

# What is History?

**History is  
an *account* of the past.**

- Accounts/narratives differ depending on one's perspective.
- We rely on evidence to construct our accounts of the past.
- We must question the reliability of each piece of evidence.
- Any single piece of evidence is insufficient.
- We must consult multiple pieces of evidence in order to build a plausible account.

## Sourcing

### Before reading the document ask yourself:

- Who wrote this?
- What is the author's point of view? (Not "opinion" or "view," "*point* of view")
- Why was it written?
- When was it written? (A long time or short time after the event?)
- Is this source believable? Why? Why not?

## Imagining the Setting (Contextualizing)

- What else was going on at the time this was written?
- What was it like to be alive at this time?
- What things were different back then? What things were the same?
- What would it look like to see this event through the eyes of someone who lived back then?

## Close Reading

- What claims does the author make?
- What evidence does the author use to support those claims?
- How is this document supposed to make me feel?
- What words or phrases does the author use to convince me that he/she is right?
- What information does the author leave out?

## Cross-Checking (Corroboration)

- What do other pieces of evidence say?
- Am I finding the same information everywhere?
- Am I finding different versions of the story? (If yes, why might that be?)
- Where else could I look to find out about this?
- What pieces of evidence are most believable?