The historian and sources*

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1 Social Sciences

2 HISTORY

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6 The historian and sources

Source A is a good example of a newspaper article that is compiled from different sources. Not only are the opinions of the two opposing parties quoted directly, but background is also provided: e.g. letters from Cosatu, as well as mention of the mediation by the minister of labour and the numbers of workers that did not go on strike. The reader is able to sort out the facts and form an own **opinion**.

The letters to which the article refers are the **primary sources**, because, just like an eyewitness report, they provide first-hand information and were recorded at the same time as the events that took place. A **secondary source** is based on information that comes from primary sources and can even provide a new perspective on things that happened centuries after the events took place. A **fact** (unchangeable and provable) differs from an **opinion**, which can be a conclusion that is not necessarily supported by the facts.

Propaganda is based on facts that are taken out of context, suppressed or distorted to proclaim a specific standpoint. **Prejudice/bias** does not maintain a balance between the two sides of an issue and **partiality** is usually based on strong emotions and often excludes reasonableness and balance.

Because the historian has to evaluate different sources in his search for facts, he has to *compare* the different sources. He looks for sources that *agree* so that facts that *differ* can be examined. This means that the historian must read and listen carefully, so that he can take propaganda, prejudice and partiality in any source into account.

6.1 Activity 1: Group discussion [LO 3.3, 3.7]

Discussion questions:

1. When can we say that someone is telling a lie?
2. Should you tell your friend that she is wearing an ugly jersey, that you do not like it?
3. Are you stealing if you quickly copy your friend's work if you have forgotten to do your homework?

Assess yourself in terms of the following :

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6.2

6.3 SOURCE A: Assessment of application of concepts to source A

- Once again, read paragraph three of Source A, which contains the words of advocate Etienne Vermaak.

What follows are quotations from Source A that you need to evaluate.

- Read the quotation. *Underline* one of the words between brackets that you believe is best suited to the quotation and *then give a reason* for your choice.

1 (a) "We stick to the offer of 8% and the minimum wage of R1 900 per month."
(Fact / Opinion) /3/
(b) "The strike might still last a while_____"
(Fact / Opinion) /3/
2. Samwa's statement is given in paragraph 5. Read it again.
(a) Now underline the word between brackets that best suits the statement and motivate your answer, as in number 1.
(Prejudice / Partiality) /3/
(b) The following people acknowledge that their actions display partiality:
Aunt Sally's naughty son John is always good, she says. Pasqual's mother always makes the most wonderful food. Thembo's dog is the best in the whole of Africa.
Be honest and write down an issue / person about which you are partial./1/
/10/
[LO 1.5, 3.2, 3.3]

- Read the following querying and complaining letter that appeared in **TygerBurger**, a regional newspaper, and then carry out the assignments that follow.

6.4 SOURCE B

Wednesday 10 JULY 2002
Case stated about march
ACCORDING to a newspaper report, the city has decided to fine litterbugs or send them to jail.
At the moment, protesters are simply emptying the rubbish bins in the street in full view of the city police, traffic police and police.
Our questions is: if people are protesting, are they free from legal prosecution?
I and fellow shop owners were compelled to sweep the streets ourselves.
DISSATISFIED BUSINESSPEOPLE
Parow
Pieter Cronjé, director: communication, City of Cape Town, replies :
It is correct that fines have been increased to try to put a stop to the illegal dumping of refuse.
A march by a large group of striking workers is an emotional issue that needs to be handled with care. The primary task of the city police and the SAPS is to observe such a march and to provide protection against intimidation and violence.
The city council cannot approve the behaviour of striking labour union mem
bers. They did not adhere to the conditions for the march and this will be discussed with the union. Armed with the necessary evidence and statements, disciplinary action can also be taken against workers as a result of offences.
The city would like to thank the shop owners who helped to clean the street. Some of the security personnel also helped to clean up after the march .

6.5 Group activity 3: Exercise in democracy [LO 3.4, 3.7]

Step 1: Divide into groups and *describe any march or protest* that you have seen. According to the principle of democracy, every person must be given a chance.

Step 2: The group selects the most *interesting* story. Two-thirds of the group must agree on which story was the most interesting.

Step 3: The group now selects a person to tell the story to the rest of the class, in other words, the person who is going to *report*. The reporter does not necessarily have to be the person who originally told the story.

The report-back only takes place in the next period. The members of the group must remain in their groups until the exercise in democracy is completed.

Step 4: The group's decision on a learner's contribution to the group is the prevailing one, and not that of the learner.

IMPORTANT:

If the class feels that their performance as democratic groups does not display good cooperation, the class needs to repeat this exercise (later).

6.6 Self-assessment

Write down the weak points in the story you told during Step 1 of the exercise in democracy.

[LO 3.4, 3.7]

- You have now had ample opportunity to take part in History activities. Assess your progress with the aid of the assessment grid on the following page.

6.7 Activity 4: Written exercise: communication

Write your own letter to a newspaper, according to

- the pattern of Source B.

Heading:

Case stated about ...

Paragraph1:

Mention the reason for your letter.

Paragraph2:

State your questions.

Paragraph3: Say why the matter is so important to you.

Conclusion:

Write a suitable pseudonym.Your address and the date.

7 Assessment

Learning outcomes(LOs)
continued on next page

LO 1
Historical Enquiry**The learner will be able to use enquiry skills to investigate the past and present.**
Assessment standards(ASs)
We know this when the learner:
1.1 continues to identify and select a variety of historical and archaeological sources relevant to an inquiry [finds sources];
1.2 evaluates the sources used (e.g. "Who created the source?", "Is it reliable", "How useful is the information?") [works with sources];
1.3 interprets graphical and statistical sources [works with sources];
1.4 presents an original idea as part of an answer to questions posed [answers the question];
1.5 communicates knowledge and understanding by constructing own interpretation and argument based on the historical sources (including extended writing, artwork, graphics and drama); uses information technology where available and appropriate [communicates the answer].

Table 1

Learning outcomes (LOs)
LO 2
Historical Knowledge and Understanding The learner will be able to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding.
Assessment standards(ASs)
We know this when the learner:
2.1 begins to make links between historical events and processes in different contexts in the same period [chronology and time];
2.2 recognises that causes and effects of effects vary in importance [cause and effect];
2.3 explains charges in a wider historical and environmental context [change and continuity].
LO 3
Historical Interpretation The learner will be able to interpret aspects of history.
We know this when the learner:
3.1 examines historical interpretation by asking relevant questions about the author of an historical source [source interpretation];
continued on next page

3.2 identifies and gives reasons for the different ways that the past is represented and interpreted [source interpretation];
3.3 explains why history is not objective or neutral [source interpretation];

Table 2