

This Is Where the Word 'History' Comes From

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American **inventor** Henry Ford famously said that history is **nonsense** (*not sensible*). Others have characterized history differently: as the essence of innumerable biographies, as a picture of human crimes and misfortunes, as nothing but an agreed upon **fable**, as something that repeats itself.

It's hard to define such a monumental thing without **struggling** (*to work hard to solve a problem*) with the tensions between what is fact and what is fiction, as well as what was included and what was left out.

The short version is that the term history has evolved from an ancient Greek verb that means "to know," says the Oxford English Dictionary's Philip Durkin. The Greek word *historia* originally meant **inquiry**, the act of seeking knowledge, as well as the knowledge that results from inquiry.

The words story and history share much of their **lineage**, and in previous **eras**, it was more difficult than today to distinguish between the two. Today, we might think of the dividing line as the one between fact and fiction. Stories are **fanciful tales woven at bedtime** (*a creative way to say imaginary stories told at bedtime*). That word can even be used to describe a lie. Histories, on the other hand, are records of events. That word refers to all time preceding this very moment and everything that really happened up to now.

However, this is not the whole story. Plenty of stories — like the story of a person's life — are supposed to be factual. And stories cannot always be categorized easily into fact or fiction. Take the notion of someone telling their side of a story; to them, that account is correct. **Nevertheless** (*synonym of however*), to someone else, that **account** (*narration*) might be incorrect. Furthermore, we expect history to be free from the **flaws** (*errors/defects*) of viewpoint and selective memory that stories so often contain. Yet it isn't. Humans are imperfect and hierarchical creatures that remember and record events according to their interests and circumstances.

Comentado [U1]: 1) What can you infer about the content of the text by reading the title?

Comentado [U2]: 2) If **inventor** is the noun for the person, what is the other noun for the thing? And what is the verb and adjective form?

Comentado [U3]: 3) Examples of fables are: Little Red Riding Hood, The Hare and the Tortoise, The Three Little Pigs. What kind of a story is a fable?

Comentado [U4]: 4) What are the tensions involved in defining history? Describe in your own words.

Comentado [U5]: 5) What is the meaning of inquiry? *Clue: the answer is already in the text. You don't need to translate or look in the dictionary.*

Comentado [U6]: 6) What is the meaning of *lineage*? How do you pronounce it? Check in www.wordreference.com

Comentado [U7]: 7) What is the meaning of *era*? Find out the meaning of the following words that also define time: Age, Decade, Millennium & Fortnight.

Comentado [U8]: 8) What is the difference between *story* and *history*? Describe in your own words.

Comentado [U9]: 9) What is the author's purpose in the first sentence of this paragraph?

Comentado [U10]: 10) What does IT refer to in this sentence?

11) Rewrite this sentence (Yet, it isn't) in other words without changing the meaning.

Comentado [U11]: 12) After reading the whole text, what is the difference between *story* and *history*?