

THE VALUES OF HISTORY AND THE PAST

INTRODUCTION

The study of history can be defined as the construction of ‘bodies of knowledge about the past [that are] produced by historians, together with everything that is involved in the production, communication of, and teaching about that knowledge’.¹

Information about the past can be discovered through the objects and sources left behind, such as photographs, paintings, potteries, artefacts, personal belongings, letters, diaries, weapons, and even human remains. The historical events captured in these resources could be understood and interpreted using questioning techniques such as the 5W1H. By asking questions, you will be able to think deeper into the context and environment of that time, and hence discover the rich history of the past.² Take a look at this example:



TAN TUAN KHOON COLLECTION,
COURTESY OF NATIONAL
ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE.

WHAT CAN
I SEE IN THIS
PICTURE?

LOOK AT THE
SIGN POST,
WHERE WAS
THE LOCATION?

WHO WERE
INVOLVED?

HOW WAS THE
PRESENCE OF THIS
CREATURE A
PROBLEM? WHY WAS
IT NECESSARY TO
MANAGE THE
SITUATION?

WHEN WAS
THIS PICTURE
TAKEN?

An understanding of history also helps younger Singaporeans appreciate how and why our country evolved to its current state. It also helps to shape national identity and foster a sense of belonging. “Our history defines us as a nation, a people, and we need to understand it to know why we made the decisions that we did.”³



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BUILDING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

5

INTER-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIP (MINDSET AND ATTITUDE)



The values of the youths differ from those of their elders. Every society needs a mix of both sets of values and it is good that those who hold different views can help society find the right balance for Singapore's second half-century.⁷



Keeping history alive is important in the building of a strong sense of national identity as it helps Singaporeans to stay humble and remember the nation's vulnerabilities.⁹

4

POINTS OF REFERENCE: DANGERS AHEAD



As a frame of reference, history enables us to identify internal and external dangers, and guides us in dealing with dangers when they appear.⁶



3

FACTS AND DATES



Facts and dates form the basis of the study of history, but the understanding of events may be subjected to perspectives and interpretations.



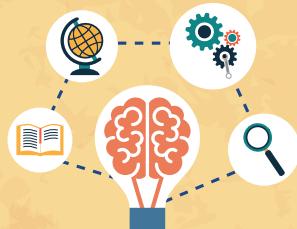
In terms of presentation skills, history provides training in communication such as essay writing and articulation of views using precise language.⁵

1

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS



The study of history exposes us to thinking skills such as analysing, evaluating, making inferences, and interpreting information from sources.⁴



NATIONAL MUSEUM, HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS AND LIBRARIES

Historical sources, especially artefacts, can be found in these places:

- Asian Civilisations Museum
- Indian Heritage Centre
- National Museum of Singapore
- Malay Heritage Centre
- Peranakan Museum
- Former Ford Factory
- Singapore Philatelic Museum
- Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall



The National Library and National Archives of Singapore too have rich collections of resources, which are accessible via online such as PictureSG, Archives Online, and NewspaperSG.

INFORMATION LITERACY TIPS

The National Library has a rich collection of books which contain pictures and images of Singapore in early years. To locate them, you can use these search tools and type in these keywords: 'Singapore history', 'pictorial works', 'pictures'.

Below is a screen grab of a catalogue record for this book entitled 'Singapore: 500 early postcards'.

Search Tools



*Disclaimer: The information is accurate at the time of production.

References

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