History: since the dawn of civilisation

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 longue durée ____	**a** a historiographical approach emphasising slow-changing structures over long timescales
2 teleological narrative ____	**b** a historical account implying inevitable progress towards a predetermined end
3 revisionism ____	**c** the reassessment and reinterpretation of accepted historical accounts, sometimes controversially
4 counterfactual history ____	**d** the exploration of hypothetical alternative historical outcomes
5 periodisation ____	**e** the division of history into named, distinct periods for analytical convenience
6 material culture ____	**f** the physical objects and artefacts a society produces and uses, studied for historical insight
7 epigraphy ____	**g** the study of inscriptions carved or written on durable materials
8 palimpsest ____	**h** something bearing visible traces of earlier, layered versions or histories
9 subaltern history ____	**i** the study of history from the perspective of marginalised or subordinate groups
10 great man theory ____	**j** the view that history is driven primarily by the actions of exceptional individuals

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 An approach emphasising slow, long-term structures is the longue durée / a single event.

2 A narrative implying inevitable progress is teleological / open-ended.

3 Reassessing accepted historical accounts is revisionism / uncritical acceptance.

4 Exploring hypothetical alternative outcomes is counterfactual history / documented fact.

5 Dividing history into named periods is periodisation / continuous flow.

6 The physical objects a society produces is material culture / abstract ideology.

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7 History from the perspective of marginalised groups is subaltern history / elite biography.

8 The view that history is driven by exceptional individuals is the great man theory / structural analysis.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 problematise ____	**a** a received narrative
2 periodise ____	**b** a historical epoch
3 excavate ____	**c** material evidence
4 reconstruct ____	**d** a fragmented record
5 destabilise ____	**e** a dominant account
6 contextualise ____	**f** a primary source
7 canonise ____	**g** a historical figure
8 marginalise ____	**h** a subaltern perspective

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

counterfactual history | epigraphy | great man theory | longue durée | material culture | palimpsest | periodisation | revisionism | subaltern history | teleological narrative

Historians influenced by the 1 _____ approach favour analysing slow-moving structures - climate, demography, economic systems - over dramatic individual events, challenging older accounts rooted in 2 _____, which credited exceptional individuals with shaping historical outcomes almost single-handedly. Many traditional narratives have also been criticised as 3 _____, implying inevitable progress towards a predetermined endpoint rather than acknowledging genuine historical contingency. Scholars increasingly practise 4 _____, deliberately imagining plausible alternative outcomes to test assumptions about historical causation. Evidence beyond written chronicles, including 5 _____ inscriptions and everyday 6 _____, offers valuable insight into societies that left few conventional documents. Historians committed to 7 _____ deliberately foreground marginalised perspectives long excluded from dominant accounts. Standard 8 _____ into named eras, though useful, risks imposing artificial boundaries on continuous historical processes. Sites layered with successive occupations function almost as a physical 9 _____, bearing visible traces of earlier periods beneath later construction. Meanwhile, historical 10 _____ remains controversial precisely because reinterpretation can serve either legitimate scholarly correction or politically motivated distortion.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Whose history gets told

Subaltern history emerged partly as a corrective to traditional historiography, which historically privileged the perspectives and records of ruling elites, literate classes and colonial administrators over those of ordinary people, particularly in colonised societies. Because marginalised groups often left fewer conventional written records, reconstructing their experiences requires creative use of alternative sources, including oral tradition, material culture and careful, critical reading of elite documents against their grain, extracting information the original authors did not intend to convey. This approach has proven methodologically demanding but has substantially reshaped understanding of colonial and pre-colonial societies, revealing forms of agency and resistance that earlier, elite-focused narratives frequently overlooked or actively suppressed.

1 What did subaltern history emerge partly as a corrective to? _____

2 What did traditional historiography historically privilege? _____

3 Why does reconstructing marginalised experiences require creative sources? _____

4 Name two alternative sources mentioned. _____

5 What has this approach substantially reshaped? _____

6 What did earlier, elite-focused narratives frequently overlook or suppress? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The historian imagined a plausible alternative outcome to test the theory. _____

2 The account implied history moved inevitably towards a fixed end point. _____

3 The site bore visible traces of many earlier, layered occupations. _____

4 The reinterpretation of the accepted account proved controversial. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how historical narratives can privilege or exclude certain perspectives, distinguishing observation from inference.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Precise terms

1 the longue durée 2 teleological 3 revisionism 4 counterfactual history 5 periodisation 6 material culture 7 subaltern history 8 the great man theory

3 Academic collocations

1 e problematise a dominant account 2 b periodise a historical epoch 3 c excavate material evidence 4 d reconstruct a fragmented record
5 a destabilise a received narrative 6 f contextualise a primary source 7 g canonise a historical figure 8 h marginalise a subaltern perspective

4 Analysis

1 longue durée 2 great man theory 3 teleological narrative 4 counterfactual history
5 epigraphy 6 material culture 7 subaltern history 8 periodisation
9 palimpsest 10 revisionism

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Traditional historiography.
2 The perspectives and records of ruling elites, literate classes and colonial administrators.
3 Because marginalised groups often left fewer conventional written records.
4 Any two: oral tradition, material culture, critical reading of elite documents against their grain.
5 Understanding of colonial and pre-colonial societies.
6 Forms of agency and resistance.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 a counterfactual 2 teleological 3 a palimpsest 4 revisionism

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.