

Evidence Detectives

Investigate the past using sources, questions, and social science ideas.

SS.6.W.1.4 "Describe the methods of historical inquiry and how history relates to the other social sciences."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that show how historians investigate evidence, and circle each social science that can help historians explain the past.

Investigating a City's Recovery

- ① Historians investigate the past by asking focused questions and examining evidence. To study how San Francisco responded after the 1906 earthquake, a historian might begin with photographs, newspaper stories, letters, government reports, and objects left from the disaster. These primary sources were created at the time. A later textbook or documentary is a secondary source because it interprets information from earlier sources. Historians note who made each source, when it was made, and why. Those details help them judge whether a source is useful and trustworthy.
- ② One source rarely tells the whole story. A photograph may show damaged buildings, but it cannot explain what residents thought or how supplies were shared. Historians compare sources to see where they agree and disagree. This process is called corroboration. They also place evidence in context by considering conditions at the time, such as crowded neighborhoods, rebuilding plans, and the city government's actions. After analyzing evidence, historians make a claim that answers their question. They support the claim with specific evidence and revise it if new, stronger evidence appears.
- ③ History connects with other social sciences because people's past choices can be studied in several ways. Geography helps historians examine how location, landforms, and resources shaped a city's recovery. Economics helps them investigate jobs, prices, trade, and the cost of rebuilding. Political science helps them study laws, leaders, and government decisions. Sociology helps them explore groups, families, and community life. Each field may use different questions or evidence, yet historians combine these ideas to explain change over time and to understand why events affected people differently.

2

ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1

A resident wrote a letter during the 1906 earthquake. Is the letter a primary or secondary source? Why?

2

Why do historians compare sources, and what is this process called?

3

Name two details historians examine to judge whether a source is useful and trustworthy.

4

How could economics help a historian study a city's recovery after a disaster? Give two topics economics could help investigate.

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one past event that is not named in the passage. In each row, write a different historical question, name a source a historian could examine, and explain how one other social science could help answer the question.

HISTORICAL QUESTION	SOURCE TO EXAMINE	SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HOW IT HELPS

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that show how historians investigate evidence, and circle each social science that can help historians explain the past. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A resident wrote a letter during the 1906 earthquake. Is the letter a primary or secondary source? Why?	It is a primary source because it was created at the time of the disaster.
2	Why do historians compare sources, and what is this process called?	They compare sources to find where they agree and disagree. This process is called corroboration.
3	Name two details historians examine to judge whether a source is useful and trustworthy.	They examine who made the source, when it was made, and why it was made. Any two are correct.
4	How could economics help a historian study a city's recovery after a disaster? Give two topics economics could help investigate.	Economics could help investigate jobs, prices, trade, or the cost of rebuilding. Any two are correct.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

HISTORICAL QUESTION	SOURCE TO EXAMINE	SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HOW IT HELPS
How did the Erie Canal affect businesses in nearby towns?	Store account books from the 1820s	Economics, to compare trade, prices, and jobs before and after the canal.
How did the Erie Canal affect where nearby towns grew?	A map made in 1825	Geography, to study the canal's location and the locations of towns.

Accept reasonable historical questions, appropriate sources, and accurate explanations of how a social science could contribute. Students may use primary or secondary sources if the source fits the question.