

## INCOMPLETE STORIES

HASS, English

How do we know about what happened in the past?

Students will:

- Understand the concept of 'primary source' of information.
- Appreciate that primary sources may reflect a particular point of view that, unique to the person who produced it.
- Understand the value of primary sources in historical research.
- Analyse historical photographs to gather information about the past and identify unknowns.

### ENGAGE

Give students a few minutes to draw a scene of something that happened at school this week, and write a short caption at the bottom of the drawing to explain what the event was and what they thought about it.

Collect the drawings, and explain that students have just created a document which provides information about life today.

Say: "Imagine how useful these pictures could be to someone studying history in the future, who wants to learn about what school was like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unfortunately, it's highly unlikely that a future historian will be able to look at ALL of these documents, because:

- Some of you might decide you don't like your drawings and decide you don't want to keep them (ask for a couple of volunteers who don't like their picture and invite them to scrunch up their drawing and put it in the bin).
- Some of you might *plan* to keep the picture, but leave it on your desk or on the floor by accident, where it gets mixed up with scrap paper, drawn on, and then thrown out (draw on the back of a few pictures and throw them in the bin)
- A couple drawings will get wet in someone's school bag when a water bottle leaks (scrunch up a couple and put in the bin)
- Some will stay scrunched up in the bag where they got covered by a manky banana (scrunch up and put in the bin)
- Some will make it home where they will be admired by mum and dad and put on the fridge, but then will be binned when new artwork arrived (scrunch up and put in the bin)..."

Continue on with a range of reasons for why drawings could get destroyed over time until there is just one drawing left. Don't show students which pictures are going in the bin.

### EXPLORE

Show students the one remaining picture.

- Who drew this picture? If there is no name on the picture itself, ask: how might a future historian know who drew it?
- What can we see in this picture?
- What does the caption tell us about what happened and how the event was perceived?
- Is this what other people chose to draw? Does everyone in class feel the same about the event pictured?
- What information would be lost if the caption on the bottom of the picture got ripped off?
- What conclusions might a future historian make about school life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if this is the only evidence he or she found? How accurate would their conclusions be?

### EXPLAIN

- Define primary and secondary sources of historical evidence, and brainstorm examples of each.
- Explain that museums and libraries collect, record and protect primary sources of evidence from the past. They sometimes use secondary sources to understand the items in their collection better, and they often produce secondary sources of information to share their knowledge with the public (eg. the Shire of Toodyay website includes a summary about [agricultural activities in the area in the 20<sup>th</sup> century](#), which was written by people who studied primary sources such as the *Daily record of farm activities at Nardie* – see PDF link on the webpage) .

## EXTEND

Show two examples of photographs from the Toodyay collection.

Discuss:

- What does each photo show?
- What information does the label give us about the photo?
- What are some things we can learn about the past by looking at these sources?
- What are some questions that remain unanswered?
- Where else could we look to find more information about this?

Museums and libraries tend to have more information about people who are educated, well off, who were considered important and were in the public eye. Discuss reasons for this (eg. educated people were more likely to write letters and diaries; well-off people had more 'stuff' that survived over time, they could afford to take photos or have paintings done of them; people in power and influence were often written about in newspapers etc).

Although stories about Aboriginal people, women and children are very important, we often have less information about them. This is because their stories were usually passed down through art, song, dance and orally rather than written down or printed.

- Make a hypothesis about why the photographs were taken, kept and given to the museum.
- Make a hypothesis about the *most likely* scenario for why one of the photographs is damaged (and why the other one is in good condition).
- Write an imaginative story which gives a *creative reason* for how the photo got damaged (or why the other remains in good condition).



## EVALUATE AND REFLECT

Why do we need to use a variety of historical sources to make judgements about the past?

What are some things you own, have written or made? Pick three of them – what would a future historian think about you if he or she found these items?

## WANT TO DO MORE?

- Working in small groups, collect a range of primary and secondary sources (eg. photographs, newspaper articles, advertisements, quotes from people you interviewed, excerpts from online encyclopaedia articles, library books etc) about a specific aspect of history – eg. convicts in Australia, technology in the past, settlement of the Swan River Colony – and use them to create a collage display.



Printed postcard showing a mixed group of adults in formal daywear at east side of the Toodyay Club, 1912. The view is to south side of Stirling Terrace. Writing on reverse of the photo reads: "The 'At Home' given by President & Mrs H. W. Clarkson, August 3rd 1912 at Toodyay Club E. H. T." In small pencilled writing appears the phrase "From Mavis Lloyd".

The first meeting of the Toodyay Club was held in the Newcastle Mechanics' Institute (now the Toodyay Library) in Jan 1905. The subscription was set at 2 guineas per annum, and 112 people became members. Recreation facilities in the first club rooms included a bar and a billiard table. The organisation started as a men's only club. In 1908 new premises were built further down New Street (now called Stirling Terrace) towards Connor's Mill. In 1911 a new bowling green adjoining the Toodyay Club premises was officially opened. This photo shows an occasion which included the spouses of members – a Ladies Day.

Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2001.1111



Group of (mostly Aboriginal) boys and girls in school uniform. Date and location of photo unknown. The two women are likely to be sisters Jane (Jenny) and Euphemia, whose grandparents were on the first shipload of European settlers to the Swan River Colony and among the first non-Aboriginal families to settle in Toodyay.

Shire of Toodyay has a number of artefacts and photos of the Drummond descendants in the collection, many donated by one of the early museum curators who is believed to also have been a descendant. It is not clear who the children are. Many Aboriginal children were sent to missions (such as Mogumber, New Norcia and Middle Swan). There was a Sisters of Mercy convent at Toodyay from the late 1800s, which ran classes and held boys' and girls' dormitories, but it is unlikely that the photo was taken there.

Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2001.1113