

Talking History - Teacher Guide

Preparing for the competition

Although these guidelines have been created to help your primary historians with the competition, a spoken presentation is also a fantastic way for children to share their learning at the end of any topic. We hope that the information here will support you in offering an alternative outcome for history learning at school.

Getting started

Create a club or team or carry out a debating exercise as part of a history club. You can meet at lunch or after school.

Try setting some initial questions related to history topics already studied to help pupils gain confidence e.g. What was the most important change between the Stone Age and Iron Age?

You could also try choosing some news headlines from the previous week. Ask the children why some people might agree with the headlines and why some people might disagree and see if any can serve as a prompt for a debate.

Think of some current topics yourself – for example:

- Exams (e.g. SATS) don't prove how capable a person is.
- All British police should carry guns.
- History is not a useful school subject.

Each of the following stages should have at least one session for discussion and a research session.

Divide the group into two and ask one side to research the arguments in favour of the question and the other group to research the arguments against – present to the group.

In discussion – is it easier to find arguments to support a statement than it is to disagree? How easy is it to make a case? How easy is it to defend an argument you don't agree with?

Now that you have got your pupils used to the art of researching, constructing and delivering an argument, you can begin to prepare them for the competition.

The Talking History competition format does not pit pupils against each other in a discussion. Rather, pupils are asked to answer the set question choosing some arguments (following research) that they think would support their point of view and provide a personal response.

The following questions (or feel free to think of your own) might help your pupils to work together to prepare a talk in this format:

- The most important scientific discovery of the last 50 years is...
- The internet has changed everything.
- Women's history is only for girls.

As well as supporting your pupils in constructing their argument, explore how someone might argue their point (such as in the first debating examples you trialled). This will make it possible to add a line of argument to acknowledge that some people might disagree with you, despite which you have reached your conclusions.

Allow pupils to present their arguments out loud to one another in the group so that they can gain confidence. If you allow for questions, it will also enable pupils to become more comfortable with the unknown and the fact that they may receive challenges to their arguments or their factual information.

Talk Structure

A good structure for talks is to break it into parts. The following may provide a useful structure to share with pupils preparing their talks:

- First third – how you understood the question and what it led you to think.
- Second third – your argument (presenting of evidence you have found from your research)
- Final third – ways in which some people might disagree with your evidence but explaining why you feel it to be convincing and why you have reached your conclusion.
- Finish with your argument on the question once more.

The prompt structure below may be useful to use with pupils for this year's competition question:

In your introduction, you may wish to outline where you live and why it may be considered historically important.

How and why did you decide upon this significant figure to discuss? Was there something in particular that piqued your interest?

Tell us about your chosen figure. You might wish to explain why this historical figure is considered significant. What are their achievements? Have they left a lasting legacy?

Share personal examples: why is the significant figure particularly important to your locality?

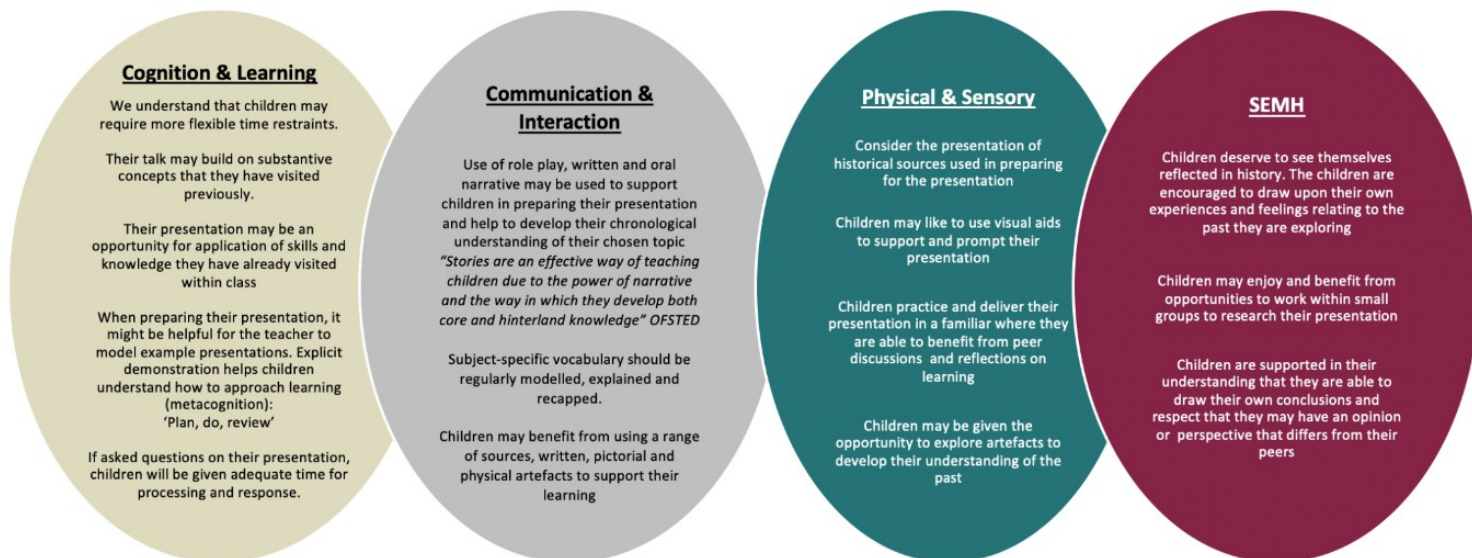
You might wish to include why some people might disagree with your point of view and explain why you have reached your conclusion.

Conclude your argument. Summarise your ideas

Inclusivity

History is an inclusive subject which all our young historians must be able to access. We are ambitious in our aims for **all** children and are firm in our belief that capability for attainment is not 'fixed'.

- We aspire to offer a learning challenge that is accessible for all. The structure and competition question presented offer a 'movable framework' that can be modified to ensure inclusion for pupils
- The spoken outcome helps to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for particular individuals and groups of pupils, ensuring opportunity for all
- We are aware that children may have a variety of different needs, which can be grouped into four broad areas: Cognition & Learning, Communication & Interaction, Physical & Sensory, and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). Examples for some of the strategies that may be used to support children in history lessons are listed below.







Assessment criteria

Primary history can be assessed in a number of different ways. Assessing children only by written outcomes can be problematic: being a confident writer does not equate to being a confident historian. Sometimes, being confident orally is a pre-cursor to confident writing.

The assessment guidance below has been designed to support schools in preparing children for the Historical Association’s Talking History competition and as criteria for use in the school’s own heats which will produce the entries to be put forward for the main competition.

The assessment grid below relies upon teachers making ‘best fit’ judgement in each of the categories. Each category is graded 1-4. The mean average, gauged from across the categories, will offer a final award:

- Growing Primary Historian
- Primary Historian
- Primary Star Historian
- Superstar Primary Historian

<p>Superstar Primary Historian (4)</p> 	<p>The historian is analytical, comparing and contrasting evidence drawn from a wide variety of resources offering differing viewpoints and perspectives</p>	<p>The argument is well-constructed. Strong evidence is used to support claims and logical reasoning and clear explanation is given. Counter-arguments are fully addressed to provide a well-rounded perspective</p>	<p>Enquiry Question is introduced. A clear argument introduces a number of differing viewpoints followed by a fair, considered conclusion that clearly answers the original question.</p>	<p>The historian shows obvious passion and enthusiasm for their subject. They confidently talk without reliance on their notes and seek eye contact with their audience. They respond confidently to questions, expanding and elaborating on their topic when asked.</p>	<p>The historian is able to use knowledge to explain why their chosen individual is significant and are able to map this beyond their own locality. They will be able to demonstrate that views regarding their character's significance might differ. They understand that their character may be deemed more or less significant depending on the period of history and the impact of changing attitudes. The historian may suggest and apply their own criteria to assess significance</p>	<p>The historian listens carefully to the presentations of their peers, posing probing questions that help develop any points made and encourage the speaker to think more deeply</p>
<p>Primary Star Historian (3)</p> 	<p>The historian draws evidence from a range of sources to inform differing perspectives of an argument</p>	<p>The historian uses evidence to support their argument. They show logical reasoning and give clear explanations. Their argument addresses counter-arguments</p>	<p>Enquiry Question is introduced. A clear argument introduces differing viewpoints followed by a fair, considered conclusion that clearly answers the original question. The presentation adheres to the time restraints</p>	<p>The historian may refer regularly to notes but maintains a more natural, conversational tone. They are confident talking about their subject and answer questions appropriately. They show awareness of audience, making easy eye contact with the group</p>	<p>The historian draws their own conclusions regarding the significance of their chosen character, drawing criteria from recognised historians (e.g. Dawson, Counsell) They recognise that significance is not 'fixed.' (attributed significance may have varied over time and might be dependent on the source providing the interpretation)</p>	<p>The historian listens with interest to the presentations of their peers. They pose questions that closely reflect the content of the presentation and show engagement with the speaker's response</p>
<p>Primary Historian Status (2)</p> 	<p>The historian has selected information from their research drawn from a range of sources, relevant to their argument</p>	<p>The historian uses some evidence to support their argument although it may not be fully explained or developed, with their reasoning weak. They may identify, although not fully address, counter arguments</p>	<p>Enquiry Question is introduced. A clear argument is followed by a conclusion that refers again to the enquiry question. The presentation may run slightly over or under time</p>	<p>The Primary Historian is reliant on their notes but maintains a comfortable speed when delivering their presentation. They may make some eye contact with their audience. They are able to answer questions posed by peers, sometimes supported by referring to their notes</p>	<p>The historian makes judgements regarding the significance of their chosen character using specific criteria. They identify how significance can reveal information about the period</p>	<p>The historian listens to the presentations of their peers, showing some engagement via body language e.g. maintaining eye contact. He/she comfortably poses questions relating to the content of the presentation, listening to the speakers' response</p>
<p>Growing Primary Historian (1)</p> 	<p>There is evidence of research which has enabled the growing historian to begin to generate their own ideas and draw conclusions</p>	<p>The growing historian has little evidence to support their argument. Their argument may lack coherence. They do not consider counter-arguments</p>	<p>Enquiry Question is introduced. A clear argument is followed by a brief conclusion. The speaker shows little awareness of adhering to the time constraints</p>	<p>The growing historian shows some awareness of their audience. They mostly read from their notes and may have difficulty answering questions outside of their presentation</p>	<p>The growing historian understands and can give examples of why their historical character might be deemed significant and how actions may have resulted in change</p>	<p>The growing historian listens to the presentations of their peers. They may pose a simple question which may not relate entirely to the points made in the presentation. They may not show engagement of the answer</p>
	<p>Content of presentation including evidence</p>	<p>Quality of argument</p>	<p>Structure of presentation</p>	<p>Communication and style</p>	<p>Analysis of significance</p>	<p>Listening skills and ability to answer questions</p>