



Historical Method

In order to gain reliable knowledge, Historians have to use the Historical method to go through and analyse Historical facts and events. The **Historical Method** will be explained and used with an **Example**

01 – Events and Facts

The Event

Thomas Midgley Jr holds a press conference in October 30, 1924, where he inhales tetraethyl lead.



The **Historical Events** and **Facts** are objective, and they can't be debated, however they are not history. Historians take interest in deriving **Conclusions** and discovering **Patterns** within Historical events. So the first step is to find a Historical event to make History out of

Evidence used

- Three Biographies and a Biographical memoir
- Study by Thomas Midgley about fuels
- Study by Clair Patterson about lead contamination.
- An interview with Clair Patterson



02 – Selecting Evidence

Historians select relevant and reliable evidence, they use primary and secondary sources to explain the causes of events and to find correlation between the event, and other events. History can never be made with one event alone, it requires context, and many different sources provide the context for History to be made. History is not the past, it's the study and reconstruction of it, and Historians need to use good evidence to anchor their History.

Historians have to deal with several issues in this step, things concerning with reliability of the accounts, how personal beliefs might affect an someone's telling of the event.

Historians must also be careful not to fall victim to **Confirmation Bias**

05 – Writing History

Now a Historian will put the events into a narrative, making it easy to read and get an idea of what happened, the event is also put into context and it allows for people to use it more efficiently when trying to derive conclusions or theories from the past.

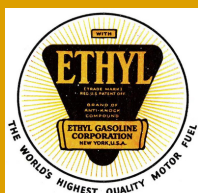
05 – Interpretations and Conclusions

Now, equipped with relevant and reliable evidence from which the Historian will put **the event** into context. The Historian will now **make History**, R.G. Collingwood (a well known Historian) once said "all history is the history of thought". which means that History must be understood by looking and the thought behind the actions taken in the past.

Of course, many other conclusions can be derived from this History, this is just an easy and intuitive example to get a point across

Evidence used

Thomas Midgley Jr was ordered by Charles Kettering to find an anti knocking agent for fuels of the time, Midgley found that a compound that contained lead worked perfectly and it was incredibly cheap, he made millions and founder ethyl corporation. Ethyl(as he named it) started to become very popular, however he suffered from lead poisoning, and when he built a new plant, 5 people died because of lead exposure, Midgley held this conference and stated that working with lead was safe, and he then inhaled ethyl, claiming he could do it daily without adverse effects.



One Conclusion

Thomas Midgley Junior had suffered from lead poisoning himself, him lying to the public is an example of how power and money can make someone become manipulative and selfish

History can be used to find patterns and explain modern day phenomena