

Motivation, Mindset and Metaphor

Helping weaker or reluctant students to
write like historians

Historical Association Conference 2013

Ben Walsh



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A note on content ...

- Mainly 20th century modern world history examples
- Safest bet to be in new curriculum / survive GCSE review?!

Why do students find it difficult to write like historians?

- Because it's difficult!
- Also threatening – requires the student to open up and say what he/she thinks
- Counter intuitive?
- [Against the grain of the signature pedagogy of the classroom?](#)

Mindset and Motivation

- Quick activity:
 - What do you think is the students' 'job' in your lesson?
 - What do you think they think their job is?
- [What does the Web Literacy clip reveal about the mindset of these students?](#)

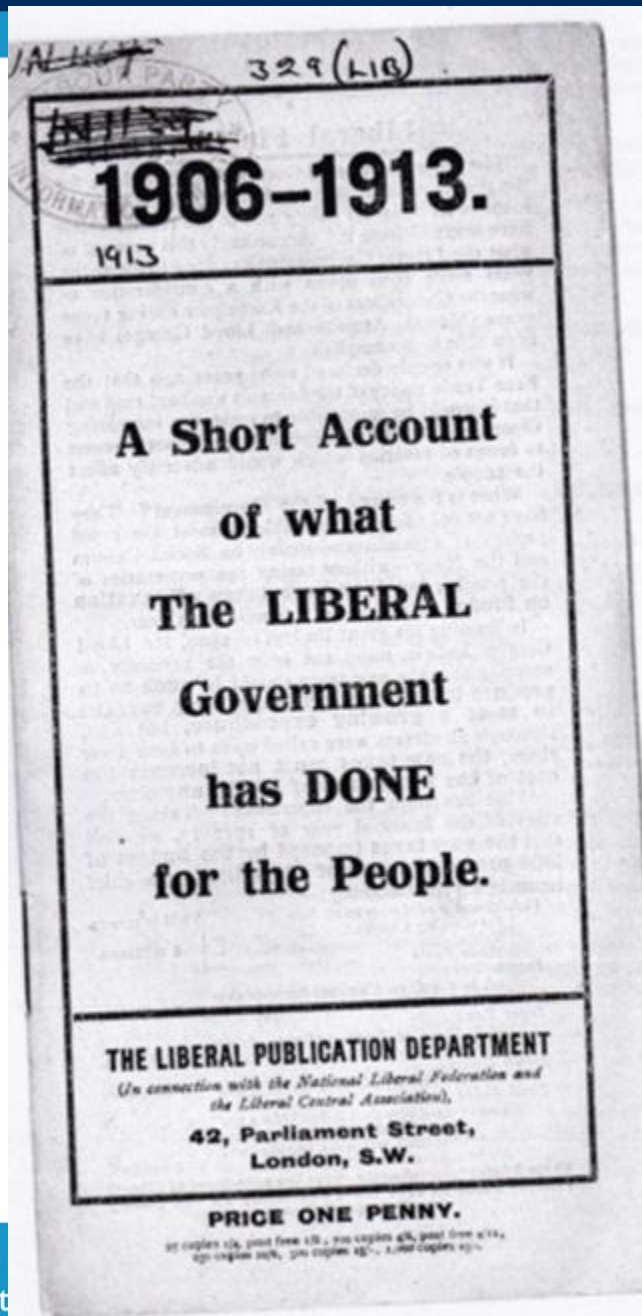
Diagnostic approaches

- Ask the students what question they would set on particular sources can be very revealing about what they think constitutes historical practice.
- Next couple of sources:
 - What question would you set?
 - What question(s) would your students set?



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No. 43.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GERMAN ATROCITIES

Founded
on the Report
of the Committee on
Alleged German Outrages

GO-OPERATIVE DEMONSTRATION
HISTORY SOCIETY



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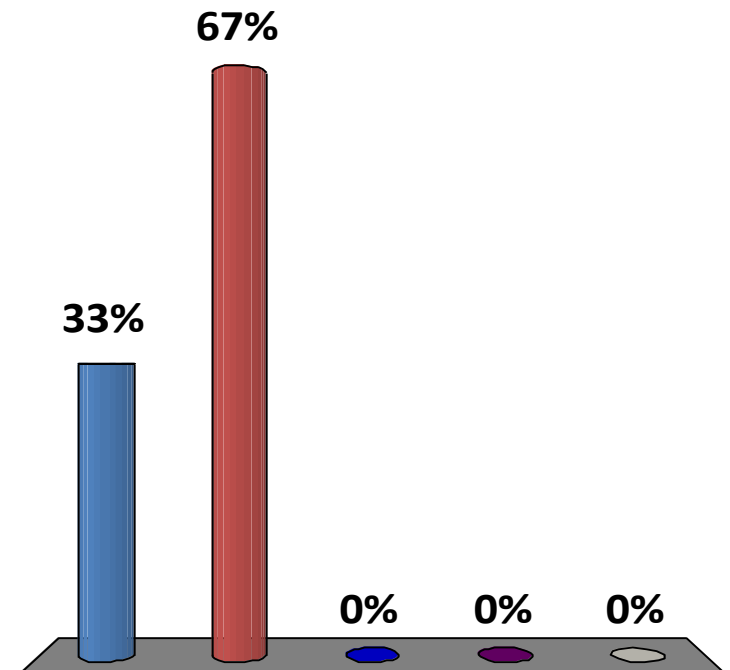
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When you see 'The Truth' in a title, what do you think?

1. It will be the truth
2. It will be total lies
3. It will be true but it will select the bits of truth which suit its authors
4. I had better read it and see what it says
5. Something else

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BUT ... Don't turn into Baldric...



Why do students do stuff like this?

- 1915 Advert for holidays in France

Sticking plaster fixes

- Compare GARGLE with UGARGLE
- Frameworks eg FAILURE
- [Writing frames](#)
- Good resources but do they address symptoms rather than the real problem?
- Sticking plasters do not address the major issue –
- To write like historians students must think like historians

Foregrounding thinking

- [What makes a source valuable?](#) See p2-3
- Imagine doing this without any prior knowledge of story of women's suffrage
- Pros / cons of doing this before or after you teach the narrative
- Possible to do narrative without thinking
- Impossible to do thinking without narrative

Motivation and Mindset ...

- How can we convince students to change mindset and think like historians?
- Recognisable goals
 - You'll get a better grade! (More later)
 - [You'll understand the world we live in](#)
 - [You'll be more employable: Research; Entertainment; Media; Business](#)
 - [You can avoid looking like Kevin](#)
- So how do historians think?

What historians do ...

- Study the Cold War sources p10-11 ...
 - Which ones go together?
 - What stories do they tell?
 - What questions can they answer?
- Your textbook is not history, neither are the sources you get on handouts
- These things are the materials that historians work with, just like builders use wood, concrete etc
- History is what historians **do** (eg the stories they tell, the questions they ask), not what they work with ...
- Historians turn random 'stuff' **into** history

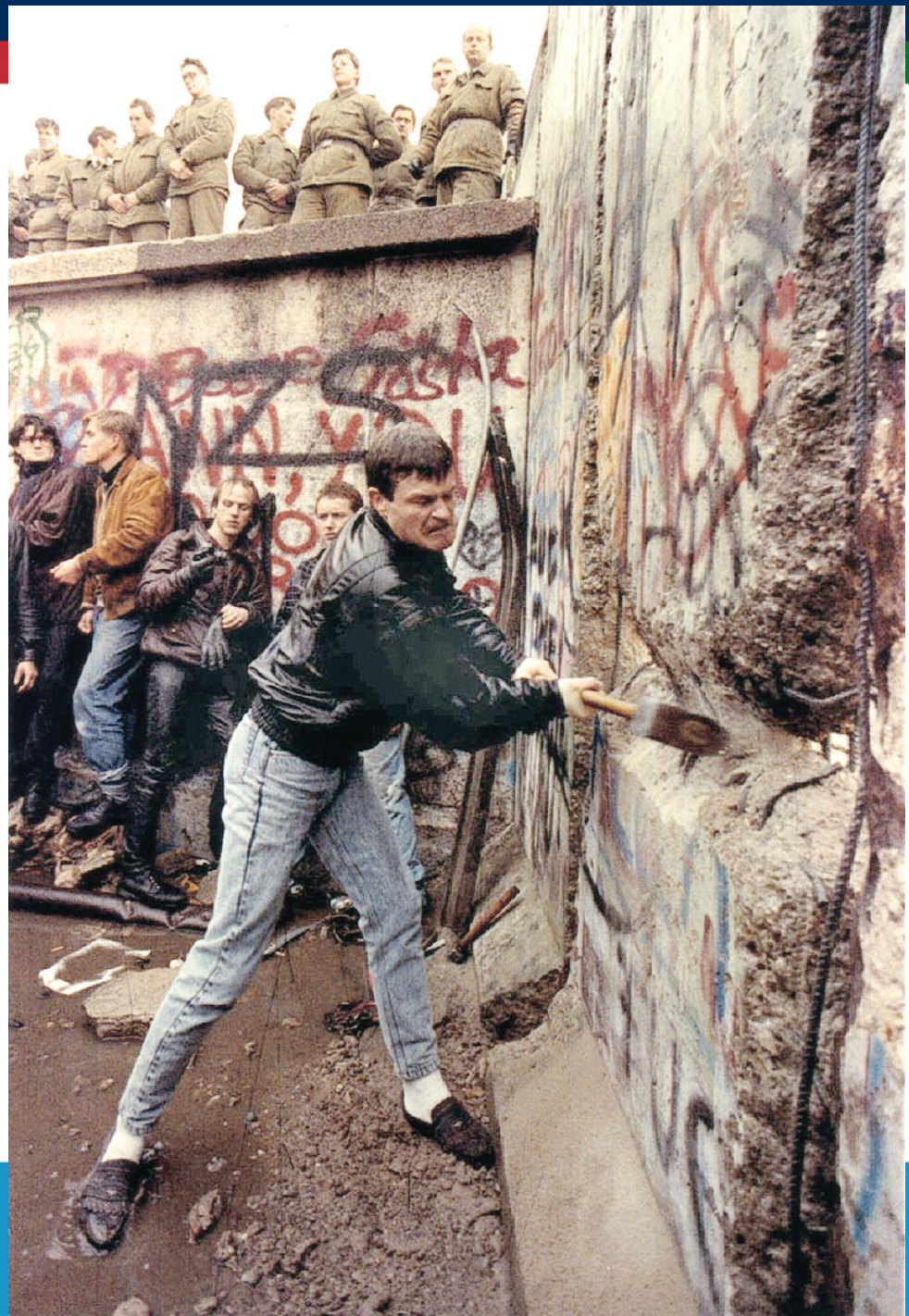
What do historians do? Metaphorically!

- Take random stuff and impose order on it (as we have seen)
- Unnatural acts
- Peep through windows
- Know the difference between a hammer and a screwdriver
- Pee in a cup
- Keep their knowledge in a wardrobe
- Bite like a shark
- Argue, not have arguments

Unnatural acts (page 7)

- What was unnatural about Richard White?
- [What do we learn about appeasement from this clip?](#)
- Are we surprised by Hugo Preuss?
- [Can YOU see the missiles?](#)
- [The story IN the source vs the story OF the source ...](#)

The story IN the source
vs the story OF the
source ...



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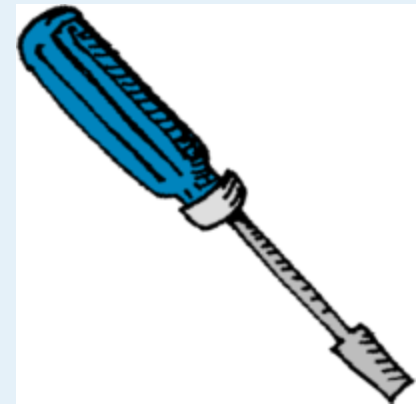
Peeping through windows (on the past)

- Did President Johnson REALLY go out with that lady?
- [How would you comment on that image of Cuba?](#)



Know the difference between a hammer
and a screwdriver

Which is more useful?



Hammers and screwdrivers

- Any use for sources like this?



How real historians use a biased source

This source tells me nothing about Jews in Nazi Germany. It is not a source I can trust if I want to find out about how Jews in Nazi Germany behaved.



But it tells me a lot about how Nazis behaved in Nazi Germany. This is a source I can trust if I want to investigate how the Nazis treated Jews.



Poster for an anti-Jewish exhibition, 1937. The caption reads 'The Eternal Jew'.

Think Gustave Flaubert ...

“Writing History is like drinking an ocean and peeing a cupful.”



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Peeing in a cup: you don't have to do every thing, every time

- Vietnam timeline – is any of this information NOT useful?
- Choose a question and select the events most relevant to that question

The knowledge wardrobe

- You know the event you are going to but what do you wear?
- Think of your knowledge like a wardrobe
- Select the right item for the right conditions
- What questions can the sources help you answer?

Page 5



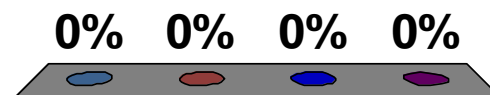
Treaty of Versailles was signed 28th June 1919

- Is this a useful fact?
- Would you include it in an answer on a question about Versailles?
- Think about these next points and get ready to vote.



Treaty of Versailles was signed 28th June 1919

1. Useful in explaining Lloyd George's actions
2. Useful in explaining Clemenceau's actions
3. Useful in explaining Wilson's actions
4. Not useful for explaining anything



Useful in explaining ...

Useful in explaining ...

Useful in explaining ...

Not useful for explaini..



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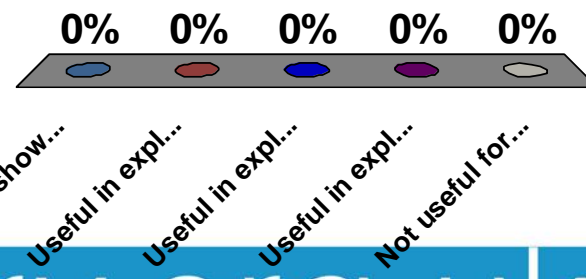
Sixty per cent of Americans killed in Vietnam were aged 17-21

- Is this a useful fact?
- Would you include it in an answer on a question about Vietnam?
- See what you come up with and then get ready to vote.



Unemployment rose to over 6 million in Germany in 1932

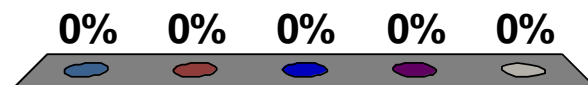
1. Useful in showing the impact of the Depression
2. Useful in explaining why Germans turned to extremist parties
3. Useful in explaining why Germans turned against democracy
4. Useful in explaining more than one thing
5. Not useful for explaining anything





Circulation of newspapers in Germany in the 1930s fell by about 10%

1. Useful in showing German newspapers were dull
2. Useful in explaining the impact of Nazi control of the media
3. Useful in explaining the effects of Nazi propaganda
4. Useful in explaining more than one thing
5. Not useful for explaining anything



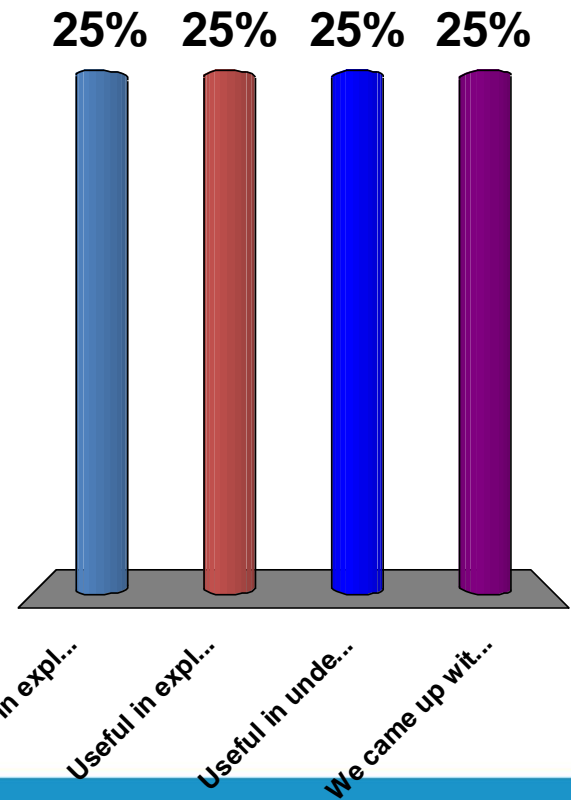
US troops first landed officially in Vietnam at Da Nang in 1965

- Is this a useful fact?
- Would you include it in an answer on a question about Vietnam?
- See what you come up with and then get ready to vote.



US troops first landed officially in Vietnam at Da Nang in 1965

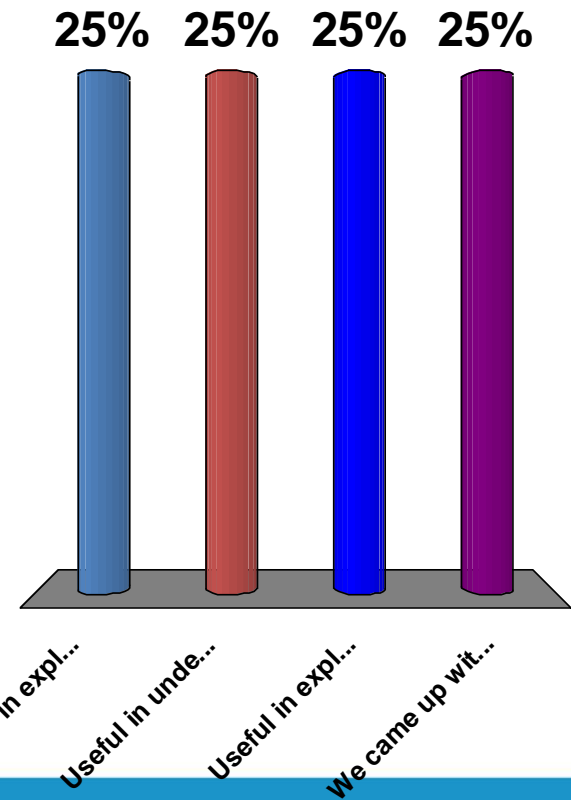
1. Useful in explaining why USA got drawn into Vietnam War
2. Useful in explaining the impact of US involvement in the conflict
3. Useful in understanding US military tactics
4. We came up with something else





Sixty per cent of Americans killed in Vietnam were aged 17-21

1. Useful in explaining the impact of US involvement in the conflict
2. Useful in understanding US military tactics
3. Useful in explaining failure of US tactics
4. We came up with something else

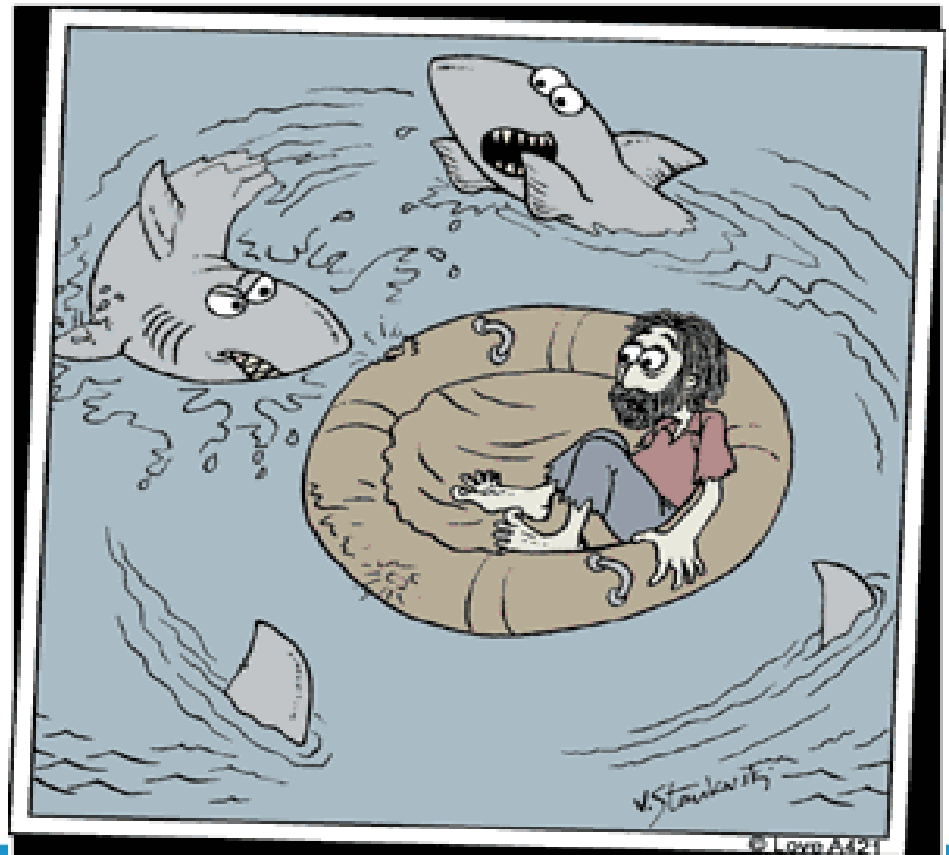


Bite like a shark

Putting it together

Circling sharks

- What we generally get ...
- Circling sharks: Models (5Ws etc) are means not ends



"Chuck, no! Keep circling. I love this part."

What we actually want ...

- Answer the question!
- Study sample answers.
Can you work out what the question is?



Answer A

- The Vietnam War was one of the first wars to be shown on TV. The view of the war had dramatically changed in America from 61% when it started to less than 25% in just 2 years. A key factor in the public opinion on the war was due to the Mai Lay massacre which was were American troops shot at innocent civilians. This was made very clear to the public through television and newspapers. Also the tactics of bombing raids and the use of Napalm and Agent Orange made American feel guilty for the war. And frightening statistics like more bombs were dropped in Vietnam than in the whole of World War Two. The mass media and the footage being published had a big impact on the Vietnam War.

Answer B

The Vietnam War was unpopular in the USA for many reasons.

One such reason was that the people were eventually conscripted into the army. This move was unpopular as people did not want to fight a war they did not really understand in a far off land. They had heard of the dangers and about troops returning who were injured and even killed, being dependent on drugs or being affected mentally.

Another reason was the US tactics. A picture was released showing children running from a village that had been bombed by napalm. This shocked the public into civil outcry, and protests were held. A student and a Buddhist set themselves on fire in protest and protesters were shot at by troops. This cause unrest and increased the unpopularity of war. Agent Orange was also unpopular with wildlife groups.

Perhaps the biggest reason of hatred was the Mai Lai massacre where hundreds of innocents were killed in an American raid on a Vietnamese town. The fact that the officers were praised when the news story broke caused disbelief.

Argue, not have arguments

- Why was WW1 not over by the end of 1914?
- Who was responsible at My Lai?

ben@bwalsh.uk.com

Mindset and Motivation

- Lots of theory but ...
- Focus on performance goals vs learning goals
- Weaker / reluctant students ...
 - proximal goals
 - performance or performance-avoidance goals
- How can we convince them to change?

Sticking plaster fixes

- Compare GARGLE with UGARGLE (p8)
- Frameworks eg FAILURE
- [Writing frames](#)
- Good resources but do they address symptoms rather than the real problem?
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