



Notes

UNIT-3 HISTORY

Structure:

- 3.0 *Introduction*
- 3.1 *Learning Objectives*
- 3.2 *Meaning of History*
- 3.3 *Nature of History*
- 3.4 *Contents of History at Elementary Level*
- 3.5 *Importance of Teaching of History in Social Science Curriculum*
- 3.6 *Historical Approach to Understand the Past*
- 3.7 *Concept Mapping of Two Chapters in History at Elementary Level*
- 3.8 *Let us Sum up*
- 3.10 *Suggested Readings and References*
- 3.11 *Unit End Exercises*

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you have gone through geography as an essential components of social science curriculum (i.e. Unit-3 of this block). This unit basically describe meaning and nature of history. Further this unit explain briefly the content, importance of teaching of history in the concept of social science curriculum. Subsequently, unit reflects the process adopted by social scientist to understand the past and also acquaint you with how to illustrate historical events through mapping technique.

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

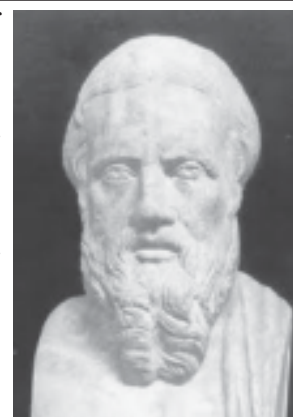
- explain the meaning of history;
- describe the nature of history;
- justify the content of history at elementary level;
- explain the importance of history in social science curriculum in the present context;
- state the role of historians in investigating the past and sharing it with others; and



- illustrate ideas, thoughts and information of historical facts through concept mapping technique.

3.2 MEANING OF HISTORY

You might have read about Aristotle teacher of Alexander. He was a native of Greece. Do you know that Greeks were great seekers of knowledge and wisdom? One of the subjects which added to their knowledge and wisdom was history. The English word 'History' has been derived the Greek noun 'Historia' which means enquiry, research, exploration, or information. Learning by enquiry or research about the past of mankind was later developed into a discipline by the ancient Greece historians, **Herodotus (484 B.C.-425 B.C.)** and **Thucydides (460-401 B.C.)**. Herodotus popularly known as 'Father of History', wrote about the *Graceo-Persian* wars, which contained a mine of information , particularly those relating to the ancient Egyptians and Persians.



Herodotus (484 B.C.-425 B.C.)
Image by Marsyas, GFDL



Battle of Marathan



Graceo-Persian war

Thucydides developed this subject on scientific lines. He wrote the *Peloponnesian* wars purely on the basis of evidence and showed the relationship between causes and effects.

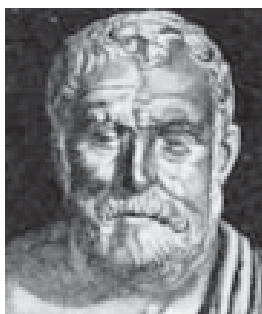


Image of Peloponnesian War



Map of the Peloponnesian War.
Peloponnesian



Image of Thucydides (ca. 460-ca. 401 B.C).
History of the Peloponnesian War, he focuses on
a factual

In the words of **Henry Johnson** (1969) “History is a detailed account of the events that have taken place”. From this definition it becomes quite clear that history mainly deals with the events of the past. In history there is description of events only.

Thomas Carlyle (1895), a famous historian of French Revolution viewed history as “biography of great men” and that it is a record of human accomplishment, particularly of great souls. A single virtuous action of someone has many a time elevated a whole village, a whole city or whole nation to great name and fame.

Prof. Maitland (1898) has further improved our knowledge by saying, “what men have done and said, above all what they have thought-that is history”. In the ultimate analysis, it is thought process, the reflective activity and the image formation of all that happened in the past that become the main business of history.

Prof. Renier (1950) has a new dimension to add when he says that “History is the story of men living in societies”. A new concept in which group activity, collective response to creative thoughts and sociability and the will to serve the interest of all, gains greater prominence.

In the words of **Prof. Ghose** (2007), “History is a scientific study and record of our complete past”

The most significant definition among all the scholars is that of Ernest Bernheim (1889), who says, “History is a **science** that **investigates** and **presents** in their **context** of **psycho-physical causality** the facts determined by **space and time** of the evolution of men in their individual as well as typical and collective activity as social beings”. This definition has touched on all fundamental activities of historical pursuits. It is a **science** because it embodies systematized knowledge based on the realities of life and about occurrences and happenings that have actually taken place and is not based on myth or imagination. Secondly, its main job is to **investigate** those facts of life with the intention of **PRESENTING** them in their **proper context**. But the more important task is to explain their **causality**, find out the problem, examine the issue in its depth and interpret the phenomenon from the origin to its final end. The origin lies in the combination of mental and material factors determined at a particular point of **TIME** and in a particular **place**. The facts are, thus investigated, relate to the progress or change in the position of man so far as his individual activity is concerned.

However history in India has an oral tradition. The achievements of ancient Indian heroes were preserved in the form of ‘sagas’ and ‘gathas’. The bards and other



Notes

people used to learn by heart various events and deeds of the people, because the art of writing and printing books were unknown. The historical events were used to literary, artistic, political and religious purposes. 'Purans' and other historical writings of India have not been arranged in a systematic and chronological order. There is more of praise of kings and warriors. It was only under the English system of education that history was introduced as a school subject in India. Therefore, most early text books were written by the European scholars.

In the end it would suffice to say that history deals with all the worldly affairs pertaining to human beings.

Check Your Progress-1

Notes: (i) Write your answer in the space given below.

(ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. State True or False in the bracket.
 - a) The English word 'History' has been derived from the Greek noun 'Historia'. ()
 - b) The proceedings Peloponnesian war has been written by Herodotus. ()
 - c) Thucydides is known as the father of history. ()
 - d) The achievements of ancient Indian heroes were preserved in the form of 'sagas' and 'gathas'. ()
 - e) English system of education introduced 'history' as a school subject in India. ()
2. List down the main conclusions regarding the meaning of history.
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3. Why were ancient Indian achievements preserved in the form of 'sagas' and 'gathas'?
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3.3 NATURE OF HISTORY

After going through above discussion, it will be easy for us to list out the true nature of history.



1. ***History is the study of human beings:*** it is concerned with the endeavours and achievements of human beings through the ages. It traces the fascinating story of how human civilisation has developed through the ages. For example, our Indus valley civilization, Aryan civilisation, Dravidian civilization, etc. shows the efforts of man in establishing an orderly society in the past.
2. ***History explains the present:*** A question may arise in your mind that how the present has been evolved out of past. Let us take an example from daily our daily life experience i.e. the present system of transport is the result of gradual evolution of so called rolling timber used by ancient man in jungle. The task of history is to study this evolution. The causal relationships among the selected happenings are to be unearthed which help in revealing the nature of happenings and framing of laws. The function of historian is to master the past in order to understand its bearing on the present.
3. ***Historical events are continuous and coherent:*** No human event is born out of vacuum; it arises out of the foundations of previous events. In turn, the event so sustained by previous happenings give rise, along with other interconnected and interdependent events, to new events and the progressive process continues. For example, the failure of a Sepoy Mutiny in India (1857) give rise to various armed revolt at regional level in India, which further contributed to the rise of nationalist movement and formation of Indian National Congress.
4. ***History is an unending dialogue between the present and the past:*** As we know, past is not known to us and every historian attempts to discover a portion of it and comes closer to reality either by adding new information or by offering a new interpretation. All this involves a very intimate dialogue between the historian, who is in the present, and the events, which are in the past. As the object of past are not present before him, he collects information either from primary or secondary sources like personal diaries, eyewitnesses or records or accounts prepared by someone other than the person, or persons, who participated in or observed an event, and finally uses his/her imaginative power, reflects on the subject and thus enters into a dialogue with the past. The dead data of the past is brought back to life through his/her discursive and discerning power.
5. ***History is the interpretation of the past with intention of predicting future:*** History in this sense demonstrates the past as a meaningful preparation of the future. Historical events took the place in time and space. The nature of the historical events one of causal connection and its motivating force is the same human nature. For example, knowing the communal situation in India, Churchill predicted streams of blood in the wake of precipitate British withdrawal from the country. It did happen. Modern diplomacy and foreign policy of every country determined taking into account related past experiences.



6. **Historical forces are linear as well as cyclical:** [linear view of history expresses] that history is a straight line from an unknown past passing through the known present to the unknown future. Further, it says that there is close continuity in history and making it a solid pipe from one end to the other. Cyclical view of history conveys that history moves in a circle. There is a starting point, and then it moves upward movement until it reaches the peak. Thereafter the downward movement sets in until it touches the lowest point where it disappears. The rise and fall of all cultures conform to this pattern. For example, all great civilizations like Egyptian, Babylonian, Indus valley, Harappan Chinese, Greek, Roman, Islamic, European etc., have been subject to this principle.
7. **Knowledge of history is incomplete:** To better understand the nature of history, we shall have to take a closer look at the historical method and particularly, its shortcomings. The method begins with an attempt to identify all relevant information about an historical episode. Since the historian cannot study the past directly, he/she must rely on available evidence. And here we must make a distinction between actual history and known history. Actual history is everything that actually occurred at the time and place of the historical event under study, while known history is merely the scanty evidence left behind. People die taking their memories with them. Few human artifacts survive the centuries. We have little or no evidence from many historical periods. Therefore, the known past is smaller than the actual fact.
8. **History is changing:** History is not static; our views of history are constantly changing as new discoveries, that cast doubt on previous knowledge are made. Before 1900 the Trojan War was considered entirely a myth; Machu Picchu and China's terra cotta army were unknown. New interpretations of historical events frequently come along to challenge older views. Was Winston Churchill the grand statesman of his age or, as has more recently been suggested, a less admirable figure? Such newer, alternative explanations are termed revisionist history. Even a popular film can do much to change public awareness about and attitudes towards the historical past.

The nature of history is very complex. It lends itself to various explanations. No one branch of history is more than a single glimpse of vast complex phenomena. However, no one can dispute the dynamic nature of history, which concerns itself with an ever changing drama of life that has a purpose and a meaning.



Check Your Progress-2

Notes: (i) Write your answer in the space given below.

(ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4. Mention the nature of history.

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5. Explain how historical forces are linear as well as cyclical?

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6. Differentiate between primary sources and secondary sources of History.

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3.4 CONTENTS OF HISTORY AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

As you know, history is the part of Environmental Studies (EVS) up to Class-V. The revised EVS syllabus has attempted to draw the child's attention in Classes I-V to the broad span of time, space and the life in society and integrating this with the way in which she or he has come to see and understand the world around his/her. From Class VI-X, all students would read history as a component of Social Sciences curriculum.

The intellectual development of a learner undergoes important qualitative changes as he or she enters the years of later childhood and early adolescence. Later childhood is a time marked by relative harmony in the inner life of the child. Intellectually, most students enter this period at the level of Piaget's "concrete operations," and they negotiate, during these years with their transition into the early stages of logical thinking. Students' thinking, during these years, becomes increasingly abstract and multidimensional. They are able to engage in comparative analyses across multiple sets of data, interprets on the basis of differences, the obtained data, and develop and test hypotheses through deductive



analysis. These are powerful analytical processes that challenge students' interest and attention. They can follow with interest the origin and development of Indian civilizations. But their skills must be supported by a wide variety of concrete instructional aids, maps, two- and three-dimensional charts for presenting data, and time lines. With such instructional aids students will be able to make critical comparisons and draw valid inferences.

The Class-VI to Class-VIII history content focuses on the past of Indian Society and provides students with a comprehensive overview of the development of their country and its role in the world. Students learn how lessons from the past can be used to make wise decisions for the present and the future. This component has been devised in a such way that it would help students develop a historical sensibility and awareness of the significance of history. The assumption has been that students need to study history not simply as a set of facts about the past – economic, social, political, and cultural – but that they have to learn to think historically i.e. based on historical evidence. Students have to acquire a capacity to make interconnections between processes and events, between developments in one place and another, and observe the link between histories of different groups and societies. In these three years (VI – VIII) the focus would be primarily on Indian History, from the earliest times to the present. Each year one chronological span of time would be studied. The effort would be to understand some of the social, economic, political and cultural processes within them. In these ways, the study of history helps prepare students to be contributing to the society and become responsible citizens in a complex society characterized by plurality of culture and, rapid technological, economic, political, and social changes.

The course titles and major subtitles for class-VI to Class-VIII of history are prescribed by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE, 2006) are as follows:

<i>Class-VI: Our Past-I</i>	
When, Where and How <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The time frame under study.• The geographical framework.• Sources. The Earliest Societies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hunting and gathering as a way of life, its implications.• Introduction to stone tools and their use.• Case study: the Deccan.	New Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upanisads.• Jainism.• Buddhism. The First Empire <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The expansion of the empire.• Asoka• Administration.

**The First Farmers and Herders**

- Implications of farming and herding.
- Archaeological evidence for crops, animals, houses, tools, pottery, burials, etc.
- Case study: the North-West, and the North-East.

The First Cities

- The settlement pattern of the Harappan civilisation.
- Unique architectural features.
- Craft production.
- The meaning of urbanism.
- Case study: the North-West.

Different Ways of Life

- The Vedas and what they tell us.
- A contemporary settlement.
- Case studies: the North-West and the Deccan

Early States

- Janapadas to Mahajanapadas
- Case study: Bihar, Magadha and the Vajji confederacy.

Life in towns and villages

- The second urbanisation.
- Agricultural intensification.
- Case study: Tamil Nadu.

Contacts with Distant lands

- The Sangam texts and long distance exchange.
- Suggested regions: the Tamil region, extending to south east Asia and the west.
- Conquerors from distant lands: north western and western India.
- The spread of Buddhism: north India to Central Asia.

Political Developments

- Gupta empire and Harshavardhana.
- Pallavas and Chalukyas.

Culture and Science

- Literature, including the Puranas, the epics, other Sanskrit and Tamil works.
- Architecture including early monasteries and temples, sculpture, painting (Ajanta); Science.

Class-VII: OUR PAST-II**Where, When and How**

- Terms used to describe the subcontinent and its regions with a map.
- An outlining of the time frame and major developments.
- A brief discussion on sources.

Towns, Traders and Craftsmen

- Varieties of urban centres—court towns,
- Pilgrimage centres, ports and trading towns.
- Case studies: Hampi, Masulipatam, Surat.



Notes

History

New Kings and Kingdoms

- An outline of political developments B.C. 700-1200
- A case study of the Cholas, including agrarian
- expansion in the Tamil region.

The Sultans of Delhi

- An overview.
- The significance of the court, nobility and land control.
- A case study of the Tughlaqs.

The Creation of An Empire

- An outline of the growth of the Mughal Empire.
- Relations with other rulers, administration, and the court.
- Agrarian relations.
- A case study of Akbar.

Architecture as Power: Forts and Sacred Places

- Varieties of monumental architecture in different parts of the country.
- A case study of Shah Jahan's patronage of architecture

Social Change: Mobile and settled communities

- A discussion on tribes, nomads and itinerant groups.
- Changes in the caste structure.
- Case studies of state formation: Gonds, Ahoms.

Popular Beliefs and Religious Debates

- An overview of belief-systems, rituals, pilgrimages, and syncretic cults.
- Case Study: Kabir.

The Flowering of Regional Cultures

- An overview of the regional languages, literatures, painting, music.
- Case study: Bengal.

New Political Formations in the Eighteenth

Century

- An overview of the independent and autonomous states in the subcontinent.
- Case study: Marathas

Class VIII: OUR PAST-III

Where, When, How

- An overview of the period.
- Introduction to the new geographical categories.
- An outline of the time frame.
- An introduction to the sources.

The Establishment of Company Power

- Mercantilism and trade-wars.

Women and reform

- Debates around *sati*, widow remarriage, child marriage and age of consent.
- Ideas of different reformers on the position of women and women's education.
- *Regional focus: Maharashtra and Bengal.*

Challenging the Caste System