Understanding the Delaware History Standards
for teachers in grades 4–5

History is the study of the past that affects today. It differs from the more structured social sciences of civics, economics, and geography in that history is a story. But, not everything that happened in the past is worthy of our contemplation and reflection. What someone had for breakfast is not history, unless it becomes part of a future story that becomes important. Perhaps it will become apparent years from now that what people ate for breakfast in the early 21st century contributed significantly to the slow decline of our society's intelligence capacity. In other words, breakfast made people dumber! Maybe breakfast will become history. Right now it is not, and probably will not become so. History studies what is important. But, *what is important* is the difficulty. Different individuals and different generations and different societies always define and redefine the word "important" according to their ideas, not ours.

History in many ways performs the same function as literature—it helps us to understand life. As much as possible, however, the historian must stick to what actually happened, giving the facts, and explaining how and why something happened. That makes history more "scientifically" based than literature. History is based upon facts. But the facts the historian uses are *selected* facts—facts that have been selected from the vast amount of information potentially available. History differs from the sciences in that an event, a person, or a situation cannot be re-created in a laboratory setting to test if the outcome will be the same. Some revolutions are successful; some are failures. The reasons may be the same or they may be unique to that particular revolution. Historians are interested in both—what about this revolution was similar to other revolutions and what about it was unique? Both the similarities and the differences will teach about the phenomenon of revolutions and equip citizens with the knowledge needed to deal with future revolutions.

The Delaware History standards require a student to become historically minded to reason, think, and perform as a historian. An understanding of history helps us to predict what will happen in the future based on our understanding of what happened in the past. Both literature and history can be just a good story to pass the time. But, both can also add immensely to our ability to understand human beings and how and why they act the way they do in situations. Sometimes the lesson we learn is not appropriate. That is why different historians and others offer their knowledge to explain new situations. They believe, sincerely, that they have a clear understanding of the new situation. Sometimes they actually do; other times they do not.

In the study of history, chronology is important. As a concept, chronology does not mean exact dates, overly detailed timelines, and long exercises putting events in order. Instead, it means understanding (*why* and *how*) that one event may or may not lead to subsequent events. The Second World War developed from the inadequate peace following the First World War. It does not necessarily follow that the Third World War will develop from the inadequate peace of the Second World War. One can easily argue that the results of the two wars differed greatly especially considering the long time span since the Second World War ended in 1945.

Nothing changes as much as history, because history is not what happened but what historians say happened. Each historian investigates a topic or an event by selecting a set of guiding questions and by researching the available records. Please note—*the available records*—some

topics cannot be researched. The questions that guide one's research affect the conclusions. For example, after the Second World War the European powers lost their colonial empires in Africa. One historian may research this series of events by asking, "What in their tribal culture failed to prepare the Africans to take advantage of the economic opportunities that accompanied independence?" A second historian might ask, "How did the colonial European powers fail to prepare the Africans to take advantage of the economic opportunities that accompanied independence?" Asking two different sets of guiding questions from two different viewpoints results in two very different answers. And, notice that both historians assumed that the Africans could have easily taken advantage of the economic opportunities. That is, of course, if the economic opportunities even existed. The questions matter as much, if not more, than the answers.

Each person comes from a societal and personal background and lives in a particular time and place. But, we all share a past together—the history of our state and nation. The history that all of us know, what one historian once called "the history that the ordinary person carries around in his head," is the glue, the collective memory that holds us together as a people and as a nation. This is one of the reasons for school to pass society's values and beliefs on to the next generation. When the public urges the schools to teach more and better history, it is this collective memory that they have in mind. A shared knowledge of history binds together a diverse America and guarantees the continuation of our prevailing values.

But, each historian also comes from a societal and personal background and lives in a particular time and place. These influences sometimes lead an individual historian to ask new questions of old events. This rewritten new history, called "revisionist history," is an effort to "get it right." For example, the new revisionist Western history emphasizes the cowboys less and the family experiences of the farmers more. It is less colorful, but it is closer to the average person's experience in settling the Great Plains. Over time, this revision of the older history may or may not come to be widely accepted. The influence of Hollywood films will probably (incorrectly) continue to cause all of us to think of the cowboy as more important than the farmer in settling the West. With each fresh look, we gain insight into the forces that may have molded and shaped our times. That is why the study of history is so crucial. It enables us to better understand the *now* around us and to hypothesize about the future based on our understanding of similar situations in the past. The dilemma we face is that we can never be absolutely certain about either our understanding of the past or of the applicability of that understanding to the new situation. In the sciences, some "laws" are absolute; in history, the "laws" are not absolute.

The standards provide a very broad description of the history content for each grade cluster: K–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12. A student who is answering a question must know something with which to argue or explain his or her response. But, there is no list of specific events everyone must know to use in asserting one's position in a written response. Indeed, part of the challenge of history is that two people cite different facts and ideas to argue their position. Someone listening to a debate or reading a history book must decide not only who argued their position better but also who selected the most appropriate and relevant facts. Since it is impossible for a curriculum to cover everything that has happened, as a textbook will try to do, in a limited frame of time, decisions must be made about which ideas, trends, and patterns in history should be studied in classrooms. Teachers and other local decision-makers should choose historical content based on its relevance to contemporary issues, its importance, its relationship to the big ideas of social

studies, and its transferability. For example, immigration—who, from where, and how many—was as important, relevant, and controversial 100 years ago as it is now. Understanding immigration's causes, effects, and importance to the American culture is necessary for contemporary citizens to reach decisions about how to handle it. Teachers might ask students: how is today's immigration like or unlike past migrations?

Goal Statements for the Delaware History Standards

- Students will organize events through chronologies to suggest and evaluate cause-and-effect relationships among those events.
- Students will study the ways in which individuals and societies have changed and interacted over time.
- Students will acquire the skills of gathering, examining, analyzing, and interpreting data.
- Students will understand that, before choosing a position or acting, research needs to be accomplished in order to understand the effect of historical developments and trends on subsequent events.

HISTORY STANDARD ONE: Students will employ chronological concepts in analyzing historical phenomena [Chronology].

Enduring Understandings (K–12):

- History is often messy, yet a historian must logically organize events, recognize patterns and trends, explain cause and effect, make inferences, and draw conclusions from those sources which are available at the time.
- The questions a historian chooses to guide historical research that creates accurate chronologies will affect which events will go into the chronology and which will be left out. Competing chronologies can both be accurate, yet may not be equally relevant to the specific topic at hand.

The study of history is grounded in chronology. Historians rely on chronology to arrange events and ideas in history and to analyze and to explain change or lack of change over space and time. **Chronology** is the main way historians arrange events and trends in history to see patterns of continuity and change in history. Historical events happen at a specific time and location, and reflect the history, culture[1], and geography of the time and place in which they occur. Although each society is unique, certain trends and ideas recur across time and space. In addition, understanding the order of events is crucial if one is to understand the importance and meaning of those events.

Time is a concept that must be taught to students. Students must recognize the application of time to prediction, cause and effect, change, and drawing inferences. The concept is introduced in grades K–3, while the 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12 clusters require an advancing and deeper understanding of the results and consequences of schedules and chronologies, such as cause and effect and change over time (while drawing logical inferences). Students who fully master this standard are ready to apply it in daily adult life as a citizen by analyzing contemporary issues; by researching or hypothesizing how that particular situation came to exist or how that particular policy came to be; and, by demonstrating the ability to determine consequences. Records can be lost, altered, damaged, or destroyed.

Students need to learn how to organize what looks like a mess of historical records and information. Chronology is one tool, easily the most frequently used tool, to accomplish this end. But sometimes chronology does not help us as much as we would like. For example, mail service between the colonies and Europe was not very dependable. Shipwrecks were fairly common, and many letters never arrived. A historian using correspondence between the colonies and England needs to be aware that the surviving letters probably are not all the letters that were sent.

Students can learn the concept of chronology (and its limitations) from all types of puzzles or situations. A teacher might take a paragraph out of a favorite book and give students the sentences all scrambled, simply a listing of sentences. Or, give them four or five paragraphs out of order. Challenge students to put the sentences and paragraphs in logical order. That is what

[1] When historians use the word culture, they mean the following: Culture is the sum total of the accepted characteristics, learned behavior patterns, and composite group thinking for any specific people or period of time, expressing the way of life associated with that people or time. Examples are Victorian culture, Hispanic culture, antebellum Southern culture, or American culture. The word "culture" needs defining adjectives to narrow its usage.

historians do; they create a chronology, a logical sequence, out of chaos. Dates help in doing this, but many times the pictures or documents or artifacts are undated. The limitations of chronology come from its seamlessness. When is it possible to link events in a cause-and-effect relationship? Where do we begin to claim that an event caused or affected a later situation—10 years ago, 100 years ago, 500 years ago? And, what do we put into our chronology and what do we leave out? Both questions are part of the judgments a historian makes while researching a topic, judgments that by definition are imperfect.

History Standard One 4-5a: Students will study historical events and persons within a given time frame in order to create a chronology and identify related cause-and-effect factors.

Essential Question:

- To what extent does one thing *always* lead to another?

In the 4–5 cluster, students add two new features: students learn how to create a chronology based on information given to them, using time frame devices. Second, the students use the chronology to begin to apply the concept of cause and effect.

For example: create a chronology of events leading up to the American Revolution and identify logical cause and effect, using time lines and time frames. Did the Boston Massacre cause the Revolutionary War? It happened five years before the war began, but anger over the massacre could have contributed to the ill feeling that eventually did lead to the war. Just because an event precedes another event does not mean that there has to be a relationship between them. Events in history can be like a TV schedule—there may be no connection between a program and the preceding program.

Events have two types of causes—immediate and underlying or long-range causes. The immediate is easier to identify. The assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand led to the outbreak of the First World War. But, what was the role of the arms race, the competition for colonies in Asia and Africa, the naval race between England and Germany, the alliance system, and nationalism in the Balkans? It is the long-range causes that usually occupy the interest of historians, because we can never say definitively. And, in another country, their historians will have the list in a different order or even a different list.

HISTORY STANDARD TWO: Students will gather, examine, and analyze historical data [Analysis].

Enduring Understandings (K–12):

- Many different types of sources exist to help us gather information about the past, such as artifacts and documents. Sources about the past need to be critically analyzed and categorized as they are used.
- Critical investigation demands constant reassessment of one's research strategies.
- A historian must prove where the information can be found that is the basis for historical conclusions.

Standard Two deals with the building blocks of history: the documents and artifacts that historians rely upon to systematically investigate and construct the story of the past. Ultimately the historian ranks the different sources in terms of their credibility and usefulness to the specific argument he or she is making.

One obstacle that appears in this task is the key question of what documents or artifacts are available. Not all documents are saved. Sometimes there never were documents. Why would someone doing something bad write down all his plans? Even love letters may be eventually (or quickly) tossed. Sometimes new documents are discovered, but this is unlikely if the event being researched is far back in history. Sometimes new techniques enable historians to get answers to formerly unanswerable questions, such as DNA establishing paternity. For example, a breakthrough in deciphering Mayan hieroglyphics and modern forensic medical techniques revealed that the Mayan Indians were more violent than previously thought. Some documents were intended to be seen by many others, and some documents were meant to be seen by very few people, such as a written copy of a speech or a private letter. Obviously documents have limitations. That is why historians doing research keep looking for documents longer than it seems necessary. After decades, a historian still has much to learn. One must accept the fact that you can never, even as a dedicated student of history, know all the nuances. A field that studies human beings and their actions has unattainable levels of understanding.

At the higher grades, the use of evidence requires the skills a historian uses. A researcher needs a healthy skepticism to guard against easily believing that one has found all the answers. The researcher may not have asked the right questions. Critical investigation demands constant reassessment of one's research strategies. The search for an absolutely foolproof, definitive answer is unending. And, it is generally unachievable.

The study of history depends upon evidence. In our daily lives, we all too often hear comments based solely upon opinion. Effective history writing rests securely upon a base of factual information and artifacts that another researcher may re-examine. That is why a historian must prove, with footnotes, endnotes, or other forms of documentation, where the information that is the basis for the historical conclusions can be found. There are guidelines as to how to do research, how to analyze a document, and how to inspect an artifact. Since learning can occur from a fresh look with a new perspective and new questions, historians seem to go over the same ground again and again. They are asking new or different questions. Ultimately every conclusion by a historian rests upon the documentary evidence; if it does not, it is fiction.

History Standard Two 4-5a: Students will identify artifacts and documents as either primary or secondary sources of historical data from which historical accounts are constructed.

Essential Question:

- How do artifacts and documents influence how history is written?
- Which historical source is best?

In the 4–5 cluster, students are introduced to two types of documents. A primary source gives an eyewitness account of an event, while a secondary source is written after the event or from information reported. Students should be exposed to both types of documents and asked to differentiate between them and to discuss the value of each. A teacher might present a historical conclusion to students and ask what kind of evidence would lead to that conclusion. Where might you find the evidence? What kind of primary or secondary source? A letter? A ship's record of cargo carried from one port to another? A personal diary or government document?

Historical sources, both primary and secondary, have limitations. Some primary sources are more reliable and credible than others. A marriage certificate is usually filled out and signed at the marriage ceremony or right afterwards. Someone later describing a wedding in a letter may mistakenly give an incorrect date for the wedding. If the wedding certificate has a different date, it is more trustworthy. That is, unless further research indicates that many wedding certificates from that church have the wrong wedding date on them. Now a historian might lean toward trusting the letter. In another example, historians have found two letters describing the weather at George Washington's first inauguration. One said it was sunny; the second said it was rainy. Since neither letter is more reliable than the other, we will never know for certain what the weather was. Logic, however, suggests that others would have commented on the weather if it had been miserable. But, history rests upon proof. Either documents support a conclusion or it is someone's guess or fiction. There is an old saying among historians, "No documents, no proof, no history."

A primary source is not the best or most important source available to support a description of an event; it is any source from the time period being studied – a firsthand account such as a diary, a newspaper, a letter, a government report, a photograph, a birth record, a deed, a marriage certificate, or an artifact. Think of a primary source as an eyewitness to an event or time period, something contemporary with the event, a piece of the past. It is usually a document simply because our society generates so many pieces of paper (documents) that historians can use.

But an eyewitness is more than a piece of paper. A brief walk across the site of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg enables a historian to sense the feel of that fateful day. Any student lifting a rifle used in the Revolutionary or Civil War will certainly appreciate how heavy it was to carry and to use. Riding in a covered wagon for a few hundred yards can make you realize how much the hope for a better future must have motivated many pioneers. It certainly was not the comfortable ride in a bouncing covered wagon! Modern researchers literally digging into outhouse pits near slave quarters have discovered that slaves ate much better than previously believed. The prevailing belief was that slaves were poorly fed, an accusation that often appeared in antislavery writings. Obviously, a slave owner's assertions that slaves were well fed was not thought to be reliable, since it seemed self-serving. Maybe neither source is perfectly reliable, the antislavery

advocate nor the slave owner. The microscopic evidence from outhouse pits indicates that the typical slave's diet was more varied than previously thought. That is not the same as saying slavery was good or that it was not too bad. We still must weigh *all* the evidence about slavery, including how we would feel in that status.

A secondary source or document is one that someone has put together from primary sources to tell a story.[2] A description of weddings in the colonial period would help a student understand weddings in colonial New Castle or Dover or Georgetown. That assumes weddings in Delaware were typical of those throughout the colonies. In combination with some primary documents, a secondary document will illustrate the larger picture, permitting a clearer understanding of the topic. After studying the life of soldiers in General George Washington's Revolutionary War army, a student would better understand a letter written in 1780 by a Delaware soldier to someone back home.

A tertiary source is a general book, like a textbook, put together after consulting both primary and secondary sources or after using just secondary sources. It tends to be very general and superficial to knowledgeable historians. A history teacher reading a tertiary textbook reads a paragraph and probably mutters, "It's not that simple." But publishing companies cannot afford to put everything into a textbook to write the complete story. It would be too long, the school would not buy it, and the students could not lift it! Textbooks, in an effort to "cover" everything, make every event seem just as important as any other event. Students and teachers should be able to judge what is important for them. Textbooks should be used as a resource, not as *the* curriculum and not relied upon for day-to-day lesson plans. You should always bear in mind that even a textbook is the result of decisions about what to put in and what to leave out and what will be the overarching concepts or interpretations in which the selected facts will be presented. For example, the story of the American Revolution in a British textbook might be only two paragraphs!

---

[2] **More on primary sources and secondary sources**

Primary sources lack perspective; they are commentary on the immediate event within that time period. One historian defined primary sources as "written or spoken by men and women enmeshed in the events of the past, rather than by later historians." The keyword is "enmeshed." The primary source is itself part of the event, person, times, etc., often by an eyewitness to the event. Secondary sources are derived from primary sources. This means that a secondary source, by definition, is hearsay evidence. A secondary source has digested primary sources to tell a larger story.

Newspapers present an example of defining the difference between primary sources and secondary sources. Almost everything in a newspaper is contemporary. But, sometimes something is published in a newspaper that is itself hearsay commentary, something based on primary sources, which makes it a secondary source. The kinds of essays and articles that we all frequently read in the Sunday newspaper magazines are secondary sources. One recent article told the story of the photographer who took the famous raising-the-flag picture in 1945 on Iwo Jima. It was one of dozens he took that day. It was not the original flag raising, and it was, to a certain extent, staged. The picture is a primary source. The story of the flag raising would have been a primary source in 1945, and newspaper accounts in 1945 would also be a primary source. But, his explanation of the events of that day now is a secondary source because it is an attempt, knowingly or unknowingly, to put the events of that day into perspective. The key difference is perspective, an attempt by the writer to judge where that event fits into the larger scheme of things for our time.

Here's a released item[3] from the Social Studies DSTP that illustrates the assessment of this benchmark. This test item asks students to use the primary source given in the graphic as historical evidence for drawing a conclusion from one of the four choices of the test item. The graphic, a textbox containing a quote from Thomas Rodney, is a primary source. It is a primary source because it is an actual writing by a man who had first-hand knowledge of life in Delaware before the French and Indian War.

> **"Almost every family manufactured their own clothes. They ate their own beef, pork and poultry along with wild game, fruits, and butter and cheese of their own making, and they grew wheat and corn enough for their own needs."**
>
> **- Thomas Rodney, writing in 1790 about life in Delaware before the French and Indian War**

Which historical conclusion most likely used this primary source as evidence?

a. Colonial families ate more vegetables than meat.
b. There was always plenty of food to eat.
c. Colonial families were mostly self-sufficient.
d. The colonials wore clothing in the latest styles.

Journals and other first-hand writings are used as evidence by historians to construct the historical accounts that are found in history textbooks and other secondary sources. Historians use documents including letters, diaries, and journals as evidence to construct historical accounts such as the correct response in this item: "*Colonial families were mostly self-sufficient*." Instruction for this standard might include examining a historical account in a text and then gathering evidence that would support the conclusion, description, or factual account being studied.

History Standard Two 4-5b: Students will examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; chronologically arrange them, and analyze change over time.

Essential Question:

- How should historical sources be used to look for change?

History Standard Two 4-5a requires students to identify sources as primary or secondary and to differentiate between them. History Standard Two 4-5b asks students to go one more step to apply that understanding in order to analyze and to explain historical sources. Students are now

[3] This is a released item from the Delaware Student Testing Program. Item Samplers with annotated student work can be found at http://www.doe.k12.de.us/aab/social_studies/default.shtml

expected to be able to arrange sources chronologically and to explain change over time. What changed? What did not change? Why? How do you know? What patterns are there? What links the documents together?

Historical sources can be arranged many different ways. This standard asks students to become familiar with using a particular region or society or theme as an organizing scheme to explain change. They trace an activity or idea over a long period and explain why changes took place. How did women dress in different periods of our history? Look at pictures of houses or schools built in Delaware over a long period of time. How can you tell which are the most recently built? Size is certainly a factor. The cost of building a school is another. The changing activities in school are another factor. Years ago there were no gym classes or sports or driver education. If an addition was ever built to your school, have the students analyze why it was needed. Look at pictures of methods of transportation. What changed? Why? How do you explain the changes illustrated by the documents?

HISTORY STANDARD THREE: Students will interpret historical data [Interpretation].

Enduring Understandings (K-12):

- What is written by a historian depends upon that historian's personal background and methods, the questions asked about the sources, and the sources used to find the answers to those questions.
- Historians select important events from the past they consider worthy of being taught to the next generation. That selection process, deciding what to emphasize, and the questions that historians ask of the documents and other evidence contributes significantly to the conclusions drawn.
- History is what the historian says it is. Different historians collect, use, and emphasize sources in ways that result in differing interpretations as they describe, compare, and interpret historical phenomena. Disagreement between historians about the causes and effects of historical events may result from these differences.

As students mature intellectually, they begin to learn that not everything is true because it appears in a book, on television, or online. Students come to realize that history can be presented from different perspectives. The existence of different viewpoints makes history a lively field. A historian gathers factual information from all kinds of sources and weaves it into a story, a narrative. Along the way, the historian decides what to emphasize, what to minimize, and what is significant. The reader goes along for the ride. But a savvy reader should understand that the historian is giving his/her definitions of significance and emphasis based on their beliefs, their judgment, and their interests. Sometimes interpretation creeps into the narrative and sometimes it roars into the narrative. The latter is obvious; the former is often overlooked. Anyone reading a historical narrative needs to be alert for the author's interpretations, both large and small. It will be there—it always is.

History Standard Three uses three concepts that are often confusing to non-historians—beliefs, perspectives, and point of view. All of them ask for information describing the historian who argues an interpretation. At the higher grades, a student is expected to differentiate between two interpretations and to come to some conclusion as to why they differ. Someone once said that any relationship is really five relationships. There is how you look at it, how I look at it, how I think you look at it, how you think I look at it, and then how it really is. What lies behind differing interpretations is complicated.

A point of view is not a viewpoint expressed by a historian—that is a simplistic, popular definition. A point of view is not just any person's way of looking at something. A point of view, as used in the study of history by professional historians, asks such questions as: Where is this historian coming from? What are the historian's nationality, race, gender, age, and personal background? Could any of these factors have played a role influencing that historian's conclusions or the questions that guided that historian's research strategy? Is the historian a young African-American female writing about the role of women in the civil rights movement? Or, is that historian an elderly white male Southerner with deep family roots in the antebellum South writing about the role of women in the civil rights movement? An Arabic historian would certainly write a history of the Crusades that differed from one written by a Western European historian (assuming he or she is not of Arabic descent). Each historian selects events from past experiences that he or she labels as important and therefore worthy of being taught to the next

generation. That selection process, deciding what to emphasize, and the questions that historian asks of the documents and other evidence contributes significantly to the conclusions drawn. If two historians disagree, they do not have two different points of view. You would reasonably expect that these factors—race, age, gender, and personal background—would influence a person as they grow to intellectual maturity and therefore would influence their research interests, methods, and strategies. It makes a difference.

Or does it? Sometimes a person's beliefs simply do not seem to fit into the mold from which they supposedly came. A wealthy capitalist of the late nineteenth century would reasonably be expected to enthusiastically support the drive for markets and raw materials associated with the acquisition of colonies, such as the Philippines after the Spanish American War. Andrew Carnegie opposed it. We can never know for certain what is inside a person's head. What ideas and understandings are floating around in there? A person's beliefs usually are philosophically consistent but not always. We all know people whose political beliefs are consistently liberal or conservative, except on one issue. What does that historian believe? And why do they believe it? And how does it impact their research and writing?

Perspective is the platform upon which a historian stands. Is the historian a Southerner writing about slavery or a former slave, such as Frederick Douglass, writing about slavery? A few years ago, Japanese and American historians formed a committee to write a joint history of the coming of the Second World War. After a while they gave up because nationalism overrode professional devotion to objectivity. Many Americans who lived through the 1960s were permanently affected by those turbulent times. Some now hold important corporate, academic, and political positions while retaining vestiges of the radical ideas (for the 1960s) they personally experienced and lived through. When a person lives and writes matters. Germans use an untranslatable word to describe this: Zeitgeist. The closest we can get is "time-ghost." What was in the air at that time? What was the climate of opinion? What were people thinking? A book attacking big businessmen as mean, nasty thieves or "Robber Barons" became immensely popular when it was published in 1934, in the middle of our worst depression. A similar reception would not have happened if it had been published during the Second World War, when we needed all of our big business muscle to win the war. Perspective asks students to recognize and confront the possibility that the times could have influenced the writing of history.

Standard Three deals with what historians do—what influences them, what difficulties they encounter, and how historians look at what other historians write. Two different people may honestly disagree about some event that has already happened. The facts are clear. The team lost the game. Now the interpretation arrives. Did the team lose the game because of a weak defense or because of a weak offense? A policeman investigating an accident wants to know all he or she can learn about the drivers, the road conditions, the mechanical status of the cars, whether seatbelts were worn, the weather conditions, the presence of alcohol, and now, sadly, road rage. Historians function in a similar manner.

What are often believed to be every day, easily defined words instead have specific meaning to practitioners of that academic discipline. Two terms that may cause trouble are "historic" and "historical." *Historic* means important or well known in history. A historic account is an event in history that is worth remembering. The standards use "historical" and the phrase "historical accounts." This is not the same as a "historic account." *Historical* means relating to or connected with history as a discipline or events in history as a historian deals with them. A

historical narrative is a history-based story, and not just any old story. A *narrative* is not simply a story; as the standards use the term it is a historian's written account.

Comparing two different accounts of the same event involves skills that a student should internalize in order to be able to apply them as a citizen every time he or she encounters a written account about current events or historical events. Teachers should bear that purpose in mind when constructing a lesson plan for a topic.

At the higher level for Standard Three, it is not just that history is interpretation. It is how a student can discover for himself that history is interpretation by assessing a historian's choice of questions, his or her choice of sources, his or her point of view, etc. It is not *what* is the point of view, but *how* does a narrative show a point of view. Students are not expected to become knowledgeable about historiography, which is the study by professional historians of how different historians' interpretations conflict with one another. Standard Three is not an exercise in historiography. Standard Three does not measure, ask for, or expect this level of knowledge but just an awareness that historians sometimes disagree and the reasons why they disagree. The key question is, "What factors contributed to this historian's conclusion and how did these factors contribute to this historian's conclusions?" It is the *process*—not the end conclusion—measured in Standard Three. The following illustrates history as interpretation.

No student of history can possibly be absolutely neutral evaluating a historical event. Even professional historians bring values and moral judgments to their investigation of a topic in history. Students need to be alert to pre-existing factors that mold and shape the writing of history. Sometimes bias is obvious in the questions posed. Consider these questions:

a. Why did the United States drop the atomic bomb on innocent, unsuspecting civilians at Hiroshima on August 6, 1945?
b. Why did the United States choose to drop the atomic bomb?
c. Would the United States have used the atomic bomb on a white nation like Germany if it had been developed earlier?

Statement "a" implies that the atomic bomb should have been used only on a military target. This comment might have struck a more responsive chord in the generation that lived in the 1940s because people could remember the years prior to the Second World War when no city had been bombed from the air. Behind this wording is the assumption that using the atomic bomb was a mistake. The historian researching this question focuses on the target decision-making process. How and why did the city of Hiroshima come to be the first atomic victim? Could the United States have merely demonstrated the bomb for Japanese observers? Teachers might ask students how the questions a historian asks reveal or reflect the historian's point of view or potential bias.

Statement "b" suggests that there were alternative policies, other than the bomb, which could have been selected. It raises a question by inference. What were those alternative policies and why were they rejected, if they were even considered at all? Historians writing during the Cold War lived with the daily threat of atomic annihilation. Some historians felt that the atomic bomb ushered in a new era in the world's history, a dangerous era. They regretted its initial use. These historians sometimes assume that it was unnecessary to drop the atomic bomb because victory was easily within our grasp. Or was it? Do we know how much longer the war could have gone

on? What did American decision-makers know and when did they know it? Historians call the "what if" judgments "counterfactual history."[4] It is great fun to rewrite history for a different ending, but can we be sure?

Statement "c" approaches history from what is sometimes called "a grand theory." This historian apparently believes that race so dominates history that behind every decision must be a racial basis. In the Second World War, the United States acted out of racial motives, as it always does, according to this perspective.

History Standard Three takes students through a process by which they come to realize that ultimately all history is what the historian says it is. What is written about and what is remembered is passed on to the next generation. One constant dispute involving the teaching of history is the criticism by some of the public that the wrong content is being taught. This assumes that there is a body of knowledge that all might agree upon. It is not so. The same event can be presented from many different perspectives. Certainly the American Revolution must be viewed differently in a British textbook. If current events are depicted differently in different newscasts and newspapers, then surely this was done in the past and surely it will continue in the future.

When this standard is fully mastered, a student is ready to apply it in his or her daily adult life as a citizen by being aware that all written accounts flow from a person who sat down to write that account and brought with him or her a collection of personal influences and perspectives. Nothing is absolutely neutral. Students must have an understanding of how a historian goes about writing. An awareness of this process arms students when they encounter what others write. This skill and awareness is essential for future citizenship.

---

[4] Counterfactual history is asking the question, "if." Unlike many subjects, history has no particular jargon. Any student can understand what a historian writes (most historians). War is war. Wars have causes. A scholarly historian, after a lifetime of studying the causes of the Civil War, can find their interpretation and knowledge challenged by a casual reader who has invented their own theory of causation. You would not dream of challenging a chemist who told you that mixing two particular chemicals would lead to an explosion. Chemists use jargon, specialized language, which can intimidate. Historians use more common words, which can intrigue. The absence of a specialized history vocabulary invites challenges. Counterfactual history enlivens class discussions. If Hitler had been killed during the First World War, would the Holocaust have happened? This is really a way of asking to what degree Hitler was personally responsible. Or was it the times? In other words, would the times have produced someone similar to Hitler? This is an interesting debate and discussion with no real answer.

Here is another example. Both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were born in Kentucky. Suppose Lincoln moved to Mississippi and Davis to Illinois, switching their historical roles as presidents during the Civil War—Lincoln the president of the Confederacy and Davis the Union president. Would their different personal leadership traits have had an impact on the Civil War and changed the outcome?

Some areas of history invite, even demand, some counterfactual history. Examples are the viability of slavery in the territories before the Civil War and the consequences of the creation of a pluralist, multiracial Southern society during Reconstruction.

History Standard Three 4-5a: Students will explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and will relate this explanation to the evidence presented or the point-of-view of the author.

Essential Question:

- How could there be different explanations of the same event in history?

In the 4–5 cluster, History Standard Three introduces students to the concept that historical accounts of the same event may differ because of either the differences in the evidence cited to support that historian or because different historians are different people with different ways of looking at something. A historian's point of view influences the sources used to answer questions, which in turn affects conclusions. Students at this level will quickly get the point if you ask them if parents ever get the same story from two siblings about what started an argument. Who was the last person to use the milk, and why is it sitting out on the counter? Or, who left the toothpaste out? Whose turn is it to take the trash out?

The American Revolution provides many possible opportunities to illustrate this aspect of history. On numerous occasions the British and the Americans disagreed. An account of an event that happened before or during the war would be different depending on which side of the ocean the author lived on. Or, which side the author preferred to emerge victorious, the British or the rebels. The vocabulary used in different accounts often betrays the author's feelings and personal bias. Instruct students to look for such words. Historians may try to write unbiased history, but they can never be completely free of the personal factors that influenced their lives.

HISTORY STANDARD FOUR: Students will develop historical knowledge of major events and phenomena in world, United States, and Delaware history [Content].

Students should know chronology in broad outlines and enough trends in history that they have a reservoir of information they can use to provide factual support and examples in their short, written responses. Students should have an understanding of trends and patterns in order to use that understanding as evidence when drawing conclusions or making inferences. For example, a student responding to a historian's writing published in the 1950s should be aware that the 1950s came after the Second World War or during the Cold War or during the beginning of a Civil Rights movement. Consider these two sentences the student might write:

a. He wrote this because Americans were angry at Russia.
b. This historian was influenced by the Cold War then taking place between the United States and Russia.

Obviously the second sentence is much stronger and reflects more understanding.

Teachers should not be concerned as they examine the content descriptions in Standard Four for each grade cluster and think, "That's too much. I could never do that in a school year." Actually, it is too much to cover, and becomes more ponderous with each passing year. What teachers, schools, and districts must learn to do is selectively abandon certain topics in the course of history. Do not try to cover everything. It is impossible. Adopt an approach that could be called "post-holing." Dig deeply into some topics rather than trying to "cover" everything. It is better for a student to clearly understand a concept and to be able to use *something* in history in an explanation than it is to have a limited understanding of a concept and know a lot of "*somethings*" in history. Students understand a standard when they can apply it in a new or different situation. The teacher does not have to "cover" every potential situation for the student to be prepared. The student who can apply understanding to a new situation is well equipped for any assessment of the Delaware History Standards and for life after school.
Social Studies content should be about:

- Themes, broad historical trends, and topics that allow the four strands of the social studies to be integrated and provide a cultural context for the student;
- Relevant and important contemporary issues;
- Resources for education and not the scope and sequence contained in a textbook.

Select historical topics which are transferable, relevant, integrated, contemporary, and important. Students should study what resonates throughout history and prepares them for decisions they will face as adult citizens.

A student must know history; do not be fooled by Standard Four. The reason why specific people, laws, events, etc., are not listed is because no group of historians will ever agree on the essential and necessary facts that everyone should know. Remember, history does not exist until the historian looks at the sources and decides what is important and therefore what is history. This is why the initial History Standards committee decided not to produce a required list of people, laws, events, etc. Content in History Standard Four is left for each district or teacher to decide. The absence of a specific list does not mean students do not have to know anything. It means that a student is free to use whatever historical knowledge he or she gained in that classroom.

If students have a reservoir of historical knowledge and they understand the History Standards, they can do well on any assessment. If they lack either one—historical knowledge or an understanding of the standards—they will not do well. Make certain in your teaching that your students acquire an understanding of history and how it works as a discipline (Standards One, Two, and Three) and that they acquire knowledge of people, laws, and events and when these historical specifics fall chronologically (Standard Four).

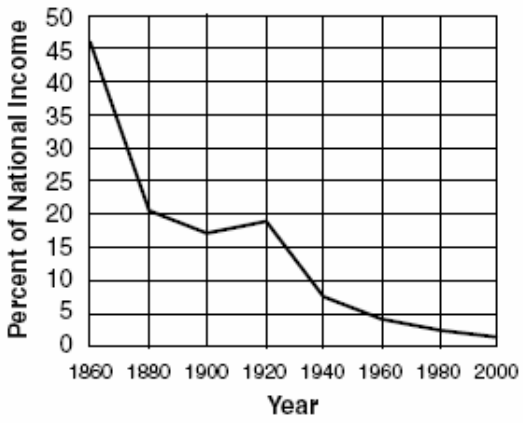
It is hard to imagine a Social Studies, History, Economics, Geography, Civics, or Government course or program that ignores events from 1900 to the present. The History Standards do not dictate a curriculum, but they do require students to have courses that equip them to bring some knowledge of history and an understanding of the standards and how to apply the standards. If the students learn information they can use it. Any assessment of the Delaware History Standards is not one to which a student can simply apply common sense or street-level knowledge. He or she must bring knowledge and an understanding of the standards to it to do well.

A student should know historical chronology in such a way as to be able to place people, laws, and events. For example, from 1850 to 2000, there was a Civil War, Reconstruction in the South, the settlement of the West, the rise of industrialization and urbanization, imperialism, the rise of segregation, two world wars, a Cold War, the rise of the Third World, the end of colonialism, a Great Depression, a civil rights movement in America, a woman's movement, a war in Vietnam, etc. Without knowing the exact years for an event, a student should still be able to place all these events within the chronology, 1850 to 2000, in their approximate place. In other words, students should know the major events and their approximate time. For example, they should know that the Great Depression occurred between the two world wars. It is not enough to minimally know these events in order to merely recognize one, as might happen for classroom multiple choice questions in which the correct answer is selected. In a standards-aligned short answer, a student needs to recall and use historical information as an explanation or evidence. Obviously, if he or she has little to recall (Standard Four), or if they do not understand history as a discipline (Standards One, Two Three), then he or she will have little to offer as a factually supported accurate and relevant explanation.

The following multiple choice question is an example.[5] In order to answer this question a student must be aware of the chronology, impact, and consequences of industrialization and technology on agriculture over a long period, 1860 to 2000. The introduction of more and more mechanization greatly increased output. The long-term effect was to reduce the number of farmers needed to feed the rest of us.

[5] This is a released item from the Delaware Student Testing Program. Item Samplers with annotated student work can be found at http://www.doe.k12.de.us/aab/social_studies/default.shtml

D **This graph shows the U.S. farmers' share of the national income from 1860 to 2000.**



What was the *main* reason for the long-term trend shown on the graph?

F Immigration
G Global warfare
H Natural disaster
J Industrialization

This 11th grade assessment item uses a graph that shows the long-term decline in the farmers' share of the national income. The correct response is option J. All four possible answers—immigration, global warfare, natural disasters, and industrialization—occurred within the dates for the graph, 1860-2000, but only industrialization explains this long-term decline in the farmers' share of the national income, the shift from an agricultural-based economy to an industrial-based economy.

The four disciplines in the Delaware Social Studies Standards—Civics, Economics, Geography, and History—each offer distinct approaches and develop different skills. Unite them in your teaching. All four disciplines are present in the issues and challenges our students face every day in the classroom and those they will confront in the future, both in their personal lives and as voters and participants in our broader society. If a student masters the Delaware Social Studies Standards, he or she will be able to transfer their understanding into a lifetime of active citizenship.