

# An Experimental Progression and Assessment Model for History

## Introduction

*“As part of our reforms to the national curriculum , the current system of ‘levels’ used to report children’s attainment and progress will be removed. It will not be replaced.” (DfE, 2013)*

Surely I cannot be the only one whose heart leapt when I read this statement in the DfE’s recent statement on assessment without National Curriculum Levels. In two short paragraphs, the document went on to describe everything that was wrong with the current system of assessment in Key Stages 1 to 3.

*“We believe this system is complicated and difficult to understand, especially for parents. It also encourages teachers to focus on a pupil’s current level, rather than consider more broadly what the pupil can actually do. Prescribing a single detailed approach to assessment does not fit with the curriculum freedoms we are giving schools.” (DfE, 2013)*

I seldom sing the praises of the Secretary of State for Education, but since this announcement, he can do little wrong in my eyes!

In the wake of the demise of the system which has shackled teachers, pupils and even teacher education for over twenty years, it seems the ideal time to begin to thinking about what should come next. How should we think about progress and progression in History in a post-Levels world?

It has long been accepted that the system of NC Levels is woefully inadequate when it comes to describing, assessing or planning for progression in History. Levels have become, in the worst cases, the end point of teaching itself. This has been accompanied by an increasing fetishisation of NC Levels as a means of establishing accountability in schools. Worryingly, the idea of NC Levels seems to have become so engrained that many are unsure how we assess now these ‘ladders’ have been removed. I would suggest however that this is a moment where we need to seize the opportunity to build meaningful models of progression with both hands.

Of course, Levels were never supposed to be anything more than a ‘best-fit’ descriptor for use at the end of a key stage. They were never intended as measures of ongoing process, something which of course explains their inadequacy for this purpose. I still inwardly cringe every time I see a series of levels in lesson ‘learning objectives’ as if achieving Level 5 in History might be assessed in the space of a five minute plenary activity. Yet even as ‘best-fit’ descriptors, there were serious limitations, as Lee and Shemilt explain...

*“...the whole concept of ‘best fit’ actually enables assessment to take place whether or not the data actually ‘fit’ the performance criteria. Imagine a darts match in which three darts miss the board but hit the ceiling, the barmaid and the dog in the corner. With the aid of a tape-measure each dart can be ‘best-fitted’ to a particular cell in the board; the dart in the ceiling, for example, might ‘best-fit’ to double-twenty! In like manner, it is possible for assessment data to be*

*'best-fitted' to a level descriptor that they fail to match on the grounds that the mismatch with other levels is even greater. Thus it is that issues of validity are sidestepped.'* (2003, p.19)

## The Problem

The biggest issue with the current Levels is they do not actually describe what the development of historical understanding actually looks like. Empirical literature in the UK today suggests that students should be assessed against second-order concepts as outlined previously (Lee et al., 1993; Banham, 2000; Counsell, 2000a; Riley, 2000; Lee & Shemilt, 2003). Yet NC Levels fail to focus on historical thinking and second-order concepts effectively. NC Levels represent a series of linguistic distinctions split into eight arbitrary stages. NC Levels tend to describe progression through historical understanding in simplistic and generic ways. For example the Levels make reference to 'beginning to' or 'demonstrating some...'. A key example of this can be seen in the move from Level 5 to Level 6. Level 6 states "Pupils show their knowledge and understanding of local, national and international history by beginning to analyse the nature and extent of diversity, change and continuity within and across different periods" whilst Level 7 suggests that "Pupils show their knowledge and understanding of local, national and international history by analysing historical change and continuity, diversity and causation..." There is no clear distinction here as to what analysing diversity and change and continuity may actually look like, so as a descriptor this is fairly hopeless. This same problem is true across the board in NC models of progression.

NC Levels also suffer another issue, in that they prioritise generic "skills" over the first and second order concepts which underpin historical thinking. They move students from knowledge to understanding to evaluation rather than focusing on the specific historical concepts involved. For example, it is common understanding that Level 4 means "describe", Level 5 "explain" and Level 6 "evaluate", yet many students can demonstrate evaluation without ever having described an historical phenomenon. This is a false hierarchy rooted in an odd educational obsession with Bloom's Taxonomy! Evaluation of course can have multiple levels – either deep, contextual and based on evidence, or very basic – the NC Levels make little distinction between the two. Counsell summarises the issue we have faced for the last twenty years when she explains that '...moving from National Curriculum Level 4 to Level 5 (or whatever) is not an adequate description of progress let alone a prescription for progress.' (Counsell, 2000, p. 41)

There is of course a clear link between progression models and assessment models. How we assess a subject does tend to drive what we teach and of course how we teach it. Traditionally, History assessment in the UK, and more contemporaneously in Canada and the United States, has relied heavily on factual recall and varieties of knowledge-based, or multiple choice tests (Husbands, 2003; Peck & Seixas, 2008; Breakstone *et al.*, 2013). However the development towards the use of historical concepts as a means of progress, has led to a shifting focus in the assessment of History. The limiting factor in this shift has been the progression model in the form of NC Levels, which have neither the nuances nor the adaptability to assist in this type of assessment. This has, in some cases, led to the arbitrary and generic assessment of historical concepts through ill-conceived or flawed assessments. We have all seen (and hands-up here I have been guilty of creating) assessments which have a series of hoops to jump to prove that Level 5, 6 or 7 understanding has been achieved. And of course we have all taken the "magic marker" out when a student has failed our hoop-jump and achieved a Level 4 instead of the expected Level 6 (isn't it strange how pupils make more linear progress the more high-stakes testing is done?!?). These issues mean that we are no longer assessing students for anyone's benefit, we are merely creating "snapshot" data for monitoring

systems. To be graded a Level 6c in one assessment, Level 4b in another and to be given a 5a overall is little use to a student in improving their historical thinking, and still less to a teacher who know that this work does not reflect the actual abilities of the student. Even with the most diligent comment marking, this system is flawed at its very core as it does not show History to be a subject in which progress happens in developing modes of thinking rather than through flashes of genius. It fails to show slow and painstaking efforts that are required to develop deep historical thought. Most importantly the current system of assessing against Levels makes genuine improvement incredibly difficult for all involved.

## Potential Solutions

The most important starting point when building progression and assessment models for History is to recognise that the subject exists on two separate planes. On the surface, History is an engagement with the past, a passing on of traditions from one generation to the next, the notion of setting at the feet of our grandparents and being connected to generations long gone (Wineburg, 2007). History in this mode of thinking, much like Burke's society is a contract "between those who are living...those who are dead, and those who are to be born..." (Burke, 1790). However, whilst this is a comforting notion it is important to remember that History is also exists on a second, more obscure plane. History is a discipline, a mode of thinking which, as Wineburg suggests "...is neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development . . . it actually goes against the grain of how we ordinarily think." (Wineburg, 1999, p. 491). In our day to day lives we are too often happy to accept History as merely a series of events (even some people high up in education seem to suffer this delusion) without forcing ourselves to engage in the complexities of the past. Yet History, good history, demands that we engage with the complexities of the past, that we are rigorous with our sources, that we interrogate the mentalities of the people who we struggle to understand, and that we recognise the limits of our understanding. We therefore need to build models of progression, assessment and of course teaching which not only tap into the fascinating human saga of history, but also allow us to develop a disciplined historical mind. Again I come back to Wineburg who suggests that "History provides an antidote to impulse by cultivating modes of thought that counterbalance haste and avert premature judgment." A valuable set of skills indeed.

One solution to building a better model for progression and assessment in History education is through the provision of research based models of understanding based on core concepts (Banham, 2000; Counsell, 2000; Riley, 2000; Lee & Shemilt, 2003). These concepts are contested to some extent, however they all, in some way, describe the processes of historical thinking and understanding. Seixas explains that

"Competent historical thinkers understand both the vast differences that separate us from our ancestors and the ties that bind us to them; they can analyse historical artefacts and documents, which can give them some of the best understandings of times gone by; they can assess the validity and relevance of historical accounts, when they are used to support entry into a war, voting for a candidate, or any of the myriad decisions knowledgeable citizens in a democracy must make. All this requires "knowing the facts," but "knowing the facts" is not enough. Historical thinking does not replace historical knowledge: the two are related and interdependent." (Seixas, 2008, p. 6)

Lee & Shemilt (2003) also argue that models, based on students' understanding of second order concepts, may help teachers to perceive the range of ideas and misconceptions they are likely to

encounter in the classroom, allowing teachers to tackle issues and help students move on in their historical thinking. The developmental psychologist Howard Gardner (he of the multiple intelligences) also agrees that the mind can be disciplined to think about the processes underlying a subject as well as the content of the subject itself (Gardner, 1999). Planning for progress might therefore be better understood, not by the creation of a series of level-like steps from the most basic operations to the most complex, but in setting out clear descriptions of good quality history and then slowly challenging the misconceptions that prevent students from achieving this. It is this challenging of misconceptions, rather than the gradual accumulation of new and correct ideas which defines progress in historical thinking – less impressive in Ofsted terms no doubt, but a firmer foundation for the development of a critical and disciplined mind (Counsell, 2000; Lee & Shemilt, 2003). This theme is echoed in the work of Wineburg (1999) who suggests that mature historical cognition is more than simply an understanding of the limits of knowledge, it is also...an acceptance of our limitations in understanding. In the best cases, Wineburg contends, historical understanding is characterised by a humility in the face of the past and our ability to comprehend it. (Wineburg, 1999, p. 498).

So where now? Over the last decade, a vast amount of work has been done in the creation of research-based models of historical thinking (Scott, 1990; Counsell, 2000; Phillips, 2002; Lee & Shemilt, 2004; Blow, 2011; Morton & Seixas, 2012; Foster, 2013). Sadly, whilst much of this work has provided excellent insights into how children’s historical thinking develops over time, very little has been implemented in more than a piecemeal fashion thanks to the straitjacket of NC Levels. In Canada, a recent change in focus in historical thinking nationally has given much greater freedom for historians and educationalists to begin putting some of these models into practice. The *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking* project, led by Peter Seixas, has investigated how historical thinking might be assessed in a more meaningful way, and how progression models might be constructed. Testing was carried out in Canadian schools with the creation of classroom materials and assessment rubrics (Seixas, 2008; The Historical Thinking Project, 2012). This has led to some focused work looking at research-based progression models. The freedom enjoyed in Canada may now be on its way to England as the DfE sets out its aim to give schools greater control over progression and assessment.

“The new programmes of study set out what should be taught by the end of each key stage. We will give schools the freedom to develop a curriculum which is relevant to their pupils and enables them to meet these expectations.” (DfE, 2013)

What is crucial therefore is looking at the kinds of progression and assessment models which will work best in the UK context.

Much of the work done by Morton & Seixas in their most recent work “the Big Six” (2012) has a direct relevance to the UK, however, they have also created a model which is focused on aspects of historical thinking peculiar to Canada. The challenge has been in adapting the work done by various authors over the last twenty years and trying to create prototypes for the kinds of models which might be tested in the context of the new National Curriculum in the UK.

The remainder of this document is an attempt to build a meaningful model of progression for use in schools, grounded in historical concepts, supported by sound historical depth and packaged in a clear enquiry curriculum. The model suggested here build on the works already cited and is very much a first attempt at stepping out into the sunlight of a Level-free world!

## The Model

The model which has been developed here is based on six key historical concepts, however, whilst there are some similarities to existing second order concepts, I have also made a number of modifications to better reflect some of the issues which I believe are under-represented in the current conceptual framework. The chosen concepts are: causation, change & continuity, using evidence, historical interpretations, historical perspectives and communication. The concept of significance has been sidelined for the time being, for reasons which I will explain later. The model is grounded in a theory of conceptual mastery, a slow process in which students are encouraged to undertake disciplined enquiry into the past in order to improve. Whilst end of unit assessment does feature here, it is not the only aspect used to understand progress, and it certainly does not provide a simple numerical descriptor of the student as an historian. There is no specific focus on “knowledge” as this should form part of historical teaching by default. Knowledge can easily be built into an enquiry led scheme of work using a model familiar to those of us who have taught GCSE or A Level. A true mastery of the historical concepts cannot be achieved without a deep understanding of the past.

For each key concept, and in line with the work of Morton and Seixas (2012) a number of key “signposts” have been identified. These are effectively the misconceptions which students need to overcome in order to master the concept in question. There is no necessity for students to tackle each “signpost” in turn, and indeed students may achieve more difficult aspects of the concept whilst still failing at the basics. The provisional conceptual models are outlined below with some brief notes and explanation. Each concept has four stages from “not mastered” through to “mastered”. In each strand I have attempted to estimate what an “average” student in a particular year group might aim for in terms of understanding. This of course is by no means conclusive and, as Lee and Ashby have noted, research tends to suggest that there may well be a seven year gap in students’ understanding with some 7 year olds holding the same ideas about causation as 14 year olds and vice versa (Lee & Ashby, 2000). Never-the-less it will serve as a guide and will want refining as this project progresses.

## Causation: Model based on (Scott, 1990) and (Morton & Seixas, 2012)

Understanding 'causation' in history is crucial for students to make sense of the past. At a basic level, causation appears to be the bread and butter of history. The causation model outlined here attempts to get student to understand a number of key strands:

1. Change happens because of MULTIPLE CAUSES and leads to many different results or consequences. These create a WEB of related causes and consequences.
2. Different causes have different LEVELS OF INFLUENCE. Some causes are more important than other causes.
3. Historical changes happen because of two main factors: The actions of HISTORICAL ACTORS and the CONDITIONS (social, economic etc.) which have influenced those actors.
4. HISTORICAL ACTORS cannot always predict the effects of their own actions leading to UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES. These unintended consequences can also lead to changes.

	<b>Lacking Understanding</b>	<b>Emergent 100pts</b>	<b>Developing 200pts</b>	<b>Mastered 300pts</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
<b>Signpost 1</b> Causal Webs	<i>Causation is attributed to a single cause, usually ST, or multiple causes are given but not explained.</i>		Y7/8	Y9/10+	<i>Multiple short term and long terms causes of events are identified and explained. Relationships between causes are recognized</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Ranking Causes	<i>There is no differentiation between the influence of various causes.</i>	Y7	Y8/9	Y10+	<i>The causes of historical change are analysed and different causes are ranked by their influence</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Underlying Causes	<i>Historical causes are personalized to be the actions of great leaders or are seen as abstractions with human intentions.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>Historical change is explained through the interplay of the actions of historical actors and the underlying conditions (SPERM) in which they operated</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Unintended Consequences	<i>Past events are seen as the result of specific plans and actions.</i>	Y8	Y9/10+		<i>A differentiation is made between the intended and unintended consequences of actions</i>

Significance: Model based on (Counsell, 2004), (Phillips, 2002) and (Morton & Seixas, 2012)

Having built a progression model of significance, I have decided to remove it from my final model for two reasons. Firstly, significance requires a deep understanding of the past which might only be expected of older students – the danger is that significance never becomes more than why something was important. Secondly, the concept, when done properly, is of such complexity that it is rarely asked of students at A Level, let alone Year 7. For this reason I have decided not to include it.

<b>Lacking Understanding</b>		<b>Emergent 100pts</b>	<b>Developing 200pts</b>	<b>Mastered 300pts</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
<b>Signpost 1</b> Resulting in Change	<i>There is a reliance on a textbook or other authority to assign significance. Or relies on a personal preference as the basis for significance.</i>	Y7	Y8	Y9/10+	<i>The significance of events, people or developments are explained by showing how they resulted in change</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Revelation	<i>Criteria for determining significance are limited to the impact of a person, event or development.</i>	Y9	Y10+		<i>Historical significance is explained by showing what people, events or developments reveal about issues in history or contemporary life</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Identifying Significance Criteria	<i>Unable to identify the criteria used by textbooks or other historical accounts to establish the significance of events or people.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>The criteria used to establish historical significance in textbooks and other historical accounts are identified and explained</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Provisional Significance	<i>Significance is seen as fixed and unchanging – ie. It is inherent in an event, person or development.</i>	Y9	Y10+		<i>Historical significance is shown to vary over time and from group to group. Some reasons for this are given</i>

## Change & Continuity: Model Based on (Blow, 2011), (Morton & Seixas, 2012) and (Foster, 2013)

Understanding the processes of continuity and change enables students to appreciate the past, not as a homogenous whole, nor indeed as a series of events, but as a complex flow of currents and counter-currents. It helps students to appreciate the complexity of the past and creates uncertainty around loaded terms such as “primitive” and “progress”. Again, there are four key strands to this concept:

1. Past societies are not fixed, there are changes which have occurred spanning centuries. Changes in the past can be identified by looking at DEVELOPMENTS between two periods.
2. Change and continuity are INTERWOVEN and both can be present together in history. CHRONOLOGIES can be used to show change and continuity working together over time.
3. Change is a process which varies over time. Change can be described as a FLOW in terms of its PACE and EXTENT and can be said to TRENDS and have specific TURNING POINTS.
4. Change and continuity are not a single process. There are many FLOWS of change and continuity operating at the same time. Not all FLOWS go in the same direction.

Lacking Understanding		Emergent 100pts	Developing 200pts	Mastered 300pts	Mastered
<b>Signpost 1</b> Identifying Change	<i>Seeing the past as homogenous and unchanging. Failing to perceive that changes happen over time.</i>		Y7	Y8/9/10+	<i>Understanding that changes can be seen as differences between two periods of time ie. What has changed between two points in history, or conversely, what has stayed the same.</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Interweaving Continuity and Change	<i>Failing to appreciate that continuity and change can happen simultaneously.</i>	Y7	Y8/9	Y10+	<i>Continuity and change are shown to be INTERWOVEN. Some things change whilst others remain stable.</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Process of Change	<i>Seeing all changes as individual events with short term impacts.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>Understanding that historical change and can be described as a flow over a longer period of time in terms of pace, extent, trends or specific turning points and that these flows might have greater importance than the changes individually.</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Complexity of Change	<i>Believing that change is a single process which ebbs and flows over time.</i>	Y9	Y10+		<i>Understanding that the past is formed of multiple lines of development and that each has its own flow but that these do not always go in the same direction as the larger river of history.</i>



## Historical Evidence: Model based on: (Lee & Shemilt, 2003), (Wineburg, 1999) and (Morton & Seixas, 2012)

Without evidence, there is of course no history to speak of, only speculation. This was one of the most tricky aspects to create a model for as working with evidence is such a complex process. I have tried to take some of the complexity of Wineburg's thinking on the issue whilst also looking at the practicalities of the classroom. When working with sources the danger is that we simply read them uncritically or through a modern lens. As Wineburg notes, the "spread of activation" effect leads us to think down similar lines of thought once we have been pushed in a certain direction. For example, when looking at a document which discusses slavery, then the modern mindset overrides other aspects of the document and leads us to condemn the practice without engaging with the meaning of the source itself. Wineburg gives the example of a group of people given an 1892 document about Columbus Day. Non-historians used the document to comment on the shame of Columbus' conquest in 1492, these readers used these source to "...confirm their prior beliefs. They encountered the past here and labelled it." (Wineburg, 1999, p. 498). Yet on the other hand, "...historians used the document to puzzle about 1892, not 1492. They paused long enough to allow their eyes to readjust from the flashing neon of Columbus's name to go down to the bottom of the document to ponder the context of the document's production' Historians contextualised the document about Columbus instead of using it as a window on the past." (Wineburg, 2007, p. 11)

Meanwhile the "availability heuristic" leads us to privilege information which is more readily available in our memory regardless of the trustworthiness or the reliability of less readily available sources. This means we often deal with sources uncritically as they are available to us rather than test them against harder to obtain information. This is especially true of the use of textbooks by students. The "availability heuristic" leads us for example to believe that we will not contract lung cancer from smoking, despite all the evidence to the contrary, if we know of a close relative who smoked and lived to the age of 95 (Wineburg, 2007). With this in mind, the strands for the evidence concept are quite complex:

1. When we write history we need to create interpretations of the past based on evidence. INFERENCES are drawn from a variety of primary sources to create interpretations of the past.
2. Historical evidence must be CROSS-REFERENCED so that claims are not made based on single pieces of evidence. CROSS-REFERENCING means checking against other primary or secondary sources.
3. Historical evidence has multiple uses. The UTILITY of a piece of historical evidence varies according to the specific enquiry or the questions being asked.
4. Working with evidence begins before the source is read by thinking about how the AUTHOR, intended AUDIENCE and PURPOSE of an historical source might affect its WEIGHT for a purpose.
5. Historical evidence must be understood on its own terms. This means thinking about the CONTEXT in which the source was created and what conditions and views existed at the time.

		Emergent 100pts	Developing 200pts	Mastered 300pts	Mastered
<b>Signpost 1</b> Drawing Inferences	<i>Lacking Understanding</i>  <i>Seeing evidence as a series of windows on the past or a collection of facts to be unearthed.</i>		Y7/8	Y9/10+	<i>Understanding that the past is not a set of fixed and known events. Evidence isn't a collection of facts about the past. Understanding that inferences can be drawn from evidence which go beyond the obvious content of the sources.</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Cross Referencing	<i>Claims about the past are often shaky or unwarranted as they are based on single pieces of evidence.</i>	Y7	Y8/9	Y10+	<i>Understanding that history is a complex web and should be constructed from a wide array of complimentary and contradictory sources. Commenting of the certainty of inferences drawn from multiple sources.</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Utility of Evidence	<i>Seeing evidence as inherently useful or otherwise based only on what it says.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>Understanding that all evidence can have multiple uses and that its utility depends on the questions which are being asked. Evidence does not have a fixed value of utility, it varies according to the enquiry.</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Evaluating Evidence	<i>The provenance of evidence is not questioned.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>Understanding that a source will reflect the views of its author. Explaining the impact of author, audience, purpose on a source.</i>
<b>Signpost 5</b> Evidence in Context	<i>Understanding historical evidence and inferences from evidence through a modern mindset. Judgments are made without reference to context.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>Historical evidence should be understood on its own terms and be recognized as an area of complexity and confusion. Interpreting historical evidence in historical terms rather than understanding it through a modern mindset. Sources cannot be understood quickly and easily – they require work. Context has an enormous impact on the meaning of a source.</i>

## Historical Interpretations: Model based on (Lee & Shemilt, 2004)

Understanding historical interpretations means asking students to step back and appreciate the processes of the discipline of History itself. In many cases, this is a skill we do not expect of students until they are much older as the contextual knowledge required is so great. It is also important to note that historical interpretations here refer to conscious reflections on the past, deliberate attempts to make sense of past events, and should not be confused with sources or personal views.

1. Historical interpretations are everywhere. Every piece of historical writing is an interpretation of some sort. The past is not fixed but CONSTRUCTED through interpretations.
2. It is possible to draw INFERENCES from interpretations of the past, just like with historical sources. INFERENCES will reveal the MESSAGE of a particular interpretation.
3. The APPROACH of an author must always be considered. This means considering their VIEWPOINT, PURPOSE, AUDIENCE and EVIDENCE chosen to build their interpretation.
4. Historical interpretations must be understood on their own terms. This means thinking about the CONTEXT in which they were created and what conditions and views existed at the time.

		Emergent 100pts	Developing 200pts	Mastered 300pts	Mastered
<b>Signpost 1</b> Identifying Interpretation	<i>Lacking Understanding</i> <i>The past is seen as knowable and therefore interpretations of the past are all just different ways of relating the same events.</i>	Y7	Y8	Y9/10+	<i>Interpretations are understood to be particular viewpoints and constructions of the past.</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Inferences from Interpretations	<i>Inferences are not drawn from interpretations. Information may be extracted from an interpretation.</i>	Y7/8	Y9	Y10+	<i>The messages and main points of an interpretation are identified. This is done through reference to the interpretation itself.</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Evaluating Interpretations	<i>Accounts of the past are either used uncritically or are seen as accurate versions of the past containing mistakes – either deliberate (bias) or accidental.</i>	Y8	Y9/10+		<i>An interpretation is seen as the product of a particular author. The APPROACH of the author is identified and an understanding is shown of the viewpoint of the author, their purpose, their intended audience and the evidence they have chosen to use.</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Interpretations in Context	<i>Interpretations are seen as views on the past but are not understood in the context of their own time.</i>		Y9/10+		<i>Understanding that the context of an historical interpretation is often more important than the period it is talking about. Interpretations can reveal a lot about the context in which they were created and could be put to this purpose.</i>



## Historical Perspectives: Model based on (Wineburg, 1999; 2007) and (Morton & Seixas, 2012)

One of the most crucial aspects of understanding history is trying to see the past on its own terms. Too often students place modern values on top of the past and therefore fail to understand why people acted in the way they did. When speaking to students about the Holocaust, Primo Levi once noted that he increasingly faced the question: why did you not escape or rebel? These students are viewing History through their own modern lens of understanding rather than trying to engage with the strange world of the past. As Richard White notes: 'Any good history begins in strangeness...the past should not be a familiar echo of the present...' (White, 1998, p. 13). History exposes our inability to understand people in the past on their own terms. In order to do it well we need to try and understand the mentalities of those in the past. History helps us to practice understanding peoples we cannot hope to understand – this is a crucial lesson today (Wineburg, 1999).

1. There are major differences between modern WORLD-VIEWS and those of people in the past, this means their beliefs, values and motivations. We must avoid PRESENTISM.
2. The perspectives of HISTORICAL ACTORS are best understood by thinking about the CONTEXT in which people lived and the WORLD-VIEWS that influenced them.
3. Looking at the perspective of an HISTORICAL ACTOR means drawing INFERENCES about how people thought and felt in the past. It does not mean using modern WORLD-VIEWS to imagine the past.
4. A variety of HISTORICAL ACTORS have very different (DIVERSE) experiences of the events in which they are involved. Understanding DIVERSITY is key to understanding history.

		Emergent 100pts	Developing 200pts	Mastered 300pts	Mastered
<b>Signpost 1</b> Appreciating World-Views	<i>Lacking Understanding</i>  <i>There is an assumption that the beliefs, values and motivations of people in the past were the same as those of people today. Presentism abounds.</i>		Y7/8	Y9/10+	<i>An understanding of the differences between the world-views of people in the past and the present day. Understanding that caution is needed when trying to understand Historical Actors through shared human experiences eg. Death, fear, love or hunger.</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Perspectives in Context	<i>A lack of historical empathy with people of the past. An assumption that people in the past were stupid or ignorant because their historical context is ignored.</i>	Y8	Y9	Y10+	<i>Understanding that the perspectives of people in the past have to be explained with reference to their historical context. A respect for the lives of people in the past.</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Perspectives through evidence	<i>Empathising with Historical Actors is often conducted as an imaginative exercise with little or no reference to evidence or historical context.</i>	Y8	Y9/10+		<i>Evidence based inferences are used to empathise with an Historical Actor. Evidence is used to reconstruct beliefs, values and motivations. Limitations of our understanding are recognised.</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Diversity	<i>A failure to recognize that there are a diverse range of perspectives in the past.</i>	Y7	Y8/9	Y10+	<i>The ability to distinguish a variety of diverse perspectives and experiences in the past. Evidence is used to reconstruct these different perspectives with respect.</i>

## Communication (essays): Model based on personal experience

Finally there is the issue of communication. It cannot have gone without notice that History is now one of the few subjects requiring extended answers throughout the school system. Unfortunately, the propensity of other subjects to remove a focus from extended writing means that History is now one of the few places where essay writing is actually taught. This model is built from my own experiences of trying to encourage students to write coherently and borrows from many places and discussions with colleagues over the years.

1. Historical knowledge and evidence is used to develop and prove an argument. Historical evidence should be ACCURATE and RELEVANT.
2. All writing needs a clear structure. This means introducing your work, developing ideas in paragraphs and reaching an overall conclusion.
3. All historical essays require some form of argument to develop. This means you need to clearly answer the question set and build a clear line of argument throughout your work.

		Emergent 100pts	Developing 200pts	Mastered 300pts	Mastered
<b>Signpost 1</b> Identifying Change	<i>Failing to provide specific evidence and details to back up historical arguments</i>	Y7	Y8	Y9/10+	<i>Giving multiple pieces of evidence to back up the points being made. These are both ACCURATE and RELEVANT.</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Interweaving Continuity and Change	<i>Failing to structure work in a formal way. Questions tend to be answered in a single paragraph with no real structure. Alternatively questions are answered with a series of short responses.</i>	Y7	Y8/9	Y10+	<i>A clear structure is evidence in writing. Paragraphs clearly address the question. Conclusions come to a judgment about the question and weigh up the arguments. Introductions are focused on the question and provide some background (context).</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Process of Change	<i>Failing to link the answer to the question set. This might include covering topic knowledge but not addressing the specific point of the question.</i>	Y7	Y8/9	Y10+	<i>Work is analytical and based on key factors. Evidence is used to back up points clearly and there are very clear links back to the question. Links are made between multiple pieces of evidence as well as between factors. Clear links are made back to the question in each paragraph. Argument flows and is cogent.</i>

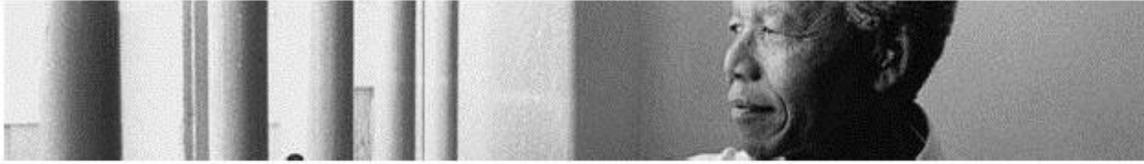
## Application of the Model

Finally I have put together some thoughts about how this model might be used in a practical, everyday sense. There is little point in creating a model which cannot be used in the classroom. The model developed here could feed into all aspects of planning, delivering and assessing a History curriculum. Yet unlike the NC Levels model it should aid to the process of building understanding rather than hampering it.

### The Student Model & Student Record Book

A child friendly version of the model could be created for students. A student record book would allow students to understand how and where they were developing their understanding over the course of a year, or indeed a Key Stage (see Figure 1). Students would be able then to use the record book to track their own understanding and set their own targets for improvement. Upon receiving feedback on their work, students could:

1. Read feedback given on specific sheets targeted at the concept or signpost in question (see Figure 2)
2. Go to the correct concept page in the booklet and record developmental stage given for each signpost (absent, emergent, developing or mastered). In the example I have given, I have equated these stages to a number of “points” to link into a motivational factor of achievement. It also makes clear where students could and should focus their efforts.
3. If a second assessment was conducted on the same concept, students would only move the item up if it had improved.
4. Go to the “assessment feedback record” sheets (Figure 3) and make a note (in their own words) of what the teacher had said. They would then use their feedback and the concept page to set a target.
5. Periodically students could count the total points in their booklet and fill in the “totalizer” on the last page. In this way students could see their progression through the year in a holistic way. This approach represents an attempt to reach a half-way house between an obsession with Levels and students’ desire to know how they are doing in a subject. Crucially progression is directly tied to the concepts and students are able to identify where they might get points next time. The different “levels” on the totalizer would be set by deciding how many points a student of a particular age group might reasonably be expected to accumulate in a year, as can be seen in the Year 9 example provided (see Figure 4).
6. At the end of a school year, students could potentially transfer points accumulated in one year into the higher demands of a new year. This way teachers would have some idea of their existing abilities and areas for development.



## Causation



Understanding 'causation' in history means explaining why things in the past happened. This is one of the most important jobs of an historian. Good historical causation means looking at a whole range of reasons why things in the past have happened and beginning to see links between them - a bit like a web! It also means choosing the right evidence to prove that what you are saying is plausible (could be true).

### Signpost 1

Change happens because of MULTIPLE CAUSES and leads to many different results or consequences. These create a WEB of related causes and consequences.

#### STARTING POINT

I talk about events having a single cause OR I can list causes but don't really explain what impact they had.

100

200

300

#### MASTERED

I can identify MULTIPLE CAUSES of an historical change. I can EXPLAIN how these causes led to the change.

### Signpost 2

Different causes have different LEVELS OF INFLUENCE. Some causes are more important than other causes.

#### STARTING POINT

I don't really talk about the INFLUENCE or IMPORTANCE of different causes.

100

200

300

#### MASTERED

I am able to rank or order causes depending on their INFLUENCE on events or their IMPORTANCE.

### Signpost 3

Historical changes happen because of two main factors: The actions of HISTORICAL ACTORS and the CONDITIONS (social, economic etc.) which have influenced those actors.

#### STARTING POINT

I only really talk about historical changes being caused by the actions of people (HISTORICAL ACTORS)

100

200

300

#### MASTERED

I can show how HISTORICAL ACTORS were influenced by their CONDITIONS (social, political etc.) and how both led to change.

### Signpost 4

HISTORICAL ACTORS cannot always predict the effects of their own actions leading to UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES. These unintended consequences can also lead to changes.

#### STARTING POINT

I describe the changes in history as results from different plans and actions, usually by HISTORICAL ACTORS.

100

200

300

#### MASTERED

I can identify UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES of people's actions in the past and can explain why they are important.



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Figure 1



## History CAUSATION Feedback



		Emergent 100pts	Developing 200pts	Mastered 300pts	
<b>Signpost 1</b> Causal Webs	<i>Causation is attributed to a single cause, usually ST, or multiple causes are given but not explained.</i>				<i>Multiple short term and long terms causes of events are identified and explained. Relationships between causes are recognized</i>
<b>Signpost 2</b> Ranking Causes	<i>There is no differentiation between the influence of various causes.</i>				<i>The causes of historical change are analysed and different causes are ranked by their influence</i>
<b>Signpost 3</b> Underlying Causes	<i>Historical causes are personalized to be the actions of great leaders or are seen as abstractions with human intentions.</i>				<i>Historical change is explained through the interplay of the actions of historical actors and the underlying conditions (SPERM) in which they operated</i>
<b>Signpost 4</b> Unintended Consequences	<i>Past events are seen as the result of specific plans and actions.</i>				<i>A differentiation is made between the intended and unintended consequences of actions</i>

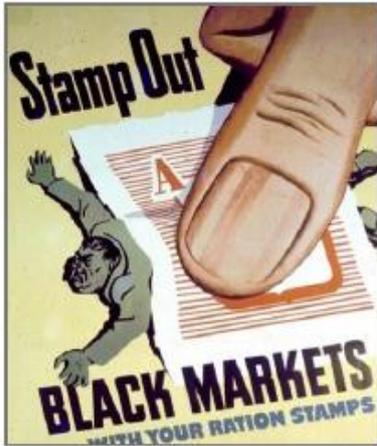
<b>COMMENT:</b>	<b>Mark</b>

Figure 2

## Assessment Feedback Record

<b>Assessment 1:</b>
<b>My teacher said:</b>
<b>My target is:</b>
<b>Assessment 2:</b>
<b>My teacher said:</b>
<b>My target is:</b>
<b>Assessment 3:</b>
<b>My teacher said:</b>
<b>My target is:</b>

Figure 3



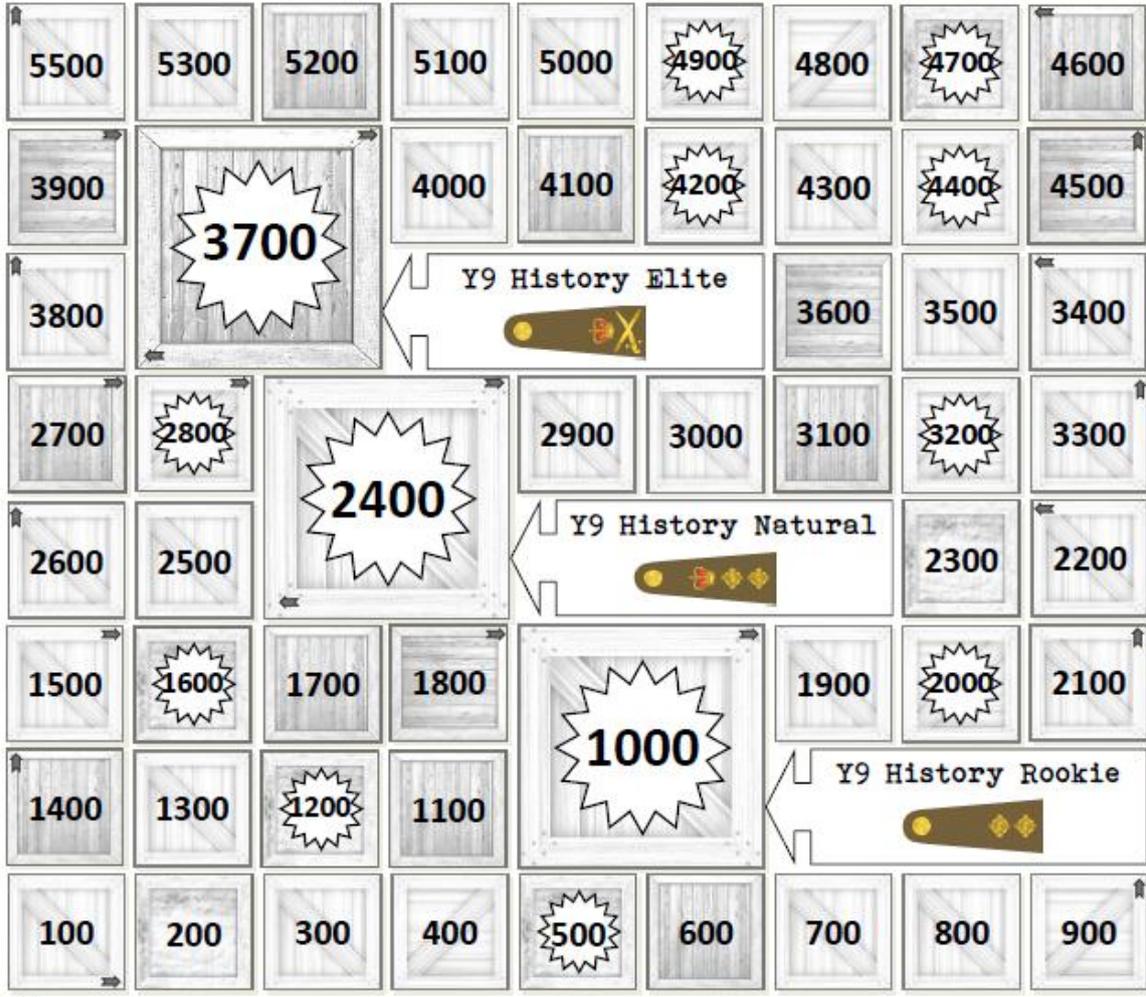
## Where am I in History?

This page is for you to fill in every time you get assessment feedback. It should always reflect the TOTAL POINTS in your booklet (ie. don't just keep adding points on). Make sure you update your record by colouring in or marking the appropriate number of crates.

### History Legend!!

**7400**

Y9 History Master



Y9 History Elite

Y9 History Natural

Y9 History Rookie

Figure 4

## The Teaching Schedule

An enquiry led teaching schedule could easily be given a clear focus by targeting units at a particular set of historical concepts. Individual lessons could also be given a specific “signpost” focus which would then allow students to appreciate which aspects of their historical skills they were developing at a given time. This would have more benefits than a similar approach with Levels as the “signposts” offer specific descriptions of improvement in a particular aspect of historical thinking. This would also serve to deepen teachers’ understanding of the “signposts” as well as making for more meaningful marking of books.

## The Assessment

Assessment could be built around key concepts and specific signposts with relative ease. The example in Appendix A shows an assessment based on the concept of evaluating historical evidence. It uses a series of questions to hit key signposts from the conceptual model. The mark scheme is based on this and refers to the mastery of these concepts. This assessment would be numerically marked, however it would also be marked against a conceptual feedback form like the previous example (see Figure 2). This would allow students to add experience gained from this assessment to their progress book.

Equally, assessment might be conducted in a less formal manner. If a lesson was designed around a particular “signpost”, students could be asked to note this in the margin next to their title. When marking, teachers could then award a level of mastery (or indeed points) for this concept as demonstrated in book work. This would also allow for more focused comment marking and help students to find a means to improve the work themselves. This would mean that book work as well as formal assessments could all form part of the formative assessment of a student’s abilities.

## Conceptual Feedback Forms

These forms are designed to allow teachers to give quick and meaningful feedback against the signposts for a concept. They also give space for a written comment using these signposts as a model to assist with setting targets. With each form there is space to mark a signpost as either “emergent”, “developing”, or “mastered”. These terms have come from Morton & Seixas. The essay feedback form is more in depth and gives a more detailed analysis of the work.

## Teacher Mark Book

With a shift away from simple summative assessments, a teacher mark book might be altered to become a mirror of the conceptual map. A record could be kept of students’ levels of mastery against specific concepts and “signposts” making for more meaningful discussions and better assessment at the end of the year (see Figure 5). If these records could be passed on between years, teachers could build powerful pictures of students’ understanding.

9a/Hi2 Passbook Y9 Dual Language		Total x100	Rank	Essay1	Essay2	Essay3	Sources1	Sources2	Sources3
				Evidence	Structure	Argument	Inferences	X Refs	Utility
	1	56.00	Master	3.00	2.00	6.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
	2	23.00	Novice	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	3	0.00							
	4	0.00							

Sources4	Sources5	Causes1	Causes2	Causes3	Causes4	Change1	Change2	Change3	Change4
Provenance	Context	Causal Webs	Ranking	Underlying	Conseq	Identify Change	Relate Cont & Chg	Process	Complex Processes
2.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	2.00
0.00	0.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00

Persp1	Persp2	Persp3	Persp4	Interps1	Interps2	Interps3	Interps4
World Views	Perspectives in Context	Evidencing	Diversity	Identify Interps	Inferences	Provenance	Context
3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
1.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00

Figure 5

## Conclusions

The important part about all of this is not so much the specific model we choose to employ when designing our new History curriculum, rather it is the fact that we now have the freedom to do so. The great danger here is that we have, as a profession, become so accustomed to Levels that we don't know what to do without them. For too long, History has been burdened with meaningless Levels which have been designed to help quantify "achievement" and progress. We must ensure that the History does not become just another means of measuring students, it must reflect the passions and disciplines of our subject and not become simply "another commodity for our instant consumption." (Wineburg, 1999, p. 490). I have every faith that history teachers will rise to the challenge of creating a meaningful model of progression for a post-levels world. The goal door is open, the guard is gone, now we just need the courage to walk out into the sunlight.

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# Appendix A

## Year 9 Common Assessment 1 – Women and the Vote

Carefully examine the evidence you have been given. You may like to annotate or write around each source. Then answer the questions:

**Source 1:** *From the diary of Bruce Glasier, written in April 1912. Glasier was a politician although he was not elected to Parliament. His wife was also involved in the Labour Party. The Labour Party had supported votes for women and had worked with the Suffragists.*

The window smashing has roused great hostility against the women. No greater blunder could be conceived. Everything was looking favourably for the women's amendment to the Government Bill being carried. The last outbreak has however endangered all. It seems as if devised purposely to show that women are incapable of political restraint. My conviction is now and always has been that the Pankhursts have been the bane of the women's movement.

1. Briefly describe some of the tactics of the Suffragettes  
(3 marks)
2. What does the author of Source 1 think of the Suffragettes and their tactics? Give examples.  
(4 marks)

**Source 2:** *Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst in a letter to members of the WSPU, February 1918, just after the Representation of the People Act was passed.*

You were a friend of the WSPU in the days when it was fighting for the vote and we know that you will want to take part in celebrating the wonderful triumph of our cause. Votes for women has been won because the WSPU was blessed with marvellous leadership, which attracted loyal and enthusiastic followers. The WSPU by its pre-war crusade for the vote followed by its patriotic stand and service to the nation during the war, has won a great political victory.

3. What different view of the Suffragettes' tactics is suggested in Source 2?

(6 marks)

4. Why do you think the opinions expressed in the two sources are so different? (think context, author, audience and purpose)

(8 marks)

**Source 3:** A cartoon from the political Punch Magazine published in February 1918. Punch was a weekly British humour magazine which made fun of politics, it was mainly read by middle and upper class men. The character shown is Joan of Arc – a medieval war leader who dressed like a man to allow her to lead armies.



5. What does Source 3 suggest about why women got the vote? How do you know?

(4 marks)

**Source 4:** *From the obituary of Millicent Fawcett published in a newspaper in August 1929. An obituary is an article about the life of a person and is usually written just after the person's death.*

There were three stages in the freeing of women. The first was the long campaign of propaganda and organisation at the centre of which, patient, unwearied and always hopeful, stood Dame Millicent Fawcett. The second was the campaign of the militants. The third was war. Had there been no militancy and no war, the right to vote would have come, although more slowly. But without the faithful preparation of the ground over many years by Dame Millicent Fawcett and her colleagues, neither militancy nor the war could have won the vote.

6. Which view of the Suffragettes does Source 4 most agree with, the one from Source 1, 2 or 3? Explain your answer with examples from the sources.  
(6 marks)
  
7. Overall, how far do you agree with the author in Source 4 about the importance of the Suffragists in getting women the right to vote? Use your own knowledge.  
(4 marks)

## Mark Scheme

<b>Question 1</b>		<b>Contextual knowledge</b>
Emergent	1 mark	Answers that give a simplistic overview of the Suffragettes tactics or generic examples.
Developing	2 marks	Answers that give one specific example of Suffragettes tactics
<b>Mastered</b>	<b>3 marks</b>	<b>Answers that develop two or more examples of Suffragette tactics</b>

<b>Question 2</b>		<b>Signpost 1: Drawing inferences from evidence</b>
Emergent	1 mark	Answers that select details from the source or show some knowledge of the Suffragettes' tactics
Developing	2 marks	Answers that draw an informed inference based on the source.
<b>Mastered</b>	<b>3-4 marks</b>	<b>Answers that draw an informed inference(s) supported by the source.</b>

<b>Question 3</b>		<b>Signpost 2: Cross Referencing Sources</b>
Emergent	1-2 marks	Answers that select details from Source 2.
<b>Developing</b>	<b>3-4 marks</b>	<b>Answers that provide a simple comparison based on the content of both sources.</b>
Mastered	5-6 marks	Answers that compare the message of both sources based on inferences and at the top of the level supported by examples.

<b>Question 4</b>		<b>Signpost 4/5: Evaluating the weight of evidence</b>
Emergent	1-2 marks	Answers that select details from sources or say how the sources are different.
<b>Developing</b>	<b>3-5 marks</b>	<b>Answers showing simple reasoning about different attitudes based on changes over time, author, audience or purpose.</b>
Mastered	6-8 marks	Answers showing developed reasoning about different attitudes based on changes over time, audience, author or purpose. This should involve an explanation of the impact of these on the evidence.

<b>Question 5</b>		<b>Signpost 1: Drawing inferences from evidence</b>
Emergent	1 mark	Answers that select details from the source or show some knowledge of the treatment of disease.
Developing	2 marks	Answers that draw an informed inference based on the source.
<b>Mastered</b>	<b>3-4 marks</b>	<b>Answers that draw an informed inference(s) supported by the source.</b>

<b>Question 6</b>		<b>Signpost 2: Cross Referencing Sources</b>
Emergent	1-2 marks	Answers that select details from Source 4.
<b>Developing</b>	<b>3-4 marks</b>	<b>Answers that provide a simple explanation of which view Source 4 most agrees with based on the content of both sources.</b>
Mastered	5-6 marks	Answers that compare the message of the sources based on inferences and give examples to compare Source 4 to other sources.

<b>Question 7</b>		<b>Signpost 2: Drawing conclusions based on evidence</b>
Emergent	1 mark	Answers which make a simple statement conclusion on which view they most support.
<b>Developing</b>	<b>2-3 marks</b>	<b>Answers that provide a simple explanation for which view they most support, comparing to knowledge or giving examples from the sources.</b>
Mastered	4 marks	Answers which develop out of the previous level but also consider the trustworthiness of the evidence.