

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1-13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 on pages 2 and 3.

Why should we study history?

In this paper, I shall present a number of people's opinions on why we should study history. Let me point out at the outset that many of these views overlap, with differences that are ones of emphasis, rather than of principle.

According to some of the greatest historians, such as Arnold Toynbee, the essential value of history is its ability to give us self-awareness, self-knowledge. This occurs because historical figures are presented to us in detail. Studying Alexander the Great, for instance, teaches us that a single person is capable of the whole range of behaviour from cruelty to kindness.

Diane Ravich, an education policy analyst, gives a practical reason for studying history. Like many others before her, she claims that history doesn't tell us the answers to our questions, but it helps to inform us and thus to improve our judgment, so that we make better choices in the future.

With a different focus, though, we can say that we know nothing about the future, and the present is just a moment, so in fact all there is is history. As the philosopher of education John Dewey suggested, the only tool we have for making sense of the reality we experience is what has occurred in the past.

According to historian Mark M Krug, the knowledge of how people acted in the past may not always suggest clever solutions to present crises, but it makes the task of finding them easier by giving us a starting point, a body of past experience which we can and, if necessary, reject. Peter N Stearns argues that

the wisdom available from history has a personal, everyday application. People need to have some sense of the workings of societies, simply so that they can run their own lives without coming into conflict with the community to which they belong.

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said people need models to imitate, and historical models are particularly powerful because they actually existed. Through her contribution to ending English rule over France, Joan of Arc demonstrates the power of individual belief and action. Galileo's opposition to the prevailing belief that the sun and planets orbited the Earth symbolises the fight against authority for freedom of thought. When studying history, we judge the actions of historical figures to be admirable or despicable, good or bad, and choose who we want to emulate.

Some philosophers have identified a pattern in historical events. Both Georg Hegel and Oswald Spengler saw history as a dynamic process, one in which nothing is static, in contrast to the many other philosophers who have believed that history consists of unique events. But there the resemblance ends. In Hegel's view, history is a process of conflict between opposite ideas, leading towards greater freedom, which combines the best elements of the two original ideas.

Spengler, on the other hand, developed the organic view that historical cultures, like plants and animals follow a process of growth, flowering and deterioration, a rise inevitably leading to a fall. There are very many

historical examples of both individuals and empires that have conformed to this pattern.

Many historians argue that a society which has a shared cultural understanding of its own history is more likely to function smoothly than a society that is ignorant of its past. For example, Beverly Southgate claims that societies, like individuals, need to know who they are, and where they belong.

Individuals who lack this sense of uniqueness are likely to feel that life has little meaning or purpose, and so too with societies. A shared knowledge of its history provides a nation with meaning, purpose and cohesion.

Southgate would agree with Conal Furay and Michael J Salevouris, in whose view a society that cannot recall its past is like an individual with amnesia, unaware of the roots that have created it. As a consequence, it has no direction, and this impacts on its further evolution.

These two historians identify another value of history. We tend to have a narrow view of our own society, assuming that its ways are the only acceptable ones. By learning how our own country used to be, we may realise that our present-day customs are not the only ones which are acceptable. This clearly has implications for our attitude towards other present-day countries and cultures, too.

Many historians and educators believe that the expert knowledge possessed by historians includes not only the learning of factual information, but also the habit of critically examining and evaluating evidence. These are abilities worth developing, as they are very useful, both in other academic pursuits and in almost any career.

Questions 1 – 4

Look at the following people (Questions 1-4) and the list of theories of history below.

*Match each person with the correct theory, **A-F**.*

*Write the correct letter, **A-F**, in boxes 1-4 on your answer sheet.*

- 1 Arnold Toynbee
- 2 Diane Ravich
- 3 John Dewey
- 4 Friedrich Nietzsche

List of Theories of History

- A It helps us to put problems into perspective.
 - B It helps us to understand human nature.
 - C It helps us to understand the present.
 - D It provides examples to copy.
 - E It shows that there are alternative explanations of events.
 - F It helps to improve our ability to make decisions.
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Questions 5 – 9

*Complete the notes using the list of words, **A-J**, below.*

*Write the correct letter, **A-J**, in boxes 5-9 on your answer sheet.*

Hegel and Spengler: history is a process of 5

Hegel: historical process ends in an increase in 6

Spengler: historical process ends in 7

Southgate: history helps to create a nation's 8

Furay and Salevouris: study of history encourages 9 of other cultures.

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- | | | |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| A analysis | B decline | C peace |
| change | E identity | F pleasure |
| communication | H liberty | tolerance |
| conflict | | |
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Questions 10 – 13

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 10 – 13 on your answer sheet.

- 10 Peter N Stearns believes that the study of history helps people to avoid with the society they live in.
- 11 Southgate compares societies with
- 12 Furay and Salevouris believe ignorance of history is like suffering from
- 13 One educational benefit of studying history is the ability to analyse