



# History

## Substantive and Disciplinary Knowledge

### Substantive Knowledge

Substantive Knowledge in History is knowledge of the past- understanding the key concepts and vocabulary.

Substantive Knowledge key themes at Orchard Primary School

- Power & Rule
- Trade
- Culture
- Conflict & Settlement

### Disciplinary Knowledge

Disciplinary Knowledge in history is the interpretation of history, requiring skills of 'meta-cognition'- applying skills of analysis, interpretation, reasoning and argument.

Disciplinary knowledge is taught by:

- Learning about how historians study the past
  - Learning how historians enquire about the past
  - Understanding that learning from the past is very different skill from everyday thinking
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- Chronology – The sequencing of events, stories, pictures and periods over time to show how different times relate to one another and contribute to a coherent understanding of the past.
  - Change and Continuity - The concept of 'change and continuity' can be described as 'understanding how and why change occurs in history, why and how things stay the same and analysing trends across time.
  - Cause and Consequence - The concept of 'cause and consequence' can be described as 'the identification and description of reasons for and results of historical events, situations and changes studied in the past'.
  - Similarity and difference - The concept of 'similarity and difference' can be described as 'the ability to identify and explain similarities within and across periods and societies studied'.

- Handling evidence - The concept of 'handling evidence' can be described as 'understanding the methods of enquiry for finding out about the past from historical evidence and how these can be used to make historical claims'. (There is some overlap with the study of historical interpretations, since they also count as evidence, but the main thrust of this concept relates to original evidence – sources dating from a particular period or event or within the lifetime of a person.)
- Historical interpretation - The concept of 'historical interpretations' can be described as 'the study of historical evidence dating from after an event, period or the lifetime of a person, reflecting back on it or them from the perspective of a later time. This includes understanding how historical interpretations have been constructed and suggesting reasons why they may differ.
- Historical significance - The concept of 'historical significance' can be described as 'understanding and suggesting reasons why events, periods, societies and people may be considered historically significant'.

*Significance has been developed as a concept for teaching in different ways, but this model written by Christine Counsell is particularly rigorous: 'An event/development is significant if they are:*

- Remarkable – it was remarked upon by people at the time and/or since
- Remembered – it was important at some stage in history within the collective memory of a group or groups
- Resulted in change – it had consequences for the future
- Resonant – people like to make analogies with it; it is possible to connect with experiences, beliefs or situations across time & space
- Revealing – of some other aspect of the past.

**Both substantive knowledge and disciplinary knowledge are important for a secure understanding of History.**

In History, we ensure that substantive knowledge (knowledge about the past) is taught through the strand of chronological understanding and communicating historically, which progress from Reception through to Year 6. It has been designed in a way which emphasize the key concepts and vocabulary.

We look at the disciplinary knowledge through the strands of historical enquiry and interpreting history. While it is clear that the stands link specifically to the type of knowledge, within lessons both substantive knowledge and disciplinary knowledge may be taught as lessons may include aspects from multiple strands.