusiasm for the argument in whatever form it takes, it is useful to have an idea about what your central learning outcomes will be and their relationship with subsequent lessons or activities in this enquiry. This will help you to make good judgements about what to analyse and what to ignore, as their arguing unfolds and energy mounts.

Activity 8

Experimenting with a short-, medium- and long-term diagram

■ Activity procedure

Pupils place triggers (or 'short-term causes' or 'precipitants' – whatever you want pupils to call them) near the centre and trends (or 'long-term causes' or 'preconditions') near the edges (see Figure 2.3 overleaf).

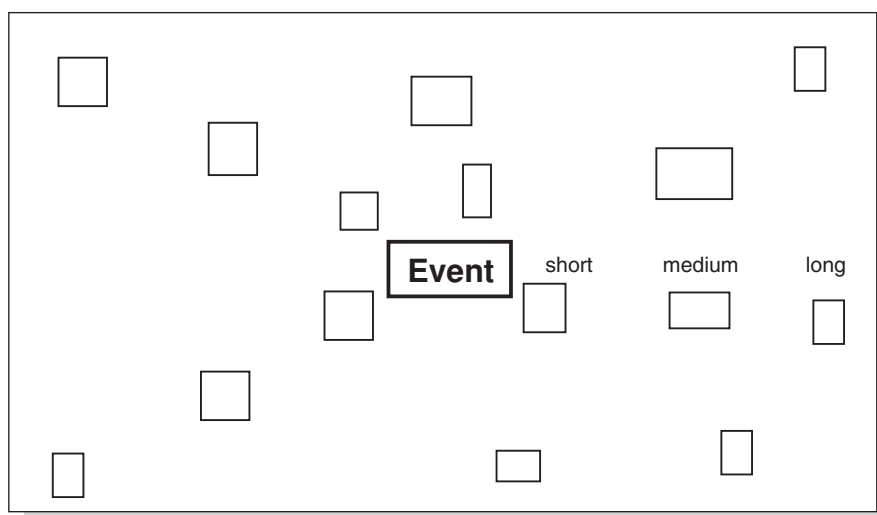
2 Breaking out of narrative and into causal analysis

Watch out! There is more for pupils to argue about here than you think. Don't set it up as obvious or easy, or pupils will simply bypass the thinking that you want. Set it up in such a way that they end up doing it *slowly*, noticing more and more layers of complexity with each of your interventions, prompts and questions.

Help orally reticent pupils, lower-attaining pupils or pupils whose analytic vocabulary seems limited to think about how the terms 'short', 'medium' and 'long' (or 'triggers and trends' or other classifiers) can change their meaning. Use the activity to show them that we need to *decide* what we *want* such terms to mean. You may want to highlight the fact that, although there appears to be less impassioned argument in this activity, there is nonetheless wide diversity of arrangement around the room. Why might this be? How have people been defining these terms? Pupils are much more likely to use words precisely, thoughtfully and reflectively if they are helped to think explicitly about the boundaries of meaning that they choose to put around them. Some of these cards (for example, 'Henry was always flying into rages') seem like medium-term causes, but can only be described as such if we have clearly defined other things as 'shorter' or 'longer' term than this.

Without such explicit, reflective work on boundaries of meaning, we leave lower attainers with the rather weak mechanism of learning definitions and/or practising the use of the words in boring or banal settings, playing matching games as though this were a mere matter of subject-specific 'vocabulary'. There are many disappointing current examples of guidance on history and literacy that do just that, seeing vocabulary simply as vocabulary, instead of seeing its role in supporting and in growing out of specific, disciplinary thinking about the boundaries of a concept. If our many struggling pupils are to construct meaning out of those terms, they must be helped to think about their role as classifiers in the context of historical causation.

● **Figure 2.3** Short-, medium- and long-term diagram



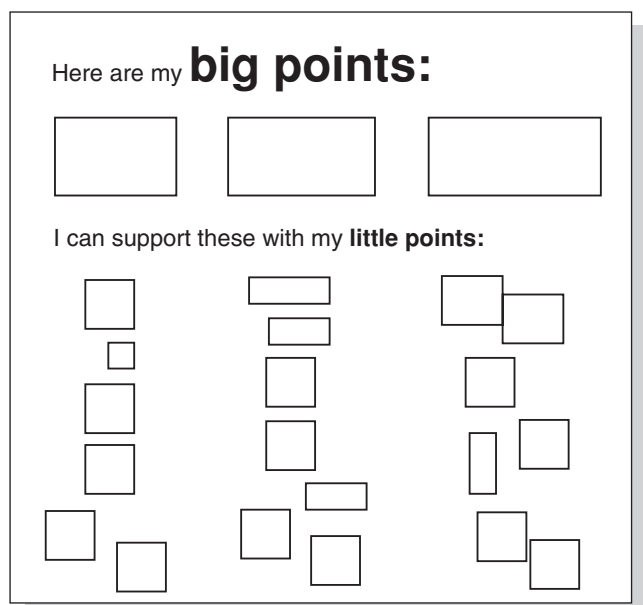
Activity 9

Free sorting: working out your own 'big points'

■ Activity procedure

Ask pupils to group and classify cards, inventing either their own headings or a slightly more developed heading – a 'big point', such as they might use in an argument or debate that obviously relates to the question (see Figure 2.4). Thus a *heading* might be 'Becket's personality' or 'the power of the Church'. A 'big point' might be 'Becket was not the sort of man to give up his aims easily' or 'The Church's power was a big factor in causing the quarrel'.

● **Figure 2.4** Classifying into 'big points' and 'little points'



■ Getting the best out of the activity

The main idea is to get pupils to see the difference between detail and examples on the one hand, and a different level of generality on the other. This is vital if pupils are to gain the skill and confidence to construct their own thematic explanations. The ability to distinguish between the general and the particular is a critical part of any attempt to break out of narrative with purpose and confidence. Another way of doing this is to treat some of the cards as 'hidden' big points. In the collection provided on Resource Sheet 7, there are already cards at different levels or layers of generality.

Activity 10

Sorting using given headings or teacher-prepared 'big points'

■ Activity procedure

This is a half-way house to Activity 9, for pupils who need more basic modelling. It scaffolds pupils into the kinds of thinking that Activity 9 is designed to secure. Simply supply pupils with 'big points' or headings (see Figure 2.5). Ask pupils to decide which cards relate to them.

● **Figure 2.5** *Sorting using teacher-prepared 'big points' or headings*

Here are my **big points:**

Becket's personality	The power of the church	The aims and ambitions of the King
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I can support these with my **little points:**

■ Getting the best out of the activity

This activity stands or falls on the teacher's understanding of its purpose in the wider enquiry and in wider plans for progress. If you choose this method, set it up as an

intriguing puzzle and emphasise its value in helping us to answer our 'why' question. Generate discussion about what should go under each big point and model the thinking involved in making that decision. If we fail to do this, then pupils simply think that the object is to produce a completed, correct table. They will look at that table and, at best, be uninspired or, at worst, none the wiser, as to what it has unlocked. As ever, it is vital not to confuse *activity completion* with *learning*. When pupils have sorted their cards, they should sense that they have revealed something enormously interesting. Our job is to help them to discern this, through the reflection that comes from focused speaking and listening.

Activity 11

Lumping: making 'bigger' substantive concepts for organising ideas

■ Activity procedure

In the activity that I call 'lumping', pupils are given two headings (such as those they have either borrowed or created in Activities 9 and 10) and asked to make one, much 'bigger' heading – a heading that the first two headings will 'fit into'.

The trick here is to *use the cards*. If pupils just try to do this with two headings on their own, there seems little inspiration and little support for their thinking. If they do not know a 'bigger' word (for example, a more abstract idea or a more inclusive concept), they will just get stuck.

Instead, get them to look at the cards they have grouped under the existing two headings. They should pull two columns of those cards together and mix them up. Then, *just using the cards*, they can think about a new heading that will include (or sum up or represent) *all* the cards. As long as pupils are working hard to think along those lines, there is nothing wrong with feeding in some ideas as half-way houses. I used to employ prompts and probing questions to tease out or feed in a word like 'institution' or 'organisation'. Then, when pupils are pushed to think of some adjectives or another noun, they can make the elaborate noun phrase that would earlier have eluded them.

For example, you might ask pupils to 'lump' these two headings, 'Power and pride of the monarchy' and 'Power and pride of the Church' into one heading. Pupils might be helped towards: 'Conflict between *organisations*' or 'International *institutions* clash'.

If you later choose to get pupils to tackle Activity 11 as a prelude to producing their own writing frames for an analytic essay, these 'lumped' noun phrases form a terrific starting point and pupils are excited by the fact that they have at least partly generated the topic sentences for their paragraphs on their own.

Activity 12

Splitting: choosing 'smaller' substantive concepts for organising ideas

■ Activity procedure

'Splitting' is simply my term for doing Activity 11 backwards. All the same principles and suggested procedures hold. Give pupils a 'giant' heading or a *really* big point, and ask them to think about why it is a bit *too* big. The sophisticated conceptual learning that lies behind this – that you may or may not choose to tease out – is that some ideas are too loose and large to act as useful paragraphs within a causal analysis. They will not give us real explanatory power. Thus, for example, 'personalities' might be a logical way to group some of the cards, but this does not really do very much in helping us to shape a causal pattern or weigh up the significance of causes – especially if pupils have lumped together the personalities of Becket, Henry, the knights and the bishops (as happened to me the first time I did this with a Year 7 class)! If we split it, however, we start to isolate factors that give us more analytic precision.

For example, pupils could be asked to split the heading 'Personalities' into several headings. They might decide upon 'Becket's character', 'Henry's determination', 'The knights' desire to prove themselves' and so on. Again, make the pupils work *from the cards*, otherwise they will just start guessing wildly when, in fact, they should be attempting a re-sort.

Activity 13

Using headings to make up possible first sentences of paragraphs in an essay

Ask pupils to turn their headings or their 'big points' into a full sentence with which they could begin a cohesive paragraph.

On the face of it, this could just be viewed as practice in shaping and wording a topic sentence. But it is much more than that – both more fun and more about getting better at history. It is a further test of the strength and value of a little section (a cluster of little points, if you like) in a causal argument. If this is set up well, with teachers conveying just what an interesting historical challenge this is, pupils will set about it thoughtfully. By converting their heading into a sentence, and by wrestling with the wording, pupils are, effectively, thinking about what main historical point they want to make.

Teachers may wish to let pupils run with flawed opening sentences that nonetheless genuinely capture and represent an important breakthrough. Style could be

worked on later. For example, if you look ahead to the essay by Katie on page 52, you will see that she has come up with a rather strange topic sentence that almost looks like a mistake: 'The monarchy was very important to the monarchy.' This was her way of saying, 'I've got a big point here about how kings were trying to strengthen the monarchy and all my paragraph is going to be about it.' And, indeed, all her paragraph *is* about it.

All her paragraphs are remarkably cohesive in their historical focus, whilst being healthily wide-ranging in their evidential base. Katie is used to thinking hard about what her paragraph is about, and what its role is in her overall argument. The essay is therefore evidence of excellent progress in this aspect of historical thinking and writing. Regular practice in converting a heading into a sentence has helped her enormously. It will continue to help her as she starts to refine the process using a wider stylistic repertoire.

● **Figure 2.6** *Pupils turn their headings into full sentences*

Original heading		Topic sentence
Becket's personality	<i>might become</i>	Becket's unusual determination and ambition were big factors in making the quarrel turn very nasty.
Making the monarchy strong		English kings badly needed to make the monarchy strong and secure.

Activity 14

Hunting for details to act as 'little points'

This is an activity that goes beyond the cards. Encourage pupils to make a skeleton essay structure, using a selection of the cards, grouped in any way you or they have judged helpful (short, medium, long? relative importance? big and little? a blend of these?). Then ask them to search in a wider repository of information for details (not necessarily sources) that help to amplify, illustrate or explain the cards. This will become the essay flesh on the skeleton essay plan.

Limit the scope of information according to pupils' ability, needs, targets or enthusiasm. For some pupils this will just be a fleshing-out exercise, where they search for material that is relevant to the points they already know they are going to make. But for many others it will be more than a fleshing-out process; it will be a process that causes them to *change the skeleton*. After all, this activity

is really the reverse of what the historian does. It would not normally be seen as good practice to have the structure of the argument already worked out and the evidential support somehow made to fit!

So as pupils start to search for more detail, whether in the textbook, in a source collection, in a more academic work or on the web, encourage them to question their original structure. Does it now need changing? Would they like to group or label their paragraphs in different ways as new material is uncovered?

Activity 15

'1, 2, 3, change the question!'

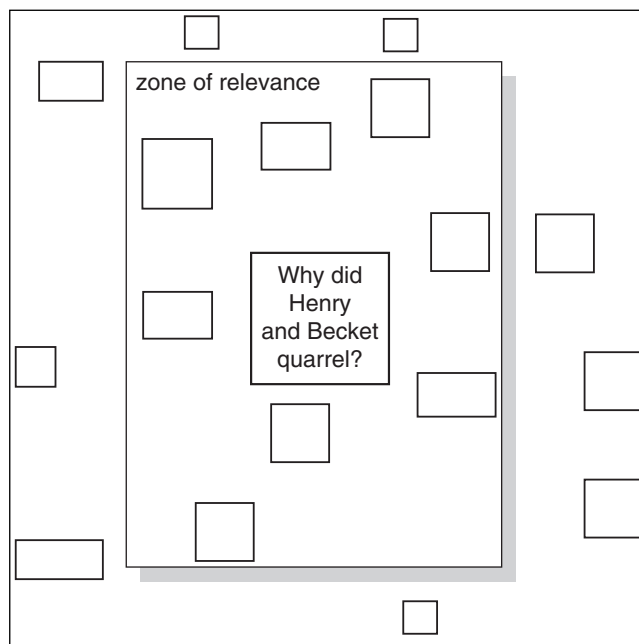
This fun activity can be played at any stage in an enquiry as a way of getting pupils to think about the scope and possibilities of a question. It makes them consider what is the relevant field of enquiry, just as in Activity 7, but this time they focus exclusively on the issue of 'question relevance', ignoring other challenges of organisation.

You can play this game in a quickfire way with pupils in pairs or very small groups, waiting to hear you change the question every two minutes or so. You could even play music, stopping it when you want to change the question. Gather their attention ready for speedy reaction with 'one, two, three, change your question to ...'. Suddenly, different cards need to be removed from or brought inside the zone of relevance. For example, the question in Figure 2.7 could be changed to the following:

- Why did Henry and Becket's quarrel end in Becket's murder?
- Why did Henry and Becket quarrel so bitterly and for so long?
- Why was it so difficult for medieval monarchs to control the church?

Abandon organisation of the cards in the middle of the zone. Just ask pupils to think about which ones need to be inside and which outside. Pause for a brief punchy discussion whenever you observe substantial disagreement across the groups.

● **Figure 2.7** 1, 2, 3, change the question! Warn the pupils that on the count of three they must move the cards to show relevance to a completely different question. As the questions change, cards will move in and out of the zone of relevance



■ Getting the best out of the activity

Lively, brief and productive whole-class argument about what belongs inside and outside the zone of relevance is easy to create. If you have not done this before, you will be surprised at how forthcoming and passionate pupils can be about what constitutes 'relevance' to the question. There really is scope for huge variation of judgement.

As they argue over a card, you will start to notice (or encourage them to notice) that the issue is often about the place of a card in a possible argument. For example, 'Becket often wore a hair shirt under his robes' may not be directly relevant to the question but it might be an ideal piece of supporting evidence for another card.

Sample lesson sequence

Summary of one possible route through an enquiry, incorporating some of the activities

Prior learning

Pupils will get more out of their reflection on the longer-term causes of these events if they know something about the Norman Conquest and the challenges facing Norman and Plantagenet kings. They should also know something about the structure and purpose of the English Church and the Church as an international

organisation. It is useful if they already know about dioceses, bishops, provinces, the Pope and Archbishops. An enquiry into the Becket and Henry quarrel could easily be adapted, however, to incorporate overview work on some of these things.

Enquiry question

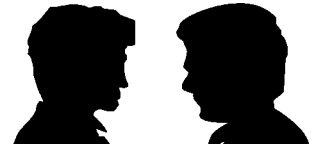
Why did Henry and Becket's quarrel turn bitter and fatal?

Outline of learning flow

Five 60-minute lessons, concluding pupils' work on the Middle Ages.

Why did Henry and Becket's quarrel turn bitter and fatal?

Lesson 1	<p>Hook pupils with the story of Henry II's pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1174 and his penance – being whipped by 80 monks. Don't tell the pupils who was doing the penance (get them to guess). Indeed, don't tell them <i>anything</i> about Becket or Henry or the direction of the lesson or the enquiry. Get them to speculate from the story, as to what kind of crime the penitent pilgrim must have committed. What kind of a person might he be? Then use their mixture of guesses to reveal the true identity – Henry, King of England. Reveal also the name of the man in the tomb over which Henry had wept – Thomas Becket. In the second half of the lesson, use a mixture of further storytelling together with drama, visual sources and texts to build a secure understanding of the story. Then ask pupils to suggest questions that they would like to ask about this extraordinary story. They may not arrive at the exact enquiry question, but it will be in the right region. Emphasise that we know the <i>story</i> that led up to Becket's death, but our challenge now is to produce an historical <i>explanation</i> of these events. Why will this be difficult? Why are we likely to disagree? Use the conclusion (a) to revisit early causation work carried out in Year 7; and (b) to look ahead and launch the new enquiry question: Why did Becket and Henry's quarrel turn bitter and fatal?</p> <p><i>For homework, pupils gather their initial ideas in response to the question, ready for next lesson.</i></p>
Lesson 2	<p>Use Activities 7, 8, 9 and 15. Discuss Activity 15 fully and get pupils talking about what this question is focusing upon and what it isn't. Don't seek consensus here (it would be hard to find!); just get them interested in the problem. By the end of the lesson they are able to choose their own structure as a basis for the essay.</p>
Lesson 3	<p>Recap the previous lesson by asking pupils specifically how close they think they got to answering the enquiry question. What else do they think they might need to do? Focus now on paragraphs as they try to convert their preferred patterns and charts into a written essay. Discuss what a good paragraph is like in a causal argument. Revisit elements of their oral arguments from Lesson 2. How is all that speaking and listening going to help us to argue well on paper? Now use Activities 11 and 13 to start to get paragraphs shaped and reshaped.</p> <p><i>For homework, pupils refine their structure and carry out work based on Activity 14 (using sources, textbooks, etc.).</i></p>
Lesson 4	<p>Pupils spend the lesson writing their essays, with built-in master classes and mini-workshops as the teacher intervenes just two or three times with discussions of particular decisions that pupils are making and how they are solving their organisational problems. Conclude the lesson by hearing some sample paragraphs and discussing the way the different causal arguments differ. Essays are handed in for formative feedback.</p>
Lesson 5	<p>Review and discuss completed essays. Pupils read each other's essays, noticing and reflecting on: Who thought long-term causes were most significant, and how did they argue this? Who thought short-term causes were most significant, and how did they argue this? Who ignored short, medium and long altogether and had different sorts of big points? And so on. Follow this up by building further reflection in the second half of the lesson with counter-factual reasoning exercises. Discuss the 'What if ...' possibilities. Which were the straws that broke the camel's back? What if X hadn't happened or Y hadn't been the case? Finish by putting the long-term cause advocates on the spot: Can they <i>really</i> claim that the fatal conclusion was inevitable? What if ...? What if ...?</p> <p><i>For homework, pupils work on a chart comparing the methods they used to argue about causes in this enquiry with the methods they used in an earlier causation enquiry – for example, one on the Battle of Hastings.</i></p>



What Katie did: a 90-minute professional development activity

This activity is designed for a department meeting or in-service training.

■ Aims

- to stimulate shared professional reflection on pupils' learning about causal reasoning;
- to help teachers to think about the relationship between structuring an argument and building vocabulary;
- to broaden teachers' repertoire of practical techniques for achieving the above;
- to explore, together, how particular learning paths and activity choices might secure particular kinds of progression.

■ Suggested in-service training procedure

Copy pages 52 to 54 as handouts for each member of your teacher group.

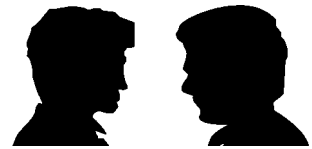
- 1 Lead groups of three in tackling two or three of the activities in Chapter 2. (30 minutes)
- 2 Read Katie's essay (see PD sheet 1). It is best if someone reads it aloud and captures something of Katie's energy and patterns of emphasis. Participants identify *what Katie is doing well*. (Ignore, for the moment, what she might be doing badly.) Discuss. (20 minutes)
- 3 Leaving aside the introduction and conclusion, participants quickly identify the *main theme* of each paragraph in the essay. (5 minutes)
- 4 Study PD sheet 2 ('What is 12-year-old Katie doing well?'). Compare the list of strengths on that sheet with the group's own responses and discussion emerging from **2** above. (10 minutes)
- 5 Look at the list of all nine activities on PD sheet 2 ('Backwards planning'). Try to work out which *three* activities Katie's teacher got her to do *in the lead-up to writing this essay*. In other words, what signs do you see of learning that may have resulted from one or more of these techniques? Compare. Discuss. (15 minutes)

The answer is (a), (b) and (e), but make sure that participants are clear that Katie has used *all* the techniques before in other enquiries. Katie's use of (a), (b) and (e) can be seen very clearly from the emphases, patterns and vocabulary that she chooses to adopt in this essay, but if teachers select other items – they usually do – this shows how learning can endure and carry over from earlier enquiries.

- 6 From which of the remaining activities would Katie *now* benefit? (10 minutes)

This is a chance to think about where Katie should go next. It helps teachers to get away from simplistic progression models, winching Katie up to a supposed next level. Instead, teachers must reflect on the range of possibilities for improving her causal reasoning and written argument. An obvious suggestion is (g), for this is a means, now, to feed in more stylistic modelling and control. Activity (i) is also a possibility, for we could query whether Katie has *really* answered the question in the title. Equally, continued use of (a), (b) and (e) may continue to benefit her.

- 7 PD sheet 3 contains a summary of possible principles for medium and long-term planning. Give this to teachers to take away in order to reflect upon their own definitions of progression in this area.



1 Katie's essay: Why did Henry and Becket's quarrel end in murder?

My introduction

This was not just an ordinary quarrel. It was a very BIG quarrel and I am going to tell you why it got so big and why Becket ended up DEAD because he shouldn't of ended up dead it should of been a quarrel but it became a **MURDER**. There a lots of reasons why and good historians try to explain problems and say WHY things happened and I am going to tell you **WHY**.

You could say and lots of people do say that it was all an accident. Henry didn't mean Becket to be killed he just got angry and he was always angry and chewing rushes on the floor. One day his loyal knights heard him moaning about Becket and saying 'Who will rid me of this troublesome priest?' and so they decided to please him and off they went. Even then, it was all an accident because Henry sent a messenger. The messengers that Henry sent to stop the knights did not reach them in time. It was terribly sad really.

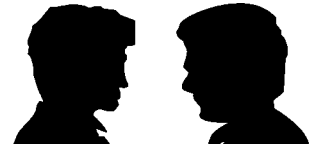
But I say that it was not accident. I think that there were deeper **LONG-TERM** reasons that meant the clash would happen anyway. It was all to do with the power and the pride of the church and the power and the pride of the king. The only accident was WHEN it happened. It was definitely going to happen. Henry was the kind of king who just wanted to be top dog of everything. He just wanted to be in charge and he was doing all kinds of things to make the government stronger at this time. The church was *just one* of the things he was taking on. *just one!!* It was an accident that a toughie like Becket came along at that moment but sooner or later there was bound to be the **CLASH OF THE TITANS!!** this is because the medieval church was very powerful. It was an international organisation. It was a very very very very powerful institution. You didn't mess with the Pope or the Archbishops. But English kings were getting more and more powerful all the time. If Henry hadn't had a go at an archbishop someone would have done.

The monarchy was very important to the monarchy. You had to keep on showing the nobles and the bishops and everyone that the king was in charge. No king could take things for granted. It wasn't so long ago that William had come along and just taken power. So for example, Henry had to show people that he was tough. He had to show that he didn't need the church. He had to show he had **AUTHORITY**. This is why in 1170 he tried to show that he did not need Becket. He ordered the Archbishop of York to crown his son as the next King of England. This job was supposed to be done by the Archbishop of Canterbury only. So it was Henry's way of saying – look here, I can do what I like. I am in charge of crowns.

Becket was a bit of an oddball – true. But the church often threw up oddballs. He wasn't the first to try to be the champion of the church and he wasn't the last either. In a way, the king egged him on. He became the king's special adviser in 1154 and they were great mates. So the church almost got extra power from the king. Besides, Becket wasn't that super human, he was sometimes a coward he ran away to France in 1164 after the fuss about church courts. Henry's fury was fury at the church.

So in conclusion I would say that Becket and Henry's quarrel ended in Becket's murder because the clash of the big titans was going that way. It could of happened the next year, it could of happened the next century, but it was going to happen. It was **INEVITABLE** Their personalities made it happen that way and then but we were going to see big fireworks later too for example with King John and the Pope. English kings were on a power kick in this part of the Middle Ages and the only thing that stood in their way was **the power and pride of the church!**

this is my essay
and it is all my own work.
Katie



2 What is 12-year-old Katie doing well?

- She understands that an historical explanation occurs in response to a **problem**.
- She understands that an historical explanation must involve **argument**.
- She is able first to isolate and then to flesh out the main **components** of her argument.
- She considers **other points of view** and signals her rejection of them.
- She is sufficiently secure in her historical **knowledge** to make a coherent, analytic case. In other words, she can 'move

about' within the narrative in order to climb **out of** that narrative.

- She has an analytic, historical vocabulary – especially **abstract nouns** – which she can deploy fluently.
- She pulls in **historical detail** appositely. She avoids superfluous detail.
- She locates the problem in a **wide historical framework**.

■ Time to plan *backwards*

Katie wrote her essay at the end of Year 7. Her enquiry lasted for seven 50-minute lessons. The final draft was produced in Lesson 6 and its homework. Lesson 7 was reserved for reflection on the essays and on the whole enquiry.

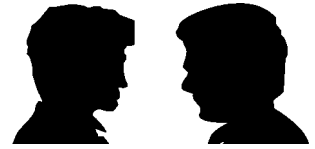
During the seven-lesson enquiry, many activities were carried out. Many of these were intended to build narrative knowledge, imagination and fascination in pupils. They included role-play, storytelling, work with sources (both written and visual) and so on.

Prior to writing this essay, however, the teacher chose three of the activities listed to steer the pupils' thinking into *causal reasoning*, and into the *organisational problem involved in constructing a written argument*.

Which of these three activities do you think Katie did? Study her essay again to see if you can work out the three activities she experienced.

(Katie has done all of the following activities within other enquiries at earlier stages in the year.)

- Relative importance continuum
- Short-, medium- and long-term diagram
- Free sorting and finding her own headings
- Sorting using given headings
- Lumping: making bigger substantive concepts for organising ideas
- Splitting: choosing smaller substantive concepts for organising ideas
- Using headings as a basis for making up first sentences of paragraphs
- Hunting for detail to act as 'little points' to support her 'big points'
- Playing '1, 2, 3, change the question!'



3 Progress in practice

Some principles for securing progression in causal reasoning

How can we help pupils to *get better* at the thinking involved in constructing explanations?

- **Teach them to *classify*:** short, medium, long; political, social, economic, cultural ...; personalities, peasants, Paris, poor ...; central, peripheral ...
- **Teach them to *find pattern*:** 'Oh look! short, medium, long is similar to my most important, least important!', 'Can we show that in a shape?', 'What shape might we use to show that connection?'
- **Teach them to *question patterns*:** 'I don't agree with your hierarchy – I think that one goes there and so perhaps we need to break out of this line altogether.'
- **Give them the *language for describing patterns*:** 'These are linked; these are interdependent; that one could have been effective on its own; this one couldn't; this is a trend, but this is an accident; this arose from social problems, this was to do with personality ...'
- **Present the historical problem as an *organisational challenge*:** 'Where shall I put this fact or idea?' Make it physical; let them see it.
- **Teach them to reflect upon *general and particular, big points and little points*:** 'I shall group these together into one cause or shall I ...?'
- **Teach them to see *similarities and differences between causation enquiries tackled a month/a term/a year ago*:** 'Was money *the main reason* for rebellion against Charles?' is similar to/different from that causation enquiry we did in Year 7: 'Was Henry's stubbornness *the main reason* for the quarrel with Becket?', 'Let's invent a *different kind* of causation question on Charles ...', 'Think back to that causation question we asked about the Reformation ...'
- **Teach them to recognise *types of causation question*:** 'This enquiry seems to be about blame, but that one we did last term was about working out which cause was the most important ...'
- **Teach them to *change the question*** – and see what happens!
- **Teach them to talk about the *scope of the question*:** 'Which factors are relevant in this question which wouldn't be in that one ...?'
- **Teach them to *experiment on their own*:** 'Now, this time, arrange the cards *however you like*', but hone your debriefing skills if you are to draw out the pupils' learning skilfully.
- **Teach them to notice *their own and others' use of language*:** for example, make them listen out for conditionals as they automatically engage in counterfactual reasoning ('but *if* that hadn't happened then, that couldn't have happened'; 'would that have been so important *if* the king hadn't ...?') As they are helped to reflect on their oral language use, pupils become more reflective and thoughtful about its use in written argument.

We can do this by:

- devising and repeating departmental techniques across the Key Stage (for example, types of diagram, types of speaking-frame, card-sorting exercises, linking and connecting activities, ways of attacking a text with cause/consequence in mind, giving them a 'listening agenda' to help them to concentrate, etc.);
- modelling the thinking;
- giving pupils *time* to own a new idea by talking about it in pairs or processing it on their own;
- structuring speaking and listening activities tightly and purposefully (short sharp bursts, lots of praise, lots of 'planned teacher interventions' that intrigue and invite curiosity, stop while the 'going is good', celebrate *before* anyone goes off task);
- limiting the information/ideas that pupils are dealing with so that they can see the wood as well as the trees (so that they can see what a cause is, crisply, clearly, succinctly; so that they can see the *shape* of an argument, the *pattern* of a case, instead of just a lot of detail).

Chapter summary

- * This chapter presents teaching approaches that will help pupils to enjoy challenging historical fiction, explore its features, and replicate some of its conventions in their own writing. The main focus is on Kevin Crossley-Holland's novel, *The Seeing Stone*, and its recreation of life in a manor in the Welsh marches in 1199–1200.
- * The chapter draws upon a variety of current educational research and projects based on pupils' learning at Key Stages 2 and 3, and in both English and history. It marries direct teaching of grammar and stylistic conventions (proposed by the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools and the Key Stage 3 Strategy in Literacy across the Curriculum) with more informal use of literature to develop pupils' ear and aesthetic sense.
- * The conceptual framework ranges across all aspects of historical learning but particularly diversity and characteristics of past situations (NC Key Elements 2a and b). Indirectly, it prepares for the building of secure outline narrative and chronology (NC Key Element 1), in that key moments in the political narrative are established by the chosen novel.
- * The chapter offers a rationale for reading and writing historical fiction in history lessons, showing how a strong, explicit focus on language and literature can improve historical understanding, and how, conversely, the constraints of the historical setting can improve pupils' wider language development.
- * Pupil borrow the patterns and rhythms of a text extract to construct a twelfth-century character viewpoint; they explicitly borrow technical characteristics of literary style and apply these in their own writing; and finally they construct their own mini-works of historical fiction, using a 'story recipe' to create a fully imagined historical world. Each activity either stands alone or could be used to complement and reinforce others.
- * The activities are designed to stretch the *full range of ability*.
- * Enquiry question chosen as the setting for the activities:
What makes a good historical story about the twelfth century?

'That shows how much you don't know,' said Serle, and he stuffed his mouth full of mutton.

'What do you mean?' I said.

'I mean ...' said Serle, but his mouth was so full he couldn't go on.

'What do you mean, Serle?' I repeated.

Serle chewed and chewed and swallowed the mutton. 'I mean two things,' he said. 'First, you're not good enough at your Yard-skills to be a squire or a knight. You're not, are you? All you're good at is archery.'

'I'm getting better,' I cried. 'I keep practising.'

'Squires use swords,' said Serle. 'Swords and lances, not bows and arrows.' Then he stuffed his mouth again, and chewed, and spat out a piece of gristle. 'And this is the second thing,' he said. 'Our father doesn't mean you to be a squire.'

'How do you know?' I cried.

Serle was half-smiling. 'Haven't you thought about it? A man may have two sons, or three sons, or ten sons, but it's only the firstborn who inherits the manor.'

'But ...'

'Think about it, Arthur! The most you can hope for is a little land, with my agreement.'

'Why with your agreement?'

'Because it could have been mine. Do you want to weaken our father's manor? Do you want to break it up?'

'But ...'

'Is that what you want?'

'No! No, it's not!'

'And how can you make a good marriage without your own manor? Have you thought about that? You can't.'

'I will!' I shouted.

'You can't. You're good at reading and writing, Arthur,' said Serle, 'and that's just as well. You must become a monk, or a priest if you want.'

'I won't,' I shouted.

'Or even a schoolman. Our father said you'd make a good schoolman.'

'Why do you hate me?' I asked in a low voice.

Crossley-Holland (2000b: 151–2)

Context

A How fiction helps fact

● Texts as tools for thinking

One reason why a text is such a good tool to think with is its effect upon the imagination. It is hard to think of any account of the past that does not start a process of visualising in the head, a sort of wondering in pictures.

Nowhere is this more powerfully realised than in historical fiction. The vividness of language, the faithfulness to period detail and the dynamic of story combine to whisk us into another world. Whether we are driven along by *reading* compelling fiction, or exercising the effort, meticulous research and disciplined imagination of *writing* it, fiction takes some beating as a tool for historical thinking. It is as if another world breaks into this one.

But to involve pupils in this process, whether reading or writing, is extremely challenging. It is so difficult that until recently it was rarely attempted, other than with isolated, skilful teacher enthusiasts or perhaps with the very able pupil capable of tackling long texts independently. What we need are techniques and approaches that allow us to open up this activity to the full ability range.

There is now ample evidence, from different kinds of curriculum development project and from empirical research, that it can be done. What is more, its effects upon motivation and classroom atmosphere are transforming.

● The need to escape from ‘cold floorboard syndrome’

Many attempts to get pupils to write fiction have been little more than bad empathy exercises – dreary ‘pretend you are’ narratives of the ‘Imagine you’re a badger’ variety. Without support and training in how to control atmosphere and plot through language, and with inadequate historical knowledge, pupils end up with the worst kind of dull, usually unhistorical, accounts:

I get up at 5.00 a.m. and my feet go down on the cold floorboards. I hunt for my feeble rags and eat my dry crust for breakfast. Then I make my way with the other pauper apprentices to the factory ...

This kind of thing really is not worth the effort. I used to call it ‘cold floorboard syndrome’. Such are the descriptions – rarely period-specific – that pupils lean on, devoid of the knowledge and skill that they need to create atmosphere, mood or tension.

● Demanding texts for demanding thoughts

In the 1990s, many of us had a lot more success in getting pupils to read historical fiction than in getting them to write it. Devoting the best part of a term to reading Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, using film, taped dialogue, lots of reading aloud by me and all manner of drama and role-play to support it, I was able to work my way through the entire novel with a middle-ability Year 8 group.

It was well worth it. I had never before been able to cultivate such a sense of period. The vivid characters were memorable to the

pupils and became a spur to pupil questioning. Although I did not have as many techniques as I have now for helping all pupils to access the difficult text, I started to realise then that pupils need to encounter demanding texts if they are to think demanding thoughts. The historical curiosity raised in the pupils by character, setting and plot made me realise that this was not too long to spend on a novel. With well-structured lessons, it was efficient and productive use of classroom time. With the novel as a springboard and constant reference point, they gained deep knowledge and a fierce fascination with the past.

At this time, I was, however, quite hopeless at getting pupils to *write* fiction. I made some feeble attempts prior to reading the novel, and also during it, where they tried to create their own mini-chapters. Although I kindled a fair bit of enthusiasm for the task, the results were always disappointing. They just could not find the adult register, the control over mood or plot to make their little stories live.

Since then I have conducted many more experiments in my own teaching and through many other teachers, from trainee to experienced, and the results are very different. This is because there have been other, wider developments on which the history teacher can draw. Two of these deserve detailed comment.

The first, the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools in England and its follow-up in the English strand of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, is a broader development on which history teachers can draw. The second is collaborative projects between history and English teachers, such as the EACH project and the work of Beth Brooke and Dave Martin.

● Direct teaching of writing at Key Stage 2

The achievements of the government’s National Literacy Strategy in transforming writing in primary schools are often associated with non-fiction text-types: report writing, explanations, instructions, discussions and so on. But continued attention has been paid to pupils’ creative and imaginative writing of stories. This has been linked up with other aspects of learning, such as ‘sentence-level’ work on grammar. In the resource, *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE, 2000), a video and guidance book for teachers, pupils at Key Stage 2 are taught to gain control over their writing and to understand how grammar works in order to try out new styles. They learn to create effects that add delay, suspense or mystery to their writing. It is a linking up of technical skill and understanding with creative and experimental purposes.

Secondary school history teachers who know about such techniques have new entry points into historical learning that simply did not exist 10 years ago.

● Collaborative projects between history and English

Meanwhile, some collaborative projects at Key Stage 3 have helped history teachers to see what was missing in their earlier practice. At the same time, English teachers have been enthused by the opportunities in history for pupils to learn to write creatively within the disciplined framework of factual details about a period setting.

One such project is the EACH project (see www.dorset-lea.org.uk/projects/each/each1.htm). This project first took place in 2001, in

Dorset, and lasted for a term. During the first half-term, pupils researched the medieval period in history lessons and read/explored historical novels in English lessons. During the second part of the term, pupils wrote their own historical fiction in both history and English lessons. Beth Brooke and Dave Martin, English and history specialists respectively, have written up this work, complete with examples and guidance (Brooke and Martin, 2002).

Brooke and Martin make the point that although fictionalised narrative writing is well established in schools, in history as well as in English, all too often it displays very little imaginative or empathetic engagement with the subject matter. In order to overcome this, pupils need all kinds of structures or ‘creative constraints’. They need direct teaching of certain language techniques, time to prepare for writing through drama, discussion and visualisation activities, and clear guidance on character, setting and plot.

A setting is particularly crucial in an historical novel, as it is one of the ways in which a writer establishes the historical credentials of the text. Pupils can use a range of sources together with examples of other fiction to construct an authentic setting. Sources are essential, if pupils are to discern and enjoy the characteristics of a fully imagined historical world. See here how Todd (1997), in the historical novel *Man Eater*, creates such a setting. One of the characters, Quintilian, is crossing the forum in a town in southern Italy:

Being the third day of the Festival of Mars, the forum was packed to capacity. Butchers’ cleavers splintered their blocks; mongrels plundered the scrap bins. Shouts of ‘stop thief’ or ‘make way for the chariot’ mingled with smells of pies and poultry, pickles and pancakes. A spice seller skidded on a fish head, and a thousand exotic scents exploded in the air. Cinnamon and nutmeg and cumin clung to Quintilian as he bumbled his way through the shoppers and the charlatans. You could buy anything here today from pastry cutters to ivory plaques, cucumbers to scribes.

And the sun beat mercilessly on it all, pounding his head like a pestle.

Todd (1997)

The writer could have just said, ‘Quintilian crossed the smelly forum’, and this is precisely what many pupils would do without explicit teaching. Instead, the noise and heat, the sights and smells, take us into a jangling world, through which, at the same time, we sense the constraints upon Quintilian. The setting makes Quintilian interesting, and the use of Quintilian’s viewpoint makes the setting come alive through his eyes and other senses. Brooke and Martin comment ‘the sense of the busyness of the forum is created by list sentences that pack in lots of detail and by the use of strong verbs such as plundered, mingled, bumbled and splintered, all of which are highly descriptive and which add a sense of character or individuality to the scene’ (2002: 32).

A close study of such texts can show pupils what to aim for. At the same time, structured exercises in language techniques, such as delaying tactics in a paragraph or sentence, or the use of more

powerful verbs, will give pupils the confidence that they really can create and sustain interesting effects, engaging the reader with another world.

The following extract by a Year 7 pupil from the EACH project shows knowledge and understanding of Roman entertainment and, interestingly, of attitudes to violence as entertainment. The pupil conveyed this by making his first-person narrator view the events through his eyes. This consistent viewpoint is a mark of mature writing. We pick up the narrator’s ambivalent attitude towards the games straightaway. That ambivalence is explained only at the end, in one short, direct statement, much more powerful than giving it away earlier:

‘And now, ladies and gentlemen, I show you a battle of gore, a battle of death, a battle of gladiatoooooooooooooorrrrrsssss!’

The crowd went completely wild with enthusiasm as twelve men ran out into the sand covered arena. Five of them were Thracians, four were Retarius and the last three were Samnites. They all stood in a polygglon shape around the arena, each the same distance away from the next. At the signal, they all charged towards each other, swinging axes, swords and nets in all directions with the aim of killing someone to amuse the crowd.

My best friend was in the battle.

Year 7 work quoted in Brooke and Martin (2002: 34)

Our viewing is only interrupted to hear this last piece of information, which is essential to the plot. It has been carefully positioned, to engage our interest and to invite us to continue to view the situation through the author’s eyes. Such techniques can be learned.

It is this link between securing a consistent viewpoint and introducing essential information to the reader that cements a strong connection between historical learning and pupils’ writing development. Whilst pupils experiment with and reflect upon *ways* of conveying essential information to the reader – ways appropriate to the viewpoint – they are at the same time forced to engage with probable attitudes, beliefs, values and experiences of the period.

● How fiction helps historical learning

Here are four key ways in which the use of historical fiction – reading it, writing it and using one to help the other – can help historical learning:

- Fiction actually gets us closer to the facts. Pupils can access a more faithful, a more fully imagined, a more detailed and a more complex picture than they can in a textbook. Jill Paton Walsh captures the seriousness of the attention to historical setting in her comment, ‘The writer may invent characters, conversations, circumstances, but if the book is a good one, the invention will all be with the grain of the known historical evidence, and will illuminate’ (Paton Walsh, 1994). We can take this good advice quite literally by giving pupils sources to work with and helping them learn what it means to ‘go with the grain of the evidence’.

3 Imagining the past through historical fiction

- Fiction gives pupils a range of historical perspectives – cultural, aesthetic, economic, social, political, religious, technological – through which to investigate the past. The range of perspectives has been a National Curriculum requirement since 1991, but the cultural, aesthetic and social perspective easily becomes lost. Equally, pupils might learn quite a lot about the political background in their lessons, but they do not always relate it to the social, economic, cultural and so on. In the Kevin Crossley-Holland novel *The Seeing Stone*, pupils are constantly reminded of how changing political context, a new king or new laws, affects the lives of the marcher lords and squires and even the people of their manors.
- Story writing gives pupils a focus to their historical research. Pupils must become dogged in their search for authentic detail with which to furnish character, setting and plot. They must create characters and settings that are as faithful to records from the past as they can possibly be.
- The language of clear explanation, the straightforward narrative of political affairs, the analytic argument and so forth are all dispassionate discourses – modes of expression in which we rightly train our pupils as part of the practice of the discipline of history. But such discourse is not the only or even necessarily the *best* way to quest for the truths about the past, or to receive or convey those truths. Sometimes, we need to avoid the language of quick and easy clarity. Sometimes the language of intimation rather than explanation gives a surer grasp of events and their implications. Learning to use more poetic language in the context of the past can help pupils to steer clear of the deceit of the obvious. Such language offers oblique, surprising and compelling ways of encountering the multi-dimensional world of the past.

Thus the English teacher's concerns and the history teacher's concerns act as creative constraints upon each other. The English teacher is concerned with character, setting and plot. The history teacher is concerned with sense of period, going with 'the grain of the evidence', testing out the possible against known facts and inference from evidence, the creation of authentic atmosphere and the avoidance of anachronism.

This is why the history teacher need fear neither the technical language teaching nor the explicit discussion of language that work with fiction entails. These things are not likely to take us away from the history. If we know what we are doing, they will take us closer in.

It is therefore thoroughly worthwhile for the history teacher to learn more of how literature can aid language development.

B Literature and language development

● The tune on the page

What kinds of historical fiction will be most transformative with pupils? The 'texts that teach' (Meek, 1988) are ones that challenge

and make demands on readers. They require readers to become active and involved in the world of the text.

The paradox at work here is that such demanding texts are also precisely those texts that have built-in access points. The work of Myra Barrs and Valerie Cork, *The Reader in the Writer* (2001), adds yet more weight to the argument that reading challenging, high-quality fiction will develop skill in writing. The special mark of a literary work, according to Louise Rosenblatt, is that it can be 'lived through' by the reader, who is then 'absorbed in the quality and structure of the experience engendered by the text' (Rosenblatt, 1978). Surely children who have had this kind of literary experience are more likely to realise that language can create worlds?

Barrs and Cork set out to test that assumption and, specifically, to discover if what children write reflects the nature and quality of their reading. They gathered evidence of the effects of children's literary experiences on their writing and then considered the most effective approaches to the use of literature in the teaching of writing.

The detail of Barrs and Cork's empirical, qualitative research makes inspirational reading. They emphasise the need for an aesthetic stance towards a text, making readers more attentive not only to meanings, but also to the words themselves, to sounds, patterns and nuances. Such sounds and patterns concern large-scale structures in texts, too. We already know that rhythmic structure is a powerful facilitator of memory. Rhythms, tunes and aural patterns in texts are likewise helpful to young writers. The Year 5 pupils in the research echoed the tunes and patterns of stories they encountered. These young writers began to mark, discernibly, the 'tune' of a story – and to do so with the reader in mind.

Barrs and Cork describe a year-long project of data collection, analysis and conclusions involving six teachers and their classes in six London schools. Detailed case studies were produced with six pupils who had been exposed to a range of literary texts. The main effect of children's reading of literary texts was that it encouraged them to write differently, moving out of what Barrs and Cork term their 'home style'. All children, even those with special needs, seemed capable of picking up in this way on the language of text and of adopting a more literary style, especially if they were made familiar with the text through their teacher's reading aloud.

Cork, Barrs and their researchers looked for quite specific indicators of children's borrowing – these included aspects of sentence structure, such as non-right-branching sentences, the use of mental state verbs, literary turns of phrase, specific echoes of literary texts and a clear sense of a reader. The progress that the children made through intensive exposure to texts and a range of activities and discussion relating to them was quite startling.

One Year 5 pupil, Sophie, influenced by Henrietta Branford's historical novel, *Fire, Bed and Bone*, made demonstrable progress. At the start of the year, all her writing simply bounced through the story in the straightforward recount mode of the immature writer:

The next morning we all put on our swim suits grabbed the pool key and a towel and we dived in the lovely swimming (pool) outside our villa. A strange man appeared at the swimming pool gate put his hand through the gate got our pool key and ran off with it.

Year 5 work quoted in Barrs and Cork (2001: 86)

No control, no timing, no conscious delay, no sense of reader – it is very boring. But in her final piece of writing, Sophie slows the pace. Clearly influenced by Henrietta Branford, she slows us down, sets the scene, creates an atmosphere and introduces essential information to the reader in a deliberate way:

I heard the wolves again last night, howling at the tops of their voices, long and loud, big and bold.

I lay with shivers all over my body.

I went out to my secret hunting field just now. I stayed out there for ages. I came in through the window, like the ghost of the cat next door, whose life was meant to end.

Year 5 work quoted in Barrs and Cork (2001: 98)

Another Year 5 pupil in Barrs and Cork's study, Yossif, with English as an Additional Language (EAL), moved from being not yet completely confident in English (Yossif's mother is Spanish and his father is from Sierra Leone), through to a much greater control over syntax, a more conscious literary style, and a much stronger sense of the reader. Under the influence of Branford's text, Yossif made the most exceptional progress in all the indicators. Listen carefully to the rhythms of the prose in this extract from Henrietta Branford's novel, *Fire, Bed and Bone*, and then consider how Yossif has borrowed from it. He uses Branford's rhythms to gather his own images relevant to his world.

This is Henrietta Branford telling her story through the eyes of a hunting dog:

I know the world beyond the house. I know Rufus's byre. I know Joan's house which stands beside the village field. I know all the village. I know the Great House barn and sheep pens; I know the great house fields. I know every small place where oats and beans and barley grow ...

I am a creature of several worlds. I know the house and the village and have my place in both. I know the pasture land beyond the great field. I know the wildwood. I know the wetlands all along the river, where every great green leaf that you step on has a different smell. I know the high, dry heath.

Branford, 1997, cited in Barrs and Cork (2001: 148)

Yossif, after being invited to write a poem, used this same device of repetition:

I know my hostel, behind my door where I sleep, all cosy and warm in the winter dreaming.
I know the market at the beginning of the street
I know the street of old Kent road they are busy all the time
I know the cab drivers which are always busy
I know the coach park near my hostel
I know the sweet shop where every thing is cheap
I know the Royal Mail car park behind the football pitch
I know the Royal Mail post Office where you can send packages to Africa, Europe and the wildworld ...
I know the old dirty laundry
I know the school in Peckham Queens road
I know the clean and neat mosque which you can pray to God.

Year 5 work quoted in Barrs and Cork (2001: 148)

Branford's device acts as a rhythmic scaffold for Yossif's ideas. The reader pictures the geographical features of his world and gains a strong sense of places that are significant to him. Branford's structure has helped Yossif to gather images.

Barrs and Cork tell us that Yossif began the year as a very inexperienced writer in English. Early pieces, which were written in language close to speech, did not greatly extend Yossif's writing ability in English. It was when his teacher began to put more emphasis on the study of traditional tales that Yossif began to develop visibly as a writer. 'He embarked confidently on retelling a range of stories, helped by his good ear and his ability to remember and echo whole passages, sometimes long after they were first told' (Barrs and Cork, 2001: 154).

C Kevin Crossley-Holland

● *The Seeing Stone*

Kevin Crossley-Holland is a master storyteller of traditional tales. As the inspiration for activities in this chapter, I have chosen the first book in his trilogy on the Arthurian legend, *The Seeing Stone*. This is the story of Arthur, a 13-year-old boy living in a manor in the Welsh marches in 1199. Arthur seems to have a mysterious relationship with his namesake living in another time. Crossley-Holland runs the two stories in parallel. First, we climb into Arthur's twelfth-century world. Then, through Arthur's eyes, the Arthurian legend begins, only dimly, to appear before us. It appears in Arthur's 'seeing stone' – a gift to him from the mysterious Merlin.

The medieval tale of life in the manor during the twelfth century is crisply told, Arthur's viewpoint is solidly consistent throughout and the vivid and economical use of language helps us to understand an array of ideas, behaviours and beliefs with a breathtaking economy of style.

3 Imagining the past through historical fiction

In this extract Gatty, the reeve's daughter, has just made a sign of the cross with pig's blood on Arthur's head. The pig was called Stupid. The blood was spilt by Arthur when his older brother, Serle, pushed him:

So Gatty and I hoisted ourselves back up onto the churchyard wall.

'When you signed that cross on my head ...' I began. 'You know, with Stupid's blood ...'

Gatty nodded.

'Well ... Why?'

'I saw Serle, didn't I. He shouldered you. He made you drop the blood.'

'Yes, but why the cross?'

'Just came into my head. I thought as you were a Crusader, like them Crusaders you told me about. Serle's a Saracen.'

I put one arm round Gatty's sopping shoulders.

'Thanks Gatty,' I said.

'Where is Jerusalem, anyhow?' asked Gatty.

'A long way. A very long way from here.'

'Is that further than Chester?' asked Gatty.

'Oh, Gatty!' I said, and I laughed.

'Is it?'

'Much, much further,' I said. 'Why?'

'Why's because I want to see where Jesus was born. Instead of Ludlow fair, let's go to Jerusalem.'

'Gatty,' I said. 'You can't walk to Jerusalem.'

'I can and all,' said Gatty.

'You can't,' I said. 'Only a magician could. It's across the sea.'

Gatty lowered her head and looked at the ground.

'I didn't know that,' she said in a quiet voice.

Crossley-Holland (2000b: 102)

Arthur is an unusual hero. He is like the hero in an ancient tragedy, in that we have to wait to see what is done to him. He is discovering what is around him, rather than affecting it. As Arthur discovers his world, so do we.

● The tale and the pupil's ear

Kevin Crossley-Holland has spoken and written a great deal about what being a writer of historical fiction and traditional tales is all about. In an essay on story-telling, he unpacks the storytelling process for us and comments upon its educational value. Here he comments on the qualities ascribed to traditional storytellers. These include:

thoughtfulness: the storyteller cares for and gives proper weight to each character and action; he or she is involved in a tale but may also stand outside it and comment upon it

accuracy: mastery of language; no action or thought

or feeling or description is greater than the language which expresses it

vividness: the use of words to make memorable images and memorable sounds.

Crossley-Holland (2000a: 18)

Central to Crossley-Holland's art and to his own beliefs about its value is the the impact of a story – and especially a traditional tale – upon the ear; the deep learning that results from that conjunction of compelling narrative and vivid language. Whilst he praises the work of teachers in using stories to launch projects, raise issues, carry out drama, stimulate artwork and so on, he states emphatically that all this is secondary:

All this activity is potentially extremely valuable, but is also all secondary ... I simply want to assert that none of it is or can be a substitute for a young child's primary experience of hearing or reading the tale itself. This is the moment at which a child may enter into deep communion, revelling in a tale's drama and music and patterning, apprehending without fully understanding that this story is also in some part her story, and unaware that she is animating the tradition by sharing in it.

Crossley-Holland (2000a: 24)

Crossley-Holland is talking about stories – and especially traditional tales – at work with pupils younger than those at Key Stage 3. But his central point rings true for Key Stage 3 as well: 'the primary experience' of hearing or reading the tale itself is what matters. As history teachers we need to invest more effort in making that 'primary experience' an exultant and a productive one.

Whilst I am just as interested here – perhaps unlike Crossley-Holland – in the subsequent pay-off, such as pupils' writing skill and ensuing historical knowledge, the quality of that 'primary experience' is nonetheless key. It is key because it matters in its own right. It is a part of enjoying history that is denied to the majority of pupils because it is too often judged 'too difficult'. It also matters because the *quality* of that experience – the thrill of being mesmerised by text read aloud with mystery, conviction or power; the thrill of suddenly wanting to persevere with reading for oneself – will affect other aspects of learning: writing, thinking and talking.

Consider the power of this section of the manor court scene towards the end of Crossley-Holland's novel. Lankin, a villein, is found guilty of stealing some mutton. It is Arthur's father, Sir John, who must carry out the sentence of removing Lankin's right hand. Arthur knows that a number of villagers have ganged up on Lankin and prevented witnesses speaking in his favour. There is nothing Arthur can do. Arthur's viewpoint is now so well established that we cannot fail to see everything through his eyes, yet this is so skilfully

realised that no direct emotion of Arthur's intrudes until the last sentence and then only by inference:

Lord Stephen turned to face Lankin. 'Theft,' he said in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, 'is a very serious offence. It is punishable by hanging.' He blinked and screwed up his eyes. 'But Sir John has asked me to reduce your punishment, as he's entitled to do – because he's your lord, and the mutton was his. Lankin, the court finds you guilty of theft, and I therefore sentence you to lose your thieving right hand. Let it be cut off at the wrist.'

Lankin said nothing. No one in the hall said a word.

'Take him out,' said my father.

Then Lord Stephen's two servants stood up and gripped Lankin under his shoulders and walked him out of the hall. My father followed him, but he didn't look at me.

'This court is suspended,' said Lord Stephen, 'until the first day of June in the year of our Lord 1200.'

At once there was commotion in the hall, and a gang of villagers hurried to the door, all of them eager to witness my father draw his sword.

Half this night has gone. Slowly it has burned away. Maybe Lankin did steal the mutton; but even if he did, what Slim and Howell and Ruth and Wat Harelip have done is much worse. They've chopped our village in two; they've wrecked Gatty's and Jankin's betrothal.

How can they sleep? How can my father sleep? I can still hear Lankin screaming.

Crossley-Holland, (2000b: 213–14)

Consider the types of learning that would arise from listening to this passage read aloud, from reading it alone or from discussing its effects:

- Medieval judicial practices are rendered fascinating, disturbing, mysterious. Pupils are always interested in people having their hands chopped off. But Arthur's viewpoint steers that interest and shapes the curiosity by humanising what would otherwise be just another gory fact. *The quality of the text has supported the assimilation of historical knowledge and become a spur to historical thinking.*
- Arthur's direct views are delayed. Although we already know that Arthur is likely to care about these events, Crossley-Holland uses a range of memorable and replicable devices. For example, he delays the directness of the final sentence and then gives us only the tiniest of direct information about the punishment, just the memory of the scream in Arthur's head. He also conveys the formality and stillness of the court room through orderly actions and silence, and then secures an immediate and dramatic contrast of commotion and macabre gawping at a violent act. Even the nouns change – the villagers become a 'gang'. *Pupils*

can see the deliberate shaping of the text in order to secure these effects – effects that reveal the striking contrasts in aspects of medieval life, formality and barbarism, order and basic bloodlust.

- We are reminded of old information for our plot at the end and new shocking implications are introduced but all from Arthur's perspective. Arthur's own moral outrage and, at the same time, his helplessness are conveyed only by questions. The formality and the drama of a manor court, clashing ideas of twelfth-century justice, the rigidity of a social hierarchy, the intolerance of villagers towards anyone different or strange and the severity of punishment, together provide a setting for the creation of tension and atmosphere, timing control and breaks in time. *Our historical setting provides creative constraints for careful control over text structure and language effects. Teachers can use this as a model to support pupils' own writing or to talk about text.*

● Reading for writing and writing for reading

The activities that follow draw from and integrate a blend of the above strategies and principles. They are all based on Crossley-Holland's novel, *The Seeing Stone*. The activities use imitation of Crossley-Holland's style and structure, his 'tunes' and 'rhythms' at the level of sentence and text.

Three underlying purposes and principles need to be borne in mind.

- 1 *At all stages and in all of the following activities, the teacher reading aloud is a core teaching method.* A teacher needs to develop the skill of reading aloud for a pupil audience. It is worth a department investing training time in this alone, as it is of such critical importance. History is atmosphere. History is curiosity. History is energy, expectation and excitement. When we read a text, we interpret it. A reading is a kind of interpretation and it is one of our precision tools for fostering everything from motivation, memory and deep learning to technical competence in grammar and style.
- 2 *A close relationship between reading and writing is assumed throughout.* The ideas in Crossley-Holland's novel are used as seeds – images and rhythms, styles and structures – for teaching pupils to write and for pupils' own story writing. Equally, the writing activities are methods for making pupils stronger, more discriminating and more aesthetically aware as readers. At the moments when we might get a little bogged down with teaching this or that convention, or alerting pupils to this or that technique, we need to remember that pupils' independent reading of entire novels is really the key *overarching* goal. 'Doing things' with novels can accelerate that confidence and competence in reading, and the disposition and desire to read. So we need to keep this goal in mind at all times. Pupils may not spend the rest of their lives writing historical fiction but we certainly hope that they will never stop reading it. Not that the cycle stops there. This reading will promote all kinds of thinking and learning, and will help their writing, whatever kind of writing they end up doing. Only readers become writers.

3 Imagining the past through historical fiction

3 *The activities that follow are based on a judicious blend of direct teaching methods and more informal exploitation of sustained reading of literature.* The activities use devices typical of the government's National Literacy Strategy in primary schools and aspects of the Key Stage 3 Strategy that relate to cross-curricular literacy, to English teaching and to teaching and learning in general. Explicit teaching of grammar, for example, and use of prior learning in this area will be central. At the same time, this is woven in with other methods – the more informal use of literature, and sheer enjoyment of literature – to develop pupils' ear and aesthetic sense.

● Using the activities with other historical novels

Whilst Activity 16 is dependent upon working with this particular novel, similar opportunities exist in many other novels. Activities 18 and 19 could be carried out, freestanding, in relation to any historical novel that has potential for motivating secondary school pupils. There is no need to be limited to this one.

Good historical novels suitable for most Year 7 pupils, and with similar opportunities to this one, include those by Cynthia Harnett, such as *The Wool Pack* and *The Load of Unicorn*; by Henrietta Branford, such as *Fire, Bed and Bone*; and the many novels by Penelope Lively.

That said, I hope that the many passages quoted in this chapter will persuade you that Crossley-Holland's novel, *The Seeing Stone*, is a gem, and well worth an investment in a class set.

■ Arriving at a good enquiry question

Framing an enquiry creates an interesting challenge here. Some history teachers might feel that we do not need an enquiry question in the usual sense. With a little reflection, however, an enquiry question can add some much-needed shaping to a fiction project.

One idea, from Michael Riley's practice, can be found in the textbook *Medieval Minds* (Byrom, Counsell and Riley, 1997). Working with the enquiry question, *What makes a good historical story about the Black Death?*, pupils produce their story and then go on to reflect upon how good they were at making it truly historical. Was there enough factual content? How was it used? Do we feel and see the period? And so on.

The following activities will work well within an enquiry question such as:

What makes a good historical story about the twelfth century?

This will help to add focus to the processes along the way, and it will ensure that plenty of time is available for pupils to discuss the quality of their work, after they have produced some fiction of their own. See the Sample Lesson Sequence on page 76 for one example of how the following activities might be integrated into such an enquiry.

■ Activities

Three activities now follow.

In Activity 16, pupils replicate the style and structure of a short piece of text in Kevin Crossley-Holland's novel. They use this constraint to focus their thinking upon various medieval perspectives and experiences, as revealed in that novel.

In Activity 17, pupils write one or two short paragraphs of their own in which they experiment with the effects of a type of sentence structure. This causes them to reflect upon their writing and to slow the narrative pace. Pupils can either do this within a small section of text for a wider story that they are writing themselves or, as suggested here, simply add an additional section of narrative or description into an existing novel, complementing it with a further historical perspective or a different viewpoint.

In Activity 18, an approach is suggested for helping pupils to devise their own, more substantial historical stories, without falling into the common pitfalls of losing 'period feel', losing the sense of a reader or getting bogged down in unmanageable plots.

Activity 16

Same style, different viewpoint

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

Barrs and Cork concluded that the Year 5 pupil, Yossif (introduced on page 59), made the most striking progress when his teacher put emphasis on traditional tales – reading them, discussing them, basing activities upon them and hearing them read aloud. The rhythms of such texts developed Yossif's ear for English and enhanced his enjoyment of writing by giving him structures and styles to borrow and experiment with (Barrs and Cork, 2001).

Kevin Crossley-Holland's writing is full of opportunities for such imitation and reflection. In *The Seeing Stone*, the large number of very short chapters allow for lots of sudden shifts in literary devices to convey characters' moods, details about the historical setting or narrative information imparted to the reader in a fresh way.

Resource Sheet 16A contains such a chapter in its entirety. It is an ideal base for an activity such as that carried out by Yossif on another text. Here, however, we will use it to secure specific development of historical knowledge and medieval period sensitivity at the same time. Read the passage for yourself first, without looking at my activities, and see what ideas it generates for getting pupils to write in a similar way.

There is a rhythm to imitate here, a 'tune on the page' (Barrs and Cork, 2001). It is the kind of structure that frees a reader and a writer because it pops up memory.

Cognitive psychologists have long reminded us that 'rhythmic structure is a powerful facilitator of verbal memory' (Neisser, 1967). The repetition and chant-like quality of this short passage make it limited, manageable and memorable. But it is not *limiting*. It can be used as a framework for unlocking a lot of thinking and recalling or reshaping a lot of knowledge. Like Yossif, our lower secondary pupils will take to the shape of it. It can support pupils by enabling them to focus upon gathering relevant detail or images.

Ask pupils to construct a similar passage using the same idea of three sorrows, three fears and three joys, *but adopting a different character viewpoint*. This is a substantial and worthwhile challenge in two ways:

- It involves pupils in thinking about the attitudes, values and experiences of an entirely different character. They must therefore think about the needs and views of particular medieval characters in the novel who represent a different gender, age, social group or setting.
- (Not a challenge to be taken lightly ...) It involves breaking out of the consistent viewpoint of this novel (Arthur as narrator) and applying the author's style to a character who has not so far revealed him or herself in this way. This will feel 'odd'. The style is very much Arthur's voice. He likes to withdraw, reflect and categorise things in this way. So we are going outside and beyond the novel by asking a pupil to impose this style on a different character altogether.

If, as a teacher, you are completely clear about these two challenges, then this will inform and strengthen any short, enabling explanation and discussion that you choose to hold before the task.

I suggest writing 'three sorrows, three fears and three joys' for two characters in *The Seeing Stone*:

- Gatty, the reeve's daughter;
- Sir John, Arthur's father.

Gatty is ideal for this exercise. She is 12 – the same age as most of our pupils studying the Middle Ages. Through Arthur's eyes we learn a great deal about her and those like her in the village. After she messes about in the village pond, Arthur is surprised to discover that she has no other clothes to change into. She provides a powerful evocation of peasant life and 'worldview' – one in which 'the world' plays very little part. She is a paradox of great knowledge and no knowledge. Because the hardship of life has already hit her, she is much more like an adult than Arthur, even though she is only 12. She also mysteriously seems to know all kinds of things that shock Arthur, like the fact that the maid is pregnant and the fact that Arthur's elder brother is responsible for this – things that he and the more genteel Grace would not know. On the other hand, she has not the remotest idea of geography or politics (she thinks that she and Arthur will be able to walk to Jerusalem) and, of course, she cannot read.

With **Sir John de Caldicot**, the scope of worries, joys and fears will widen significantly, especially if you choose to do the activity after pupils have read most or all of the novel. By the end of the book, the potential encroachment on Sir John's power by King John starts to become apparent. Sir John has much to worry him and many hopes for his family, his manor and the people of the marches.

■ Pre-activity discussion points

1) Discuss Gatty's possible sorrows with pupils and consider how you might need to prompt them into making worthwhile suggestions.

What will Gatty's sorrows be? Perhaps not knowing anything about the world? Perhaps hunger – the theme of the struggle to find enough to eat seeps through all her actions. Perhaps her brutal father, Hum, the reeve? Perhaps the cruel way the village (including her own father) treats Lankin, father of Jankin? What would be her joys? The many village games she plays, perhaps Arthur's illicit companionship, perhaps her betrothal to Jankin?

2) Discuss Sir John's possible sorrows with pupils. Consider how you might need to prompt them. A focus on one short passage from the book, perhaps reading it aloud to pupils, will focus reflection on Sir John's sorrows, fears and joys.

What will Sir John's sorrows be? Pupils will have no difficulty in thinking of plenty of things here. Although we see all the actions of the tetchy, kindly, witty Sir John through the eyes of Arthur, we gain a strong picture of his concerns and therefore of wider political and social affairs. He is increasingly angry at the new King John and his encroachment on the power of the lords and squires of the marches. Additionally, towards the very end of the book Sir John, as far as we can tell from Arthur, does not want to go on a crusade. The friar comes to preach the crusade, but Sir John is clearly reluctant, worrying about what will happen to the manor while he is away. To what sorts of fears will this give rise?

It is useful to focus on just one short passage before doing such an exercise. Why not use a passage such as that reproduced on Resource Sheet 16B. Then discuss what Sir John's sorrows, fears and joys might be. The extract describes the second visit of a messenger from King John to the Welsh marches. From this passage alone we could work out Sir John's sorrows, fears and joys.

The challenge to extrapolate sorrows, fears and joys is an interesting one because in passages such as this we *never hear Sir John's view*. Arthur's viewpoint is kept consistently throughout Crossley-Holland's novel. Arthur simply describes his father's actions, narrates his words and sometimes offers his own interpretation ('my father is angry because ...'). If we are to borrow Arthur's style, with our 'three sorrows, three joys, three fears' exercise, the evocation of Sir John will have a very different feel.

I have worked out that I have three sorrows, three fears and three joys, so my number may be nine.

My first sorrow is Serle, who is unfair and mean to me. My second sorrow is my tail-bone. I am almost sure it is growing. My third is the secret Lady Alice told me, and the pain she feels. These are the sorrows of my heart and body and head.

My first fear is that my father will never agree to let me go into service away from home. And my second is even worse. I'm not all that good at my Yard-skills, my tilting especially, so what if my father doesn't mean me to be a squire at all? I know Grace likes me and I do hope that we will be betrothed. But my third fear is that my parents may want her to be betrothed to Serle and not to me.

My three joys. The first joy is to go out and about with Gatty, and Tempest and Storm. They're my companions; I am their leader. My second joy is my skill with the longbow. I am the best at that, and have even beaten my father. My third joy is my reading and writing, and what I learn when I talk to Oliver and Merlin.

Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Seeing Stone*, chapter 16

There are only sixteen more days this century, and scarcely a day goes by without something happening. Today another king's messenger rode in.

This messenger told us that all over the country, King John's earls, lords and knights are allowing their tenants to commit offences against forest animals, and against the trees and undergrowth. The king's new laws instruct my father to prevent anyone on his manor from axing living oak trees or ashes, or even cutting their branches. Not only that. The laws say each villager must pay his woodpenny to my father twice each year if he wants to pick up deadwood, and that in any case he can only bring home five loads – one for spring, summer and autumn, and two for the winter.

Five loads! How will people in the village be able to Cork pottage and stay warm? Does King John want his people to freeze? And where can Will get true wood now to make our tables and stools and shelves?

'Our new king seems very eager to be liked,' said my father sarcastically. 'These new restrictions are not just.'

'They're just according to the king's forest laws,' the messenger replied.

'Exactly,' said my father. 'The king does just as he pleases, and now it pleases him to call unjust rules laws.'

Then the messenger told my father that King John intends to appoint a warden for each of his forests.

'But I am the warden of Pike Forest,' said my father angrily.

'You will be answerable to him,' the messenger said. 'From now on, you will pay him all the king's dues you've collected, and he will inspect Pike Forest each month. He and the chief forester will hear cases concerning offences against the king's animals and trees.'

My father is angry not only because the king's new laws reduce his authority, but also because they will cause suffering and everyone will think that he made them....

The messenger raised his document with the king's red wax disk depending from it. 'This is King John's word,' he announced. 'His loyal earls, lords and knights are the strength and health of his kingdom, and the king requires them to enforce his laws.'

My father nodded but he didn't even offer the messenger rye bread and cheese and ale. He simply walked away into the chamber.

Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Seeing Stone*, pp. 254–6

Activity procedure

You might find a template such as Figure 3.1 very useful. You can make the template as much or as little like the original as you think will be helpful in prompting pupils' writing:

● **Figure 3.1** *Template for 'Three sorrows, three fears and three joys'*

I have worked out that I have three sorrows, three fears and three joys.

My first sorrow is ... My second sorrow is ... My third is ...
These are the sorrows of my heart and body and head.

My first fear is ... And my second is ... But my third fear is ...

My three joys. The first is ... My second is ... My third joy is ...

Here is a skilful piece by Cynthia Harnett writing in *The Load of Unicorn*, a novel set in the fifteenth century. Notice how the non-right-branching sentence establishes great control over the description. It allows Harnett to use the description of actions as a tool for conveying the discomfort of the main character. It slows down what is in fact only the briefest of moments, and creates a comic effect.

At that moment, he heard his name called and saw that his father was going downstairs, so he hastily made his bow. *To his astonishment*, she dropped him a curtsy. No one had ever curtsied to him before. *In his panic*, he almost forgot to bow to her mother, who smiled at him indulgently. *Feeling a fool*, he smiled back; then he bolted after his father.

Harnett (1959: 73)

A less skilful writer might turn this into:

His father called him and he ran downstairs.

This tells us nothing about character, development, setting or atmosphere. It is just concerned with hurtling on through the chronology of a story.

The device of non-right-branching sentences can be taught quite directly, by modelling, explanation, discussion and practice. Equally, it is sometimes picked up through frequent work with literary texts. In their research, Barrs and Cork found that pupils particularly remembered the wording and many of the cadences of a particular Crossley-Holland text. These researchers concluded that, under the influence of a text, pupils can adopt a much more literary style (Barrs and Cork, 2001).

What is proposed here is blending the opportunity for such extended 'influence of a text' with judicious use of the more direct teaching proposed in the government's National Literacy Strategy and Key Stage 3 Strategy materials.

Pre-activity explanation and discussion points

First, discuss a section of the Crossley-Holland text where non-right-branching sentences are used. There are many reasons why the short passage reproduced below is vivid and moving, but consider the role of the first and the last sentence in achieving this. Arthur has been given a present that puts him in a state of almost ineffable joy. He has been given a new bow: 'My bow shines in sunlight and candlelight, and the stave's fingerspan taller than I am.' He cannot fully convey his joy in words; instead we feel it

Activity 17

Telling it differently: delaying the main verb or main clause to slow the pace

Understanding the rationale for the activity

As Brooke and Martin (2002) point out, when pupils attempt their own historical fiction, stopping them from bouncing through their story in recount mode, with no feel for the reader's response, can be one of the hardest tasks. When this combines with a lack of 'period feel' it can lead to quite dreadful historical fiction, hard to justify in a history lesson, and achieving nothing for pupils' wider understanding or use of text.

One way of combating this is to help pupils to experiment with the effects of a type of sentence structure that creates a literary feel, whilst causing them to reflect upon their writing and to slow the narrative pace. In such work, you are likely to be building upon story writing that they have carried out in their primary schools. So it is worth reading a publication such as *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE, 2000) or talking to the English department, so that you can find a quite specific aspect of sentence-level work to build upon, something that will have resonance for your pupils.

Activity 17 involves getting pupils to produce *non-right-branching sentences*. This is the kind of sentence where the main verb or main clause is delayed (see Grammar Spot on page 70). Another way of thinking about such sentences is to call them *front-loaded sentences*. Such sentences are characteristic of more mature writers.

through his actions, the attention he gives to discovering his new bow. Arthur's delight is conveyed through the intricate care that the bow receives as he starts to string it. To add to his delight, Arthur's father brings him ten arrows:

One by one, I rolled each arrow between my right thumb and forefinger: ten arrows! Each flight was bound to the shaft with red silk, and each nock was inlaid with little strips of horn. The heads were lean and very sharp, and I pressed each one with the ball of my thumb. When at last I looked up, my father and Will were still standing there, quietly watching me.

Crossley-Holland (2000b: 139)

Crossley-Holland creates a feeling of timelessness with his initial 'One by one' and we have a sense of Arthur being there, almost for hours, as each single arrow receives lovingly detailed appreciation.

We are ready, then, to have Arthur's own sense of timelessness powerfully reinforced by the last sentence: 'When at last I looked up ...'. Utterly absorbed, he had not noticed his father and Will watching him. From the way Crossley-Holland builds this paragraph, we know that Arthur's father and Will are not just watching Arthur look at his arrows; they are watching Arthur's joy.

Having discussed such a paragraph, and having enjoyed rolling the language around by reading it in different ways and examining the sentence structures in it, you can now encourage pupils to experiment for themselves.

■ Choosing a setting for the activity

Consider carefully the setting that will motivate pupils. This should not be an abstract exercise, outside of their investigation and enjoyment of a novel – either one they are reading or one they are writing. They are likely to be motivated to attempt to produce their own paragraph or small section of text for a wider story that they are writing themselves. Equally, they might simply use the device to add a section of narrative or description to a novel that they have been reading and working on.

■ Activity procedure

Resource sheet 17 explains the activity in full. Pupils are invited to add material to the novel in two places. In each of the examples, which are elaborations and imaginative extensions of the existing story, emphasise to pupils that they must maintain the consistent viewpoint established in the book – that is, Arthur as narrator. Model the first example, using shared writing and/or scaffolding their first attempts. Analyse the product, with particular reference to delayed main clauses.

■ Getting the best out of the activity

Activity 17 works best if pupils are given a paragraph in which there is an ostensibly banal action (Arthur goes to see Oliver, Arthur finds Luke's tombstone) that they have to turn into something much more vivid, much more dramatically significant and much more historically grounded. They might use other devices as well, such as powerful verbs. You need not limit the discussion to non-right-branching sentences!

You can help pupils to make their paragraphs more historically interesting, by asking them:

What else do we know about Arthur's situation that we could bring into his thoughts at this stage? What else do we know about reading and writing at this time that we could bring into his thoughts? What else do we know about the role of younger sons of landholders?

Help pupils to link up key historical features and characteristics with the thought-journey that Arthur – or any other narrator – is pursuing.

Modelling writing

You can help pupils to reflect on specific aspects of style and structure by modelling the writing of a short paragraph yourself, on the OHP, whiteboard or computer projector. This can either be an individual, thinking-out-loud process, carried out only by you, or a shared writing exercise with the whole class.

Here is an example of individual teacher modelling, based on an imaginary walk to Oliver's house, that incorporates all of the features above. The ideas are all based on Chapter 13, 'Knowing and Understanding', where we find Arthur and Oliver together. I am inventing a walk to that meeting place. It is a walk that Kevin Crossley-Holland does not write about, but which his story inspires my imagination to explore. We know that Arthur likes thinking and he uses powerful similes to capture that thinking process: for example, 'One reason why I quite like my lessons with Oliver is that I am allowed to argue with him, and find out new things. It's like climbing Tumber Hill inside my own head: the further I go, the more I see: and the more I see, the more I want to see.'

If texts are 'tools to think with', so are characters within them. Arthur is a gift of a character for a history teacher to get pupils to 'think with'.

■ Practical tip

When modelling writing to a whole class, you are requiring them to be very focused in their listening. If you are to hold their attention, it is absolutely vital that you convey personal enjoyment and real fascination in your own writing. You are not just modelling a technique, you are modelling a disposition and a passion.

● The Seeing Stone

You are now going to add to the story with your own extra events.

Write two extra paragraphs which you could fit into Kevin Crossley-Holland's story. The first could be fitted into his story. The second changes the story slightly from how Kevin Crossley-Holland wrote it:

- 1** Arthur is on his way to see Oliver the Priest for his lesson. Describe his journey in just two or three paragraphs. As he walks to Oliver's house, he is wondering about what monks, priests and schoolmen do. He starts to think about questions he will ask Oliver when he arrives. When he arrives, he finds Oliver reading.
- 2** Arthur is out in the forest with Gatty, Tempest and Storm. On his way back, he decides to find little Luke's tombstone. When he does, he sees the words 'LITTLE LUKE, fourth son of Sir John and Lady Helen de Caldicot. Born and died 1199.' He is disturbed. He thought that his parents had five sons.

Remember that you must delay the final moment. Don't rush into it. Use some front-loaded sentences to:

- build the sense of expectation as Arthur makes his way to his goal;
- create an arresting conclusion as Arthur finds what he set out to look for.


In the first example, he is pleased and reassured to find Oliver reading. Remember that few others in his family read, and no one can read as well as he can.

In the second example, he is horrified to discover that the tombstone refers to only four sons. Somehow, deep inside, he thinks he knows that he is not Sir John's son.


Remember, your goal is to slow the pace of your writing. Think about using sentences with phrases or subordinate clauses before you reach your main clause.

■ An example of teacher modelling


Teacher's starting attempt


 I walked over the bridge, past the glebe and towards Oliver's house. I had decided to take the rabbit that Storm caught. Oliver would like that. Soon, I saw Oliver's house. It was bigger than the other villagers' houses and it had one chimney made of stone.

Teacher thinking out loud about how to change it

 I like that. It's in little snatches, suggesting Arthur's mind leaping about and then suddenly seeing the house ahead of him. But I want to say more about what Arthur expected to talk about when he got there: at the moment it doesn't have enough of a medieval feel. Some of Arthur's wonderings and questions will help.


Perhaps the bit about the rabbit gets in the way? I wonder if I can put that in another way. Perhaps I can link it to Arthur's thinking. Also, I'm not helping the reader really to see the village and to visualise Arthur's journey. How can I help the reader to see the village through Arthur's eyes? Let's try this:


 As soon as I climbed the bridge, I began to see the glebe ahead of me. Just beyond, with its chimney made of stone, I saw Oliver's house.


 That's better, I've given information about Oliver's position in the village – he has the church land, the glebe, and his house is better than the other villagers'. But I've shown it in an interesting way, by referring to the stone chimney – the first thing Arthur would see as he came over the bridge.

Also, I've got two sentences in which the main clause is delayed. Let's listen to them and how they feel again ... This gives a feeling of the time that the walk took, and the thinking time it gave to Arthur.


Now, how shall I bring the rabbit in?


 I felt Storm's dead rabbit swinging off my shoulder. Oliver doesn't need the rabbit but I hope he will still like it. With everyone giving him a tenth of their crops and their chicks and lambs, Oliver never has to worry about his next meal.


 Good! We can feel and see and think with Arthur. The only problem is that I seem to have slipped into the present tense! But I've got an idea about that too. Kevin Crossley-Holland constantly switches between past and present tenses, although he doesn't usually muddle them up in one passage. I'm going to put the whole thing in the present tense and see how it sounds:


 As soon as I climb the bridge, I begin to see the glebe ahead of me. Just beyond, with its chimney made of stone, I can see Oliver's house. I can feel Storm's dead rabbit swinging off my shoulder. Oliver doesn't need the rabbit, but I hope he will still


like it. With everyone giving him a tenth of their crops and their chicks and lambs, Oliver never has to worry about his next meal.


 That's much better. With a consistent tense, we are just travelling with Arthur all the way. Now I'm going to link Arthur's questions to Oliver's position in the village:


 Oliver reads more than anyone else on the manor and he pretends to know everything. Last time, he said that we are all equal in God's eyes. But if he and I have enough to eat and most of the villagers don't, I don't see how we can be equal. I must ask him if he read this in the Bible, or in another book.


 This bit about books links nicely with my conclusion, where Arthur finds Oliver reading. Let's try this to round it off.

 Now I can see Oliver reading. I once asked Oliver how many books had been written in the whole world. He thinks there might be more than one hundred.

 Hhhmm ... That gets there a bit too quickly. I've lost that sense of travelling, and I really want the bit about reading to come at the very end, perhaps as the very last word. 'Reading' sort of sums Oliver up. I'll swap it round, putting the bit about the books first. Then I'll finish with the journey down the path, but I'll delay the main clause so that we arrive at the end slowly:

 I once asked Oliver how many books had been written in the whole world. He thinks there might be more than one hundred!
Turning down the path towards Oliver's house, I can just see him, reading.

 The final short paragraph creates a peaceful, quiet ending. Now let's look at the whole thing and see how it sounds. I might just change the 'I can feel' sentence a bit, and find a more powerful verb to describe the effect of the rabbit swinging. Otherwise I'm going to leave it all as it is.

 As soon as I climb the bridge, I begin to see the glebe ahead of me. Just beyond, with its chimney made of stone, I can see Oliver's house. Storm's dead rabbit pounds on my shoulder. Oliver doesn't need the rabbit, but I hope he will still like it. With everyone giving him a tenth of their crops and their chicks and lambs, Oliver never has to worry about his next meal.
Oliver reads more than anyone else on the manor and he pretends to know everything. Last time, he said that we are all equal in God's eyes. But if he and I have enough to eat and most of the villagers don't, I don't see how we can be equal. I must ask him if he read this in the Bible, or in another book.
I once asked Oliver how many books had been written in the whole world. He thinks there might be more than one hundred.
Turning down the path towards Oliver's house, I can just see him, reading.

GRAMMAR SPOT

Non-right-branching sentences

Non-right-branching sentences are sentences where the main verb or main clause is delayed because the sentence begins with a subordinate clause or a phrase. It is a piece of deliberate shaping that has the effect of delaying the point of the sentence, in a way which sometimes gives a dramatic effect. In this example, a subordinate clause delays the main clause:

When we got back to the manor, we found Serle and Tom and Sian sitting by the fire.

In this example, a phrase delays the main clause:

By this time, Sir John was very angry.

Such sentences are characteristic of writing rather than speech and, in particular, more literary writing.

They do, however, appear in more formal or highly reflective speech. Listen to Sir John after the friar preached the crusade in the church on Caldicot manor (examples from *The Seeing Stone*):

'Before I can decide, I will need to talk to Lord Stephen and the other lords and knights in this middle March.'

'If we travel east to the land overseas, the Welsh will also travel east and take over our women and our castles and our manors.'

Linking up literary and historical teaching points

Focused reflection that such sentence-level work entails can be used to secure a double pay-off. Whilst thinking about how to slow down (and about *why* it might be helpful to slow down), pupils can be thinking about a particular aspect of an historical setting or perspective that they want to communicate.

In the above example of modelling writing, our imaginary teacher focused, ambitiously, on a range of literary and historical issues. Very often, a teacher will not want to concentrate on all of these at once. You might want to model just one idea – the construction and effects of non-right-branching sentences, or the keeping of a consistent tense, or the use of period detail, or the speculation about what particular medieval characters are likely to have

known or thought, and so on. If we overload a teaching episode, pupils' ability to take ideas in and process them can actually diminish.

On the other hand, it is rather more complicated than that. Differing teaching styles can accommodate different loads of teaching points. And all these historical and literary issues can link up and support each other in pupils' learning. One issue can act as a useful 'creative constraint' (Brooke and Martin, 2002) for another aspect of learning.

In the above example, a range of teaching points supported each other. In the modelling episode above, I sought to:

- maintain a consistent and plausibly historical viewpoint – Arthur's.

This helped me to:

- describe the manor more precisely and vividly, seeing everything as Arthur saw it on his journey.

This made it easier to:

- capture Arthur's thoughts about learning, about priests, about books, about ideas in the Bible.

This gave me a reason to:

- slow the narrative down, to give Arthur time to think on his journey, to create a sense of travelling, and to make us reflective with him (my non-right-branching sentences helped here)

and at the same time forced me to:

- draw upon relevant period detail (taken from the novel or from wider reading and research).

Moreover, if pupils' comments were used and woven in – for example, if the above episode turned into whole-class 'shared writing' rather than pure 'teacher modelling' – it would be possible to take many opportunities to think on one's feet and help pupils to see how things linked up. Strengthening the vividness, the flow and the period feel of the text can become one project.

Finding your own integration of history and language issues

In a history lesson, the driving force of the learning must be history. We want pupils to be excited about discussing a text or creating their own texts (or blending the two) with a clear historical direction in mind. We are trying to evoke life on the manor, to reflect upon what Arthur might have done and what he definitely would not have done; we are using our knowledge to strengthen this and we are pushing the boundaries of that knowledge by linking it with imagination and speculation. We are trying to capture the past in a way that fits with our wider knowledge, a way that goes with the grain of the evidence. So we need to be careful that we do not shoot off into a self-contained

discussion about sentences that does not take us back into the history.

It is quite a skill to integrate reflection on historical issues and matters to do with grammar or other aspects of literary style without the discussion becoming dry and disconnected. But by thinking through, for ourselves, how everything connects up, we are more likely to display both the fascination and the clarity necessary for pupils to see the point of the connection.

Neat recipes for how to do it can never be supplied. It is too tangled up with personal passion and the ways in which individual teachers manage the energy of a class. Moreover, the historical issues under discussion are often diverse – and serious and important – requiring different kinds of attention and different kinds of relationship with language and text. What matters is that teachers take time to reflect, as individuals and as teams, on what worked and why, so that general principles can be extracted. We also need to think about how far such principles seem general, or true for whole teams of teachers, and how far they are just for individuals, with other individual teachers needing to think things through, in their own ways.

For example, one teacher might manage to integrate active reflection on non-right-branching sentences throughout such modelling. Another teacher might find that this overt, explicit articulation of something that seemed to be working subconsciously in her head gets in the way of other things she wanted (*or felt the pupils needed*) to be made explicit. Such a teacher might prefer to draw pupils' attention to the many non-right-branching sentences *after* the modelling, thus revealing them and discussing their effects.

The two teachers might agree on the *general* principles, first, that 'thinking out loud' in front of pupils can be extremely effective and, second, that linking grammar with points about a consistent and historical viewpoint can be effective. But they might differ on *when and how to emphasise particular grammatical points*, or find themselves differing as they read the mood of different classes.

If we choose to look at all the non-right-branching sentences in the final teacher-modelled text on page 69, there is plenty to absorb us. Here is the whole passage.

As soon as I climb the bridge, I begin to see the glebe ahead of me. Just beyond, with its chimney made of stone, I can see Oliver's house. Storm's dead rabbit pounds on my shoulder. Oliver doesn't need the rabbit but I hope he will still like it. With everyone giving him a tenth of their crops and their chicks and lambs, Oliver never has to worry about his next meal.

Oliver reads more than anyone else on the manor and he pretends to know everything. *Last time, he said that we are all equal in God's eyes. But if he and I have enough to eat and most of the villagers don't, I don't see how we can be equal. I must ask him if he read this in the Bible, or in another book.*

I once asked Oliver how many books had been written in the

whole world. He thinks there might be more than one hundred.

Turning down the path towards Oliver's house, I can just see him, reading.

■ Practical tip

If you want to use a much shorter example, focusing almost exclusively upon non-right-branching sentences (that is, when you don't want to get tangled up with the sentence's role in the wider paragraph), try asking pupils to use a delaying subordinate clause or phrase that describes *actions* rather than directly describing *feelings*.

For example:

Picking up the huge Bible with both arms, Oliver shuffled towards the church door.

Handing over his chickens and a lamb, Jankin stared coldly at the priest.

This emphasis on action rather than feelings enables pupils:

- to draw upon period detail more quickly – they are much less likely to drift into the 'cold floorboard syndrome' if they avoid potentially sentimental, waffly clauses and phrases like 'Feeling very sad ...' and 'Miserable and lonely ...'
- to understand that we often describe feelings more vividly and economically when we do so indirectly.

■ Whole-class shared writing

If you choose whole-class shared writing rather than teacher modelling, whether with short or long examples, you will need to *leave about three times as much time* as you would for ordinary modelling. Pupils will make unpredictable contributions, all of which you will want to value, some of which you will want to use. Even if your focus is fairly clear and limited – for example, constructing just two sentences and trying to create a particular effect through sentence structure in just one of them – you will still need much more time.

In whole-class shared writing, you will need to be mentally ready to deal with a range of suggestions and reflections, some of which might take you beyond your planned objectives. Sometimes it will be appropriate and helpful to run with these; sometimes you will want to be very firm and to place clear boundaries around the discussion.

In particular, in a *history* lesson, shared writing often takes on a particular character that is less in evidence in English lessons. As part of the shared reflection on the text, pupils want to discuss and draw in wider questions and details ('but would a priest really have been regarded like that ...?'), which are 100 per cent relevant to the historical objectives underpinning the writing task. It is important to be ready for these, to gain plenty of experience and to make that experience professionally

3 Imagining the past through historical fiction

helpful by reflecting hard afterwards. Did you err too far on the side of firmness, becoming unhelpfully rigid and closing down vital historical reflection? Or did you indulge the pupils too much, letting the suggestions meander on and losing the sense of purpose in the lesson?

Watch that the shared writing does not drag on. Once pupils have got the point, many will be itching to have a go on their own.

■ Drawing out the learning

In making these difficult judgements, a good guide is your historical enquiry question for the lesson sequence – the big history concepts and the layer or type of knowledge it embodies. This is sometimes a surer guide than your individual lesson objectives. Experienced and highly effective teachers have such a strong sense of the historical concepts and knowledge that the lesson sequence is dealing with, and such a feeling for the energy in the class that the ongoing puzzle or narrative is creating, that they can make very good judgements about when to go beyond the lesson objectives and take unplanned opportunities provided by the pupils.

■ Practical tip

Use dry-wipe, mini-whiteboards for small writing exercises. You can ask pupils to experiment, either on their own or in pairs, to reflect, review and make changes. Then they can share their paragraph ideas either with the whole class or through a structured discussion in a small group. Pupils enjoy experimenting on whiteboards as they can so easily change their minds.

Activity 18

Using a story recipe

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

As well as tackling the micro elements of a story, such as aspects of style and ‘period feel’ secured through activities like those above, history teachers also need to help pupils with the macro planning dimensions of their own stories. They need to orchestrate character, setting and plot.

The trick here is to make sure that pupils attend as much to character and setting as to plot. Plot *appears* to be the most difficult challenge, and it is certainly the area where pupils most obviously flounder. But careful reflection on character and setting can act as a creative – and helpfully historical – constraint for plot.

Brooke and Martin suggest the use of a ‘story recipe’, furnishing pupils with given constraints. These constraints are also seeds of inspiration for character, setting and plot.

A story recipe limits pupils in terms of the time and scope of the story, and so frees them to think in depth about how character, setting and plot will affect each other.

Without structure, pupils will develop plots that are either over-ambitious, with too many characters, or lacking direction (Brooke and Martin, 2002). They swiftly become demoralised. Their writing degenerates into bland description or frantic gallops through events to a weak conclusion, with a loss of pace and timing in the narrative and a loss of deliberate control over the historical setting.

■ Activity procedure

Resource Sheet 18 supplies a comprehensive story recipe and guidance for pupils in how to use it.

■ Getting the best out of the activity

Do remember that a story recipe alone will not be enough for pupils to achieve their full potential in constructing a worthwhile piece of historical fiction. If they are really to create a fully imagined historical world, they must, to some extent, inhabit the world of the story.

Pupils need to develop a view of what is going on *around* the central action of the story. This helps them to look for more vivid images, or to reflect upon what the characters are seeing and apprehending in their medieval world. Some of this preparation can come through exploratory work using mini-drama activities or improvised dialogue in pairs. Sometimes, short structured discussion will allow exploration of character development.

If pupils are to imagine the historical world fully, and to integrate that imagining with disciplined historical work, they need time. They also need to have that time carefully structured, with clear interim targets. Barrs and Cork advocate a range of planning methods from formal to informal (Barrs and Cork, 2001: 195). From their work with Year 5 pupils they recommend a mixture of:

- *informal planning*, in which jottings are made of interesting ideas, words or phrases and sketches of characters, or where possibilities for plot events are noted and captioned (as in a storyboard);
- *formal planning*, such as frames, linked boxes or charts;
- *indirect planning*, where little is written down but there are extensive opportunities for reflection and exploration through paired talking, thinking activities, drama, improvisation, listening, whole group discussion and so on.

Whatever methods are chosen, the history teacher needs to bring pupils to the point where they are ready to move around a fictional world in their imaginations.

This is why the positioning of such fiction-writing activities in the wider lesson sequence is so crucial. Can we make this part of an enquiry in the usual sense? One such sequence is illustrated on page 76.

■ Can we use fiction writing to prepare for fiction reading?

Whilst the reading of historical fiction in general is an important way of preparing and inspiring pupils to write their own fiction, sometimes pupils can be prepared for reading a particular novel by anticipating that novel in their own writing, using a story recipe that shares a few common ingredients with it. This can be helpful in creating eager anticipation to read a novel. It also creates a deep fascination with how the characters and plot are realised.

This is about the only thing that I did right in my earliest attempts at getting pupils to write historical fiction, mentioned at the start of this chapter. Whilst I lacked the necessary history teaching techniques and pupils lacked the background literacy knowledge and skill to draw upon,

the attempt to construct a story set in revolutionary Paris, using some of Dickens' characters, did still make pupils strangely hungry to read the real thing.

A further idea is to create a half-way house between these two extremes. Share and enjoy some isolated extracts from a novel such as *The Seeing Stone* and use them as part of the stimulus that will lead pupils into the construction of a short story.

Activity 18 could be used in any of these ways. It might be used as a prelude to reading *The Seeing Stone* or it might be used after reading some key passages from its early chapters only. (Whatever you do, if you adopt this method, don't use the later chapters! You'll ruin the story for pupils when they come to read it.)

Your task is to write a story set in the borders of England and Wales at the end of the twelfth century.

● **Setting**

Your story must begin on 10 December 1199 and finish on Christmas Eve, just 14 days later. Most of the action will take place on the manor of Caldicot – an English manor in the borders of England and Wales. Start by drawing a picture plan of the manor, including three fields (give them suitable names), the manor house, houses for the brewer, the priest, the reeve and the miller, and more cottages for other villagers. Include a church, a pond, a well and some barns. Surround your manor with two forests (name them). All the action must take place on the manor and its forests, although you may include characters who bring information and stories from outside, such as the town of Ludlow.

● **Characters**

- You must have a squire, a squire's wife and at least two sons.
- You may have up to three more main characters who shape the action of the story. At least one of these must be a woman.
- In addition, you must have two real historical characters who do not appear or speak in your story, but whom your characters talk about. These are the Archbishop and King John.
- You must include a friar who comes to preach a crusade in the manor's church.

● **Plot**

The event or problem that starts your story off must include some bad news that the younger son of the squire has just received or found out by accident. Think carefully about what this might be. This son is worried about his future. He wants to become a squire like his father. Perhaps the bad news has made him fear for his future in some way. Will he keep this news a secret from any of the other characters? If so, why?

- How will you tell the reader about the secret? Through the main character sharing his thoughts? Or through a description of how the main character hears it?
- How much will you tell the reader? Does the reader need to know all of the secret? Or, perhaps, does the reader need to know, but not some of the characters?

Plan the most important things that happen to your character.

● Researching your story

In order to write your story, you will now need to do some historical research. It must sound like a story set in 1199, without any modern references:

- If your characters arrive after travelling, you will want to know details about horses and saddlery, so that you can create a vivid picture.
- If your characters go into the church, you will need to find out what the inside of the church would have been like at this time. It would not have been like a church today!
- When news is heard from or about King John or the Archbishop, you will need to check your factual details. What kinds of thing was King John concerned with at the start of his reign? What messages did he send to his people? How did he do this? How might the people in the Welsh marches have reacted?

● Creating surprise and historical atmosphere

Your story must intrigue the reader. Rushing the story is not good! It will make the story boring. You must use careful description to build atmosphere, to help the reader to 'see' the manor of Caldicot, and to create suspense. Use some of the different methods we have discussed and practised for:

- slowing down the pace of your writing – think about the different types of sentence that we have discussed here or in English, and the techniques we have observed in other historical texts and tried out;
- giving the reader important information in interesting ways;
- sticking with one viewpoint – decide through whose eyes we will see the story. Will you be the younger son and tell the story in the first person? What advantages and disadvantages will this create? Or will you be the all-seeing narrator and tell it all in the third person?

Sample lesson sequence

Summary of one possible route through an enquiry, incorporating some of the activities

Prior learning

Such is the crispness, colour and accuracy with which medieval life is painted in this novel that it would be possible to use such a sequence fairly early on in a study of the Middle Ages, perhaps with very little prior knowledge. The enquiry would be an efficient way of introducing pupils to an overview of material culture, worldviews and some aspects of chronology of the medieval period. Some of these, such as the village economy or the crusades, could then be revisited in more depth later.

The prior learning that might be drawn upon is work on story writing at Key Stages 2 and 3 in English. The enquiry below has been structured as though it is the first enquiry in a new unit on the medieval period.

It is also organised on the understanding that about four lessons of English might be devoted to reading and reflecting on the text, after negotiation with the English department. See Mary Woolley (2003) for an account of a similar arrangement, where a set of 'low-ability' Year 8 girls read a Thomas Hardy short story in English and then analysed it from an historical perspective in history lessons. This is not essential, however, and the amount of understanding about the medieval period that such a sequence would create would justify nine history lessons spent on it.

Enquiry question

What makes a good historical story about the twelfth century?

Outline of learning flow

Nine 50-minute lessons. These could all be history lessons or they could be divided between 4–5 history lessons and 4–5 English lessons.

What makes a good historical story about the twelfth century?

Lesson 1	Pupils share: (a) existing knowledge on medieval period, with teacher clarifying main differences (chronological, political and cultural) from other periods studied (e.g. Tudors and Victorians); (b) experience of fiction and especially historical fiction. Read sample passages of Crossley-Holland, from the beginning of the book. Pupils speculate about characters and setting. Set out the enquiry question and introduce the idea that the lessons will gradually build the criteria by which they will judge each other's stories in the final lesson.
Lesson 2	Getting to know Arthur, Gatty and Sir John. Reading, role-play and speculation about current constraints and future possibilities. Who has the most freedom? Who has the least freedom? What makes it a good historical story so far? <i>For homework, pupils frame questions they would now like to ask about the crusades.</i>
Lesson 3	Follow up pupils' questions about the crusades and relate them to medieval worldviews. How is Gatty different from Arthur? How is Sir John different from the friar? When framing objectives for this lesson, it is important to choose objectives that <i>integrate</i> knowledge of the crusades and understanding of characters' perceptions in the novel. Pupils conduct mini-research into the crusades and twelfth-century religion as the main lesson activity.
Lesson 4	Discuss non-right-branching sentences and other features in relation to two passages, in preparation for Activity 17 in the next lesson. <i>Set a homework to reinforce learning and prepare for Lesson 5.</i>
Lesson 5	Build lesson around Activity 17 .
Lesson 6	Activity 18 (incorporating a variation on Activity 16 – same style, different viewpoint). <i>Continue for homework.</i>
Lesson 7	Activity 18 (including interim review in two plenaries).
Lesson 8	Activity 18 (complete – include interventions and discussion of how pupils handled Activity 16). <i>Homework: finalise criteria for judging what makes a good historical story. Develop this under two headings: (a) awareness of reader; (b) grounding in period.</i>
Lesson 9	Emphasise criteria relating to period sensitivity (for example, in a starter activity designed to create alertness to anachronism). Pupils apply these criteria to each other's stories and answer the enquiry question.

Chapter summary

- * This chapter presents teaching approaches that enable pupils to construct a narrative and to reflect on aspects of the construction process. Pupils complete a written story of the thirteenth-century mass procession known as the Children's Crusade. During the writing process, pupils think about why this event has been judged *significant enough* to find its way into historical accounts.
- * The chapter offers one rationale for constructing historical narrative in history lessons. As pupils are supported through the process of narrative writing, they become aware that the writer of a seemingly straightforward narrative has all kinds of choices. In particular, the writer can convey ideas about historical significance and can choose to do so in different ways.
- * Historical significance (NC Key Element 2e) forms the conceptual framework. The chapter moves beyond some of the existing debates and conflicting professional conceptions of historical significance. The activities also support aspects of evidential thinking as required by NC Key Element 4.
- * In the first activity, pupils examine and discuss a narrative account. It is largely a 'speaking and listening' activity. In the second activity, pupils follow a sequence of reflective, decision-making stages in order to construct their own narratives. In the third activity, pupils reflect on what this *extraordinary* story suggests about *ordinary* aspects of medieval experience. They develop the idea that the Children's Crusade is historically *significant* because it is historically *revealing*.
- * The activities are geared towards pupils who find extended writing difficult.
- * Enquiry question chosen as the setting for the activities:
What is remarkable and revealing about the Children's Crusade?

Context

A What does it mean to think about 'historical significance'?

● An important curriculum idea ...

Amongst the package of concepts, skills and understandings listed in the National Curriculum for History since 1995 (DfE, 1994; DfEE, 1999) we find a reference to historical significance. Judging by the space devoted to it, the authors deemed it important. More familiar concepts such as causation, change, continuity and so on are packed into just one of the 'Key Elements', but historical significance gets a 'Key Element' all of its own.

● ... but no one knows what it is

The other second-order concepts, such as causation and continuity, are more familiar to history teachers. Any literacy co-ordinator or new history teacher wanting to devise reading, writing, speaking or listening tasks on historical causation would not have far to look. Tradition, debate, professional literature, research, textbooks, examination rubrics and historians themselves all deal explicitly in causation. Moreover, although practice and beliefs diverge, they would find a discernible core consensus about the types of historical thinking that it would be profitable to encourage.

No such consensus, no such easy-to-find debate or exemplar exists for historical significance. Some teachers, education researchers and textbook authors have addressed it, but when these contributions are taken together, the overall picture is somewhat confused (e.g. Hunt, 2000; Hammond, 2001; Phillips, 2002). Recently, we have seen the first international study, comparing children's ideas about historical significance in England and Spain (Cercadillo, 2001). But to complicate the picture further, the conception of historical significance on which Cercadillo reports is not necessarily the one with which history teachers in the UK operate. Moreover, some authors write about what different pupils *already* appear to think; others focus upon where they would like to take them. To complete the confusing picture, the National Curriculum Attainment Target ignores significance completely, even though the National Curriculum 'Programme of Study' states its importance (DfEE, 1999).

So if we are to start thinking about how work with language can develop understanding of 'historical significance' or how historical significance can improve pupils' language use, professional judgement must start in a different place.

This absence of guides (or absence of consensus) is actually a great opportunity. Surely anyone, with knowledge of the practice of history and experience of teaching and learning on which to reflect, can and ought to be able to theorise this for themselves? Surely, as professionals, we should look to the discipline of history, to the way other parts of the history curriculum get interpreted and to our

beliefs about what pupils might achieve? From these places, we can apply an historian's reason and a teacher's imagination to give the idea some meaning and start to see what activities and outcomes might look like in practice. Thinking about historical significance is everyone's property.

● We want pupils to *think about it*

To start with, let us keep the focus on 'thinking about'. This immediately discounts a few red herrings and common distractions.

With causation, the experienced history teacher knows (and sometimes needs to explain carefully to the literacy co-ordinator) that work on causal reasoning is *not* just about knowing or understanding 'why something happens'. The old O-level examination required that. You just memorised the five causes of the First World War or the long- and short-term causes of the Russian Revolution, and explained them clearly. No, the focus is upon understanding the *problem* of causation and the different types of historical reasoning involved in solving such problems – causal reasoning, counterfactual thinking, comparing different models of explanation, grouping, sorting and organising causes, realising that constructing historical explanation is about constructing argument. It has nothing to do with explaining how a bicycle works, as though historical causation were just a process to be understood. There is not some fixed process or answer that the pupils must simply understand and then present.

If we want to develop or define the thinking associated with historical significance, it makes sense to start right there. It cannot be about merely 'knowing/understanding why a particular event is significant' any more than causation is primarily about 'knowing/understanding why a particular event happens'.

So we might model our own judgements about significance in many ways, but 'knowing that something is significant' is not really the endpoint. If it were, it would not be listed as a concept for shaping historical thinking in the NC Key Elements. Its position there suggests that we treat it as a process of reasoning; something that is up for grabs, not a given condition.

● Something *others* attach to an event in the past

Historical significance is not a property of the event itself. It is something that others ascribe to that event (or development or situation). If pupils are going to think about significance, it will involve judging and weighing – both making judgements themselves and judging other people's judgements. This gives us a clearer sense of direction.

This does not mean that pupils have to be throwing everything up in the air and making fresh judgements all the time. Indeed, the simple, basic activities in this chapter are very much about *preparing* pupils to discern such judgements and *preparing* them to make such judgements in future by giving them frameworks and language for shaping their thoughts. But we must have that sense of direction. Otherwise, our activities – especially the simple ones recommended here – will collapse into neat tricks that close down thinking or bolt-on literacy ideas that are ends in themselves.

● Tim Lomas: linking historical significance and historical thinking

Of the many teachers and theorists who have attempted to examine what the history teacher might try to achieve under the umbrella of historical significance, I have found Lomas (1990) the most theoretically consistent and practically realistic. These are the thinking processes and understandings that he sees as central:

- to understand that history operates on the basis that some events and changes are more important than others;
- to establish criteria for assessing the significance of events, people and issues in the past;
- to understand that some events, which may have seemed significant at the time, were not, while the significance of other events is only recognised later;
- to understand that different people will have different ideas about which people, events, changes and issues are significant;
- to be able to understand why people may hold different ideas about what has been significant;
- to understand that the significance of an event is determined by the nature of the historical enquiry;
- to understand that relatively minor events can be highly significant (e.g. they have symbolic significance);
- to be able to distinguish between the consequences of an event and its significance;
- to understand that an event or change usually becomes significant because of its connection with other events.

These points offer a view of historical significance that is relative and contingent. Significance is shifting and problematic, rather than fixed. If this is our direction then pupils will need the opportunity to see what influences judgements about significance and also to engage in such judgement themselves.

This package of ideas also implies a connection between pupils' thinking and their growing knowledge. As depth and variety of knowledge increase, there is more opportunity to develop thinking. Equally, just accumulating knowledge will not be enough to make thinking happen. Pupils need explicit frameworks and challenges.

● Getting beyond 'relevance to today'

Sometimes, when historical significance is raised, the assumption is that it is about showing pupils the importance of an event, development or situation for our lives today, or even about choosing content in workschemes that will enable them to do this. But whilst pupils' grasp of an event's supposed link with today might be a useful realisation, it does not necessarily take pupils closer to thinking about historical significance.

Of course, history teachers constantly help pupils to make sense of why studying the past matters and, of course, they will often use relevance of events to today or impact on our own lives and values. This is a good way 'in' to a topic or a useful way of reflecting on it afterwards. But we lay ourselves open to charges of presentism if our conception of *historical significance* is intrinsically or necessarily related to this. Relevance to today is just one possible consideration in a judgement about the significance of an event. It is one possible criterion that might lay behind someone else's judgement.

On its own, it would leave pupils with an incomplete picture of the idea of historical significance. It certainly does not explain why many events and developments end up in the history books or in television history.

The Children's Crusade is a clear example of this. Of the many, many things that happened in 1212, this is one that made it into the history books. Why? Has it affected lives today? No, not really. Can pupils see how it has affected their own lives? No. We slither into judging more recent history as disproportionately 'significant' if we judge the historical significance of past events solely on those terms.

Of course, we *could* say – and some of us *would* say – that we can interest children and teenagers in the Children's Crusade because the *issues* at stake are eternally relevant. There is no shortage of opportunity to find a motivating resonance between the Children's Crusade and modern issues. For example:

- The Children's Crusade is about the actions people take when they are powerless.
- The Children's Crusade is about the way in which groups of young people sometimes create a culture or a sense of moral purpose of their own.

These are points of resonance or kick-off points that a teacher might use. But they are not (necessarily) things that make an event *historically* 'significant'. Indeed, they might be distractions. Such connection is useful and intriguing, but it is not an adequate or even very relevant guide to the factors that have made historians judge an event to be more or less significant.

● Getting beyond consequences

Equally, we need to get beyond consequences or results. The fact that consequences or results might not be enough to assess an event's significance – or, importantly, to work out why others have judged something significant – is apparent if you supply a simple test to lots of events and developments that appear in history books. Plenty of consequences or results, short term and long term, attach to the First World War, the Russian Revolution, the Glorious Revolution, the Tolpuddle Martyrs or the emergence of the railways. These might easily explain their significance. But the few, negligible short-term results that might attach to the Children's Crusade or to the poetry of Ivor Gurney or to the Jarrow March do not explain the significance of these events. One might reply that this is simply because, relatively speaking, these things are not very 'significant'. But that is not the point. They have still ended up in the history books, having been plucked out from thousands of other events and phenomena that collapsed into private worlds and never entered that public domain of history.

Why did these things end up in public domains? This is what needs to be examined. Perhaps they are iconic, perhaps they reveal things about their age, perhaps they have personal significance for particular groups, perhaps they had indirect results. Whatever the reason, the simple idea of results or consequences being an equivalent of historical significance just will not do.

Martin Hunt is very clear about this in his work on significance (Hunt, 2000, 2003). 'There is also a danger in what may be an apparent overlap with the 'second order' concept of consequence. Greater understanding of historical significance is more likely to be

achieved if there is a clear distinction between the two' (Hunt, 2003: 35).

Hunt argues that significance is a 'wider concept' than consequence. I think of it as a meta-concept. When pupils work on significance, they are really standing outside all the usual concepts and could be drawing upon any of them. Whether cause or change or consequence or social diversity – any could be historically 'significant'.

● Towards objectives and activities

Lomas' list might identify the domain, but it is still quite a mixture. Some points are understandings to be gradually constructed, some are straight pieces of knowledge that might be internalised after exposure to a range of material and some are modes of analysis that we might ask pupils to employ. Activity, learning path and eventual learning outcome are not at all easy to separate out from that list.

It may not even be desirable to separate them out. Historical learning is not that tidy, and the interplay with knowledge and maturity is so close that it would seem very reductive to try to isolate some hierarchy of 'skill' to be achieved. What we can do, however, is identify types of thinking, in that domain, that we want to foster. What types of thinking – thinking that pupils might *not* do naturally – do we need to try to secure? What types of activities and teaching interventions might then foster that thinking, pushing pupils to challenge assumptions and to reflect on their own, former ideas?

What any history teacher needs to do – and I think *each* history teacher needs to do this for him or herself; my effort is one mere model – is to think about the reflective and processing activities pupils will be engaged in if they are going to be pushed into this domain that we call 'significance'. Drawing upon Lomas' ideas, I will go for four:

- applying **given** sets of criteria for judging historical significance;
- devising (and applying or testing) sets of criteria **of their own**;
- discerning **implicit** criteria in others' judgements about historical significance;
- using any of the above to challenge others' judgements about significance.

Working on each of these would also be a way of developing knowledge of the events under study – a good example of the way in which growing skill, conceptual understanding and knowledge interrelate.

● Keeping the big picture in view

Armed with a set of descriptions such as this, we can begin to relate this area of thinking to different kinds of writing, reading, speaking and listening that will support (and be supported by) a focus on significance. When we gain or create a sense of the whole domain, it is easier to find purpose for the smallest reading, writing, speaking or listening activity. It allows us to focus on a very small part whilst seeing the whole. Thus, whilst sophisticated work on historical significance clearly looks as though it is going to involve judging and arguing, a smaller activity might actually help pupils

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with a much smaller property of that domain, perhaps just applying a single idea in order to become familiar with a type of language or expression. Because this chapter is about work within this conceptual area (perhaps for the first time in an explicit form) with pupils aged just 11 or 12, it will limit the focus to the first of the four points suggested above – the application of existing or supplied sets of criteria.

Even so, a teacher in Year 7 attempting simple, elementary work of this kind needs to know where that work is going. A big picture of historical significance is essential for the simplest of tasks. This is why it is important to think through the whole issue of significance even when one is using only its simplest application with the youngest secondary pupils. Simplification *without knowing what it is you are simplifying* is dangerous territory for a teacher!

● Existing sets of criteria

In textbooks, and in professional and academic literature, there are plenty of examples of sets of criteria that might be applied in a judgement about historical significance.

One such example is supplied by Phillips (2002). Working on the First World War, he generated a mnemonic for thinking about significance, using the word GREAT:

- Groundbreaking
- Remembered by all
- Events that were far reaching
- Affected the future
- Terrifying

Teachers might use this in all kinds of ways:

- Ask pupils to show how each of the five criteria relate to the Great War.
- Get pupils to build these criteria into an account or analysis of the Great War.
- Ask pupils to test these criteria and to consider *whether* they relate to the Great War.
- Ask pupils to consider whether these are the best criteria for describing the significance of the Great War, and perhaps to suggest their own.
- Ask pupils whether these seem to be the criteria used by others.
- Ask pupils to relate these criteria to other, contrasting events that have been judged significant, and to see if the formula fits.

● A new set of criteria to generate thinking

Such formulas are fine, as long as the goal, ultimately, is to get pupils to question them. I have a few problems with Phillips' set of criteria, however, as they do not seem to me to help us with why events like the Children's Crusade (or the Jarrow March or the poetry of Ivor Gurney) found their way into the history books. The more I apply those criteria to these other events and developments, the more I have to start to question the Phillips model of significance that underpins them (which means that the model is a good one, *pedagogically*, as it is helping me to think and learn!). One might not expect all the criteria to apply equally across different events, of course. But in the case of the Children's Crusade, none of them does, except, possibly, at a far stretch,

'Groundbreaking'. But it is hardly this that has made the Children's Crusade enter the history books.

In the quest to find some more all-purpose criteria that might allow pupils to experiment with a model across a wide range of events and developments, I found myself coming closer to the meaning of the word 'historical' in 'historical significance'. If something is 'historically' significant, one might argue that it has helped us in some way with *carrying out* the practice of history, with making sense of other aspects of the past or with shining a light on another puzzle or question thrown up by the past. This accounts for the word 'revealing' in my own 'five Rs' model shown in Figure 4.1.

● Figure 4.1 Five Rs for thinking about historical significance

Historians – or anyone constructing historical accounts – tend to judge phenomena as significant when these are one or more of the following:

Revealing – of some other aspect of the past

Remarked upon – the event/development was remarked upon by people at the time and/or since

Remembered – the event/development was important at some stage in history within the collective memory of a group or groups

Resonant – people like to make analogies with it; it is possible to connect with experiences, beliefs or situations across time and space

Resulting in change – it had consequences for the future

In the activities in this chapter, pupils will use just two of the criteria in Figure 4.1 to shape their thinking about the Children's Crusade – 'revealing' and 'remarked upon'. Their historical thinking will be supported by direct attempts to build their language awareness, range and control.

They will simply use, make sense of, apply and inhabit those criteria. They are not yet judging their appropriateness. That could come later.

What is unusual about these activities is that pupils are going to use them in the context of the narrative form, not in an overt analysis. Pupils are going to produce an historical story. That narrative will suggest to the reader the historical significance of events.

B The Children's Crusade: revealing and remarked upon

The five Rs is a formula that I can apply to the First World War and to the Children's Crusade, alike. Some words are more relevant than others for each event, but as a collection they give me a rich and more widely transferable profile for talking about significance.

Above all, we have a model that starts to suggest something about what it means to be *historically* significant.

● Revealing

Historians are trying to find out what happened in the past. Thus a past event can become historically significant because of the light it sheds on *some other facet* of the past. I think this is a crucial way in which the Children's Crusade is significant. It is revealing. It suggests or tells us things about more ordinary, hidden aspects of lives. The staggering fact of thousands of children leaving their homes to go on an impossible journey must be indicative of all kinds of conditions and changes – material and spiritual – in their lives and beliefs. It might suggest something about the nature of religious fervour, about the influence of popular preachers or, by inference, about economic and social changes that had made people more desperate or given them less to lose. The *extraordinary* can reveal the ordinary. The idea that an event or development creeps into the history books because it is revealing gives us a fuller concept of historical significance to work with.

● Remarkd upon

There were many processions and large gatherings in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Yet this one was judged important enough to merit a special title. *This* one gets placed on the timeline, *this* one gets put in the school textbooks, *this* one gets listed alongside the other crusades. Why is this? What has made it stand out? One simple answer is that it was judged remarkable at the time. People remarked upon it. They have remarked upon it ever since. Those remarks at the time help us to gauge how far out of the ordinary this one was deemed to be. It was worthy of remark. Here is another way of thinking about significance – one capable of wide application.

These are two characteristics that we will work with in this chapter, in the context of analysing and constructing narrative.

C Linking narrative with historical significance

The other thing that helped me to choose the five words was a close look at good historical narratives. If pupils are to enjoy and become increasingly skilful at constructing their own historical narratives, we have to give them something to think about beyond putting events in the right order. A chronology or sequence of events is not a narrative.

We also have to give them more than the guidance that they normally get about good fictional narrative writing, such as that explored in Chapter 2. There is a good deal of overlap, here, of course, but in thinking about what made a narrative *historical*, I began to think about what we need to model if pupils are to produce convincing, readable and truly historical narratives. The issues about significance loomed large. What emerges about historical significance in a narrative? Quite a lot. In fact, *the demonstration of historical significance to a reader* is one thing

pupils need to think about if they are to decide what to put into an historical narrative, and what to leave out.

It may seem that analysis, persuasion, discussion or explanation are the obvious ways to build an overt argument about historical significance. Indeed they are, and Book 3 of this series (for Year 9) picks up on ways of using persuasive language in the context of a rigorous argument about historical significance. But an author's view about historical significance comes through in a narrative and is no less important for being indirect.

So this chapter will look at historical significance as just one way of helping pupils to think about the hidden decision making that goes on in a narrative – what to leave in, and what to miss out. The challenge is to make the act of reflection on those decisions into an act of *historical* reflection.

● Reflecting on the decision making in an historical narrative

A huge amount of curriculum development work and research of many kinds has gone into the nature and construction of narrative, and into children's learning with and about narrative. The theme of narrative will be picked up in greater depth in Book 2, with activities for Year 8. Here I want to create a limited and manageable focus on just a few aspects of pupils' decision making in the construction of narrative. The goal is to help them to realise that *there are decisions to be made* in areas where they might previously have relied upon stream of consciousness or simply bounced through a 'recount' mode without thinking (Brooke and Martin, 2002).

With the Children's Crusade as our example, there are plenty of decisions to be made. What is the core, and what is the periphery? Is what 12-year-old Nicolas did the centre of our story? Or are reactions to what he did and said more important? Which things in the conventional story are we quite certain about? Where are historians undecided or reliant upon a blend of inference and imagination? And how does a narrative show these things? Through these issues, sometimes wittingly, sometimes unwittingly, a narrative-writer sends messages or reveals assumptions about historical significance.

The approaches in this chapter are designed to make pupils a little more witting. One of my own most important discoveries as a teacher was that it was possible to teach pupils to think about how they put an historical narrative together, how to invest it with meaning and how to notice just how much choice they have in making that meaning. Media Studies teachers manage it all the time when they get pupils to think about the impact of two unconnected images, juxtaposed. See, for example, the work of Banham and Hall (2003) on using film with Year 9. Pupils can do this with text, too. They can reflect on how the apparently inadvertent stacking of facts together can convey an impression to a reader – an intended impression or an unintended impression. Narrative is not neutral.

Narrative is fun to write. It is also quite difficult to write well. When Sean Lang first argued for a revival of narrative in examination answers, he was presenting it as a worthy challenge, not as a low-level skill somewhere with the lower forms of life below 'analysis' and 'argument' (Lang, 2003).

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So let us help pupils to learn a little of the artistry of narrative. It will help them to 'feel' the compositional challenge – the degree of freedom that exists even when one is working within a disciplined framework of facts – and to be savvier, more alert readers of narrative themselves.

● What goes wrong when pupils bounce through recount mode

Before plunging into choosing activities or planning an enquiry, just reflect on a short account of the Children's Crusade (see Figure 4.2) and consider in what ways it is unsatisfactory as an historical narrative.

● **Figure 4.2** *A basic account of the Children's Crusade in which issues about historical construction are ignored and ideas about historical significance are underdeveloped*

In the early thirteenth century, a 12-year-old boy called Nicolas started to preach sermons in his home town of Cologne. He told the people of Cologne about a message he believed he had received from God. He said that God wanted him to lead children in a crusade to the Holy Land and take Jerusalem back from the Muslims.

In April 1212, Nicolas led a procession southwards towards the Mediterranean Sea. Several thousand people, mostly children, followed him. In the summer, they crossed the Alps and came down the other side of the mountains into Italy.

The account is accurate, competent and readable. In some settings it might be just what is needed but it misses many opportunities. It is clearly trying to be a neutral and factual recount, only. No one is inviting us to dwell upon what might be remarkable or revealing about these events. In particular:

- No background or setting is given, whether to create atmosphere or context, expectation or surprise. Therefore, we cannot get any sense of whether this event was out of place in its context, or whether it was typical of the time.
- There is no mystery about it. We do not feel the writer's sense of historical puzzle.
- There is nothing about the reaction of others to the actions of the children. We do not know anything about how the event was received, or whether it was greeted with wonder at the time.
- The piece is written with assured certainty. Nothing appears disputed. There are no 'hedges' in the language (see Chapter 5, page 102). There is no sense of difficulty in constructing the story. It is assumed that the story is just 'there', so we do not feel the work of historical construction.
- Although the story stops at a half-way point, no sense of suspense is cultivated.

This last point might appear not to matter. After all, this is history, isn't it? It is not a novel! But it does matter, for what is it that makes a narrative worth telling? What makes it a *story*? Stories have resolutions. The events must be connected and linked in some way and its ending must matter to us. Any narrative historian is highly

selective when choosing events to put in a story. When considering what level or blend of detail to include, issues such as narrative flow, tension and dynamic matter greatly. To relate the story as though the next stage of events did not matter, as though there were no need to engage the reader, is actually to deny some key historical characteristics of the story.

None of this makes it weak writing. Indeed, there are settings where such spare, bald recitations of facts can be devastating and powerful. But the point that we want to get across to the pupils is that (a) the writing of an historical narrative is not just about sequencing events; (b) the writing of an historical narrative is a tool, albeit an indirect one, through which we *can* convey message or atmosphere, through which we *can* show historical significance, and whose form will allow us, in effect, to 'argue'.

■ Arriving at a good enquiry question

Take another look at Tim Lomas' propositions (see page 78). Some turn neatly into possible enquiry questions that suggest a learning journey within a defined area of ideas (for example, 'to establish criteria for assessing the significance of events, people and issues in the past'). Others seem to encompass no really teachable journey and, instead, a kind of arrival point, 'to understand that history operates on the basis that some events and changes are more important than others'. The former translate into enquiry questions quite neatly; the latter are vital outcomes of learning that take place over time, but to establish either a lesson objective or an enquiry question that merely results in the informed regurgitation of that statement might be reductive and pointless.

There are many different kinds of enquiry question that serve the first type, however. For example, after studying the discussion in this chapter, a history department would have some principles for working towards: *Is the Children's Crusade historically significant?* A more 'Year 7-friendly' translation of the same question might be: *Why might the Children's Crusade matter?* This would allow pupils to experiment with criteria for judging its significance and/or to generate their own.

Something that is less ambitious and simply asks pupils to gather and make sense of reasons why it has found its way into the history books, without necessarily problematising this, might be: *Why has the Children's Crusade ended up in history books?* or *Why is the Children's Crusade an important historical story?*

The activities that follow could be fitted into any of these. The final narrative that pupils will write could become the 'answer' to the question or teachers might like to follow it up with more directly analytic work.

Using just two of the five 'R's (see page 80), our working enquiry question will be:

What is remarkable and revealing about the Children's Crusade?

The activities suggested also address, indirectly, many aspects of evidential thinking, such as drawing out and wording different types of inference. The activities that focus on the word 'remarkable' are all to do with selecting and integrating sources. The activities that focus on the word 'revealing' are about hypothesising and drawing inference.

Activities

Three activities now follow.

Activity 19 is largely oral. Pupils examine a narrative of the Children's Crusade. They look for and discuss some of the features that they will attempt to replicate and adapt for themselves in the second half of the narrative.

In Activity 20, pupils write the second part of the narrative. They are given the bare bones of the narrative in the form of a full chronology of events. This places the learning and thinking emphasis upon decisions about style, rather than leaving pupils floundering trying to work out the chronology. Pupils are supported through stages in which they make their stories flow better, decide how to weave in further background information that is 'outside' the immediate chronology, show their certainty or uncertainty about what happened, and finally indicate to the reader how people remarked upon the event at the time.

In Activity 21, pupils concentrate on the word 'revealing'. They examine how the Children's Crusade reveals or points to beliefs, conditions and possible changes at the time. Pupils turn the Children's Crusade into a series of 'windows on the past'.

Activity 19

Examining some features of a historical narrative

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

Using Part 1 of a narrative of the Children's Crusade (see Resource Sheet 19), pupils collect and discuss features that they will attempt to replicate themselves when they write Part 2. These features range from technical and stylistic matters, with which pupils might need support, through to wider questions about the impact of the narrative on the reader and the scope for showing the historical significance of the event. Six areas for searching, reflection and discussion are suggested.

I strongly recommend that this activity is tackled orally. Not only is it essential for the teacher to read the text aloud, probably more than once, it is also vital that pupils discuss their responses with each other and with their teacher. Whilst it would be possible to give pupils a chart or sheet to fill in, the danger is that the mystery, interest

and reflection can get lost in the business of 'filling in the sheet'. A simple chart could certainly be created for collecting elements from the six areas, but this is of small importance compared with the development of pupils' thinking through listening and discussion.

Such oral work gives teachers a chance to hear and to analyse a range of responses, and to challenge pupils' thinking accordingly. It also means that concentration, motivation and understanding can be kept at a high level through the direct intervention of the teacher, and in preparation for the more independent work that will follow. By reading sections of the text aloud and developing pupils' responses orally, the teacher can:

- help pupils to hear emphasis and pattern in the text;
- invite pupils' comments on features of the text and so establish what pupils are and are not understanding;
- develop pupils' thinking about the intentions and effects of stylistic and content decisions in the text;
- build skill in technical aspects of writing.

In each of the following six examples, the teacher could begin by modelling the searching process first, on OHP or whiteboard, then give pupils a brief searching period, as individuals or pairs. Pupils could be asked to highlight the examples that they find. These brief periods of searching and highlighting could then be followed by mini-plenaries to hear their ideas, extend their thinking and alert them to further examples.

■ Activity procedure

1) Ask pupils to find all the places where reference is made to the evidential record behind the story.

The narrative on Resource Sheet 19 is full of references to chronicles and chroniclers, so this is fairly easy.

Nonetheless, it is worth doing. In this section of narrative, the story seems to be as much about the chroniclers as about the children themselves. Getting pupils to notice this now will help them with the activities that follow. Through discussion, help pupils to notice this emphasis on the chroniclers and to reflect on its effects:

- Why might the author of the story have done this?
- Why might this be important in an *historical* story?
- What kinds of thing do the direct quotations from sources help the reader to picture or understand?
- How does this help the telling of a good story?
- How does it help us to understand the importance of the story at the time?

2) Ask pupils to find all the language that suggests uncertainty, tentativeness or a sense of how the story has been constructed.

The narrative on Resource Sheet 19 is full of tentative claim and hypothetical language. As author, I have been explicit about the degree of certainty that can or cannot be attached to many of the claims.

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Pupils could simply find these, or you might go further and help them to classify these examples in a variety of ways. Pupils are used to this 'collect and classify' approach from work with grammar at Key Stage 2 (see DfEE, 2000). For example:

- Direct comments on the problems of being certain:

We do not know exactly ...

- References to what the chroniclers tell us:

Chroniclers tell us ...

One chronicler wrote ...

The chroniclers all say ...

We can chart their journey from the chronicles ...

... there are reports ...

- Processes of historical inference or deduction made explicit (for example, through the use of conditionals and other modal verbs):

... people must have thought ...

... would have been difficult ...

... could not have been ...

It seems that ...

... seems

... might ...

... may ...

This is not just about modelling the kinds of language that pupils might use when they continue the narrative; it is yet another way (building on part 1, above) of showing pupils, bit by bit, that such a story is *constructed*. We are reminding pupils that there is a process behind it – a process not just of sifting and selecting the sources, but of making inferences and drawing conclusions, a process involving speculation, for the evidential record is patchy and incomplete. The work of history is to use the evidence, human insight, wider knowledge and imagination (a) to piece together a plausible story; (b) to tell it in such a way that the reader's thinking and imagination are engaged.

3) Ask pupils to find all the places where the author has included some background information.

You might draw pupils' attention to background context on:

- other gatherings and processions;
- views about children at the time;
- wandering preachers and prophets.

The fact that Nicolas began to preach is not enough to explain the children's actions, which were remarkable even by the standards of the time. This event must have had many causes. We need background information to help create a *context* for making sense of the children's actions.

Whilst a narrative does not explicitly list these things as causes, it can still do some of the work of explanation. It is

just that the explanation is less direct, less obviously *analytic*. Any analysis has been subordinated to the demands of narrative flow. In a narrative (of this type) the reader is left to speculate and to analyse for him or herself.

Try getting the pupils to do just that. What can they work out about this period that might help to *explain* the Children's Crusade? Keep the emphasis on 'might'.

This is ideal for reflection and speculation. All you are doing is helping pupils to extract a range of points that might give some clues as to the values and hopes of people at the time. The narrative deliberately does not explain everything – it actually makes the children's actions seem rather mysterious – but we do gain a sense of attitudes, values, beliefs and hopes. From this brief narrative, we gain a hint that this might have been a time of instability and extreme behaviour – that there was a pattern into which the Children's Crusade might fit. What a good narrative can do is create just enough context to create a sense of mystery, but not so much that it is de-problematised, fully and directly analysed and explained.

This is what the narrative supplies – a context. The focus for learning at this stage, then, is to get pupils to tell the difference between the context and the story. Clearly the two merge, but this in itself will yield productive discussion. Another way of doing this is to ask pupils to highlight those parts of the story that they would classify as background information or context. This will lead to interesting discussion about the boundaries of the story itself. And where does the *story* 'start'?

This discussion will be focusing, increasingly, if indirectly, on the quality of the narrative, on what the author is *choosing* to reveal and how.

Note that many other contextual factors – such as changing economic conditions in town and country – have deliberately been excluded from Part 1 of the narrative. This is partly so that pupils can have an opportunity to weave these in for themselves later (see Activity 21). Their exclusion at this stage also makes it easier for the teacher to keep asking, 'Why do you think ...?'

4) Ask pupils to find all the places where reference is made to the reactions of people living at the time.

This is essential if pupils are to assess the strangeness of events to people living at the time. The event is strange to us, but the narrative makes clear, by showing others' comments, that it was seen as remarkable and unusual even at the time.

Pupils will have picked out some of this when focusing on the chroniclers or the evidential record (see part 1, above). But the focus here is wider than the chroniclers. Pupils should pick up on the reactions of people through whose villages the children passed and of those who chose to feed them (or not). These documented and inferred reactions can then act as a springboard for speculation about other possible reactions. Pupils will be

using the narrative as a basis for informed speculation about wider reaction to the Children's Crusade.

5) Ask pupils to comment on the interim ending.

There are two kinds of question to raise here. First, ask how suspense and mystery are achieved. For example:

- How is the reader left wanting to read on?
- How is this achieved?
- What are the characteristics of the writing in the final paragraph? (for example, short sentences)

Then, invite pupils to attempt prediction. For example:

- What do pupils think might happen next?
- Where must the children head for on the other side of the Alps?
- If the children ever reach Genoa, what do they predict might happen there?

This might be a good moment to reveal to them that they are *not* going to 'read on'! They are going to write Part 2 for themselves ...

6) Alert pupils to a range of technical devices that will help to model what they will have to do in Activity 20 when they write their own continuation of the narrative.

For example, pupils might collect and classify:

- connectives and conjunctions;
- use of the past tense;
- use of conditionals;
- the use of adverbs to show emphasis (for example, 'even', 'still').

Activity 20

From chronology to historical narrative

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

In this activity, pupils are given a kit of elements with which to continue the narrative. A lot is done for them. They do not have to puzzle out the chronology of events. This is supplied on Resource Sheet 20A. The focus of the learning is on weaving these elements together and integrating them with further features and ideas.

In this way, the process of narrative construction is deliberately rendered slightly artificial and heavily supported. There is an important reason for this. The aim is to develop reflection on the many options open to the writer of historical narrative, to build pupils' sense of control over the medium and to enable them, through these processes, to consider how messages about historical significance can be built into a narrative.

The activity is divided into four stages:

Stage 1: Make it flow

Pupils are given technical help with linking some sequential but essentially isolated and staccato pieces of information into a fluent story.

Stage 2: Show uncertainty

Pupils are encouraged to show the tentative basis of our knowledge. They do this by choosing and experimenting with much of the language of inference and uncertainty that they searched for and talked about in Activity 19.

Stage 3: Weave in background information

Pupils make decisions about other, more general, information that might not be part of the sequenced events, but which could be useful in explaining the children's experiences or actions. Just as an historian has to make decisions about where to put things in a narrative (especially when many things happen in parallel), so pupils are helped to see that this information could go in a number of places. They have to deploy it according to *where it will help the reader the most*.

Stage 4: Show how people remarked on the story

Pupils examine short examples of reactions by many contemporary chroniclers. They decide how to weave these into their narrative in such a way that the contemporary sense of wonder and strangeness comes through clearly.

■ Activity procedure

A photocopyable set of events that will form the spine of Part 2 of the narrative is supplied on Resource Sheet 20A. Resource Sheets 20B to 20E then take pupils through the above stages. This allows for independent or collaborative working at pupils' own pace. However, with some groups of pupils it will be sensible to complement this by pausing regularly and modelling aspects of each stage, using whiteboard or OHP.

In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there were many large and unusual gatherings of poor people in parts of France and Germany. Even at that time, people must have thought these happenings strange, for the chroniclers wrote a great deal about them.

Large processions of men, women and children were quite normal. Some would wander through the countryside for weeks, in very large groups, in order to get work building the great medieval cathedrals. As these were religious processions, the people often carried candles and banners, chanting and singing as they went.

But the gatherings at this time were changing. Sometimes, people were gathering to listen to wandering prophets and preachers. Some of these preachers just encouraged people to lead good lives. Others prophesied that the world would soon end. Some criticised the nobles, the rich and the clergy, saying that the priests were no good and took money from the poor. The preachers were sometimes very poor themselves.

Children, in particular, had been doing some very strange things. Chroniclers tell us that at this time children danced until they died of exhaustion. Throughout the Middle Ages, there are reports of this 'dancing mania', but especially when there was a war, a plague or a terrible famine. It seems that hunger, anxiety or insecurity may have made people behave strangely. The chronicle of Aachen says that children, *'formed circles hand in hand and, appearing to have lost all control over their senses, carried on dancing, regardless of bystanders, for hours on end into a wild delirium, until eventually they fell to the ground exhausted.'*

Medieval people had traditions of making children the centre of attention on special occasions. For example, on 28 December, Holy Innocents' Day, children took over cathedrals for a whole day. One child was even dressed in bishop's clothes. The wandering preachers and prophets took up this belief that God showed himself to children in special ways. One Italian hermit, Joachim of Fiore, who lived from 1145 to 1202, reminded his readers of Jesus's words in the Bible: *'I thank, thee, O Father, because you have hidden things from the wise and have revealed them to the children.'* Perhaps this explains why there were so many reports of children in the processions and gatherings. Several chroniclers describe large numbers of children walking over 180 km in northern France, at the start of 1212. It seems that they were on their way to speak to King Philip near Paris. These children were even led by a young shepherd boy named Stephen.

Meanwhile, the biggest and strangest children's procession also began in 1212. It was led by a twelve-year-old boy called Nicolas who lived in Cologne, a city in Northern Germany. The chroniclers all say that in April or May, 1212, Nicolas told

people about a message he had received from God in a vision. He said that God had told him to recapture the city of Jerusalem from the Muslims. He was to lead a new crusade. Nicolas seems to have preached everywhere in Cologne – in the market-places, in the town squares and on the steps outside the cathedral.

Nicolas managed to make thousands of children and adults believe that, unlike all the other crusades of the previous 100 years, this one, the Children's Crusade, was going to succeed. We do not know exactly how many went on this crusade but we can be fairly certain that it ran into thousands. It might have been tens of thousands. Some chroniclers claim as many as 30,000. One chronicle, from the town of Marbach, just south of Cologne, shows how powerful Nicolas' message must have been: *'Boys and girls, and some men and women, set out with him, all penniless. Nobody could stop them, neither their parents nor their friends.... People did anything to join the expedition. As it passed by, people put down their tools or whatever they had in their hands at the time, and joined in.'*

Nicolas and the children knew that they had to cross the Mediterranean Sea if they were to reach Jerusalem. So they headed for the port of Genoa, in Northern Italy. This meant that they would have to cross the Alps. We can chart their journey from the chronicles written in the different towns that they passed through. The chronicler of Speyer, for example, noted that the children passed through his town on 25 July. The chroniclers marvelled at the enthusiasm of the children. One wrote, *'They left their mothers and fathers, their nurses and their friends, singing. Bolted doors could not keep them in, nor could their parents call them back.'*

The people of the towns and villages through which the children passed must have been amazed. The first thing they would have heard was the children's singing. Then the children would have started to appear, flowing through the fields and villages in a never-ending procession. As they heard and saw the children, many people must have thought that this was the work of God.

Doubtless the children thought that God would take care of them. Perhaps this was why they did not prepare for the long journey. The chroniclers tell us that the children begged for food along the way. The peasants whose villages they passed through would not have had much food to spare, however, and the chroniclers describe the summer of 1212 as unusually dry and hot.

In this heat, and completely unprepared for the climb, the children began to cross the Alps. There were some passes between the mountains but the paths up to these were long and steep. Few people lived in the mountains and there could not have been much to eat. As the children crossed the Alps, many died from thirst, hunger and heat.

Key events and developments for use in your narrative

These events and developments are already in the right order. The thick black lines are the suggested breaks between paragraphs. Resource Sheets 20B to 20E show you how to shape these into a narrative. Work through Resource Sheets 20B to 20E, *one at a time*.

The procession leaves the Alps behind.
The children arrive in the plain of Lombardy (northern Italy) in August.
Some local people are suspicious of the children.
Some local people try to drive the children back over the Alps.
The children start to split up.
Some children drop out of the march.
Some children find jobs in Italy.
Some children carry on following Nicolas.
7,000 children reach Genoa on 25 August.
The Genoese let the children stay for a week.
The children break into different groups.
Each group tries to find a way to get to the Holy Land.
Some children go to other Italian ports to find ships.
A few children go to Rome and meet the Pope, who tells them to go home.
Some children wait for the sea to part and let them through to Jerusalem.
Most children try to head for home.
Many children die of hunger.
The returning children cross the Alps in October and November.
Many children die in the Alps.
In Cologne, the townspeople seize Nicolas' father and hang him.

● Set it in the past

How? This is easy. Just change all the verbs into the past tense. For example:

The children left the Alps behind. They arrived in ...

● Link up events and ideas

How?

- Use conjunctions like *and, but, if, so, while, then, since, when*.
- Use time connectives like *after that, finally, at first, meanwhile, next, after a while, later*, to link sentences.
- Use contrast connectives like *however, whereas, nonetheless, although*.

You can link two sentences into one by using one of these words at the beginning of your new sentence:

For example:

When the returning children crossed the Alps in October and November, many of them died.

You can also link two sentences by using one of these words in the middle of your new sentence.

For example:

7,000 children reached Genoa on 25 August but the Genoese only let them stay for a week.

Use pronouns. You don't have to keep repeating nouns all the time. As long as the reader is clear about your meaning, use pronouns like *they, them, it* and *he*, wherever it helps.

For example:

The children left the Alps behind. They arrived in ...

● Show patterns and choose things to emphasise

How? Use adverbs.

For example:

The Genoese let the children stay only one week.

Some children even waited for the sea to part and let them through to Jerusalem.

Yet again, the children started to break into groups.

Get more ideas from Part 1 of the story on Resource Sheet 20A.

Your story is already starting to flow. It sounds like a *story*. Read it through again (try reading it aloud to a partner) and see if you want to make any more changes.

So far, you sound very certain about your story. But there are many details in the Children's Crusade about which historians are *uncertain*. Here are three things that we are not very sure about:

1 We are not very sure how friendly people were in the towns and villages that the children passed through. Some writers at the time say that the local people encouraged the children, giving them food and shelter. Others say that they were unfriendly, unkind and even cruel. It was probably different in different places but we really do not know.

2 We do not know what the different groups did when they reached Genoa. Some sources say that some children went to Italian ports or tried to find ships. But we are not very certain about this.

3 We do not know what happened to Nicolas himself.

First, decide where you want to use these three things in your story. Work out where they will fit. How will you introduce them or weave them in?

Here are some ideas from which you can choose:

- *Historians are not sure about ...*
- *We cannot be certain about ...*
- *It is possible that ...*
- *Some children might have ...*
- *It is possible/likely that many children ...*
- *Some sources suggest ...*
- *We can be fairly certain that ...*
- *We have no idea ...*

Some background information might not *seem* to be part of the story. It might be helpful, however, for making sense of why the people in the story behaved as they did. Here are two examples:

- **The weather.** The weather in the plain of Lombardy in August is extremely hot. Winter blizzards in the Alps start in November.
- **The behaviour of the Italian peoples towards the children.** The children were mostly from Germany. German armies had attacked and destroyed Lombard cities for many years in the twelfth century. The people of Genoa – the Genoese – were also enemies of the Germans.

Think about where this information might be important in your story:

- Work out *where* it might belong.
- Work out *how to weave* it in in your own words.

If you do some research on the Children's Crusade, you might find yet more information that could be relevant to people's behaviour in your story! If you decide that it is relevant, work out where and how to weave it in.

But don't overdo it. If it does not help your story, *leave it out*.

Stage 4: Show how people remarked on the story

Lots of people at the time found these events *remarkable*. In the chronicles, many authors *remarked* on what they saw. They saw it as a very special and strange happening. Here are some tiny snippets from chronicles written during the 60 years that followed the Children's Crusade:

Where and when the chronicle was written	The chronicler's remark
<p>Laon a few years after the children returned</p>	<p>'With innocent children coming together of their own free will, God must be doing something great and new upon the earth.'</p>
<p>Cologne c.1238</p>	<p>'They were divinely inspired.' 'Remarkable - indeed, more than remarkable.'</p>
<p>Admont</p>	<p>'The devil was behind it all.'</p>
<p>Châlons-sur-Marne 1240s</p>	<p>'This was a miraculous expedition.'</p>
<p>Strasbourg</p>	<p>'What stupid children.'</p>
<p>Genoa 1290s</p>	<p>'A great multitude of pilgrims.' 'The Genoese thought that the children were there more for fun than for any good reason.'</p>
<p>Stade possibly in the 1250s</p>	<p>'An assembly of lunatic boys.'</p>
<p>Liège</p>	<p>'A wonderful moment.'</p>
<p>Sens probably in the 1260s</p>	<p>'On the return journey, many children died of hunger on the roads. Nobody helped them.'</p>
<p>Marbach 1220s</p>	<p>'A foolish expedition of children and stupid adults.' 'The clergy and other sensible people spoke against the expedition, and said it was useless.' 'Many thought God had inspired them, and so they helped them with food and other necessities.' 'They who before had travelled in parties and groups, always singing, now came back alone and in silence, barefoot and hungry. Everyone laughed at them.'</p>
<p>Calais 1220s</p>	<p>'A huge multitude of young children from various cities, castles, towns and villages ... came together and went hurrying towards the Mediterranean Sea. When their parents or anyone else asked them where they were going they all answered together, "To God!"'</p>

● Using the chronicler's remarks

Now it is time to work out what to do with all this in your story. You need to show what a remarkable and extraordinary event this was. You need to use some of the remarks of these chroniclers in your story. How will you do that?

Decide where and how to introduce some of these remarks

- Will you use them all in *one place*? Or will you use them in *two or more places* in your story?
- Will you summarise for yourself what the chroniclers said? Or will you use some quotations? If so, which quotations will you choose, and why?
- How will you *introduce* these chroniclers' remarks? Here are some ideas. But only choose them if they fit with what you want to do!

One chronicler wrote, '...'

The chronicler from ... said, '...'

Some chroniclers thought that the children were ...

Other chroniclers from ... tended to say that the children were ...

This was the view of one chronicler, for example, who said, '...'

Activity 21

Revealing the ordinary through the extraordinary: windows on the past

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

This activity moves pupils on to the word ‘revealing’. Pupils are presented with information about the conditions, events and beliefs that *might* have led to the Children’s Crusade, but instead of couching the activity as a search for causes, pupils are asked to comment on what the Children’s Crusade itself *might reveal* about conditions, events and beliefs at the time. They are asked to comment on how the Children’s Crusade might *shed further light* on the severity of conditions or the depth of beliefs at the time. The historical significance of the Children’s Crusade suggested here is that it is an event that is a unique and helpful window on the past. It is an extraordinary event whose value to us today is that it is uniquely *revealing* of aspects of life at the time. In this task, pupils are simply supported in commenting on that characteristic.

In the activity, pupils fill in literal ‘windows’. The language of inference is modelled for them. Choices they make about that language allow them to think about whether they are making a strong or a weak historical inference. They choose ‘strongly suggest’ or ‘might suggest’. For those pupils who are coping well, ask them to vary or extend those language choices to reflect further gradations of certainty/uncertainty.

The activity works as a stand-alone. But see *Activity procedure: Stage 3*, for ideas about ways in which pupils might build this work into the whole narrative, both the pre-prepared section in Part 1 and the section that pupils wrote themselves in Part 2.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 1

Turning the Children’s Crusade into a set of windows on the past

Supply pupils with Resource Sheets 21A to 21E. Resource Sheet 21A contains four windows for them to complete. Resource Sheets 21B to 21E contain information that they can use to help them complete the windows. All of the information on Resource Sheets 21B to 21E could be reduced substantially, amplified or supplemented, depending on the ability or motivation of the pupils.

Model carefully to pupils how to go about the activity, ‘thinking aloud’ on the whiteboard or OHP. Reflect on some of the information on one of the resource sheets, and model the process of deciding how the Children’s Crusade could shed further light on or strengthen our understanding of the facts on each sheet. For example, the outcome, at the end of the modelling process for Window 1/Resource Sheet 21B might be:

The children’s behaviour *strongly suggests* that life in the countryside was harsh and that there was little hope of improvement. If the children had had any chance of improving their lives or any hope of better conditions in the future through hard work or saving money, they might have preferred to stay behind. But there was probably nothing of value for them to leave behind.

The children’s behaviour *might suggest* that life in the countryside was *particularly* bad at this time. It might point to the effects of a recent famine or drought, or else to some disaster that had caused great anxiety, fear or unusually severe hardship.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 2

Developing explicit thinking about strong and weak inferences

A number of follow-up activities are possible using the completed ‘windows’ on Resource Sheet 21A, including opportunities to strengthen and refine the earlier narrative still further.

- 1 Extend the menus of inference language using such options as:
 - ... proves that ...
 - ... could be a strong indication that ...
 - ... might be worth investigating

or ideas of pupils’ own choosing.

- 2 Ask pupils to cut up their windows and arrange their points from weak to strong inferences.

■ Activity procedure: Stage 3

Deciding where to integrate the windows into the narrative

If pupils have completed Stage 1, they will be ready to build into their narratives their points about how revealing the Children’s Crusade might be. They could find places in Part 1 (the narrative supplied on Resource Sheet 19) or in Part 2, which they wrote themselves.

Pupils will already have thought about the kind of language they might need to use, to insert their observations and ideas into the narrative. This activity is therefore very much about *positioning*. *Where* could I put this in my narrative? *Where* will it help the story? *Where*, *why* and *how* might it make it a better *historical* story? *Where* could it *fit*?

Pupils need not necessarily go as far as actually weaving in this material. Many pupils would extend their learning very well simply by annotating a large copy of the narrative (Part 1 or Part 2 or both) with comments on *where* they might insert something from their windows, ready for discussion in pairs or as a whole class.

Equally, other pupils might well enjoy and benefit from weaving the ‘revealing’ comments in. This will be a matter for teacher judgement.

Using the Children's Crusade as a window on the past

Sometimes extraordinary events in the past are like windows through which we are able to see ordinary things very clearly. If we look 'through' those windows carefully, we can develop ideas and theories about why people might have acted as they did.

You are going to show what the Children's Crusade *reveals* about ordinary lives and beliefs at the time. This is one way in which the Children's Crusade becomes *significant* to us, as modern people studying the past. Using Resource Sheets 21B to 21E, fill in your 'windows on the past'.

1 The Children's Crusade as a window on life in the countryside (use Resource Sheet 21B)

The children's behaviour strongly suggests . . .	
The children's behaviour might suggest . . .	

2 The Children's Crusade as a window on life in the towns (use Resource Sheet 21C)

The children's behaviour strongly suggests . . .		
The children's behaviour might suggest . . .		

3 The Children's Crusade as a window on religious beliefs at this time (use Resource Sheet 21D)

The children's behaviour strongly suggests . . .				
The children's behaviour might suggest . . .				

4 The Children's Crusade as a window on views about crusading (use Resource Sheet 21E)

The children's behaviour strongly suggests . . .	
The children's behaviour might suggest . . .	

In the early thirteenth century, life in the countryside was very hard.

Think about the work you have done on life in medieval villages. Think of all the reasons why life for medieval peasants could be very hard:

- the amount of hard work they had to do in the fields;
- the labour services they had to carry out for their lords for free;
- duties that peasants owed to the Church – paying one-tenth of their produce to the local church;
- the amount and type of food on which they had to survive;
- the effects of disease and malnutrition, with no hospitals or doctors when illness or injury came.

Sometimes there were times of unusual or extreme hardship. Sometimes the weather or the economy (or both) made food scarce or too expensive to buy. We know that there were such times in the years leading up to the Children's Crusade, as this monk living near Cologne reports:

In the days when that most terrible famine of the year 1197 was raging ... our monastery, poor and new though it was, gave help to many. I have been told by those who had seen the poor flocking around the gate that sometimes fifteen hundred doles were given out in a single day.

Adapted from Dialogus Miraculorum by Caesarius of Heisterbach, near Cologne, 1235

By the end of the twelfth century, lords throughout this part of Europe would not allow peasants to leave their villages. There were savage punishments for those who ran away. Most peasants were supposed to stay where they were born, carrying out services for their lords, for ever.

How could this information help us to work out why thousands of children and young people chose to leave northern Germany to face the hardship of the Children's Crusade?

What might the Children's Crusade *reveal* about hardship in the countryside at this time? Fill in the first window on Resource Sheet 21A.

In the early thirteenth century, life in the towns was very hard.

Not many people lived in towns at this time, but some towns in northern Europe were starting to grow. Cologne was one of these.

There were a few landlords who were starting to give peasants a chance to pay for their homes and their land with money instead of labour. A peasant could grow extra crops, sell them and so have money to pay the lord. When a peasant did this, he could move, because he no longer had to stay and do labour services.

These peasants sometimes went to the nearest town or city, hoping to find a better life there. One such city was Cologne in Germany.

Young people arriving in Cologne from the countryside would hope to find jobs in one of the city trades, such as cloth dyeing, brewing or metal working. The life of an apprentice was often hard. They worked from dawn until dusk. If they ran away, they could be forced to return to work. Their masters could also sell them to other master-craftsmen. Masters controlled every part of an apprentice's life.

But if children did not have an apprenticeship, it was almost impossible to make a living. Some children had only arrived in the towns to escape a harsh winter in the countryside. Many quickly became destitute. The chroniclers at this time report many starving children begging in the marketplace or becoming thieves.

The chroniclers suggest that, at this time, people began to behave in ways that others could not understand. There were riots, buildings were burned and huge crowds of people, naked or in rags, would run through a city together.

How could this information help us to work out why thousands of children and young people chose to leave northern Germany to face the hardship of the Children's Crusade?

What might the Children's Crusade *reveal* about hardship in the towns at this time? Fill in the second window on Resource Sheet 21A.

Many people believed that the end of the world was near and that Christians would soon end their suffering in heaven.

Many Christians looked forward to the end of the world, believing that then they would go to heaven. But they expected that the last few years of the world, before the end came, would be dreadful. Many prophets said that an awful period of famine, illness and war would be God's sign that the end was near.

In the Bible, St Matthew's Gospel records Jesus saying, 'Nation will make war on nation, kingdom upon kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes ... It will be a time of great distress, such as has never been from the beginning of the world until now.'

In the thirteenth century, many people believed that this prophecy had come true. They believed that the world was ending. The poor and the young were suffering, and their lives seemed hopeless. Other prophecies in the Bible told of a terrible beast that would rule the world and spread evil in the 'Last Days'. The prophecies said that this beast would turn into a human, called Anti-Christ. Some Christians would fight against him, but many would not.

Some of the wandering prophets of the thirteenth century were very popular. Many said that the time of the Anti-Christ was near. Some of them even forecast the date of the end of the world: one said that it would end in 1229. Another said 1260. By 1212 the wandering prophets had spread the idea that God wanted Christians to speed up the Last Days by going to Jerusalem and overthrowing the Muslims. That would cause the end of the world, they said. The suffering of the poor would end and they would live in bliss for ever. Think about why this message would appeal to the poor and the young.

How could this information help us to work out why thousands of children and young people chose to leave northern Germany to face the hardship of the Children's Crusade?

What might the Children's Crusade *reveal* about people's religious beliefs? Fill in the third window on Resource Sheet 21A.

Many earlier crusades had failed. Many people believed that the crusaders were becoming 'worldly'.

By the time of the Children's Crusade in 1212 there had been four major crusades, in 1096–9, 1147–50, 1189–92 and 1202–4. After the first crusade, Muslims recaptured Jerusalem. All of the later crusades were unsuccessful.

Back in Europe, many people were criticising the crusaders. Many people felt that they were no longer true to the aims of the original crusaders. The crusades were becoming a chance to gain money and land. The dream of capturing Jerusalem began to fade. The fourth crusade, in 1204, never even got near Jerusalem because its leaders decided to attack Constantinople instead! Constantinople was a wealthy city. It had paved streets, lighting at night, theatres, a cathedral and a huge palace. The crusaders spent three days looting it. This was not really the proper behaviour of a soldier of God.

There was also a special crusading vow. You could promise to go to Jerusalem in return for getting forgiveness for your sins. But by the twelfth century, people were taking the vow, gaining forgiveness and then just paying some money to the Church instead of going on the crusade.

All this was giving crusading a bad name. When the crusades began, crusaders were seen as heroes. By the early thirteenth century, they seemed worldly and weak.

In 1212, however, there were many young people who still wanted to believe in the old aims of crusading. They wanted to speed up the fight against 'the Anti-Christ'. The prophets told them that they would succeed because God was on their side. In 1189, one writer wrote: 'The poor and the weak will be given the Kingdom of God in Heaven, and the Holy Land on Earth, the double Jerusalem. Already to help him in his work, God is served by vagabonds and women.'

How could this information help us to work out why thousands of children and young people chose to leave northern Germany to face the hardship of the Children's Crusade?**What might the Children's Crusade *reveal* about attitudes to crusading at this time? Fill in the fourth window on Resource Sheet 21A.**

Sample lesson sequence

Summary of one possible route through an enquiry, incorporating all of the activities

Prior learning

This is an ideal activity to place towards the end of a study of the Middle Ages, where pupils have a good range of knowledge on which to draw as they begin to reflect on what makes something historically significant. Historical significance is a huge issue, and it is salutary for teachers to remember that pupils' reflections can only mature as they build more knowledge of varied historical accounts and stories, across the whole of Key Stage 3.

But with a broad experience of the medieval period behind them and taking into account other common topics tackled at Key Stage 2, it would be possible to begin an enquiry with reflection on issues such as:

Why do you think we chose the topics that we did in our study of the Middle Ages?

or

Why do you think some stories end up in the history books and others don't?

or

Why do you think that the government's National Curriculum says that all pupils should know something about the Middle Ages?

This kind of discussion can then allow the teacher to introduce possible criteria such as those discussed in this chapter and/or to create simple activities that put those criteria to the test. For example, in what ways was the story of Becket and Henry *revealing*? Why is the story of John and the Magna Carta so *remarked upon*? Did the Peasants' Revolt have any *results*?

With this experience behind them, pupils would be able to manage a simple enquiry such as the one suggested below. Further sources and background can be found in the excellent classroom text, *The Children's Crusade* by Douglas Thorburn (1985).

Enquiry question

What is remarkable and revealing about the Children's Crusade?

Outline of learning flow

Six 60-minute lessons, concluding pupils' work on the Middle Ages.

What is remarkable and revealing about the Children's Crusade?

Lesson 1	Teacher leads a structured discussion in which pupils look back at earlier topics on the medieval period. They reflect on why these stories stand out, how they entered the history books and why the government and/or this school's history department decided it was important to study them. This leads into structured activities using criteria for historical significance. Pupils apply these to topics that they have studied, creating a chart, table, graph or 'weighing scales' diagram to judge which criteria seem to be more important in each. The five Rs are introduced either during this activity or after it. <i>Follow-up homework activity using the five Rs.</i>
Lesson 2	Pupils are introduced to the story of the Children's Crusade through a selection of storytelling, drama, role-play, looking at a map of the journey or atmospheric reconstruction (see Counsell, 2001b: Cunning Plan, for an example of a whole-class mini-reconstruction). The goal is for pupils to be enthralled and fascinated by this strange story and to end the lesson with good outline knowledge of it in their heads. The lesson concludes with reflection on 'What does this story suggest to us about the Middle Ages?' and (given that it didn't result in anything very much) 'Why do we find it in history books and textbooks?'
Lesson 3	Activity 19 – reading and discussing Part 1 of the narrative. Conclude the lesson with an introduction to the enquiry question. <i>Homework: pupils attempt to apply the five Rs to the Children's Crusade. Which ones might apply?</i>
Lesson 4	Begin with a discussion on homework and then launch into Activity 20 .
Lesson 5	Continue Activity 20 for this lesson. <i>For homework, tackle Stage 4 (Resource Sheet 20E) and/or a reflective activity.</i>
Lesson 6	Begin the lesson with a further discussion and a starter activity on the word 'revealing'. Introduce the idea of an event as a window. Using aspects of Activity 21 , pupils make their windows on the past for a class display. Groups of pupils could tackle one or two windows and then compare with others.

Chapter summary

- * This chapter presents teaching approaches designed to help pupils (a) to enjoy historical argument written by real historians; (b) to explore the lively personality in one example of such writing; and (c) to replicate some of its conventions, features and energy in their own writing.
- * These approaches are illustrated through two substantial text extracts from Eileen Power's posthumously published work, *Medieval Women*. The choice of text is geared to the pupil of above average ability.
- * The chapter argues that pupils need to feel and hear the shape and style of an argument, to hear the historian's voice. The 'subtext' lurking beneath the text is not only intrinsically interesting in its own right, but is an access tool for making sense of the text in the first place. It is argued that finding the subtext should not be viewed as some higher-order skill to which pupils progress once they have grasped literal meaning; instead, they need to be taken straight to the rhythm, flow and personality of such a text. It is by highlighting the energy and passion of an historian's writing that we can make a challenging text both interesting and *comprehensible* to pupils. The chapter's message is: 'subtext first'.
- * The chapter draws upon the author's own practice with pupils, on the work of teachers and researchers in England, Israel and America, and, in particular, on the case made by Sam Wineburg that to ignore the subtext in historical writing is to ignore the distinctive properties of history as a subject. Pupils must be introduced to the peculiar characteristics of a disciplinary style if a way of reading is to become a 'way of knowing'.
- * National Curriculum areas include diversity and characteristics of past situations (NC Key Elements 2a and b). The activities indirectly support the use of sources (NC Key Element 4), particularly their constructive and integrated use in extended writing (NC Key Element 5).
- * Each of the two activity sequences prepares pupils for reading a substantial extract from Eileen Power's book. Most of the activity takes place *before* pupils even reach the written text. They listen to a text read aloud, they carry out various oral and aural tasks and they collaborate in writing that anticipates the text's argument.
- * The approach could be used with *the full range of ability*. The kit for collaborative writing in the second activity has been chosen, however, with *the very able pupil* in mind. The kit and the activity could easily be modified for the lower-attaining or less confident pupil.
- * Enquiry question chosen as the setting for the activities:
How does Eileen Power show us what she thinks?

Context

A History as argument

● No puzzle, no history

The practice of history is the practice of argument. As a result of historical research, the historian must have something to say, not merely information to present. Gathering facts about Roman food or medieval women's work is not really the point. This is just antiquarianism, not history. What makes it genuine historical enquiry is the existence of some puzzle or problem. If an historian's writing seems to be going nowhere in particular, one is left asking: what was the historical problem in the first place? If there is no case to be made, then what on earth was the historical puzzle or question? Chris Culpin says 'no puzzle, no learning' (Culpin, 1999). I'd go further and say, 'no puzzle, no history'.

The current Programme of Study in the National Curriculum for History in England and in Wales acknowledges this. National

Curriculum Key Element 2 reminds us of the concepts within which such historical questions arise. Key Element 5 reminds us that pupils must be taught to organise and construct an account in response to such questions or puzzles. Key Element 4 reminds us to frame problems as puzzles or enquiries to ensure that pupils encounter and evaluate documentary sources.

History teachers need to make it absolutely clear to literacy co-ordinators that in history we are not merely trying to find information to describe or relate, with no obvious point. All historical writing has an argumentative edge to some degree. There are different shades of explicitness in that argument, but there is always something to be explained or a case to be made.

This should make the practice of history – the construction and presentation of an historical case – both fun to write and fun to read. But is this what our pupils experience? And whilst the history education community has made great strides in recent years in helping the full ability range to produce extended, analytic, written argument, how many teachers have been equally assiduous in getting pupils to read that argument, to read the finished products of real historians' work? Very few.

● Reading history – the missing piece of the history learning jigsaw

Thanks to the work of many teachers in the 1980s (and to teacher-authors prepared to develop and disseminate it), we have got beyond – at least at Key Stage 3, if not yet at GCSE – the short answer syndrome: ‘Here is a proposition, now give us a reaction.’ Our best history teachers now have a good range of techniques for teaching pupils to put sources and ideas together again. Byrom, in particular, emphasises the need to compensate for the atomisation of ‘source work’ and ‘skills’ by teaching pupils ‘to be constructive’ (Byrom, 1998). By about 2000 our source-based tradition, our response to deficits emerging in that tradition (outlined in Chapter 1) and our techniques for enabling pupils to construct extended arguments of their own (outlined in Chapter 2) had led to a positive, new, widespread determination to help pupils construct their own extended accounts (e.g. Hammond, 1999; Laffin, 2000). At the very least, there is a common will to achieve this.

In the light of those recent developments and the accompanying cross-curricular literacy revolution, it is therefore interesting, and sobering, to observe those pupils who continue to have real difficulty in constructing any extended accounts – and to reflect upon why. One answer – and one untapped area in the history education community – has to lie in the area of reading: *extended* reading of real history. I doubt if anybody but a reader of history ever became a writer of history.

We can ‘scaffold’ all we like, modelling ‘big points’ and ‘little points’, card-sorting alternative arrangements to discuss the merits and demerits of different types of analysis (see Chapter 2), using sentence starters and so on. In the end, however, pupils who still cannot string a few sentences together to make a bit of continuous prose that argues something, are stuck not merely for lack of technique. Surely they are also stuck because they simply have no model of such an argument in their head. They have never lived inside an extended text, felt its flow and been borne away by it.

● Linking substance and process: finding a reason to argue

There have been recent attempts to solve this by putting model bits of writing in front of children, sometimes on completely different topics, so that pupils can pick out the stylistic features or notice the structure or the language effects. This useful approach has been encouraged by the British government’s ‘Strategy’ in all subjects, in both primary and secondary schools in England. It is designed to help pupils imitate features and make them their own.

One problem here, however, is that the accounts are often unrelated to the enquiry in which pupils are engaged. This makes it hard for pupils to see the point. If a text is suddenly introduced whose substantive content bears no relation to the deep puzzle that pupils are beginning to engage in, it is particularly hard for them to become fascinated by the form, structure and style, no matter how many clever activities we devise.

The practice of history allows us to link the substantive content with the process and concepts of the subject. This clever marriage of the ‘what’ and the ‘how’, which naturally informs all good history lessons, means that out of the substantive content pupils can find a

real reason to argue – and therefore a reason to think and to learn about arguing.

● Puzzling in prose

But we need to deal with the missing link. We work hard on how historians might use sources but we often fail to match it by showing what the problem looks like after being tackled by a real historian, not to mention enjoying the end product for its own sake. So we need to show pupils some real examples of finished historical prose.

This is easier said than done. Instantly, I hear history teachers cry that real historians’ writing is far, far too difficult for the majority of the ability range at Key Stage 3. True, a lot of it is. But it is not *all* too difficult. In addition, there is much that can be made more accessible to pupils, in an intellectually honest way, without distortion, dumbing down or emasculation of the text.

More than that, it is essential. Without reading a text by an historian, how on earth are pupils supposed to see what all these sources are really for? We assume that getting pupils to do things with sources will help them to see what they are for. But do they not also need to see what others have done with them, both to make sense of the processes and to enjoy the product? Do they not need to see, feel and hear an historian puzzling and wrestling with those sources, and sharing their conclusions with us, with winning communication skill, for the benefit of scholars and public? Historians reveal their puzzling through their prose.

Further, many real historians write extraordinarily well. They write much better than textbook authors. Their prose is worth getting to grips with, and the effort is more likely to produce a sustained interest in reading than ploughing through ten textbooks with their watered-down vocabulary and concern for readability, which so often makes them completely *unreadable*. Our savvy teenagers, still struggling to decode aspects of a text in a literal sense, might ‘hear’ the rhythm of a case or the mounting intensity of an argument much more readily than they will hear the dry list of facts in textbooks or reference books – a book that may be written with exemplary clarity and simplicity but which is going nowhere.

B Listen out for the buzzing

● Historians are real people ... interesting ones

It is only real historical writing that will take us into what history really is – a quest, often a highly personal one, a puzzle-determined search and a constant, careful weighing of claims. Crucially, this weighing of claims is done by a real person – an historian or a group of historians.

In 1967, Peter Schrag noted that history textbooks are often written ‘as if their authors did not exist at all, as if they were simply the instruments of heavenly intelligence transcribing official truths’ (Schrag, 1967). Of course, history textbooks are now very different. In the UK at least, they are packed with sources and constantly invite a questioning approach. But the authorial voice, other than in a minority of self-consciously innovative texts, is still somehow

anonymous. Some lower secondary textbooks are identified more by their commercial publishers than by the author. It is odd that a modern history textbook, now oozing the message that historical process is what matters, should emasculate or conceal the central and defining character in that process – the author as historian. Of course, the textbook author may not have engaged in original research but he or she has selected and arranged, chosen and supported. He or she may be mediator of history more than (strictly speaking) ‘historian’, but the writing of history at whatever degree of distance from original research can only be an individual’s craft and art. It is not the product of the bulk reliability mechanisms of a commercial company. Voice and humanness are all. History is humans writing about humans. Both sets of humans are interesting to the pupil and the first set cannot be forever screened out.

The blandness of the textbook is already disappearing. But no matter how lively and thought-provoking history textbooks get, they will never obviate the need for pupils to be exposed to the writing of professional historians.

● Historians and hedges

Studies of the language of professional historians are revealing to those of us concerned with classroom teaching of younger teenagers. Avon Crismore (1984), in a discourse analysis of different types of writing about history, found that ‘metadiscourse’, or indications of judgement, emphasis and uncertainty, was used frequently in historical writing but appeared rarely in conventional textbooks. She showed, for example, that historians use hedges to indicate the slipperiness of history, using devices such as modals (may, might), certain verbs (suggest, appear, seem) and qualifiers (possibly, perhaps) to convey the sense that historical certainty is elusive. The textbooks that she looked at, by contrast, avoided such hedges.

Crismore suggests that this means that the textbook writers leave the reader with little sense that interpretation had anything to do with the words on the page. Crismore argued that such writing may contribute to students’ inability to move beyond the literal: ‘What happens to critical reading (learning to evaluate and make judgements about truth conditions) when hedges ... are absent? When bias is not overt (as it is *not* in most textbooks) are young readers being deceived?’ (Crismore, 1984: 295). She makes the case, from looking at the stubbornly hard-to-remove, naïve beliefs of undergraduates, that this school experience of history has unhelpfully delayed their grasp of what the discipline is.

‘When bias is not overt ... are young readers being deceived?’ That is a stick of dynamite among present assumptions in history teaching circles. The suggestion is not simply that the pretence to neutrality or objectivity is more deceptive than bias, or even that the bias of an author is inevitable. Rather, it is a specific point about the impact of language on a reader’s grasp of what the discipline of history is. An author could be holding back the pupil’s understanding of what history is by adopting a tone of simplified certainty, by failing to problematise.

Nor is it simply a case of ‘needing to know the author’s bias’, which I could see breeding 101 little exercises to establish the historian’s bias, perhaps as dry as those we have sometimes

witnessed with sources. Rather it is that pupils need to feel the hedging, weighing, problematising process in what they read. To remove those signals is to remove the historian and his or her craft. In real historical writing, they are not removed, they are overt.

● Texts ‘with attitude’ are more fun

Moreover, historians do not try to be neutral. In that American sense, they write ‘with attitude’. This makes historical writing peculiarly paradoxical. In the midst of carefully modified, qualified, ‘hedged’ claims, whether achieved through quiet devastation or with bombastic energy, we feel (and I mean *feel* as well as hear and see) that dogged pursuance of a case. Historical writing is writing that pays great attention to the status of a claim but the words on the page are arranged in such a way as to make a very clear case. This is not to say that in solving a problem or answering a question with a particular line the historian is being disingenuous but rather, simply, that he or she is solving a problem or answering a question. He or she must therefore gather the reader to that end. The facts are arranged accordingly. An historian can state an opinion without an opinion in sight.

We need to show pupils some ‘writing with attitude’. Quite apart from needing to know about the historical process, it makes reading a lot more fun. To read text without accessing subtext is dangerous, we know that. It has been a key principle of history education for 30 years and probably underpins its central contribution to citizenship education. There is nothing new here. I am arguing for a further power of subtext: learning to listen for subtext, through language clues and language rhythms, makes it easier to access the text in the first place. It is precisely this that makes reading history fun. It is precisely this that helps the reader to know that they are reading *history*.

● Keeping pupils away from dull dogs

History without historian’s voice can be very boring. But I am not discounting historians themselves being boring. As E. H. Carr reminds us:

Study the historian before you begin to study the facts. This is, after all, not very abstruse. It is what is already done by the intelligent undergraduate who, when recommended to read a work by that great scholar Jones of St Jude’s, goes round to a friend at St Jude’s to ask what sort of a chap Jones is, and what bees he has in his bonnet. When you read a work of history, always listen out for the buzzing. If you can detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog.

Carr (1961: 23)

We need to find historians who are not dull dogs. We need to change pupils’ expectations so that when they come to a text, they expect to hear the buzzing. If they come looking for information, they will remain ‘tone deaf’. This does not have to mean the full-blown work of finding out about Jones (as we would do if we were

getting heavily into interpretations of history, in line with 'Key Element 3' of the National Curriculum). It can just mean, quite simply, building a sensitivity to language, an enjoyment of the energy and voice in a text.

C Using subtext to access text

'Buzzing' is what Wineburg calls the 'subtext'. He uses this term in a particular way. At one level, his use of the term is the common one. He draws a distinction between the literal text and a text of hidden and latent meanings. But discussing both original source material and historians' writings, Wineburg develops what he means by subtext with a further helpful distinction for the history teacher. He discusses the text as *rhetorical* artefact, meaning the author's purposes, intentions and goals. He then argues that there is another related but distinct sphere, the text as *human* artefact:

But the subtext goes beyond a reconstruction of the intentions of the author, beyond the use of language as a linguistic technology for persuasion. In fact, many subtexts include elements that work at cross-purposes with authors' intentions, bringing to the surface convictions authors may have been unaware of or may have wished to conceal. These aspects fall into the second sphere, the text as human artifact, which relates to how texts frame reality and disclose information about their author's assumptions, world views and beliefs. It is a reading that leaps from the words authors *use* to the types of people authors *are*.

Wineburg (1991: 498–9)

The fact that literal meaning is not enough is shown by the fact that we have a problem getting even older students to read, at sixth form and undergraduate level. By sixth form or undergraduate level, the literal meaning of a text is less of a problem. If these students still find extended reading either too difficult or too boring, it suggests that literal meaning is not enough to sustain interest. This might point the way to solving problems lower down the school. Researchers Haas and Flower (1988) had American undergraduates think aloud as they read a series of texts. They found that college students could easily decipher the literal meaning of texts, but

these same students often frustrate us, as they paraphrase rather than analyze, summarize rather than criticize texts ... Their representations of text are closely tied to content: they read for information. Our students may believe that if they understand all the words and can paraphrase the propositional content of the text they have successfully read it.

Haas and Flower (1988: 43)

Literal meaning alone is not enough to use the text well and it is not enough to motivate students in the first place. Barbara Hibbert's recent study of the experience of history A-level students in England showed a reluctance to read longer written texts and especially articles and chapters by historians. What was interesting here was that, despite being steeped in a diet of source work and evidential work in the pre-16 curriculum (these were students of the 1990s), when it came to reading texts by historians they seemed to lose any expectation that the text might be more than information. Despite the overt encouragement of their teachers and the view of their teachers that students must become 'selective and critical readers', Hibbert reports:

Some students claimed to do little or no reading beyond that actually set (one or two actually claimed to do no reading at all), and few went beyond course textbooks. There was little awareness among students of different genres of writing, and those who did read tended to do so for information rather than interpretation.

Hibbert (2002: 41)

If literal meaning is not enough to understand an historian's text, if it is not enough to motivate a student, and if a constant diet of critical work with primary sources does not transfer to students' reading of secondary sources, then the case is compelling for the active teaching of how to read historians' texts. In achieving this, accessing the subtext has got to be key – not as a dry, 'is this reliable?' activity, but as a way of enjoying the distinctive use of language, of examining its effects as much as its intentions.

● Plenty of history teachers are doing it already

The picture of practice here, far from being depressing, suggests a renaissance. For alongside these depressing reports are countless examples of teachers solving the problem, and doing so by direct focus on the subtext. Sometimes, they are using the subtext to become interested in that human dimension to which Wineburg alludes, the text as human artefact. Sometimes, they are just good at getting pupils to hold their ear to the text and hear the buzzing.

Working with mixed ability classes of 15-year-olds in northern Israel, Edna Shoham and Neomi Shiloah help students to compare different historians' texts on the same topic in order to notice Carr's 'buzzing'. On the face of it, the texts are factual, objective and reporting details. But a comparison revealed conflicting interpretations on the basis of identical facts, and interpretation proved to be lurking in the choice of facts and arrangement of words, not in any of the obvious signals of opinion giving. Students discovered that factual writing can be crawling in opinion (Shiloah and Shoham, 2003).

Richard Cunningham (2001) described his practice with pupils in a comprehensive school in Portsmouth. Cunningham believes in 'bringing the historian into the classroom' and focuses on helping

5 Hearing the shape and style of an argument

the pupils discover both the practice and the person behind the product we call history. He shows videos of real historians arguing in order to help pupils to see where their knowledge of history comes from and to interest them in its producers:

I had earlier edited a biographical video on Elizabeth I. It was a not a pupil-dedicated, school-style video, but, instead, a one-hour overview shown on the History Channel, complete with a drawling American commentary ('the grrrreatest monarrrrrch ever to have reigned in Eng – ger – land'). The bits that I took were sound bites from three rather glamorous biographers of Elizabeth; Rosalind Miles, Alison Weir and Margaret George, and comments from Professor John Morrill of Cambridge and Dr Diarmaid McCulloch of Oxford. By putting these shots – originally scattered throughout the video – next to each other in quick succession, the pupils were able to observe how these professionals had different opinions (fair enough) that were actually very strongly opposed to one another to the point of aggression (wow!). Interspersed amidst scenes of Hatfield House and Hampton Court, the comments would have passed most of the children by, but when presented in stark conflict ... the pupils could not fail to notice that had the historians and biographers been in the same room, they would have been really arguing. In one sense, they were in our room and, because of the edit, were arguing.

Cunningham (2001: 15–17)

This is one antidote to the problem of the invisible historian. Wineburg remarks that 'before students see subtexts they must first believe that they exist' (Wineburg, 1991: 510). Reading the provenance at the bottom of the text is not necessarily the best starting point, nor can we always bring video footage of real historians into the classroom but we can always hear the voice of the historian by tuning into the energy or urgency in the text.

This makes Eileen Power an excellent choice. Most of Year 7 are unlikely to climb into the complex questions of motivation, ideology or circumstance that made Power write in the way she did (although don't rule it out!), so we may not be able to do all the work with interpretations on Power that we might with older students. This is why I am not styling this chapter as full-blown 'interpretations' work. It is simply that to read Eileen Power in the first place, we need to hear the buzzing. To make any sense of her at all, we need to find some subtext.

● Rethinking our progression models

So let us get right out of our heads the idea that comprehension (or understanding the words) is some lower-order skill that we need to start with before proceeding to inference, evaluation and the rest. I am not arguing here that to read Power requires unusual sophistication. Instead, I am suggesting that the lowest level of

access requires attention to energy and voice, to subtext and buzz. Without this, we will not get the average Year 7 pupil understanding the text in the first place.

Subtext is not something extra, some higher-order level of reading. Indeed, feeling and hearing the subtext might be the only way to give pupils any access to the text.

D Integrating evidence into argument

● Historians integrate the evidential record

Most historians make constant reference to the empirical basis of their conclusions, as naturally as putting a full stop. There is often explicit reference to the evidential base woven into the writing. A quick read of both extracts by Eileen Power in this chapter, and especially Text B that was chosen for this purpose, illustrates this well (see Resource Sheets 22A and 23D).

This reference to the documentary record in historians' work is not only frequent but feels very natural. Indeed, the process of communicating argument or conclusion cannot be achieved without reference to documentary record. Wineburg contrasts this, too, with the textbook:

When historical texts make their journey from the discipline to the school curriculum, we force them to check their distinctiveness at the door. The historical text becomes the school text, and soon bears a greater resemblance to other school texts – those in biology, language, arts and other subjects – than to its rightful disciplinary referent. So, perhaps the defining feature of historical discourse – its constant reference to the documentary record through footnotes – is the very aspect that drops out when historical texts become history textbooks. No wonder many students come to see history as a closed story when we suppress the evidence of how that story was pieced together.

Wineburg (1991: 514)

History textbooks in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s in the UK might be said to have responded to such criticism in that they are full of sources. This is very true but being full of sources is not quite the same thing as integrating the evidential record within historical discourse. It is not the same as building it seamlessly into prose.

What we see in textbooks are lots of sources and lots of activities to do on them. We do not see writing that integrates those source extracts as part of the prose. We do not, therefore, see the product of academic history itself. We are invited to engage in its process, for sure but without being shown its product as model. We must go to academic history itself for that, and to some decent chunks of it,

so that we learn the conventions of weaving evidential reference into prose.

● ‘Evidential information’

There is a further key respect in which our modern history textbook functions differently from a professional historian’s account. McAleavy (1998) has often written and spoken about the need for teachers to make much more reference to what he called ‘evidential information’ in their teaching and to encourage pupils to do the same in their writing. What he meant was that all too often we assume that we have to develop pupils’ evidential thinking by direct use of source extracts. The reality is that the historian thinks, talks and writes about conclusions from evidence or impressions from types of evidence without putting quotes from sources all over the place.

This notion of evidential information is important both for reviewing the way we teach pupils to write and for reviewing the way in which we present new knowledge to pupils. To develop either we need to see it modelled by historians. In Text B (Resource Sheet 23D) see how Eileen Power makes use of ‘evidential information’ without actually quoting from particular sources:

- Much less prominent in medieval sources ...
- We find in manorial accounts ...
- In every manorial survey ...

This is a feature of most historians’ prose – they both summarise and substantiate in a single sentence stem. We are told where the knowledge comes from and we receive an overview of its implications for our ongoing argument at the same time. We do not necessarily have to pause to look at a source and if we did its role would be as illustration rather than evidence. It is the generality of the phenomenon that renders it *evidence* for our case.

We need to equip pupils with more flexible ways of referring to the evidential base than the sometimes clumsy and limited device of inserting sources all over the place. The activities in this chapter address this issue directly by drawing upon Power’s natural technique.

E Eileen Power

● The choice of text: extracts from Eileen Power’s *Medieval Women*

The distinguished medieval historian Eileen Power was educated in Cambridge and spent most of her life researching and teaching at the London School of Economics, although retaining many connections with Cambridge. Having acquired an international reputation, she turned down the almost certain opportunity to hold the Chair of Economic History in Cambridge in 1938 so that her new husband, M. M. Postan, could apply. She spent the last two years of her life in Cambridge as his wife and as a member of the London School of Economics during the war years when it was evacuated to Peterhouse. She died suddenly of a heart attack in 1940, aged just over 50.

Medieval Women was first published in 1975. Throughout her career as a medieval historian, Eileen Power was engaged on a

book about women in the Middle Ages. She did not live to write the book, but some of the material she collected found its way into popular lectures on medieval women. These lectures were brought together by her husband, M. M. Postan, and published long after her death.

Power’s scholarly writing had a quality of mischief and fun about it. You can feel her interest in her subjects, particularly when she is focusing upon working women. She wrote about her medieval subjects with sympathy and wit. As a result, she gained quite a popular, literary following whilst securing high academic honours at the same time – not a combination achieved by the great male historians of her day. She sought to write the history of the wider spectrum of society and also to take this history beyond academic audiences. Thus she broadened both the content and the audience for her work. Working closely with R.H. Tawney, she developed new methods for enquiry into social and economic history and virtually created the new disciplines of social and economic history as courses for study at university. (Teachers who want to gain further background on Eileen Power might consult Maxine Berg’s Foreword to *Medieval Women* in Cambridge University Press’s Canto series, 1997).

I outline this information for two reasons. First, the teacher needs to know about the historian so as to be alert to issues and opportunities for developing discussion with pupils. That way the historian can come to life. Picture Eileen Power – an attractive woman who dressed very fashionably, regarded everywhere as beautiful and brilliant – lecturing in the 1930s. Picture her world – one where few female academics were taken seriously. Consider her tragic death – totally unexpected in middle age and before her great work on medieval women was finished. Bring the writer into the pupils’ view. What was she trying to achieve? What might have motivated her? To what widening circles of people would her death have been a tragic loss?

Pupils need to be intrigued by the historian. Eileen Power’s premature death was a tragedy. The poignancy of her husband gathering a set of essays or lectures to be published later adds to pupils’ interest right from the start. The teacher needs all the curiosity props that he or she can muster to help pupils persevere with a text.

Second, it explains my choice within this series of books. Eileen Power is an ideal contrast with another female historian of the twentieth century – C. V. Wedgwood – a narrative historian focusing upon political and military stories. Book 2 in this series suggests ways of using a short passage of C. V. Wedgwood in a rather different way, playing to the importance of narrative and pupils’ love of it, and examining Wedgwood’s writing as an interpretation. Power in Year 7 could be contrasted productively with Wedgwood in Year 8.

● Starting in a sensible place with younger teenagers

Choosing a few academics for Key Stage 3 is a tricky matter. Elsewhere in this series I have chosen more up-to-date examples of scholarship, such as the work of Eamon Duffy in activities for Year 8. I have partly chosen Power and Wedgwood because I have used them with real pupils but that original choice was informed by the

quest for a certain kind of style which, with a modicum of good teaching, younger teenagers can hear and feel.

I stress this lest the reader asks why I am introducing pupils to a scholar who died in 1940, instead of recent scholarship on women. Well, we still can, and this would be splendid as a follow-up enquiry. But we have to start somewhere. My primary considerations were pedagogic – Eileen Power is a writer whose force and flow pushes the reader through the text with just the right mix of argument and detail for one not to crowd out the other.

● Text A (Resource Sheet 22)

Text A has been chosen because the three paragraphs neatly show Power setting out the scope of her response to a problem. She tackles what might seem a rather banal issue – whether or not Latin and French were taught in nunneries and when – often commented on in the driest of ways in textbooks. With a mischievous, mounting intensity, she laughs more and more loudly at other writers as the middle paragraph unfolds. How ridiculous they are! she cries. Each writer, emboldened by the last, relates yet more fanciful things that the nuns taught, culminating in the clearly crazy idea that they taught black magic (although she does sneak back into the fourteenth century for this particular gem).

This is not ‘difficult’. It is difficult if you mistakenly call it an ‘information text’ and ask pupils to find facts in it or make a glossary of the difficult words (as though they make any sense in isolation) or do activities with it that do not relate to history’s concepts or a question with a conceptual base. But if you read with the grain of the historical case – and, better still, *bear it read* – it is not difficult at all. It is irresistible. Yes, even a text about Latin and nuns.

Picture Eileen Power working herself up into witty frenzy about it. Remember, this was a *lecture* before it was a book, so when you read it aloud to pupils, why not come into the classroom as Eileen Power, complete with hat, and give your brilliant lecture?

The final paragraph sobers us up immediately. Helpfully (it is as though she knew we wanted to use it with 12-year-olds) she uses the word ‘sober’ in the first line, ‘The sober fact is . . .’. But it does not stop there. The final paragraph changes totally in its degree of certainty. We see this in the verbs. In a short paragraph, she reminds us that we are back in the dutiful, sober world of trying to extrapolate things from evidence and not to go beyond it.

● Text B (Resource Sheet 23D)

In Text B, Eileen Power argues a less obviously strong line, although the theme of diversity is implicitly there all the time. Working women’s lives are now being discussed and she is contrasting them with the lives of other women. She is also drawing contrasts within the category of working women, however, darting about through different groups and types, scotching our stereotypical view of unmarried women as she goes.

I chose this piece because it illustrates, even more sharply than the first, the natural, easy-as-breathing integration of source material and evidential information with the text. In the text on Resource Sheet 23D, I have highlighted these examples of integration.

● Some words of caution

When using activities to help pupils access a text that is not normally read by children, let us be careful that we do not lose sight of the overall object. One overriding, long-term goal is to get pupils reading and enjoying demanding texts, with all the intellectual, social and moral development that reading demanding history brings.

So let us take care. We need to ensure that the activities do not become ends in themselves. If the activity becomes the object, we lose the point. Our goal is to give pupils the confidence and the curiosity, the expectation and the disposition to persevere with a little extended argument by a real historian. In using these activities, our ultimate aim must be for pupils to do so willingly and on their own.

As with the activities in other chapters, the dangers and pitfalls (of atomisation, of loss of direction, of trivialisation) are less likely to occur if the activities are well situated within a good, historically valid, intriguing enquiry, shaping the lesson sequence. If we pluck these activities out of their enquiry, they easily become ‘exercises’ rather than exciting tools for finding the nerve and the will to dig into a text.

■ Arriving at a good enquiry question

Three very different kinds of enquiry question could work well as a framework for a lesson sequence in which these texts might be used. These are shown in Figure 5.1. Each could sustain anything between three and eight lessons, embracing a great deal of knowledge, whether in greater depth or breadth. Breadth could be secured by going into a wider time period, such as the whole of the Middle Ages, or emphasising Europe rather than just Britain. Breadth could also be secured by going beyond Eileen Power and including more recent scholarship on medieval women.

Greater depth, equally, could be secured by focusing upon just one century, just one region or just one historian, assuming that materials of different kinds are available.

But depth and breadth are not my criteria for distinctions in Figure 5.1. The reasoning behind the three sets given has to do with the relationship between the texts and the enquiry focus. There is some overlap between Sets 1 and 2 but they would culminate in substantially different final activities.

The questions in Set 3 seem somehow more tangible. They are less obviously geared to teaching pupils deliberately to use historical accounts. The issues in this set are, of course, our goal. We do not want to stay for ever with reflection on historical writing for its own sake; we want to look at its object. But the reason why we might sometimes need questions such as those in Set 1 or Set 2 is that we want to give pupils an opportunity to *articulate* their reflections on the historians’ texts. If they do this directly in the activity that concludes the enquiry, it adds weight to this work and provides a useful means for the teacher to assess it.

Of course, these sets overlap in what they would achieve for pupils’ learning. In choosing Set 3 we would still be using sources and might still include some direct work on historians’ arguments.

● **Figure 5.1** Possible enquiry questions within which these texts and activities could support historical learning

Set 1: Enquiry questions inviting a direct learning focus on the characteristics of historical argument

- How did Eileen Power let us know what she thinks?
- What did Eileen Power want us to think about medieval women?
- What was Eileen Power arguing?
- What problems do historians have with medieval women?

Set 2: Enquiry questions inviting a primary learning focus on sources and evidential understanding

- Why do historians argue about medieval women?
- What kinds of source did Eileen Power use?
- How much can we work out from the sources about medieval women?
- What can we learn about women's lives from medieval poems and stories?
- How do historians use sources on medieval women?

Set 3: Enquiry questions primarily about social and cultural diversity in the medieval period

- Lady, peasant, townswoman and nun: who had the hardest life?
- What were medieval women educated *for*?
- How different were the roles that different medieval women performed?
- Subjected or exalted? What did a noble lady do in the fourteenth century? (Text B would not be relevant in this question but Text A would be ideal.)
- What mattered most to medieval women: work or worship, love or education?

Equally, a theme of diversity (emphasised in Set 3) can remain strong in an enquiry where the aim is to conclude with direct reflection on source type and evidential problems.

For the purposes of the activities in this chapter and the sample, medium-term outline plan, I have plumped for the perhaps quite demanding but conceptually very tight enquiry question:

How does Eileen Power let us know what she thinks?

This type of question formulation – ‘How does “so and so” let us know ...?’ – allows us to keep as strong a pedagogic focus upon the main concept (diversity in medieval life) as upon evidential understanding and argument. Eileen Power constantly surprises us by smashing our stereotypes. Pupils are going to come away learning a lot about social, cultural and gender diversity in this period, whether it figures much in our objectives or not.

Activities

Two sets of activities now follow.

In Activity 22, pupils listen to a passage from Eileen Power's book read aloud (Text A) without a copy of the text

in front of them. They comment on the changes in style and tone that they can hear. They see the text only at the end of the activity, after oral work has made them both ready and curious to read it.

Activity 23 is closely linked. Having heard Eileen Power, and having acquired an analytic vocabulary for talking about her style, they attempt to borrow an aspect of her style in a collaborative writing exercise. To help them with their writing, they receive a mixture of source extracts and pieces of evidential information that Eileen Power herself uses in one section of her book (Text B). This is part of their ‘Eileen Power kit’.

The two activities are closely linked, the first making the second possible. Moreover, each activity has a central feature in common – almost all of the activity is designed *to prepare* pupils to meet a demanding text by a real historian. In each case, pupils only actually read the text right at the end of the activity sequence, *when they are ready*.

Activity 22

Listening for style and tone

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

In deliberate contrast to the kind of activity that asks pupils to ‘read for information’, pupils are here explicitly asked to listen for style and tone, and so engage with something of the subtext. To begin with, they are simply helped to *feel* the force of the argument, rather than to do anything particularly analytic with it. This has the effect of making the tricky words less of a problem. If we read the passage well, the energy of the text can be used like a powerful wave that washes away the distraction of small confusions.

The reading aloud also forces pupils to listen and to tune into rhythms and cadences in the writing. Carefully structured exercises help to give pupils a listening agenda. The listening part of the activity comes in three stages so that pupils build confidence with the text, steadily. These stages, each with its own mini-plenary, give the teacher opportunity to monitor pupil response, to check that understanding really is being achieved and to re-teach as necessary.

A key purpose in this activity is therefore to help pupils to move away from looking at a text for literal meaning. If they simply hunt for information in this text, then both their work and the text become decontextualised from the discipline. It is a direct, deliberate attempt to get pupils to comment on the *writing*, rather than on the content.

This is not because the content is not important. The content is supremely important. But we must be very imaginative indeed, if we are to give more pupils access to its complexity and points of interest.

5 Hearing the shape and style of an argument

■ Activity procedure

Figure 5.2 sets out the first three stages of the activity. The teacher simply reads the three-paragraph text in three

stages. After the first stage, the teacher models a process of choosing adjectives to describe tone. After the second and third stages, pupils do this themselves.

● **Figure 5.2** Activity procedure for working with Text A

	Text extract to be read aloud to pupils, in three sections	Activity to follow the reading of the paragraph
<p>How to read paragraph 1</p>	<p>Read very slowly, with a puzzled, enquiring tone, exaggerated emphasis on the highlighted words and phrases, and a sense of caution, steadiness and expectation of more to come.</p>	<p>Stage 1: After reading paragraph 1, teacher models choosing of adjectives Pretend to be the pupils and ‘think out loud’ in the manner <i>they</i> will have to employ in Stages 2 and 3. Scribe the adjectives as you go, for pupils to see clearly:</p>
	<p>‘What exactly did the nuns teach children? This is a difficult question to answer: difficult because contemporary evidence is scarce, and because the value of education varied greatly from age to age, and also with the intellectual level of the nuns themselves. Generally speaking in the early centuries of the Middle Ages the intellectual standards at many houses were quite high. But in the later centuries the education of the nuns themselves grew progressively worse, and Latin died out of most convents in the fourteenth century and French in the fifteenth century.’</p>	<p>Teacher: [<i>all thoughtful</i>] Hhhmmmm ... she’s not giving away much, it sounds as though she wants us to be very, very careful about what can be said about how children were taught. I’ll put <i>careful</i> [<i>scribes ‘careful’</i>]. I think she’s also being <i>cautious</i> [<i>scribes ‘cautious’</i>]. She’s not drawing any big conclusions at all, and keeps saying ‘generally speaking’ and ‘most’ and telling us how things ‘varied’ all the time. I think I’ll say she was being <i>moderate</i> in her judgements [<i>scribes ‘moderate’</i>]. It’s also as though she’s warning us: ‘We mustn’t claim too much! There’s not enough evidence!’ So I think I’m going to choose <i>warning</i> [<i>scribes ‘warning’</i>].</p>
<p>How to read paragraph 2</p>	<p>Read with gathering pace and drama, culminating in a mocking, over-the-top tone as the claims get more and more ridiculous and far-fetched. Sound incredulous and emphasise each point as though it is clearly a joke.</p>	<p>Stage 2: After reading paragraph 2, ask pupils to choose their own adjectives and to share them directly in plenary session</p>
	<p>‘Modern writers have tried to make up for lack of direct evidence by drawing up imaginary curricula, and they grew more and more ambitious as they copied the curricula from each other. In the seventeenth century, Aubrey says ‘here they learned needlework, art of confectionery, surgery, physic, writing, drawing etc.’ But in the work of a writer of the mid-nineteenth century the list becomes, ‘reading, writing, some knowledge of arithmetic, art of embroidery, music and French ... , preparation of perfumes, balsams, simples and confectionery’. Another writer adds a few more touches, ‘treatment of various disorders, compounding of herbal remedies, binding up of wounds, fancy cookery such as making of sweetmeats, drawing, needlework of all kinds and music both vocal and instrumental’. Students of human nature cannot but smile to see music creep into the list and become both instrumental and vocal. Confectionery extends itself to include perfumes, balsams, simples and sweetmeats; arithmetic appears out of nowhere, and even dancing trips in</p>	<p>Pupils might choose adjectives like: mocking, teasing, over-the-top, laughing, ridiculing, hurried, breathless, scathing.</p> <p>If you want to move beyond adjectives, pupils might say things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it’s full of lists; • she thinks other writers are daft; • she wants to rubbish the others; • she is irritated by all the silly claims that people have made and wants to bring us back to the evidence. <p>When this works well, pupils often disagree. Lead as much discussion as is helpful and motivating. Return to re-read bits of the text if this helps, but <i>don’t</i> give them the written text yet. Keep it all oral; it keeps their listening buds active.</p>

on light fantastic toe. In Sir Thomas Malory's stories about King Arthur there is a passage where it is said of Arthur's fairy sister, who bewitched Merlin, that 'she was put to school in a nunnery and there she learned so much that she was a great clerk of necromancy'. This would add black magic to the curriculum of nunnery schools!

How to read paragraph 3

Change tone completely. Take your cue for tone from 'sober'. Slow the pace again. Place emphasis on the different 'hedges': the *qualifiers of claims*, the *references to evidence*, the *use of modal verbs* to emphasise inference or deduction. Speak with steady and emphatic certainty. This will have the paradoxical effect of emphasising the doubt surrounding any claims that can be made, because it will emphasise Power's determination to set the record straight concerning the limits of knowledge. Finish each sentence with aplomb and pause meaningfully before the next one.

'The sober fact is we have **no evidence** about what was taught except **inferences** from what we know of the education of nuns themselves. Latin **could not have been** taught in the fourteenth century or French in the fifteenth century since nuns themselves **did not know** these languages in those times. Children were **doubtless** taught the Credo, the Ave and the Paternoster by rote, and **must have been** taught to read, although it is **more doubtful** whether they learned to write. **Probably**, they learned songs with the nuns, and spinning and needlework. Beyond these accomplishments, nuns **doubtless** taught piety and good breeding; and the standard of these, though good in some houses, **could not have been** very high in others, **judging from the visitation reports.**'

Power, *Medieval Women* (1975: 73–4)

Stage 3:

After reading aloud paragraph 3, ask pupils to choose their own adjectives in pairs or threes. Pupils discuss their ideas and build a full list before a plenary.

In other words, pupils do the same as in paragraphs 1 and 2, but they now have the confidence and the models with which to do it both more independently and in peer collaboration.

Don't give them too long. Plunge them into an intensive 3-minute discussion (maximum) as soon as you have finished reading.

Then pull their ideas together in a 5–10-minute plenary. Lead discussion on any points of disagreement that interest them.

Develop any points that anticipate Stage 4, building their curiosity about any recurring language features, such as the different types of hedge (a second reading might help here). Simply ask them for words or types of word pattern that are *repeated*.

What **exactly** did the nuns teach children? This is a **difficult** question to answer: **difficult** because contemporary evidence is scarce, and because the value of education varied greatly from age to age, and also with the intellectual level of the nuns themselves. **Generally speaking** in the early centuries of the Middle Ages the intellectual standards at many houses were **quite** high. But in the later centuries the education of the nuns themselves grew **progressively worse**, and Latin died out of most convents in the fourteenth century and French in the fifteenth century.

Modern writers have tried to make up for lack of direct evidence by drawing up imaginary curricula, and they **grew more and more** ambitious as they copied the curricula from each other. In the seventeenth century, Aubrey says 'here they learned needlework, art of confectionery, surgery, physic, writing, drawing etc.' But in the work of a writer of the mid-nineteenth century the list **becomes**, 'reading, writing, some knowledge of arithmetic, art of embroidery, music and French . . . , preparation of perfumes, balsams, simples and confectionery'. Another writer **adds a few more** touches, 'treatment of various disorders, compounding of herbal remedies, binding up of wounds, fancy cookery such as making of sweetmeats, drawing, needlework of all kinds and music both vocal and instrumental'. Students of human nature cannot but smile to see music **creep into** the list and **become** both instrumental and vocal. Confectionery **extends itself** to include perfumes, balsams, simples and sweetmeats; arithmetic **appears out of nowhere**, and **even dancing trips in on light fantastic toe**. In Sir Thomas Malory's stories about King Arthur there is a passage where it is said of Arthur's fairy sister, who bewitched Merlin, that 'she was put to school in a nunnery and there she learned so much that she was a great clerk of necromancy'. This would **add** black magic to the curriculum of nunnery schools!

The sober fact is we have no evidence about what was taught except *inferences* from what we know of the education of nuns themselves. Latin **could not have been** taught in the fourteenth century or French in the fifteenth century since nuns themselves did not know these languages in those times. Children were *doubtless* taught the Credo, the Ave and the Paternoster by rote, and **must have been** taught to read, although it is *more doubtful* whether they learned to write. *Probably*, they learned songs with the nuns, and spinning and needlework. Beyond these accomplishments, nuns *doubtless* taught piety and good breeding; and the standard of these, though good in some houses, **could not have been** very high in others, *judging from the visitation reports*.

Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, pp. 73–4

■ Stage 4

Pupils are now ready to read the full text for themselves. A clean version for you to photocopy is on Resource Sheet 22. In some cases, that may be all they need to do (remember the cautions about excessive activities on page 106). Some pupils will simply descend on the text with interest because Stages 1 to 3 have done the work of making them ready and confident to read a challenging text. It might be enough simply to review the activity and ask pupils if they would like to add to or change their lists of words now that they have the text in front of them.

Equally, you may judge that some or all pupils will benefit from additional activities that will help them to discern, articulate and enjoy features of Power's style. In these cases, the rich possibilities are now endless.

There are many simple activities that can now take pupils closer to the heart of the enquiry question rather than further away from it. Each of these involves collecting and classifying – a process that pupils should be used to from work in the literacy hour in Key Stage 2 (DfEE, 2000).

Collect and classify:

- all the modal verbs (*could, must*)

These turn out in force in paragraph 3 of the passage. Why is this? What is Eileen Power trying to do in that section?

- all the ways in which Eileen Power creates a sense of an expanding list and an intensification of ridiculousness in the middle paragraph (see Figure 5.3)

Just look at the verbs she uses – *become, add, extend, creep, appear*. She makes it sound as though there is some irresistible force of untruth that just grows and grows. She supplies an image of mounting untruth before sobering us up in the next paragraph. You could help pupils by reminding them about the work with 'powerful verbs' that they will have done at Key Stage 2 (DfEE, 2000). Why are 'creep' and 'appear' powerful verbs?

- all the 'hedges' in her writing (see Figure 5.3)

These are in her third paragraph, the place where she gets most emphatic. She is being emphatic about her own uncertainty.

When asking pupils to collect and classify, be very thoughtful about the type of collection you are asking pupils to do. Are you using a specific, grammatical term or language feature (for example, verbs, modal verbs or conditional statements), are you asking for a value judgement about a technical term (for example, 'powerful verbs') or are you asking them simply to find language of any kind that creates a particular effect? Any of these could be valid or useful. Just remember:

- Be very clear so that there is no confusion (check your technical terms with the English department if in doubt).
- Avoid hunting for technical features of language for its own sake. Where we start to lose sight of the enquiry question, and to bolt on language-hunting games that do not take us anywhere historically, alarm bells should ring.

● Figure 5.3 *Things to collect, classify and rank in Text A*

<p>In paragraph 2, Eileen Power builds up a list of exaggerations about the education that nuns provided. She creates a feeling of exaggeration by suggesting an almost physical pile of growing untruth that is just out of control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the list becomes • adds a few more touches • extends itself • creep into • appears out of nowhere • this would add
<p>In paragraph 3, having explained that we are totally reliant on inference, Eileen Power likes to tell us how <i>certain</i> she is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very certain? • moderately certain? • not very certain at all? <p>She uses different types of hedge to do this.</p> <p>As well as collecting these 'hedges', you could ask pupils to rank them in order of the degree of certainty that they show – from very certain through to very doubtful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doubtless • probably • it is more doubtful • judging from • could not have been taught • must have been taught • did not know

■ Discussion points

Ask pupils to find and/or discuss where they think the turning points in this passage are. What do they see as a ‘turning point’ in this context? What are the signals?

To help them represent this thinking or to transform their reflection so that others can access it, you could ask them to use drawings, colour or symbols to show how the text shifts in each paragraph.

● **GRAMMAR SPOT**

■ **Modal verbs**

Modal verbs are special kinds of auxiliary verb used to express such ideas as possibility, willingness, prediction, speculation, inference, deduction and necessity.

These are the modal verbs:

- can/could
- may/might
- must/ought
- shall/should
- will/would

They occur with other verbs, including other auxiliaries (*be* and *have*).

Historians often use these as their fine tools to show degrees of certainty in their truth claims. Imagine each of the following without the modal and see how precision of judgement about the strength of the claim, or the support for the claim, is lost.

- This might have been the case where ...
- Peasants could not have ...
- This could only have happened where ...
- Evidence that these women might have studied ... can be found in ...
- This source suggests that the event would have taken place when ...
- They must have been able to do this because ...

As preparation for devising and developing your own activities with pupils, think about which of these bullet pointed stems you would describe as possibility, speculation, inference, deduction or necessity. This will help you to be more precise when using these terms with children.

In her third paragraph, Eileen Power uses modals three times. It helps her to convey strong inferences (ones that she clearly sees as necessary conclusions) whilst emphasising that they are, nonetheless, merely inferences.

■ **Ensuring pupils are ready through effective modelling**

The role of modelling in Activity 22 cannot be stressed too strongly. Modelling is a much discussed feature of the expanded teaching repertoire advocated and supported by

the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Thinking aloud to pupils is vital here because it creates an *expectation of reflection*. Clear instructions and explanations are not enough. Modelling is necessary to provide access to the challenge. After hearing paragraph 1 of the text, modelling is an ideal way to help pupils understand what it might *feel like* to choose and think about words that capture Eileen Power’s style.

Modelling is also vital at other stages in the activity. In some of the ‘collect and classify’ choices suggested in Stage 4, the elements that pupils choose will differ and, again, they need to be made ready to persevere, reflect and enquire.

So rather than just giving a couple of starting examples to get pupils going, *model your own thinking* behind the choice of those examples.

■ **Getting the best out of the activity sequence**

The importance of reading aloud cannot be emphasised too strongly either. When I first read this text to pupils, I don’t think I did it very well, but one able pupil still said, ‘You can hear the exclamation marks.’

The pupil was spot on, for, unusually, Eileen Power really does have an exclamation mark at the end of this paragraph. This gave me further clues for how to read it next time. In your own reading, can you *hear* the exclamation marks, the question marks, the commas and the full stops? Do you use variations in speed, tone and emphasis to help pupils to construct meaning and hear shapes?

Some pupils might feel that paragraph 3 is very similar to paragraph 1, but actually it is very different. There is a sense of resolution here. There is a finality about Power’s judgements. She is saying, ‘Look, this is all that can be said! Stop kidding yourselves!’ Reading it in a particular way is vital if all pupils are going to pick up on this. Those working at the level of literal meaning only, and those still struggling with literal meaning, will not be able to hold enough in their heads at any one time to capture the subtext. They will be left with boring, surface statements that lack meaning.

Eileen Power is being a buzzing bee here and we need to help pupils hear the buzzing. She speaks with authority in paragraph 3. Let us help pupils to hear that authority.

■ **Additional opportunities for supporting lower-attaining pupils**

Whilst this text has been chosen with more able pupils in mind, many of the activities above can be used to provide additional access for so-called lower attainers. It is important not to put a ceiling on our expectations of performance. Purely oral work can effect surprising results.

Further adaptations are also possible:

- During Stage 2, revisit sections of the paragraph 2 text and use prompts, probes and other questions to elicit responses and build confidence.
- During Stages 2 and 3, you could also give pupils a list of words to choose from, including some that could be disputed and some that are way off target.

The one adaptation I am *not* suggesting is rewriting the text to make it simpler. In the context of the historical learning being discussed here, this would be pointless. It would also make it harder, leaving the pupil helpless with literal text only and no subtext to help them clamber in.

Activity 23

Writing in Eileen Power's style using the Eileen Power kit

■ Understanding the rationale for the activity

Having listened to Eileen Power's voice, pupils are now ready to develop their thinking about the characteristics of her style by experimenting with some imitation. This activity involves pupils in collaborative writing using the same sources and evidential information that Eileen Power used in Text B (see Resource Sheet 23D). Once again, the bulk of the activity involves *preparation* for reading the text. But the additional challenge this time is to notice the wide range of conventions, many of them vivid, for integrating reference to the evidential record smoothly into the prose. Here, pupils are required to borrow not only some features of Power's style explored in Activity 22, but also to experiment with conventions for integrating sources.

■ Activity procedure

Tell pupils that they are going to be working in threes with an 'Eileen Power kit'. That kit will be made up of a selection of source extracts and pieces of evidential information that Eileen Power really does use in Text B (Resource Sheet 23A). Using their kit, pupils will attempt to write like Eileen Power, and then (later) compare their efforts with the real thing.

Give pupils a very large piece of paper – A1 – marker pens, glue, scissors and the 'Eileen Power kit' (Resource Sheet 23A cut up and placed in an envelope).

Either give them the starters, fillers and enders shown on Resource Sheet 23B or put these on an OHP, monitor or whiteboard where pupils can see them easily. This menu of words and phrases will help pupils to think about and do two things in their writing:

- It helps them to think about and then to show the degree of doubt or certainty they want to attach to a claim.

- It helps them to integrate statements of evidential information into the flow of their argument.

Explain to pupils that these will act as another kind of glue to help them weave the source extracts or evidential information into what they are going to say.

And what *are* they going to say? There is no point in asking them to set about a piece of historical writing of this kind without giving them something to argue. An overly subtle argument might not help Year 7, so I suggest two rather strong, erroneous propositions that pupils will enjoy arguing against.

Either choose one of these *or* divide the class in two *or* let them choose:

- There is little evidence about the working lives of medieval peasant women.
- Medieval peasant women generally did not take on roles outside the home.

A fairly quick glance at Resource Sheet 23A will show the potential for arguing against one of these.

First, model like mad! Tell pupils that they are going to look at the sources and examples of evidential information and decide how they can use these to argue against one of the propositions. They must then build their argument in a few well-chosen sentences, building in constant reference to the evidence as they go. This is where the sample starters, fillers and enders will come into play. Having explained this, model it enthusiastically and reflectively, so that they get a sense not only of what it will mean to write, but also of how they are to operate collaboratively in their groups.

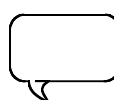
■ Practical tip

If you have a learning support assistant or other teaching assistant in the room, work with them to model the collaborative discussion and writing. Alternatively, video yourself, with another teacher or two, modelling the discussion and writing. If you have planned this enquiry collaboratively with all history teaching colleagues, the whole department could then use this modelling video with all classes.

In particular, use modelling to help pupils see what the scissors are for. They can chop up the little pieces of paper in their kit, especially the sources, so that they can create short, apposite quotes. Imagine that you have already modelled two sentences of the writing as follows:



How could anyone say that there is little evidence on peasant women's working lives? One finds countless details of women's work in poems and pictures.




Teacher 1 thinking out loud about how to develop it: OK, time for some evidence to support that conclusion, I think. Now, what shall we use first? That piece by Chaucer was a good example of a dairy woman doing lots of important work.

5 Hearing the shape and style of an argument

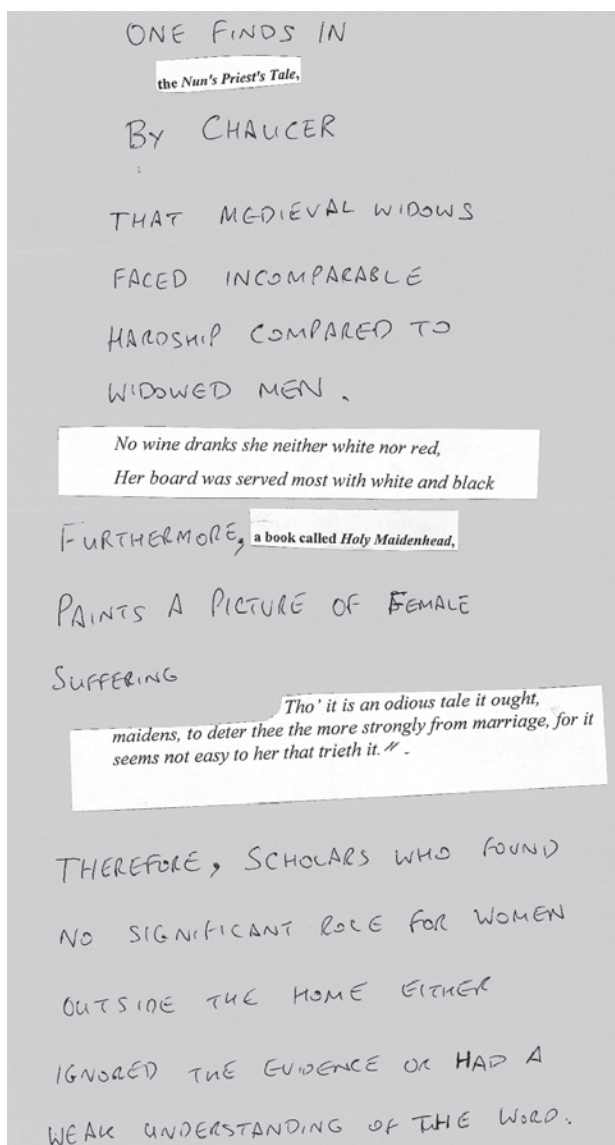
Teacher 2 responding to Teacher 1: I'm not sure what much of it means, but this bit about the animals shows her work.

Teacher 1 making a decision about which bit to include: OK, let's just choose these three lines here as they capture what I want to say about women's work. Let's get the scissors and chop all the rest off. Now, how are we going to introduce it? [Turns to the starters on Resource Sheet 23B]. How about 'paints a picture'? Let's put:

 How could anyone say that there is little evidence on peasant women's working lives? One finds countless details of women's work in poems and pictures. Chaucer paints a very detailed picture of a dairy woman or 'daye':

*By husbandry, of such as God her sent
she found herself and eke her daughters two
three large sows had she and namo,
Three kine and eek a sheep.*

● **Figure 5.4** A sample of pupils' finished work on Activity 23



ONE FINDS IN
the Nun's Priest's Tale,
BY CHAUCER
THAT MEDIEVAL WIDOWS
FACED INCOMPARABLE
HARDSHIP COMPARED TO
WIDOWED MEN.
No wine dranks she neither white nor red,
Her board was served most with white and black
FURTHERMORE, a book called Holy Maidenhead,
PAINTS A PICTURE OF FEMALE
SUFFERING
Tho' it is an odious tale it ought,
maidens, to deter thee the more strongly from marriage, for it
seems not easy to her that trieth it."
THEREFORE, SCHOLARS WHO FOUND
NO SIGNIFICANT ROLE FOR WOMEN
OUTSIDE THE HOME EITHER
IGNORED THE EVIDENCE OR HAD A
WEAK UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD.

■ Practical tip

Keep referring back to Activity 23 and Text A. Pupils can adopt any or all of the styles shown in that text. They can be mocking and over-the-top; they can be measured and cautious; they can be emphatic and cautious; or they can blend these styles in their own way (this has an interesting effect). Some pupils find the 'over-the-top' style the easiest one to start with.

Keep reminding them, too, about hedges. Resource Sheet 23B will help. Again, remind pupils how hedges were used in Text A.

■ ICT opportunity

Large pieces of paper, glue, scissors and big marker pens have an appealing physicality. Pupils feel, literally, that they are *making* something. This heightens the sense of writing as composition, as deliberate, constructed artefact.

At the same time, where ICT is available, it has distinct advantages. Resource Sheets 23A and 23B could be in prepared files and pupils could experiment more freely with redrafting their text.

If the use of ICT is an option, then interventions to teach and to monitor become all the more important so that pupils keep their concentration trained on perfecting their Power-style argument and use of evidence, and do not slip into jigsawing a few sources together without thought. Research into effective ICT practice shows that teacher interventions in the form of plenaries and modelling are critical when using word-processing to develop thoughtful approaches to writing (Counsell, 1998, 2003c).

■ Getting the best out of Activity 22 within Activity 23

As pupils start to get into Activity 23, the value of Activity 22 will become more and more apparent. Here is one example of an intervention during Activity 23 that builds on Activity 22.

Pupils will already know that connectives create cohesion. They will have been introduced to different types of connective at Key Stage 2 (DfEE, 2000) and it is likely that these are being reinforced at Key Stage 3. But if Eileen Power had relied upon 'addition' connectives to create the mounting argument in Section 2 of Text A, we would not have had the mocking splendour of her prose.

Ask pupils to explain the difference between the two columns on Resource Sheet 23C. What does Eileen Power do that goes *beyond these connectives*? What is the effect of her powerful verbs? How do these achieve more than mere connectives? How do they do more than achieve paragraph cohesion?

■ Post-activity discussion

In groups

After pupils have had a good effort at producing their own Eileen Power writing, and have integrated (and glued

down) at least half the items in the Eileen Power kit, let pupils rest from their writing and go on a walkabout to see how other groups have done. Send them out in their groups to read and study at least three other groups' attempts, to work out how the other groups have completed their writing and how these efforts differ from their own.

This is a stage where pupils are highly curious to see other groups' efforts. Their engagement with the writing will make them ready to examine others' writing closely.

As individuals and/or as a whole class

Now, at last, show pupils the full text on Resource Sheet 23D. Pupils will be ready to read it now, as they will be interested to see how Eileen Power achieved what they have just attempted. Some might comment, proudly, that their own attempt is rather better than Eileen Power's. After all, she's a bit sloppy with those extra-long source extracts, isn't she?

On Resource Sheet 23D, the places where Eileen Power integrates reference to her evidential base are shown in bold type. This may be helpful for some pupils.

■ Following up the activity

Certainty, uncertainty and hedges

Earlier learning points could be developed or reinforced by asking pupils to look for some of the features discussed in relation to Text A, such as the doubt or certainty that Eileen Power attaches to her claims. Pupils will now have the analytic vocabulary and the knowledge of language features and effects to know what to look for.

Be careful about hunting for specific language features. Looking for 'must have' and 'could have' might be invaluable at the start, but could get a little dry at this stage. Worse, it could miss the point. It might be a better idea to ask pupils *how* Power shows degrees of doubt or certainty, speculation or deduction, and see what pupils suggest. Pupils might compare these methods with those found in Text A.

As with Text A we quickly feel where she is certain and where she is guessing:

- perhaps
- no doubt
- probably.

Pupils could also colour in the text lightly, using colours that fade into each other, in order to show stages and degrees of certainty and uncertainty. Using red, orange and yellow, for a movement from certainty to uncertainty, ask pupils to colour on their own and then compare.

Integrating references to evidence

This was a crucial part of the rationale behind Activity 23 and follow-up may be necessary. Ask pupils to pick out the integrating devices that Power uses.

These are the main ones in the text and are highlighted on Resource Sheet 23D:

- When Helmbrecht, an ambitious peasant hero of a famous German poem ...
- In every manorial survey one will find ...
- We find in manorial accounts ...
- A charming picture of a daye drawn by Chaucer ...
- Chaucer depicts ...
- A picture of the trials of a country labourer's wife is given in ...
- Longland paints a truer and more tragic picture ...

Whether we ask pupils to say what patterns or recurring features they can see, or whether we want to point them out, there are two very obvious ones:

- the use of 'find';
- the use of 'picture' (twice) and the related 'depicts'.

Each of these speaks volumes about the historical process. It is a very pure example of language capturing layers of the historical endeavour, purpose and method.

Notice how the word 'depicts' is suddenly much less scary or alienating for the weaker pupil when seen alongside its relation, 'picture'.

Making a bridge with future work

The proof of the pudding is in pupils' subsequent ability not only to make meaning out of these words in future reading, but also to *use* these words, in their own speaking and writing. So it will be vital to refer back to them in future enquiries.

Why not get the pupils themselves to anticipate that future work? They can extend the bank of starters, fillers and enders that they used in their own writing (Resource Sheet 23B) in order to create a really rich, full bank of phrases for use in future discussions or writing. With their own bank on the wall, the teacher will have a future reference point, one that pupils have expanded for themselves.

Drawing on the Power extracts, one might add, for example, a range of phrases that capture the visualisation involved in historical thinking, regardless of whether or not the source(s) referred to are themselves visual:

- ... paints a picture of ...
- ... gives us a picture ...
- ... clouds the picture ...
- ... allows us to picture ...
- ... presents a scene ...
- ... pictures ...
- A charming/depressing/surprising picture of ... can be found in ...
- ... reveals/uncovers a disturbing picture of ...
- A picture is given ...

Enlarge these sheets to A3. Cut up into separate items and place in an envelope for pupil use. Pupils can then make further cuts when they choose elements for quoting.

Married peasant women shared their husband's work on the family's land holdings. Many visual sources show women working with their husbands in the fields and tending animals.

Helmbrecht, a peasant hero in a famous German poem, tries to persuade his sister Gotelinde to flee the house of her peasant parents and marry a man who would enable her to lead the life of a lady. He reminds her of all the traditional feminine tasks she will have to do if she stays as a peasant:

You will never be more wretched than if you marry a peasant. You will be compelled to spin, to scour the flax, to combe the hemp, wash and wring clothes, dig up the beets.

In every manorial survey, women are listed as free tenants, villeins or cotters. They held a few acres of land like men. Like men they had to pay the same services for them.

At the start of the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Chaucer describes the life of the dairy woman or 'daye':

A poor widow, somdeal steep in age
 Was whildom dwelling in a narrow cottage
 Beside a grove, standing in a dale
 This widow, of which I telle you my tale
 Since thilke day that she was last a wife
 In patience ledde full simple life.
 For little was her chattel and her rent.
 By husbandry, of such as God her sent
 She found herself and eke her daughters
 two
 three large sowes had she and namo,
 Three kine and eke a sheep ...
 No wine drank she neither white nor red,
 Her board was served most with white and
 black
 Milk and brown bread, in which she found
 no lack,
 Seynd bacon and sometimes an egg or
 tweye
 And she was as it were a manes daye.

A picture from the Luttrell Psalter, a book made in Lincolnshire in the early fourteenth century





Manorial records show that all peasants who held land had to pay services such as a few days a week of labour to their lord, boon services at sowing or harvest, and certain amounts of goods every year.

Manorial accounts show women hired by the bailiff to do all kinds of agricultural work, such as planting peas and beans, weeding, repairing, binding, threshing, winnowing, thatching and even sheep-shearing.

This picture of a country labourer's wife comes from a book called *Holy Maidenhead*. The author tries to persuade girls to become nuns by drawing a gloomy picture of married life:

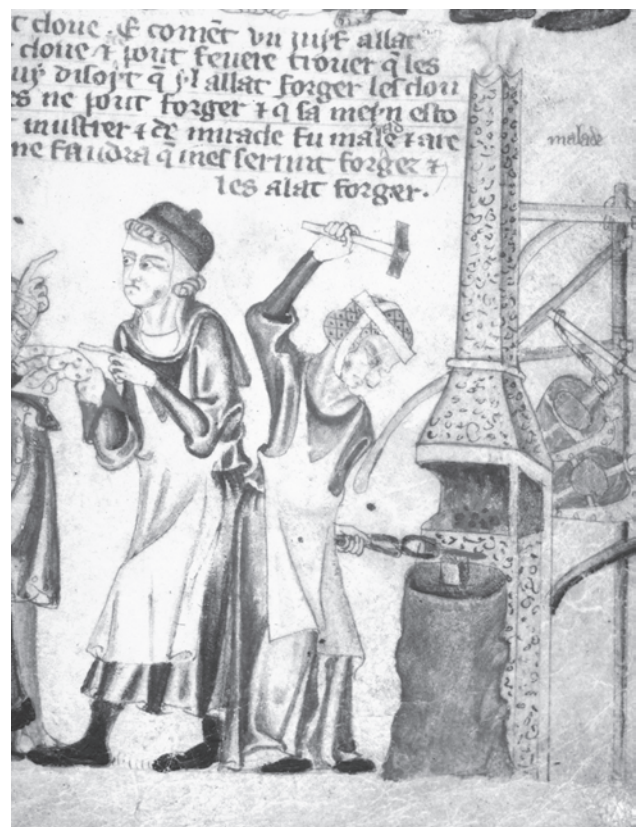
The fourteenth-century poet Langland, in a long poem called *Piers Ploughman*, describes the life of women who live in cottages:

What if I ask besides, that it may seem odious, how the wife stands, that hearest when she cometh in her child scream, sees her cake is burning on the stone hearth and her calf is sucking all the milk up, the earthen pot is running into the fire and churl is scolding. Tho' it is an odious tale it ought, maidens, to deter thee the more strongly from marriage, for it seems not easy to her that trieth it.

Poor folk in cotes ...
 Also themselves suffer much hunger
 And woe in winter time, with waking a-
 nights
 To rise to the bedside to rock the cradle ...
 Both to card and to comb, to clout and to
 wash
 To rub and to reel and rushes to peel,
 That ruth is to read or in rime to show
 The woe of those women that woneth in
 cots.

A fourteenth-century German picture shows women harvesting in the fields

A woman blacksmith



RESOURCE 23B *Sentence starters, fillers and enders for use with the Eileen Power kit*

- Many sources reveal ...
- We find in ...
- We find ...
- One finds ...
- Scholars have found ...
- ... depicts
- ... paints a picture of ...
- ... suggests ...
- ... strongly suggests ...
- ... might suggest ...
- ... would have us believe ...
- ... might show ...
- ... indicates ...
- ... might indicate ...
- ... provide overwhelming evidence for ...
- ... cannot tell us ... but can tell us ...
- Although we cannot be sure about ..., nevertheless the sources do suggest ...
- Whilst ... nonetheless, we do get a sense of ...

RESOURCE 23C *Eileen Power's connectives*

Usual addition connectives or 'something more' connectives	Eileen Power goes beyond these connectives and gives cumulative power to her argument using verbs
In addition ...	• the list becomes
As well as ...	• adds a few more touches
What is more ...	• extends itself
Also ...	• creep into
Furthermore ...	• appears out of nowhere
Moreover ...	• This would add

How Eileen Power used the sources and evidential information

Much less prominent in medieval sources, perhaps because it was taken for granted, was the largest class of working women, peasants and dwellers on all manors scattered up and down England. Most of them were expected, if they were married, to share in all their husband's labours on the family holdings. In addition, they were burdened with chores which were traditionally feminine. The keeping of the house was of course one of them, the making of cloths and clothes (both for own use and for sale) was another.

When Helmbrecht, an ambitious peasant hero of a famous German poem, tries to persuade his sister Gotelinde to flee the house of her peasant parents and marry a man who would enable her to lead the life of a lady, he reminds her of what her life would otherwise be: 'You will never be more wretched than if you marry a peasant. You will be compelled to spin, to scour the flax, to combe the hemp, wash and wring clothes, dig up the beets.'

Helmbrecht's list of the tasks which life imposed on a peasant wife was of course too short. For instance, it says nothing of the strenuous hours and weeks which a working wife was called upon to spend by her husband's side in fields and pastures.

These tasks weighed no less, often even more, on women who, whether married or not, possessed holdings in their own names – mostly widows or unmarried women. This was perhaps the most hard-worked class of all. **In every manorial survey one will find** a certain number of women as free tenants, villeins or cotters, holding their virgule of few acres like men and liable to pay the same services for them – so many days' labour a week perhaps, so many boon services at sowing or harvest, so many carvings, so many eggs or pullets or pence per year. No doubt they hired men for heavy polishing but probably performed other services in person.

We find in manorial accounts women hired by the bailiff to do all sorts of agricultural labour. In fact there was hardly any work except polishing for which they were not engaged, e.g. planting peas and beans, weeding, repairing, binding, threshing, winnowing, thatching. They did much of the sheep shearing. One of the most important of regular servants of the manor was the dairy woman or *daye* who looked after dairy and poultry on the manor farm. **A charming picture of a daye drawn by Chaucer** at the beginning of the *Nun's Priest's Tale*:

A poor widow, some deal steep in age
Was whildom dwelling in a narrow cottage
Beside a grove, standing in a dale
This widow, of which I telle you my tale
Since thilke day that she was last a wife
In patience ledde full simple life.
For little was her chattel and her rent.
By husbandry, of such as God her sent
She found herself and eke her daughters two
Three large sowes had she and namo,
Three kine and eke a sheep . . .

Chaucer depicts a simple and frugal but not uncomfortable existence. But life for these women of the soil must often have been a hard one. **A picture of the trials of a country labourer's wife is given in** a book called *Holy Maidenhead*, in which the author tries to persuade girls to become nuns by drawing a most gloomy picture of married life in all classes of society:

What if I ask besides, that it may seem odious, how the wife stands, that hearest when she cometh in her child scream, sees her cake is burning on the stone hearth and her calf is sucking all the milk up, the earthen pot is running into the fire and churl is scolding. Tho' it is an odious tale it ought, maidens, to deter thee the more strongly from marriage, for it seems not easy to her that trieth it.

Longland paints a truer and more tragic picture of the life of women who live in cottages, their unending labour and brave face turned to the world. He calls them:

Poor folk in cotes . . .
Also themselves suffer much hunger
And woe in winter time, with waking a-nights
To rise to the bedside to rock the cradle . . .
Both to card and to comb, to clout and to wash
To rub and to reel and rushes to peel,
That ruth is to read or in rime to show
The woe of those women that woneth in cots.

Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, pp. 63–4

■ Sample lesson sequence

Summary of one possible route through an enquiry, incorporating the main activities.

Prior learning

Pupils should already know about life on the medieval manor, farming, social structure, the medieval economy and education. This will help them to interpret the sources in Activity 23. They do not need any background on medieval women specifically. Such an enquiry would be an ideal way to introduce them to this dimension of diversity. Pupils would also need to have done some work with sources, even if only using a conventional textbook with Source A, Source B, etc., so that they are ready to see the contrast with how real historians use sources.

Enquiry question

How does Eileen Power let us know what she thinks?

Outline of learning flow

Four 50-minute lessons.

How does Eileen Power let us know what she thinks?

Lesson 1	Introduce pupils to some historians of the medieval period. Use video clips, websites, pictures. Show them the whole industry of enquiry into the medieval period. Reference to archaeology and the work of <i>Time Team</i> might be a good starting point. The focus here is not just how do we find out about the past, but <i>who</i> finds out about the past? Who finds out about the medieval past for a living? What kind of people are they? (Careful!) After initial activities on these areas, introduce Eileen Power. Tell a brief story of her life and untimely death. Pupils could draw a picture and speech bubbles to show how others held her in high esteem. Choose and assess your lesson objectives carefully – you are trying to make sure that pupils have enough knowledge and interest to be ready to hear Eileen Power in the next lesson.
Lesson 2	Activity 22. Follow this up with consolidation for homework.
Lesson 3	Activity 23 and the follow-up activities will work as the final concluding activity in this short enquiry. Through the direct work on her style, pupils will be commenting on how Power communicates as well as imitating it.
Lesson 4	Discussion and comparison of pupil efforts in order to tease out pupils' learning. Attempt whole-class answer to enquiry question.

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