

Module One: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-1: The Rights of Immigrants

Over the centuries, millions of immigrants have journeyed to America. Most sought to fit into American society, yet most also sought to hold onto certain aspects of their native lands. The experience of different immigrant groups illustrates the difficulty of "fitting in" and attaining the full range of rights that the Constitution guarantees to all citizens, when one is perceived as somehow *different* from native-born Americans.

In this module, we will look at the experiences of two different immigrant groups—the Irish and the Québécois, French-speaking immigrants from Quebec—who came to America in large numbers during the 19th century. Looking at the experiences of these two groups will help us learn how to begin to think like historians: to assess the historical significance of events, to place them in context, and to understand the different perspectives, or **lenses**, through which we can view these events. You will begin developing the **historical thinking** skills necessary to ask questions, investigate sources, and begin outlining your historical analysis essay, using these two immigrant groups as backdrops.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Be introduced to the core concept of this section: the rights of immigrants
- Learn about the concept of historical significance
- Apply the concept of historical significance to your own experience



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Module One: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-2: Historical Thinking

Studying history is not a matter of memorizing names and dates. Studying history is an effort to make sense of the past—to understand why certain events took place and to draw from that understanding larger conclusions about human society.

To do all that requires a particular mindset, a way of looking at the events of the past that allows us to see connections and causalities that may elude the casual observer. Thinking like a historian is a vital skill, and learning that skill is one of the central goals of this course. The skills you learn in this course will be useful both in completing your historical analysis essay and in your future studies at SNHU.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Be introduced to the concept of *historical lenses*
- Learn to look at historical events through different lenses



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Module One: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-3: Research Questions

In this learning block, we are going to shift our focus away from the immigrant experience in America for the moment and begin to look at the historical research that you will be asked to undertake for your course assessment.

At the conclusion of Module Eight, you will be required to submit a **historical event analysis**—a four- to six-page essay that analyzes a particular historical event. Before writing your essay, you will be required to submit a **writing plan**—a one- to two-page document that describes the event you have chosen to analyze, the resources you plan to use in your research, and the particular audience for your essay. You will be required to submit your writing plan at the conclusion of Module Four.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Begin choosing the research topic for your historical event analysis
- Learn how to ask a critical research question
- Better understand how historical thinking can be applied to parts of your life
- Practice developing research questions



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Module One: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-4: The Irish Immigrant Experience

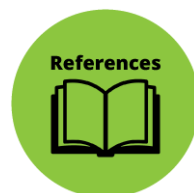
According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Irish Americans make up the third largest "ancestry group" in the United States. As of 2014, more than 33 million Americans claimed Irish ancestry—almost eight times the current population of the Republic of Ireland (Mekouar, 2014).

This learning block uses the Irish immigrant experience as a way to develop historical thinking skills and further refine your approach to framing a research question.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Analyze how historical events change over time
- Develop narrower and more specific research questions
- Start the process of asking your research question for your historical essay



References

Mekouar, D. (2014, December 19). *People of German ancestry dominate US melting pot*. Voice of America. <https://blogs.voanews.com/all-about-america/2014/12/19/people-of-german-ancestry-dominate-us-melting-pot/> (<https://blogs.voanews.com/all-about-america/2014/12/19/people-of-german-ancestry-dominate-us-melting-pot/>)

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Asking a Research Question

Once you have chosen a basic topic for your historical analysis, you will need to ask a question about what it is you want to research. A **research question** is more than an opinion—as the name implies, it requires a certain amount of research to answer.

How to ask a good question:

1. **Conduct preliminary research:** You need to have a certain basis of knowledge about a historical topic before you ask a question about it. And a good way to frame your research question is to draw from facts about the historical event and base your question on historical premises and things you already know about the event. From there, you can prove the premises in your analysis—or attempt to disprove them.



Immigrants arriving in the United States.

(Click button for citation) 

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Your first stop as you conduct your preliminary research should be Shapiro

Library ([https://lgapi.libapps.com/widgets.php?](https://lgapi.libapps.com/widgets.php?site_id=75&widget_type=9&output_format=1&widget_embed_type=2&guide_id=183523&page_id=75)

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A good place to conduct initial research to choose a topic you are interested in, or to narrow down a topic you have in mind, is with an encyclopedia. Through the Shapiro Library, you have access to the Credo Reference encyclopedia, which you can access at this link (<http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/title/rcah?institutionId=943&tab=contents>).

You will need to log in with your SNHU credentials to

access these sites. This is a great way to get started with your research, but Credo should **not** constitute your entire research for your essay.

2. **Explore the historical premise and make it explicit:** When asking a research question, don't assume the audience will take the next logical leap with you. State any assumptions that you might be including in your research.

3. **Break it down into further questions:** Yes, you are asking a research question, but it will consist of many questions that add to your argument.

Example of Forming a Research Question

Consider the following research question:

Did Irish immigration in the 1840s have a positive impact on the U.S. economy?

This question is flawed in many different ways. To begin, it is overly broad: researching the impact of Irish immigration on the entire U.S. economy could take years. A somewhat better question might be:

Did Irish immigration in the 1840s have a positive impact on the economy of New York City?

That narrows things down a bit, but it's still too vague. What does it mean to *have a positive impact* on the economy? Let's be more specific:

Did Irish immigration in the 1840s contribute to the growth of manufacturing industries in New York City?

We're getting there, but there are still a few problems. For starters, we're making an assumption about the link between immigration and manufacturing; let's state that assumption, or historical premise, explicitly:

Did the availability of cheap labor, brought about by Irish immigration in the 1840s, contribute to the growth of manufacturing industries in New York City?

A good research question also requires analyzing texts and thinking critically. Your question should have more than a simple "yes" or "no" answer. If your question can only be answered by a series of facts, then it is not critical enough.

Critical questions:

- Lead to more questions
- Require further analysis of text
- Provoke further discussion
- Moves you outside of your own frame of reference in order to understand issues on a larger scale
- Focus on the audience and the message (which you will learn more about later in this course)

The research question we developed above is still one that requires a simple, yes-or-no answer. We need a question that requires critical thinking—a question that can't be answered simply:

How did the availability of cheap labor, brought about by Irish immigration in the 1840s, affect the growth of manufacturing industries in New York City?

This question leads to further questions, such as:

What industries might have benefited from the low-skilled Irish immigrant labor pool? How did employers' desire for cheap labor play off against prevailing anti-Catholic, anti-Irish attitudes?

Further information about researching and writing history by Patrick Rael, professor of History at Bowdoin College, can be found at this link (<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>). *This reading is optional.*

Review Checkpoint

To test your understanding of the content presented in this learning block, **please click on the Question icon below**. Click your selected response to see feedback displayed below it. If you have trouble answering, you are always free to return to this or any learning block to re-read the material.



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Assimilation

The process by which immigrant communities, over time, integrate themselves into their host society is known as **assimilation**. In America, this process generally involves the gradual adoption of the English language, along with American culture and values, by the immigrant group. Full assimilation is said to occur when members of a particular group are indistinguishable from the rest of American society (Brown & Bean, 2006).

Throughout American history, assimilation has generally been assumed to be the logical and desired end result for any immigrant group coming to America. This assumption is not universally shared, however, and some immigrant groups have resisted assimilation by holding on to their native language, food, and cultural practices. Other immigrants saw themselves as "birds of passage," coming to America to take advantage of the greater economic opportunities here but returning home after they'd earned enough money to live comfortably in their native lands.

Sociologists measure assimilation by the extent to which members of an immigrant group:

- Improve their socioeconomic status, making it comparable to national norms;
- Increase geographic mobility, moving beyond the **ethnic enclaves** in which many immigrants first settle;
- Adopt English as a second and, eventually, first language; and
- Intermarry—that is, marry people from outside their ethnic group or community (Waters & Jiménez, 2005).

Barriers to Assimilation

The classic theory of assimilation holds that immigrants inevitably become more "Americanized" with the passage of time. But there are many barriers to assimilation that can delay or even prevent a group's full assimilation (Brown & Bean, 2006).

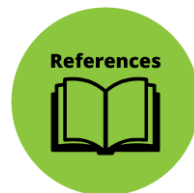
Language is one of the primary barriers to assimilation. Immigrant groups whose members speak English may find it easier to assimilate than members of other groups, though this is not always the case.

Race may also block a group's assimilation into American society. The nation's tragic history of racial division has had a long-lasting impact on American society; the simple fact is that having a darker skin color undeniably marks a person as *different* from the majority of white Americans. For that reason alone, an English-speaking immigrant from Nigeria, for example, might find it harder to "blend in" than an English-speaking immigrant from Scotland.

Finally, *religion* has historically been a major barrier to assimilation. From the earliest colonial days, religious minorities have often faced prejudice and discrimination in America. From the anti-Catholic riots of the 19th century to the widespread anti-Semitism of the 20th century to the anti-Muslim sentiment of the post-9/11 era, religious prejudices have proven to be a powerful impediment to assimilation.

Review Checkpoint

To test your understanding of the content presented in this learning block, **please click on the Question icon below**. Click your selected response to see feedback displayed below it. If you have trouble answering, you are always free to return to this or any learning block to re-read the material.



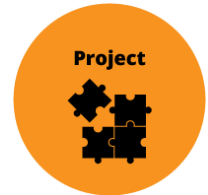
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You have reached the end of **Learning Block 1-1**. Click the Next button below to begin **Learning Block 1-2**.

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Choosing a Research Topic



As you get ready to start your own historical research, you should know that the first step in any historical analysis is the most basic: choosing a topic to research. In this course, you will be required to submit your research topic for approval at the end of **Module One, Learning Block 1-4**.

The topic must be an event in American history. You may choose a topic that is related to any of the case studies contained in this course, or you may choose your own topic, with the approval of your instructor.

Here are a few pointers to help you choose your topic:

1. **Pick a topic that interests you.** You're likely to do more research, and do it faster, when you're genuinely engaged by your topic.
2. **Pick a topic that is credible and relevant.** Avoid sensationalism; don't waste your time trying to research the history of alien abductions or Elvis sightings. And make sure your topic is historically relevant—that is, a topic that requires you to do real historical research, not just express your opinions.
3. **Narrow it down.** A topic that's too broad will require you to sift through too much information and make it hard for you to focus.
4. **Ask your instructor for ideas.** Your instructor can also help you decide what topics are credible and relevant and how to narrow down an overly broad topic.
5. **Make sure you can find the needed resources.** If your topic is too obscure or too narrow, you might have trouble finding enough relevant sources.

Sample Topics

The case studies in this course cover the following issues. Click on each tab to learn more about the topic, which will help you decide if it might be something you are interested in researching.

Irish Immigrant Experience

Québécois Immigrant Experience

The Woman Suffrage Movement and the Nineteenth Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

School Desegregation in Boston

The Cherokee "Trail of Tears"

The Creation of Alaska Native Corporations

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Coming to America: The Irish



Most of the Irish who journeyed to America during the colonial era were Protestants from Ulster, the province (now known as Northern Ireland) that has remained a part of the United Kingdom. These *Scots-Irish* immigrants differed in many respects from immigrants from the other Irish provinces, who were mainly Catholic.

Scots-Irish immigrants in the 18th century were much like other British colonists: they were not well-to-do, but most were skilled and fairly well-educated, and of course, they were Protestant. For that reason, they had little difficulty assimilating into American society.

Philadelphia was the major port of entry for the Scots-Irish, but many eventually settled in the western territories as frontiersmen (McCaffrey, 2004). President Andrew Jackson was the child of Scots-Irish immigrants, and many later Presidents claimed Scots-Irish ancestry.

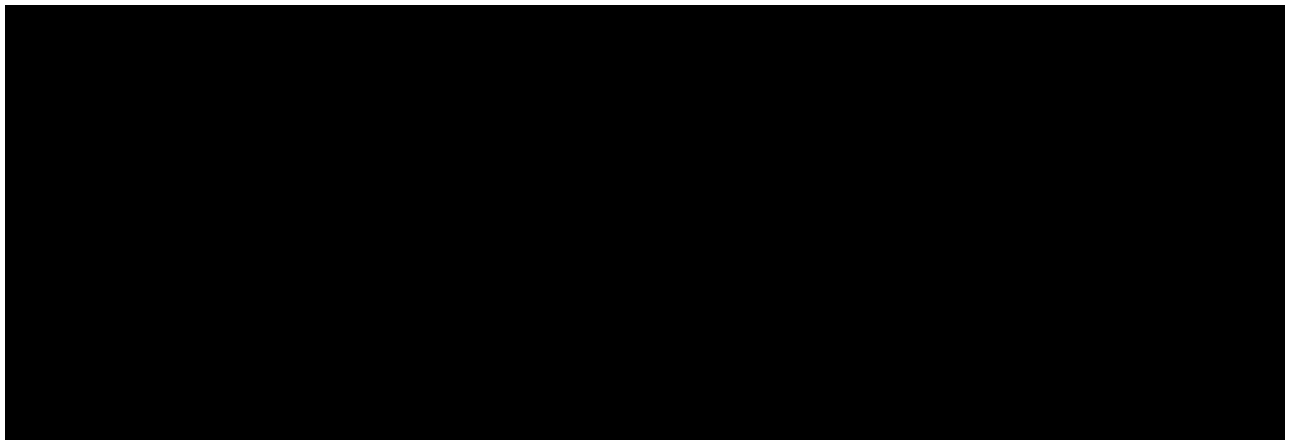
Starting around 1820, however, the nature of Irish immigration to America changed dramatically, as unprecedented numbers of Catholics from rural Ireland began to make their way across the Atlantic. This video tells their story:



(<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/p>

Click the image above to visit the Library of Congress page about Irish immigration. (Click button for citation) ⓘ

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Irish_immigrant



[View the Transcript](#)

The Irish and the Civil War

Much of the anti-Catholic bias that confronted Irish-American immigrants focused on the figure of the Pope. To many nativist Americans, the idea that Catholic immigrants professed allegiance to a foreign-born religious leader raised serious doubts about whether they could ever be "truly" American. The advent of the War Between the States created an opportunity for the Irish immigrant community to "prove" its Americanism—to demonstrate loyalty to its adopted country, and by so doing, put the lie to the assertions of Know-Nothings and other nativists, who saw the Irish as unfit to be called American.

Most Irish Catholics had settled in the industrial North, and many were quick to express their support for the Union cause. Barely a week after the attack on Fort Sumter that sparked the hostilities, thousands of Irish Americans gathered at a rally in New York's Union Square, cheering on Major Robert Anderson and other Union defenders of Sumter. Urged on by Catholic bishops such as New York's John Hughes and Boston's John Fitzpatrick, thousands of Irish enlisted in the Union Army (Samito, 2011).

Many of these enlistees joined all-Irish "heritage units" led by Irish-American officers. The Army's "Irish Brigade" included New York's Famous "Fighting 69th" Regiment, which distinguished itself during the Seven Days Battles, and the



Massachusetts Ninth Volunteers, which fought at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

The well-publicized heroics of these and other all-Irish units helped establish the

"Americanism" of the Irish-

American community and contributed significantly to the process of Irish assimilation (Samito, 2011). Some Irish-American soldiers segued naturally into politics after the war; Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher, commander of the Irish Brigade, was later governor of the Montana Territory.

But even as the Irish were fighting to preserve the Union, many balked at the goal of abolishing slavery. Since first arriving in America in great numbers, Irish immigrants had frequently found themselves competing economically with free African Americans. Tensions between the two communities, both struggling on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, had flared into violence on several occasions before the war, including the Cincinnati riots of 1829 and 1841 (Osofsky, 1975).

The New York Draft Riots

In 1863, economic tensions were exacerbated by the fear, common among Irish immigrants and other working-class whites, that President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would lead many freed African Americans to move to the North and compete with them for jobs. At the same time, resentment over the newly instituted military draft—from which African Americans were exempt, and which wealthy whites could avoid by paying a \$300 fee—festered among the Irish working class.

The drawing of draft numbers was scheduled to take place in New York City in July. On July 13—less than two weeks after the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg—rioters attacked the building where the drawing was taking place. Police were unable to restore order, and what began as a protest against the draft quickly turned into a four-day race riot. Federal troops, coupled with the state militia, eventually quelled the mob, but the "Draft Riots" left an estimated 120 people dead and another 2,000 injured.

Depiction of the aftermath of the New York Draft Riots.

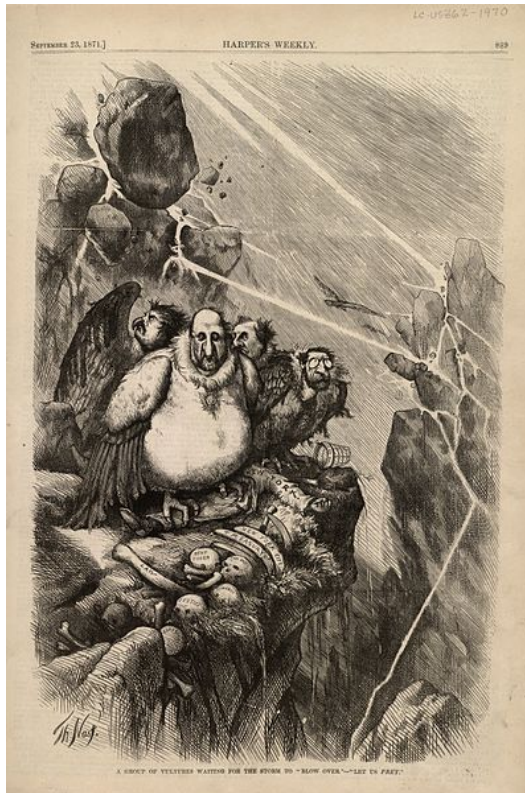
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(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New_York_I_Harpers_-_clash.jpg)

Even as the Civil War provided the Irish-American community with an avenue toward assimilation, the Draft Riots and their aftermath led to lingering tension and distrust between the Irish and African American communities (Hauptman, 2003).

Political Mobilization

Even before the Civil War, Irish Catholics sought to protect their community and assert their strength by organizing politically. Most Irish identified with the Democratic Party, and their growing numbers allowed Democratic **political machines** to dominate many major cities, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco, in the late 1800s. Irish-American political bosses retained power in many cities through the Great Depression of the 1930s, and in some cases, well beyond that.



New York's "Boss" Tweed was depicted as a vulture in this cartoon by Thomas Nast. (Click button for citation) ⓘ

(<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nast-Prey-Harper%27s-Weekly-1871.jpg>)

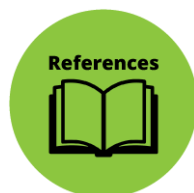
These local political machines provided many valuable social services at a time when state and local governments did not. They helped immigrants—originally mostly Irish, but as time passed, newcomers from many other lands as well—become citizens and find jobs, and they would often help out with money or food in times of need.

But many of the political machines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were notorious—and rightly so—as hotbeds of graft and corruption. In New York City, the Democratic machine led by Boss William M. Tweed embezzled between \$40 million and \$100 million in just five years, and similar (though smaller-scale) corruption flourished in many other cities.

The emergence of government-provided social services, beginning in the Great Depression, displaced the local machines and helped contribute to their eventual demise. Still, the big-city political machines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries unquestionably eased the burdens for millions of immigrants and helped them find their place in American society.

Assimilation

With the passage of time, the Irish have assimilated fully into American society and culture. While the Irish immigrants of the 19th century were poor and ill-educated, today's Irish Americans as a group rank well above the national averages for household income and educational attainment (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).



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Exercise: Further Readings

As you begin research for your historical analysis essay, you will encounter secondary sources, such as scholarly journals and periodicals. The following passage is from a scholarly journal article that looks at possible job discrimination against the Irish in Major League Baseball during the 1880s. Read the passage and then answer the question following it, keeping in mind the historical concept of **change** over time.



The passage below is excerpted from "Anti-Irish Job Discrimination circa 1880: Evidence from Major League Baseball"

(<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/pdf/40927624.pdf>), pages 409 to 410 and 415 to 416. Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *This reading is required. You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials to access this article.*

The Famine Irish

From about 1846 to the early 1850s Ireland was beset by a series of disastrous failures of the potato crop, a staple for poor peasants in the rural western and southern counties. One outcome was an estimated 1.1 to 1.5 million deaths from starvation and related diseases, roughly 15 percent of the country's pre-famine population (Kenny 2000: 89). Another was a mass exodus, primarily to the United States. About 1.5 million Irish entered the United States from 1846 to 1855, by far the largest immigrant wave up to that time. This was 45.6 percent of total U.S. immigration in the 1840s and 35.2 percent in the 1850s (ibid.: 90). The wave subsided after the mid-1850s (Hatton and Williamson 1993: 596).

The famine immigrants tended to settle in large northeastern cities, often the ports where their transporting ships landed. In 1850, 37 percent of the U.S. Irish-born population lived in cities of 25,000 or more, compared to just under 9 percent of the

general population (Kenny 2000: 105). In 1870, 44.5 percent of the Irish-born lived in the 50 largest cities (ibid.). They remained in these alien urban environments partly because they had no money to move inland and partly because their experience back home as farm laborers and small-scale tenant farmers had not prepared them for success in American agriculture. Once settled, Irish immigrants quickly discovered that their rural, underdeveloped homeland had provided very little in the way of industrial experience or skill, forcing them to the bottom of the occupational hierarchy (Laurie et al. 1975: 240). The result was a concentration of the Irish in big-city tenement slums.

All these circumstances made the Irish quite conspicuous and worked against their rapid assimilation. William H. A. Williams (1996: 1) writes: "Irish Catholics were in many respects the first 'ethnic' group in America . . . the first immigrant group to arrive in extremely large numbers, to gain high visibility by clustering in cities . . . , and to appear sufficiently 'different' in religion and culture so that acceptance by native-born Americans was not automatic, and assimilation was, therefore, prolonged." Although most spoke English in addition to their native Irish (Gaelic), this was insufficient to overcome their various disadvantages.

The native-born U.S. population reacted in part by developing negative Irish stereotypes similar to those associated with bigotry toward African Americans. The long history of English domination of Ireland already had planted notions of Irish inferiority that English immigrants had brought with them in the two centuries before the famine exodus. In fact, the Irish generally were viewed as a separate "race," although the term would hardly be applied to Irish Americans today. The basic elements of the stereotype were innate low intelligence, unreliability, laziness, and (for males) a penchant for drunkenness and fighting. Newspaper and magazine cartoonists of the era often portrayed the Irish with simian features. They were regularly characterized as racially inferior to Americans of Anglo-Saxon origin, even in the pages of respectable intellectual periodicals (Kenny 2006: 366; Lee 2006: 25).

In contrast, the other main non-English immigrant group of the period, the Germans (Cohn 1995), assimilated much more easily. While language was a problem, they were more highly educated and skilled than the Irish. In 1860 German men were most highly concentrated in skilled crafts, in contrast to the Irish, who were disproportionately made up of unskilled laborers (Conley and Galenson 1998: 471). Also, German immigrants had been preceded by numerous fellow "countrymen" during the previous century who had paved the way by establishing themselves economically and socially in America. The stereotypical German was hardworking, disciplined, earnest, and frugal (Gerlach 2002: 39). While the famine Irish had been preceded by a steady stream of Scots-Irish, starting in the early 1700s these non-Gaelic Protestants from the north of Ireland were a distinct group (Chepesiuk 2000). They generally settled in inland rural areas (e.g., Appalachia and the southern Piedmont), and where the two groups coexisted, the Scots-Irish were often antagonistic toward the new immigrants.

The Irish ballplayers circa 1880, during our study period, were mainly the sons of the famine immigrants. While assimilation had clearly begun by this time, it was hardly complete. For example, Kerby A. Miller (1985: 492) notes: "Between 1870 and 1921 Irish-Americans emerged from the near ubiquitous poverty and crippling prejudice of the Famine decades. The process was slow, halting, and incomplete even by 1921." Negative stereotypes lingered after the turn of the twentieth century, and the popular press continued to portray the Irish with simian features at least into the 1890s.

Early Professional Baseball

The origin of major-league baseball is usually identified with the 1876 founding of the National League (NL), which has operated continuously to the present day. It joined with the American League in 1903 to form modern Major League Baseball (MLB). The NL's basic business model and operating format at its inception were essentially the same as those of modern professional baseball, as were most playing rules.

There were, however, some important differences circa 1880. First, league membership typically changed from year to year (see Eckard 2005). For example, by 1881 only Boston and Chicago remained of the original eight NL clubs. During 1876-83, 18 cities were represented. The NL had eight teams in each of these years except 1877 and 1878, when it had six.

A second difference was the entry of independent major leagues. In 1882 the American Association (AA) began play, recognized then and now as a second major league. The AA fielded six teams in its first year and eight in its second. It lasted for a decade before merging with the NL in 1892. In 1884 the Union Association (UA) claimed major status, although it lasted but a single season. It was highly unstable with several midseason failures. Including replacements, 13 cities were involved in its eight-team circuit. In response to this entry, the AA expanded to 12 teams for 1884 but with one failure and replacement also included 13 cities. Thus the total number of major-league teams more than doubled from 16 in 1883 to a still record 34 in 1884, with a concurrent significant dilution of player quality.

The season lasted from April to October, nearly as long as today, but fewer games were scheduled. During 1876-83 the number varied from only 60 (1877 and 1878) to 98 (1883), spread more or less evenly over the six-month season. Major-league clubs augmented their "championship" schedule with exhibition games against independent teams. An important difference in playing rules is that midgame player substitutions were allowed only in the case of injury. Thus there was no pinch-hitting, pinch-running, or late-game defensive substitution. Nor was there relief pitching as we know it today. A pitcher removed for poor performance had to trade positions with another player already in the game who could also pitch (called a "change" pitcher). But this seldom occurred; pitchers usually completed over 90 percent of their starts. Partly for this reason, circa 1880 pitchers were used much more intensively than today, with teams relying primarily on only one or two pitchers for the entire season. Also, pitchers often played in the field in games in which they did not pitch.

For all these reasons, rosters seldom had more than a dozen players at any one time, fewer than half the number on modern MLB teams. Clubs often took only 10 men on road trips plus a nonplaying agent of the owners responsible for general supervision and business matters. Player salaries circa 1880 varied roughly from \$500 to \$2,500, comparable to the wages of skilled craftsmen and many white-collar workers (see Voigt 1983: 56-57, 81). Contracts were typically for a single year, and contrary to myth, "revolving" or contract jumping among major-league teams was virtually nonexistent (Eckard 2001).

The first successful attempt by NL owners to limit competition for players was the partial reserve system introduced in 1880, applying to five players per team. Owners agreed among themselves not to bid for players reserved by other teams. But in 1880 and 1881 a few significant independent clubs still competed for top players (Eckard 2005: 127-28), undermining the resulting monopsony power. The nascent reserve system collapsed in 1882, when the entry of the AA caused a bidding war for players. In 1883 the AA and the NL agreed on a joint system, although it worked imperfectly before collapsing again with the 1884 entry of the UA.

If you're interested in reading more about the Irish immigrant experience on your own, you might also be interested in these *optional readings*:

- **Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and the Dilemmas of Romantic Nationalism:** An article on the frictions between Irish immigrants and African Americans and the reluctance of many Irish to support the abolition of slavery. You can read it [at this link](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/pdf/1867443.pdf?_=1459868932167). (http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/pdf/1867443.pdf?_=1459868932167)
- **Ethnic Diversity and Democratic Stability: The Case of Irish Americans:** An analysis of the involvement of Irish immigrants in 19th-century Democratic machine politics. You can read it [at this link](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/pdf/2151885.pdf). (<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/pdf/2151885.pdf>)

Discussion



Please review the discussion prompt for this module in Brightspace.

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Framing Research Questions



By now, you should have a general idea of what topic you would like to research. The next step will be to formulate a research question about your topic. Below are two sample topics. You will begin the process of conducting an historical event analysis by considering research questions for the sample topics below.

As you work on this exercise, keep in mind the aspects of a successful research question:

- It leads to more questions.
- It requires further analysis of text.
- It provokes further discussion.
- It moves you outside of your own frame of reference in order to understand issues on a larger scale.
- It focuses on the audience and the message (which you will learn more about later in this course).

Read the summary of each sample topic carefully and consider what you would like to learn more about if you were going to write a paper on that topic. Some sources are provided for you to explore further, which should help in crafting your research questions.

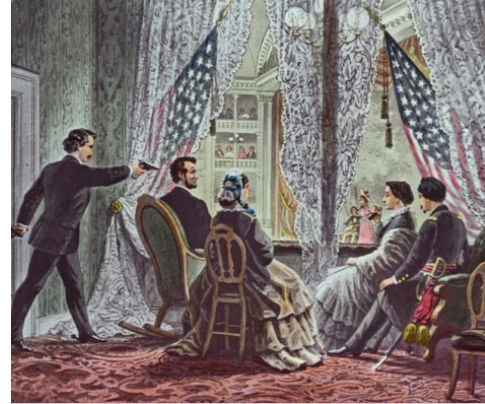
Sample Topic #1 (<https://snhu.mindedgeonline.com/content.php?cid=170381#ta>)

Sample Topic #2 (<https://snhu.mindedgeonline.com/content.php?cid=170381#ta>)

Sample Topic #1: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

On April 14, 1865, five days after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox effectively ended the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was fatally shot as he and his wife were watching a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC.

Lincoln's assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and Confederate sympathizer. Booth headed a conspiracy that aimed to decapitate the Union government; Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward, the next two figures in the line of Presidential succession, were also marked for death that night, but both survived.



Depiction of John Wilkes Booth leaning forward to shoot President Abraham Lincoln as he watches Our American Cousin at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. (Click button for citation) ©

(<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Li>

Lincoln's death had profound implications for post-Civil War America. In elevating to the Presidency Andrew Johnson, a poorly educated Southern populist Democrat who clashed repeatedly with Congressional Republicans over the course of Reconstruction, it set the stage for another century of political and legal conflicts over the civil rights of African Americans.

The following sources will give you some background on Lincoln's assassination and its aftermath. Read them over—along with any other articles on this subject that you might like to consult—and then formulate research questions that would be appropriate for an analysis of some aspect of this historical event:

- A reprint of an article that first appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* in July 1865, which suggested that Lincoln's assassination may have been ordered by the leaders of the Confederacy, can be found at this link. (<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=prf&AN=69689762&site=prc-live>)
- An article in *Smithsonian* magazine, which summarizes the reactions to Lincoln's death as presented in newspapers of the day, can be found at this link. (<http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=101141982&site=ehost-live&scope=site>)
- An article in *OAH Magazine of History*, which analyzes the Reconstruction of the former Confederacy during the administrations of President Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S. Grant, can be found at this link. (http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/25162637?&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Module 1 Short Responses

The following exercise will give you practice in framing research questions. Type your responses to the questions in the textboxes below. Be sure to respond to each question in two to three sentences. When you are finished, click "Submit." **These responses will be graded.** After submitting, you can edit your response by clicking "Edit."



Module 1 Short Responses – Question 5

If you had to write a paper on the Lincoln assassination, what would you like to know more about? Create three research questions that would be appropriate for a historical analysis essay, keeping in mind the characteristics of a critical research question. The three questions can be related, or they can address different aspects of the topic.

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 6

If you had to write a paper on Title IX, what would you like to know more about? Create three research questions that would be appropriate for a historical analysis essay, keeping in mind the characteristics of a critical research question. The three questions can be related, or they can address different aspects of the topic.

You have reached the end of **Learning Block 1-3**. Click the Next button below to begin **Learning Block 1-4**.

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Historical Lenses

Different historians can develop different interpretations of the same event because they are looking at that event from different perspectives and emphasizing some pieces of historical evidence more than others.

The different perspectives from which historians approach the task of historical research are known as **historical lenses**. More generally, the study of historical methods, and of the techniques for researching and writing history, is known as **historiography**.

Historical lenses are often referred to as *categories* of history or *approaches* to history. Click on the tabs to learn more about each type of historical lens. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the way historians examine different aspects of history, however. (Endy, 2015) As you begin to think about what topic you would like to explore further for your historical analysis essay, you will want to consider through which historical lens (or lenses) you will examine the different aspects of the event.

Political history

Social history

Military history

Economic history

Religious history

Cultural history

History of science

These are only a few examples. Historical lenses can also represent certain **theories of history**, such as the *Great Man Theory*, which holds that history can be explained mainly by studying the actions and motivations of highly influential leaders or heroes, or *Marxism*, which argues that social class conflict and related economic forces determine historical outcomes (Tosh, 1984).

Theories of history are sometimes referred to as *schools* of historiography. Some other notable schools of historiography include the *Annales School*, a theory of French history that emphasizes long-term social history and the use of social science methodology; *psychohistory*, which studies the psychological motivations behind historical events; and the *cyclical theory of history*, which holds that history can be defined in terms of repeating cycles of events.

Looking once more at the two different interpretations of Irish immigration to the U.S., it's clear that the first historian looked at the issue through the lens of economic history, while the second used the lens of social history.

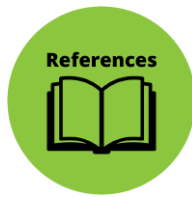
Other lenses offer the possibility of still more interpretations: a political historian, for instance, might focus on the role that Irish immigration played in building the Democratic political machines in such cities as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. A religious historian, on the other hand, might study the influence of Irish Catholic immigrants on the rise of America's major Catholic universities, including Georgetown, Fordham, and the University of Notre Dame.

The point is that whatever approach you take to history—whatever lens you apply to any historical event—your choice will affect what you see and the conclusions that you draw from the historical evidence.

Review Checkpoint

To test your understanding of the content presented in this learning block, **please click on the Question icon below**. Click your selected response to see feedback displayed below it. If you have trouble answering, you are always free to return to this or any learning block to re-read the material.





References

Endy, C. (2015). *Glossary of historical terms*. <http://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/cendy/glossary.pdf>
(<http://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/cendy/glossary.pdf>).

Tosh, J. (2015). *In pursuit of history: Aims, methods, and new directions in the study of history* (6th ed.). Routledge.

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Historical Significance

Significance is one of the most important concepts in the study of history.

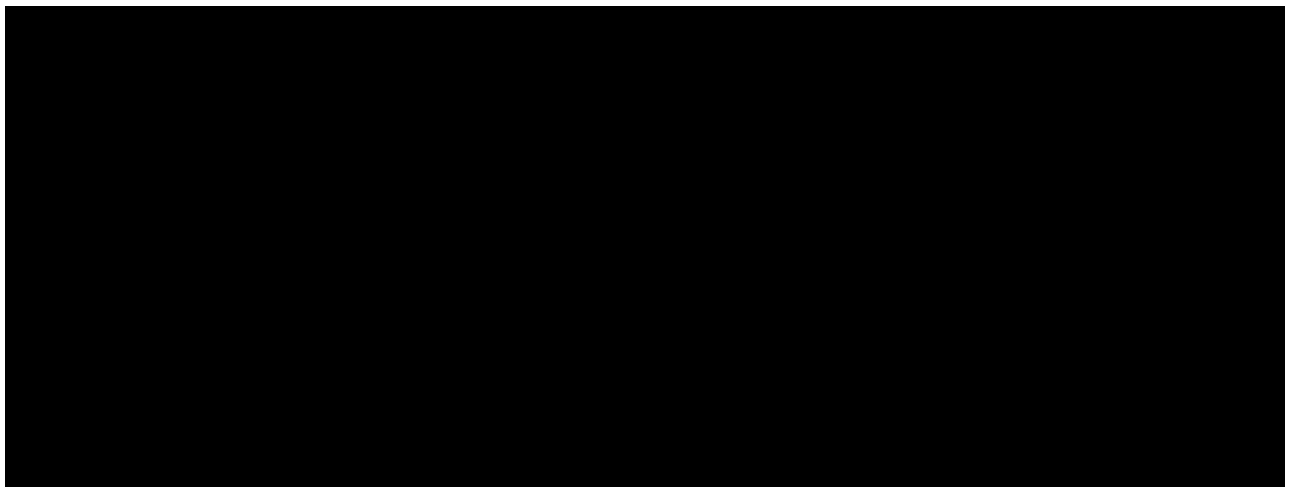
Historical significance is closely related to the concept of **importance**, but it implies a higher standard: lots of events may seem important at the time they take place, but how many are historically significant? Historical significance can help us understand the experience of immigrant groups in the United States.

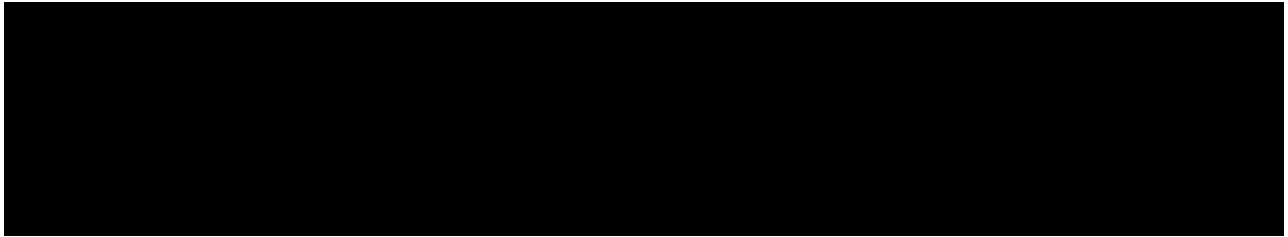


Historians generally rate historical significance by asking **four key questions**:

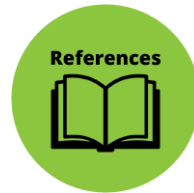
- How notable, or important, was the event at the time it occurred?
- Did the event affect a great many people?
- Were the consequences of the event extensive and enduring?
- Does the event symbolize or relate to broader historical trends? (Phillips, 2002)

To gain a better understanding of the concept of historical significance, watch the video below:





[View the Transcript](#)



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Kimball, A. (1997, March 31). *Ways of seeing history*. University of Oregon.

<http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/ways.html> (<http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/ways.html>)

Phillips, R. (2002, March). Historical significance – The forgotten 'key element'? *Teaching History*, (106), 14–19. <http://search.proquest.com/openview/535c4fbce3194b0a79d80f3f6dea5f7f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=48308>
(<http://search.proquest.com/openview/535c4fbce3194b0a79d80f3f6dea5f7f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=48308>)

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Module 1 Short Responses

To acquaint you further with the concept of historical lenses, we'd like you to read through each of the four following scenarios. For each one, please tell us—in no more than one or two sentences—which historical lens you think is being applied, and why you think so. Please be aware: it's possible

that multiple lenses might apply to some of these scenarios. You just need to name one of them.

Type your responses to the questions in the textboxes below. Be sure to respond to each question in one or two complete sentences, using proper grammar. When you are finished, click "Submit." **These responses will be graded.** After submitting, you can edit your response by clicking "Edit."

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 1

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

The influx of unskilled Irish immigrants into New York City in the 1840s and early 1850s drives down wages for other workers at the low end of the salary ladder.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 2

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

In 1908 Aram Pothier, an immigrant from Quebec, is elected governor of Rhode Island with strong support from the Québécois community.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 3

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

Irish immigrants and first-generation Irish-Americans come to dominate the hierarchy of the American Catholic Church in the late 19th century.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 4

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

Immigration to the United States comes to be seen as a "rite of passage" for young Québécois women in the early 20th century.

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Submit

You have reached the end of **Learning Block 1-2**. Click the Next button below to begin **Learning Block 1-3**.

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Module One: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-4 | Page 4 of 4

Module 1 Submissions

On this page, you will review both your Module 1 Short Responses and the work you have done on your Project One Writing Plan this week, in preparation for their submission in your learning environment.

Module 1 Short Responses



During the Module One: Approaches to History, you have been asked to respond to several questions designed to show your understanding of key concepts. Now it is time for you to submit your responses to those questions.

First, review your answers to each response. Be sure you have responded to each question in 2-3 complete sentences, using proper grammar throughout. Check for errors and incomplete answers. If you have not completed any of these questions, do this now. **When you are finished reviewing and editing, follow the instructions to submit your work to your instructor.**

Here are the Module 1 Short Response exercises:

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 1

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

The influx of unskilled Irish immigrants into New York City in the 1840s and early 1850s drives down wages for other workers at the low end of the salary ladder.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 2

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

In 1908 Aram Pothier, an immigrant from Quebec, is elected governor of Rhode Island with strong support from the Québécois community.

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Submit

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 3

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

Irish immigrants and first-generation Irish-Americans come to dominate the hierarchy of the American Catholic Church in the late 19th century.

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<div>Submit</div>

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 4

In the following scenario, which historical lens is being applied? Why do you think so?

Immigration to the United States comes to be seen as a "rite of passage" for young Québécois women in the early 20th century.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 5

If you had to write a paper on the Lincoln assassination, what would you like to know more about? Create three research questions that would be appropriate for a historical analysis essay, keeping in mind the characteristics of a critical research question. The three questions can be related, or they can address different aspects of the topic.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 6

If you had to write a paper on Title IX, what would you like to know more about? Create three research questions that would be appropriate for a historical analysis essay, keeping in mind the characteristics of a critical research question. The three questions can be related, or they can address different aspects of the topic.

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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 7

Write a research question that addresses the Irish immigrant experience through the lens of political history.



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Module 1 Short Responses – Question 8

Write a research question that addresses the Irish immigrant experience through the lens of economic history.

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<div>Submit</div>

Click "Download Word Document" below to download your short responses to the questions posed during the week's assigned learning blocks. After downloading, save this document locally on your computer, being sure to rename the document to reflect the assignment you are submitting (Module 1 Short Responses).

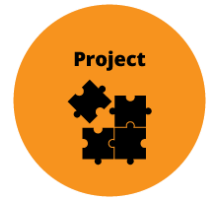
After downloading, review your responses. Make sure they completely answer the questions in the prompt. If you have not answered a question, the words "[no response]" in brackets will appear. Your short responses will be graded using the Module One Short Response Guidelines and Rubric document included in your learning environment in Module One.

When all of your responses are completed, saved, and edited, submit your assignment in your learning environment by clicking on the assignment "1-2 Module One Short Responses" within Module One, then uploading your attachments and submitting your work.

[Download Word Document \(/tools/ExportFile/component_doc.php?clds=81514,81515,81516,81517,81508,81509,81520,81521&prompts=1\)](/tools/ExportFile/component_doc.php?clds=81514,81515,81516,81517,81508,81509,81520,81521&prompts=1)

Writing Plan Progress Check 1

In this assignment, you will review the work you've completed on your Project One Writing Plan throughout Module 1 and prepare to submit your work to your instructor for a progress check. Now it is time to submit the first part of the writing plan for your historical event analysis essay: the topic and research question (or questions) for your essay. Open the document **firstname_lastname.Writing_Plan**, which you've saved on your computer.



Below is an example of what your assignment should look like:

Jane Doe

HIS 200: Applied History

Southern New Hampshire University

April 5, 2016

Topic and Research Question

Topic: For my historical event analysis, I have chosen to focus on Congressman John F. Fitzgerald of Boston, the son of Irish immigrants, and his opposition to an 1897 immigration bill, which would have barred illiterate foreigners from entering the United States.

Research Question: How did John Fitzgerald's political ambitions, and the interests of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, affect his position on the 1897 immigration reform bill?

Proofread your document, checking for typos and missing words. After making any last-minute tweaks, save **firstname_lastname.Writing_Plan** locally on your computer. Refer to the Writing Plan Progress Check 1 guidelines and rubric document located in Module One under 1-4 Writing Plan Progress Check 1.

Once you are confident your submission is complete, save this document a final time and your assignment in your learning environment by clicking on the assignment "1-3 Writing Plan Progress Check 1" within Module One, then uploading your attachments and submitting your work.

You will add to this document during the first four modules, and you will be asked to submit it to your instructor for feedback and approval at the end of each module.

You have reached the end of **Learning Block 1-4** and the end of **Module One**. To begin **Module Two**, return to your learning environment.

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The Irish Experience: Framing Research Questions

Module 1 Short Responses

Based on your readings about Irish immigration, please frame research questions that respond to the following prompts. Type your responses to the questions in the textboxes below. Be sure to respond to each question in 2-3 complete sentences, using proper grammar.






When you are finished, click "Submit." **These responses will be graded.** After submitting, you can edit your response by clicking "Edit."

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 7

Write a research question that addresses the Irish immigrant experience through the lens of political history.



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<div style="height: 150px;"></div>
<div>Submit</div>

Module 1 Short Responses – Question 8

Write a research question that addresses the Irish immigrant experience through the lens of economic history.

Saved

B *I* U   **A** ▼ Ω *ℒ* ↶

Submit

Writing Plan Progress Check 1



Now that you have had some practice writing sample research questions, it is time to start working on your own. Think about the topic you have chosen for your historical event analysis essay, and decide what question or questions you want to address as you research that topic.

Now, open the document **firstname_lastname.Writing_Plan**, which you created in Module One: Approaches to History, Learning Block 1-3. Add your research question or questions to that document, and save it locally to your computer. You will be asked to submit this document to your instructor for feedback and approval at the end of this learning block.

Module One: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-1 | Page 1 of 3

The Rights of Immigrants


The United States, as the saying goes, is a nation of immigrants. In 2014, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 13.3 percent of all Americans were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), while everyone else—including Native Americans—was descended from someone who, however long ago, came here from somewhere else.

That simple fact defines America as something different from most other countries: a place whose national identity is not rooted solely in geography or ethnicity but which comprises such shared values as democracy, liberty, opportunity, and upward mobility.



(https://www.nps.gov/hdp/exhibits/ellis/Ellis_Index.html)

Ellis Island was the main entry facility for immigrants entering the United States between 1892 and 1954. Click on the image above to take the Ellis Island virtual tour.

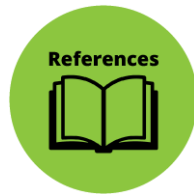
(Click button for citation) 

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ellis_Island_2.jpg)

But it is also a fact that America, as a nation, has not always embraced newcomers to its shores. For many immigrant groups, the path to acceptance—and the ability to exercise the full panoply of rights enjoyed by native-born Americans—has been a tortuous one.

There is a strong strain of **nativism** that runs through American culture and society. Especially in times of economic hardship, immigrants have been demonized for "taking American jobs"; at other times they have been victims of religious or racial/ethnic discrimination. The struggle of different immigrant groups to overcome these obstacles, and to be incorporated fully into American society and economic life, is a crucial element of the American story (Schrag, 2010).

Immigrants came here from many countries, and they entered the country through many different ports. Perhaps the most famous gateway was Ellis Island in New York Harbor—the first federal immigration station, through which 12 million immigrants passed. Today, Ellis Island, as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, stands as a symbol of the American immigrant experience.



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http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_S0501&prodType=table
(http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_S0501&prodType=table)

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Thinking Like a Historian

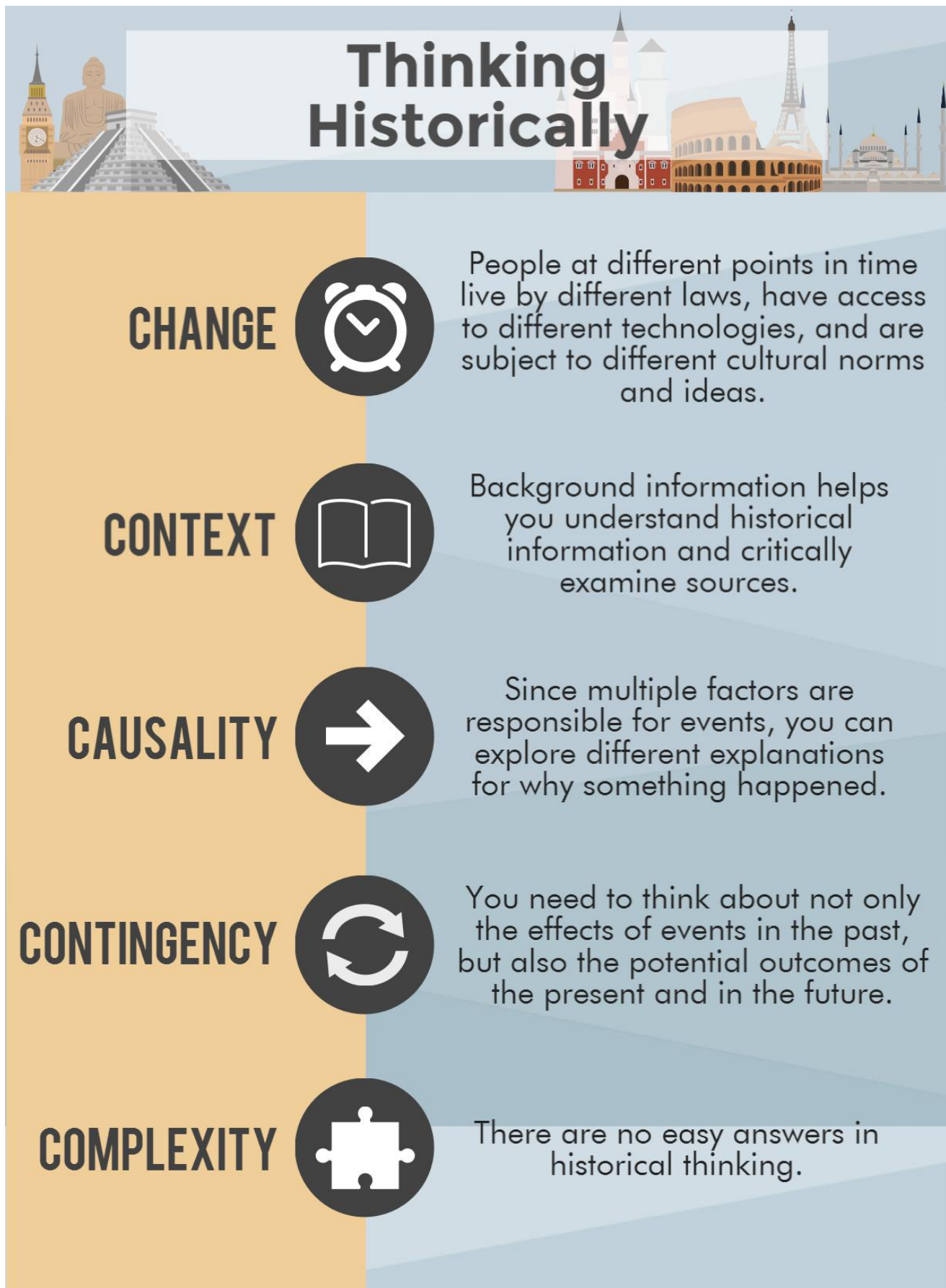
For too many people, history is an unconnected list of names and dates—a litany of people and events that needs to be memorized but not necessarily understood.

Needless to say, that's not the way historians think about history. They know that history, in the most fundamental sense, is a *story*: a complex narrative with lots of moving, interdependent parts, all of which inform and instruct us about the past. And **historical thinking** is a way to think about the world that helps us understand not only the past, but the present (Wineburg, 2010).

The first step toward thinking like a historian is to understand that there is no single, "right" way to look at history. Studying history is all about **interpretation**—how we try to make sense of events and individuals from the past. Different historians may have different interpretations of the same event, but neither one is necessarily right or wrong. What matters is how well each interpretation meshes with the **historical evidence** (Cohen, 2011).

There are many different kinds of historical evidence: documents, artifacts, buildings, paintings or photographs, and oral histories, to name just a few. But it's also important to realize the many things that are *not* historical evidence: opinion, rumor, propaganda, and political rhetoric, among many others.

The graphic below summarizes the 5 C's of thinking historically. You should keep these in mind as you encounter the historical case studies in this course.



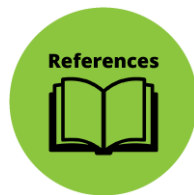
Example: Thinking Historically by Examining the Impact of Irish Immigration

The Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s led to an enormous movement of Irish immigrants to the United States. But what were the most important effects of this historical event?

One historian might argue that the vast influx of Irish immigrants was good for the American economy because it contributed to the rapid industrialization of the American North, providing a large pool of cheap factory labor in the major coastal cities where most of the immigrant Irish settled. Another historian might argue that Irish immigration, regardless of its effects on industrialization, had a destabilizing effect on American society because it led to urban overcrowding, public health problems caused by slum-like conditions, and social conflict arising from religious differences.

Neither interpretation is necessarily right or wrong. And it's entirely possible that both could be justified by the historical evidence, which in this case would include the number of industrial jobs created in Northern cities in the 1840s and 1850s; statistics on housing and infectious diseases; and contemporary accounts of anti-Catholic discrimination and violence.

An introductory guide to historical thinking, published in *Perspectives on History*, the news magazine of the American Historical Association, can be found [at this link](https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically) (<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically>). *This reading is required.*



References

Cohen, S. (2011). *Teaching the skill of historical interpretation*. World History Connected.

<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/8.2/cohen.html>

(<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/8.2/cohen.html>)

Wineburg, S. (2010). *Thinking like a historian*. Library of Congress.

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/historical_thinking/article.html

(http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/historical_thinking/article.html)

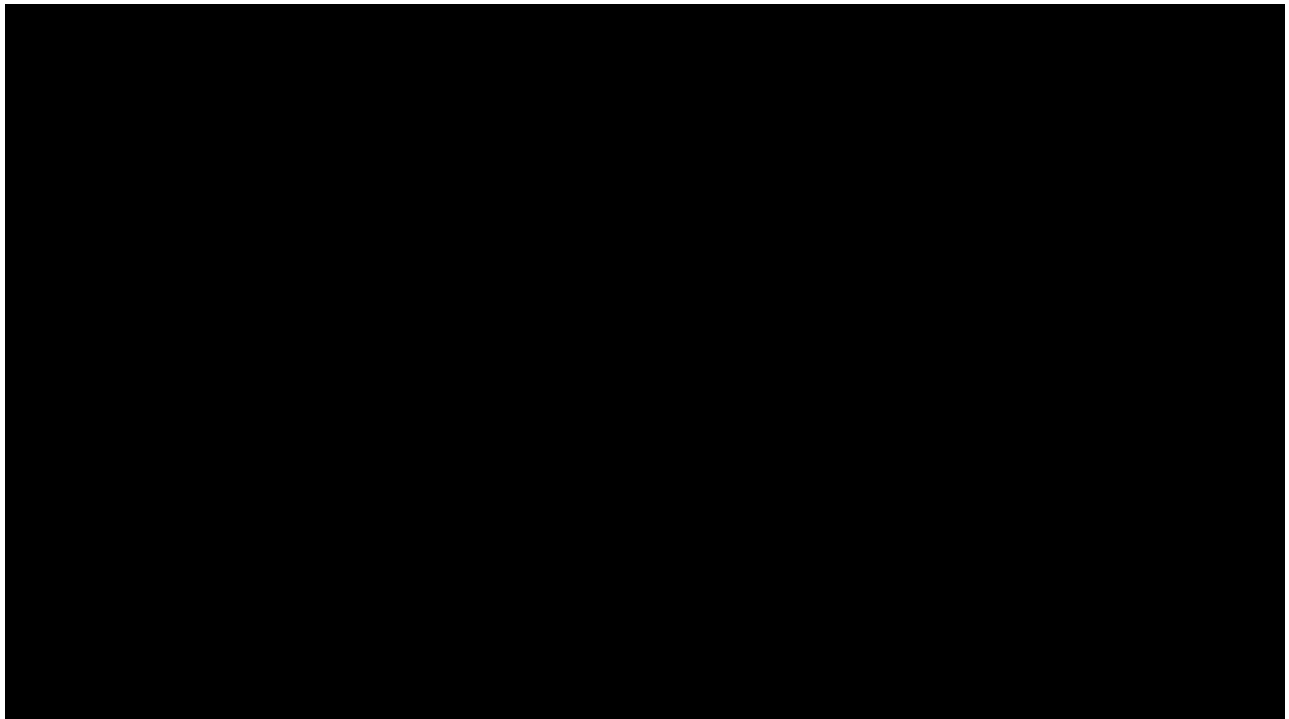
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Video: Historical Thinking



As you consider the topic you would like to research and the question you would like to ask for your historical analysis essay, you are beginning to think like an historian. As you think critically and ask critical questions, you are developing skills that will be useful in this course as well as in your future studies.

Thinking historically will not only be important in this course, but it can also be applied to many other aspects of your life. Watch the video below to learn more about how historical thinking can be applied to many other disciplines and how it can be useful in other courses and in your life experiences.



[View the Transcript](#)

Writing Plan Progress Check 1

Thinking historically will be necessary as you begin the process of drafting and writing your historical analysis essay. Take some time to think about what areas of history interest you. At this point, you should start



brainstorming a topic that you would like to write about.

Spend at least **30 minutes** doing independent, initial research to familiarize yourself with the basic background of a time period and historical topic. Use the tools referenced in this Learning Block on Page 1 ([Choosing a Research Topic \(/content.php?cid=170382\)](/content.php?cid=170382)) and Page 2 ([Asking a Research Question \(/content.php?cid=170380\)](/content.php?cid=170380)). *Clicking on the titles will redirect you to those pages.*

Write your idea or ideas for your topic in a separate document, and name the document after yourself: **firstname_lastname.Writing_Plan** and save it on your computer. Be sure to place your name at the top of the document. You will add to this document during the course of the first four modules, and you will be asked to submit it to your instructor for feedback and approval at the end of each module.

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