A One-hour Test of Historical Thinking

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Six historical thinking concepts were promoted by the Historical Thinking Project ([www.historicalthinking.ca](http://www.historicalthinking.ca)) and form the basis for the draft British Columbia social studies curriculum (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/Social%20Studies>

as well as the new Ontario history curriculum.

The accompanying test was designed to assess students’ competencies with three of the historical thinking concepts: using primary source evidence, taking historical perspectives, and understanding the ethical dimension of history.

While it was designed as a research instrument to explore the choosing and editing of document excerpts, the construction of questions, scoring, and the validation of score interpretation, we are posting it here as a model of a one hour test that could be replicated using other substantive historical topics, and, with somewhat more labour, other historical thinking concepts. We invite any who try to do so to communicate with us about your efforts. ([kadriye.ercikan@ubc.ca](mailto:kadriye.ercikan@ubc.ca) or peter.seixas@ubc.ca)

The test does not require previous knowledge about the historical period or the events to which it refers. The contextual information that students will need is provided as part of the test in a short summary and in excerpts from primary source documents. Even though efforts have been made to minimize reading difficulty, the test is recommended for students with English reading abilities at the high school level. The test has six multiple-choice and five open-ended questions. Students should be able to complete it within a one-hour time period.

The test, its application, interpretation and significance have been the basis of a number of papers and publications:

Ercikan, K. & Seixas, P. (submitted). Issues in Designing Assessments of Historical Thinking. *Theory into Practice.*

Ercikan, K., Seixas, P., Kaliski, P. , & Huff, K., (submitted). Assessment of history learning. In H. Braun (Ed.), *Meeting the Challenges to Measurement in an Era of Accountability.*

Routledge publishing.

Ercikan, K., Seixas, P., Lyons-Thomas, J., & Gibson, L. (in press). Cognitive validity evidence for validating assessments of historical thinking. In K. Ercikan & P. Seixas (Eds.), *New Directions in Assessing Historical Thinking*. New York: Routledge.

Ercikan, K., Seixas, P., Lyons-Thomas, J., & Gibson, L. (2012). *Designing and validating an assessment of historical thinking using evidence centered assessment design*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association.

Seixas, P., Gibson, L., & Ercikan, K. (in press). A design process for assessing historical thinking: The case of a one-hour test. In K. Ercikan & P. Seixas (Eds.), *New Directions in Assessing Historical Thinking*. New York: Routledge.

Seixas, P., Ercikan, K., Gibson, L., & Lyons-Thomas, J. (2012). *Assessing historical thinking: Challenges and possibilities*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association.