



BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

2011

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATION

WRITING BOOKLET

Examination

History  
Extension

Section	Part	Question Number
1	1	1

Date

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Number of booklets  
used for this question

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Instructions

- Write your Centre Number and Student Number at the top of this page.
- In the boxes provided write the name and date of this examination, and the number(s) of the question(s) attempted in this booklet.
- If you have not attempted the question, you must still hand in the Writing Booklet, with the words 'NOT ATTEMPTED' written clearly on the front cover.
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Start here.

To what extent do historians 'own' history? That is the question we seek an answer for today. However, is it possible for any group of people to own history? Is it right for any group of people to tell us what parts of history we can access? And should history be controlled by social 'norms' and politics? These are all questions that will be asked and criticed in this essay.

The earliest recount of history we can find comes from a man called Herodotus. Over the years he has been given the name 'The Father of history' and his work opened up several windows to our view of ancient civilisations and is the foundation / building blocks for all the ancient historical sources we can access today. From these facts a conclusion could be made that Herodotus, a historian, could potentially 'own' said slice of history. This would be a very loosely fit and based hypothesis but a start none the lesser.

However, Herodotus, The 'Father of history'. The man whose work an uncountable amount of current ancient history essays, works, books and sources are based on, was not free from the tyranny

of politics and social expectations. No matter how different both those features are today, they still have the same affect. His work only told of epic battles in which his country was triumphant and tales (often mythologised tales e.g. hercules being son of Zeus) which were glorified local lore. So even though it does reveal alot for us today, it is a very bias source which often makes it hard to build a full understanding.

This links back to the 'who owns history' source we were given. In the opening few paragraphs it tells of politicians and governments trying to censor the history given to there youth. This opens up another source, The "black armband debate" in ~~the~~ Australia.

This debate was about the alleged censoring of the atrocities performed on the indigenous communities. Keith Windschuttle believed that the atrocities were nothing more than bad myths and that what the settlers done was nothing short of revolutionising a primitive country. Henry Reynolds believed however that the atrocities were true and the European Australians needed to apologise for what had been done. Windschuttle dubbed Reynolds view on history as a 'black armband view' as he was caught up

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in Mourning that he couldn't see what ~~he~~ Winschuttle saw. Winschuttle was coming from a very political angle in this debate, however Reynolds actually investigated these historical events and gathered his hypothesis that way.

This once again shows the power politics play in what history should and shouldn't be told. This is the issue with history. Because it is forever being updated due to new discoveries, the amount of political meddling from country to country is rising. Every country that had a horrible past wants to remove that from the education of their youth. They only want their successes and achievements glorified. The line "history should not be left to the reporters and politicians" (quoted Charles Francis Adams from the book by Eric Foner "Who owns history? rethinking the past in a changing world") clearly shows that Adams believes history should be left to historians to set an unbiased state of the facts. This still leaves us with the question, Who owns history?

"Who owns history? everyone and no one - which is why the study of the past is a constantly evolving, never ending journey of discovery".  
(referenced from same source as above)