Year 10 History Complete Study Guide

Complete study guide · Levels 9 and 10 · The modern world and Australia · AceGuides

This guide follows the History curriculum of the **Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0** (VCAA), Levels 9 and 10 band, which is based on the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0. It covers the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand (the Overview and all six Investigations, with the most depth on the Level 10 topics most Victorian schools teach) and every content description in the Historical Concepts and Skills strand.

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About this guide

How the curriculum is organised

In Version 2.0, History for Levels 9 and 10 is written as one two-year band covering roughly **1750 to the present**. By the end of Level 10 you are expected to "evaluate the significant events, developments and ideas that shaped the modern world" (VCAA achievement standard), including histories of Australia, the world wars and the Holocaust, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' rights and freedoms.

The band has two strands, and they are always taught together:

Strand	What it contains	Where it is in this guide
Historical Concepts and Skills	Questions, chronology, sources, perspectives, interpretations, continuity and change, cause and consequence, significance, communicating (VC2HH10S01–S10)	Section 1, then practised in every section
Overview (VC2HH10K01–K06)	Industrial Revolution, imperialism, big ideas, post-1945 change, social movements, the Australian women's movement	Section 2
Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)	Colonisation, Frontier Wars, gold, Federation, "social laboratory" (VC2HH10K07–K12)	Section 3
Investigation: Australians at war (1914–1945)	WWI and WWII, the home front, the Holocaust (VC2HH10K13–K23)	Section 4
Investigation: Asia (1750–present)	One Asian society; this guide uses Japan (VC2HH10K24–K29)	Section 5

Strand	What it contains	Where it is in this guide
Investigation: Rights and freedoms (1938–present)	First Nations civil rights, the 1967 referendum, land rights (VC2HH10K30–K35)	Section 6
Investigation: The globalising world (1945–present)	Human rights, migration, popular culture, the environment movement, the Cold War (VC2HH10K36–K41)	Section 7

Your school will not teach every Investigation in depth. Check your course outline, then spend most of your time on the sections your school assesses. Sections 1, 6 and 7 are taught almost everywhere at Level 10, and Section 4 (World War II) is usually the Level 9–10 war unit.

How Year 10 History is assessed

There is no state-wide exam for Year 10 History. Your school sets the assessment, so formats differ, but most Victorian schools use a combination of:

Task type	What it usually looks like	What it tests most
Source analysis test	3–5 sources (text, images, statistics) with short and extended questions	Using sources, perspectives, reliability
Research essay or investigation	A historical question you research and answer in 800–1,500 words with referencing	Questions, evidence, sustained argument
Extended response or essay under test conditions	1 question, 40–50 minutes	Knowledge, cause and consequence, significance
End-of-semester exam	Short answers, sources and an essay, usually 90–120 minutes	Everything

The practice exam in this guide follows the most common end-of-semester format: Section A (short answer), Section B (source analysis) and Section C (extended response). It also prepares you for VCE History, where the same skills are assessed in much more depth.

How to use this guide

- Read each section once from start to finish, then make your own one-page summary of it.
- Learn the timelines. Dates are the skeleton you hang every argument on.
- Do the “Check your understanding” questions without looking at the notes, then mark them using the Worked solutions section.
- Do the practice exam under timed conditions about a week before your real exam.
- Read the model paragraphs carefully. Notice how they use evidence, name a historical concept and reach a judgement.

Exam tip: Blue boxes like this one give advice on how marks are awarded. Boxes marked **Common mistake** warn you about errors that cost students marks every year.

A four-week revision plan

Week	Focus	Tasks
1	Skills and sources	Section 1; practise the source-analysis method on two sources a day
2	World War II and the Holocaust	Section 4; timeline drills; two extended paragraphs
3	Rights and freedoms; globalising world	Sections 6 and 7; one full essay plan per topic
4	Whole course	Sections 2, 3 and 5 skim; practice exam timed; review mistakes; One-page summary

Contents

1. Historical concepts and skills
2. Overview: the making of the modern world (1750–present)
3. Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)
4. Investigation: Australians at war (1914–1945) and the Holocaust
5. Investigation: Asia (1750–present) — Japan
6. Investigation: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' rights and freedoms
7. Investigation: The globalising world (1945–present)
8. Exam technique
9. Practice exam
10. Worked solutions
11. Glossary
12. One-page summary

1. Historical concepts and skills

These skills are assessed in every task, whatever the topic. A student who knows fewer facts but uses the concepts well will usually outscore a student who only retells events.

Historical questions (VC2HH10S01)

A good historical investigation starts with a good question. Questions fall into three broad types:

Type	Example	Why it matters
Closed (factual)	When was the 1967 referendum held?	Builds knowledge but cannot be argued
Open (explanatory)	Why did the 1967 referendum receive such strong support?	Requires causes and evidence
Evaluative	To what extent did the 1967	Requires a judgement; this is

Type	Example	Why it matters
	referendum change the lives of Aboriginal people?	what essays ask

To **refine** a question, narrow it by place, time or group ("in Victoria", "between 1939 and 1945", "for women"), and make sure it can be answered with the sources available.

Exam tip: In a research task, an evaluative question beginning "To what extent…" or "How significant…" almost always produces a stronger essay than one beginning "What happened…".

Chronology (VC2HH10S02)

Chronology is placing events in the order they happened. It matters because causes must come before consequences, and because placing an event in its period helps explain it. Useful terms: **decade** (10 years), **century** (the 20th century is 1901–2000), **era** or **period** (e.g. the interwar period, 1918–1939), **BCE/CE**, **c.** (circa, "about").

Common mistake: Writing "the 1900s" when you mean the 20th century. "The 1900s" can mean 1900–1909. Write "the 20th century" or give exact years.

Using historical sources (VC2HH10S03 and S04)

A **primary source** was created during the period being studied, or by someone who experienced it (a diary, a photograph, a law, a speech, a census table). A **secondary source** was created later by someone interpreting the past (a textbook, a historian's book, a documentary). A memoir written decades later by a participant is primary for that person's experience but shaped by hindsight.

To analyse any source, use the **OPCVL** method:

Step	Question to ask	Example: Prime Minister Menzies' radio broadcast, 3 September 1939
Origin	Who made it, when, where, what type?	Robert Menzies, Prime Minister, national radio broadcast, the day Britain declared war
Purpose	Why was it made, and for whom?	To inform Australians officially and prepare them for war
Content	What does it say or show?	Australia is at war because Britain has declared war on Germany
Context	What was happening at the time that helps explain it?	Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939; Australia had not adopted the Statute of Westminster and saw itself as part of the British Empire
Value and limitations	What is it useful for? What can't it show?	Excellent evidence of the official view and of Australia's ties to

Step	Question to ask	Example: Prime Minister Menzies' radio broadcast, 3 September 1939
		Britain; cannot show how ordinary Australians felt

Reliability is how far a source can be trusted to be accurate. **Usefulness** depends on the question you are asking: a biased propaganda poster is unreliable as a record of facts but very useful as evidence of what a government wanted people to believe. **Corroboration** means checking a source against other sources.

Common mistake: Saying a source is "biased so it is useless". Every source has a perspective. Explain what it is useful for despite, or because of, its perspective.

Exam tip: When asked how useful a source is, always say "useful for…" and "limited because…", and link both to the specific question.

Perspectives (VC2HH10S05)

A **perspective** is a point of view shaped by a person's beliefs, values, experiences, position in society, gender, culture, location and the time they lived in. **Historical perspectives** are those of people in the past; **contemporary perspectives** are those of people looking back today. For example, in 1939 many Australians saw going to war alongside Britain as natural loyalty; a historian today might see the same decision as evidence of how dependent Australia was on Britain.

To identify a perspective, ask: who is speaking, what do they want, what do they leave out, and what words show their attitude?

Historical interpretations and contestability (VC2HH10S06)

An **interpretation** is a historian's explanation of the past based on evidence. History is **contestable**: historians may disagree because they use different evidence, ask different questions, or hold different values. Major Australian debates include the "History Wars" over the Frontier Wars, whether Australia faced a real Japanese invasion in 1942, and how much the 1967 referendum changed.

To evaluate an interpretation: identify the historian's argument, the evidence used, what it leaves out, and how well it is supported by other sources.

Continuity and change (VC2HH10S07)

Change is what becomes different over time; **continuity** is what stays the same. Change can be rapid (a revolution) or slow (attitudes to women's work), and can be progress for some groups and decline for others.

Exam tip: Strong answers mention both. "Although the 1967 referendum changed the Constitution, discrimination in wages, housing and policing continued for many Aboriginal people" is a continuity-and-change sentence.

Cause and consequence (VC2HH10S08)

A **long-term cause** builds up over years (e.g. resentment of the Treaty of Versailles). A **short-term cause** or **trigger** sets off the event (Germany's invasion of Poland). A **consequence** is a result; it can be **intended** (what people wanted) or **unintended** (what they did not expect), and **short-term** or **long-term**. Historians also rank causes: which was the most important, and why?

Historical significance (VC2HH10S09)

Significance is the importance historians give to an event, person or development. A useful set of criteria (remember **RIPED**):

Criterion	Question
Remarkable	Was it noticed and remarked on at the time and since?
Impact	How many people were affected, how deeply, for how long?
Pivotal	Was it a turning point?
Enduring	Does it still matter today?
Defining	Does it reveal something important about the period?

Significance is a judgement, so it must be argued with evidence and it can change over time. The Wave Hill walk-off (1966) was little noticed by most Australians at the time but is now seen as a turning point for land rights.

Communicating (VC2HH10S10)

History is written as an **argument**. Use the **TEEL** paragraph structure: **Topic sentence** (your point), **Explanation**, **Evidence** (specific facts, dates, statistics, quotes from sources), **Link** (back to the question and your judgement). Reference sources consistently (your school will tell you which system; footnotes or author–date are common).

Model paragraph: using a source as evidence

Question: *How useful is Menzies' 1939 broadcast for understanding why Australia went to war?*

Menzies' radio broadcast of 3 September 1939 is very useful for understanding the official reason Australia entered World War II. Menzies told the nation that "Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war", which shows that the government saw Australia's decision as automatic once Britain acted. This reflects the context of 1939, when Australia had not yet adopted the Statute of Westminster and most Australians identified strongly as British. However, the broadcast is limited because it shows only the government's perspective; it cannot tell us whether ordinary Australians agreed, and it says nothing about the economic or strategic reasons for supporting Britain. Corroborating it with enlistment figures or letters from soldiers would give a fuller picture. Overall, it is highly reliable evidence of the official view but only a partial explanation of why Australians fought.

Check your understanding 1

1. Give one example each of a closed, an open and an evaluative question about the Eureka Stockade.
2. Explain the difference between a primary and a secondary source. Is a historian's 2015 book on Gallipoli primary or secondary?
3. A government poster from 1917 urges men to enlist. Name one thing it is useful for and one thing it is limited for.
4. What does RIPED stand for?
5. Write one sentence about the 1967 referendum that shows both continuity and change.

2. Overview: the making of the modern world (1750–present)

The Overview gives you the big picture. Every Investigation in the rest of this guide sits inside it, so learn these ideas first and refer back to them in every essay.

2.1 The Industrial Revolution (from about 1750)

The **Industrial Revolution** was the shift from hand production in homes and workshops to machine production in factories. It began in **Britain** from the 1750s and 1760s and spread to Europe, the United States and later Asia.

Why Britain first? Coal and iron ore close together, a large empire supplying cheap raw materials (such as cotton), money to invest, a growing population, and a stable government that protected property.

Development	What changed
Textile machines (spinning jenny, c. 1764; later power looms)	Cloth was made in factories, far faster than by hand
Steam power (James Watt's improved steam engine, patented 1769)	Factories no longer had to be beside rivers; steam also powered ships and railways
Railways (from the 1820s)	Goods and people moved quickly and cheaply over long distances
Iron and steel	Stronger machines, bridges, ships and buildings

Consequences:

- **Urbanisation.** Millions moved from farms to fast-growing towns such as Manchester and Birmingham.
- **Working conditions.** Long hours, low pay and dangerous machines. Children worked in factories and mines. Reform came slowly: the 1833 Factory Act in Britain limited the hours of young children, and the 1842 Mines Act banned women and children from working underground.
- **New social classes.** A wealthy factory-owning middle class and a large industrial working class. Workers formed **trade unions** to demand better pay and conditions.
- **Pollution and overcrowding.** Slums, dirty water and disease.
- **Global impact.** Factories needed raw materials and markets, which drove imperialism (next). Australian wool, for example, fed British mills.

2.2 Imperialism

Imperialism is when a powerful country takes control of other lands and peoples. The period from about 1870 to 1914 is often called the age of **New Imperialism**, when European powers carved up Africa and parts of Asia. At the Berlin Conference (1884–85) European leaders agreed rules for dividing Africa, and no African leaders were part of the decisions.

Motive	Meaning
Economic	Raw materials, new markets for factory goods, places to invest
Strategic	Naval bases and trade routes (for example the Suez Canal, opened 1869)
Political	National pride; the more colonies, the more powerful a nation seemed
Ideological	Beliefs such as the "civilising mission" and racist ideas of European superiority (often called Social Darwinism)

Impacts on colonised peoples: loss of land and independence, forced labour, new borders that ignored existing nations, and damage to traditional cultures. There was also **resistance**, such as the 1857 Rebellion in British India. In China, Britain fought the Opium Wars (1839–42 and 1856–60) to force the country to accept trade on British terms. Imperial rivalry also helped cause World War I.

Australia was part of this story twice: as a British colony that took the land of First Nations peoples, and later as a small imperial power itself, ruling Papua and, after World War I, German New Guinea.

2.3 Big ideas that shaped the modern world

Idea	What it is	Example
Enlightenment	The belief that reason, science and human rights should guide society	Inspired the American Revolution (1776) and French Revolution (1789)
Nationalism	Strong loyalty to one's nation; can unite people or divide them	Unification of Germany (1871); Australian Federation (1901)
Liberalism and democracy	Individual freedom and government by the people	Spread of the vote during the 19th century
Socialism and communism	Ideas that wealth should be shared more equally; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848	Russian Revolution 1917; Australian Labor movement
Scientific ideas	New understanding of nature	Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859)

2.4 Change after 1945

- **The United Nations** was founded in 1945 to keep peace and protect human rights.

- **Decolonisation:** many colonies became independent (India and Pakistan in 1947, then much of Africa and Asia in the 1950s and 1960s).
- **The Cold War** divided the world between the United States and the Soviet Union (see Section 7).
- **Technology and globalisation:** air travel, television, computers and the internet connected the world and made economies depend on each other.
- **Rights movements** challenged racism, sexism and discrimination.

2.5 Social movements

A **social movement** is a large group of people working together for change. Common methods include petitions, marches, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience and lobbying. Examples you can use in essays: the suffrage movement, the US civil rights movement, the anti-apartheid movement, the Aboriginal rights movement (Section 6), the anti-Vietnam War movement (Section 7) and the environment movement (Section 7).

2.6 The Australian women's movement

Date	Event
1894	South Australia gives women the vote in colonial elections, and the right to stand for parliament (a world first)
1902	The Commonwealth Franchise Act gives non-Indigenous women the right to vote and stand in federal elections; most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were excluded from this
1920s–30s	Women win the right to enter more professions, but many lose their jobs on marriage
1942–45	World War II brings women into factories, farms and the armed services
1966	The marriage bar, which forced women in the Commonwealth public service to resign when they married, is removed
1969 and 1972	Equal pay decisions by the arbitration commission move towards equal pay for work of equal value
1972	The Women's Electoral Lobby presses political parties on women's issues
1975	The Family Law Act introduces no-fault divorce
1984	The Sex Discrimination Act makes discrimination on the basis of sex unlawful

Continuity and change: women today have equal legal rights, but the gender pay gap, unequal unpaid work at home and violence against women remain major issues.

Exam tip: In an overview question, do not just list events. Link them: "The Industrial Revolution created factories that needed raw materials, which helped drive imperialism, which brought Britain to Australia." Showing connections earns top marks.

Check your understanding 2

1. Give two reasons why the Industrial Revolution began in Britain.
2. Name two consequences of the Industrial Revolution for workers.
3. List the four main motives for imperialism.
4. Which Australian colony first gave women the right to stand for parliament, and in what year?
5. Explain one way the Industrial Revolution and imperialism were connected.

3. Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)

3.1 Before 1788: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived on this continent for more than 60,000 years, making theirs one of the oldest continuing cultures on Earth. Before 1788 there were hundreds of language groups and nations (commonly estimated at around 250), each with its own **Country**, laws, trade networks and spiritual connection to the land. **Country** means the land, waters and sky, and the responsibilities people have to care for them. Torres Strait Islander Peoples have their own distinct cultures, including strong sea-based economies and gardens.

In Victoria, the **Kulin Nation** (including the Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Wadawurrung peoples) cared for the land on which Melbourne now stands.

3.2 British colonisation

- In **1770** James Cook claimed the east coast for Britain.
- **Why Britain chose to settle in 1788:** Britain's prisons were overcrowded, and it could no longer send convicts to America after the American colonies became independent (1783). Other motives were to claim land before France did, and to gain a naval base and new resources.
- The **First Fleet** (11 ships carrying about 1,400 people, around 750 of them convicts) reached Botany Bay in January 1788 and settled at Sydney Cove. **26 January 1788** is the day the British flag was raised, and today many First Nations people mark it as a day of mourning (Invasion Day or Survival Day).
- Britain treated the land as **terra nullius**, "land belonging to no one", ignoring the existing peoples. This idea was not overturned until the *Mabo* decision in 1992 (Section 6).
- About 160,000 convicts were transported to Australia. Transportation ended to New South Wales in 1840, to Tasmania in 1853 and to Western Australia in 1868.

3.3 Impact on First Nations peoples and the Frontier Wars

As settlers spread, Aboriginal peoples lost land, food sources and sacred sites. Introduced diseases such as smallpox killed very large numbers of people. Many communities resisted, and conflict on the frontier is often called the **Frontier Wars**.

End of free sample

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