

## Examples of Questions to Prompt Different Kinds of Historical Thinking

From Mary Jo Festle, *Transforming History: A Guide to Effective, Inclusive, and Evidence-Based Teaching* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), 89-92.

<b>Interpretation</b>	<p>What do you think the author/source meant by the quote, “...”?</p> <p>Who do you think was the audience for this source?</p> <p>What was the purpose of this source?</p> <p>What assumptions does the author make?</p> <p>To what degree do you trust this source?</p> <p>What are the limitations of this source?</p> <p>What can we conclude from this source? What remains unknown?</p>
<b>Perspective-taking</b>	<p>From whose perspective are we hearing?</p> <p>How might X have felt or responded? What about Y?</p> <p>What alternative arguments might be made?</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Would you characterize the X period as effective or ineffective?</p> <p>Which of these leaders’ actions proved shrewdest?</p> <p>What adjective would you use to describe the outcomes of... (the New Deal)?</p> <p>Which historian’s argument is most persuasive?</p> <p>Do you agree with Smith’s argument that “...”?</p>
<b>Warm-up/remember</b>	<p>What image/moment/quotation most stands out from the reading (document/lecture)?</p> <p>How would you finish this sentence? (Mao Zedong...)</p>
<b>Prior knowledge</b>	<p>Which of the following do you think was true of (Columbus)?</p> <p>What do you know about...?</p>
<b>Prediction</b>	<p>[After instructor relates a short story], what do you think happened next? How do you think this story ended?</p> <p>Given what you know so far, how would you expect... (Eva Peron to govern)?</p> <p>Which do you think would have... (Costa Rica, or Nicaragua)?</p>
<b>Comprehension of information</b>	<p>What were the main points of ...</p> <p>How would you explain ... in your own words?</p> <p>What was ... (the Monroe Doctrine)?</p>
<b>Application of a concept</b>	<p>Which of the people we read about most embodied the concept of ... (noblesse oblige)?</p> <p>Which of these people was... (“conservative”? “radical”)?</p> <p>Which of these examples constitutes ... (plagiarism)?</p> <p>Which of these sources is “scholarly”?</p>
<b>Causation or motives</b>	<p>Why did ...? Why else?</p> <p>Why then?</p> <p>Why do you think [an alternative] didn’t happen?</p> <p>Was it inevitable that...?</p>
<b>Context</b>	<p>Why isn’t it surprising that this happened at this time?</p> <p>Why might it be surprising that this happened when it did?</p>

<b>Effects, implications, significance</b>	<p>How did this affect...? How else?</p> <p>Why did this matter to people at the time?</p> <p>Which effects were short-term, and which long-term?</p> <p>So what? Why should we care? Does this have any contemporary significance?</p> <p>What lessons do you draw from this?</p>
<b>Reasoning</b>	<p>What is the author's argument?</p> <p>Why does s/he think that?</p> <p>What evidence or examples does the author use?</p> <p>Do you find that persuasive?</p> <p>Why do you think that? How do you know? Do you have evidence or an example of that?</p>
<b>Prioritization</b>	<p>Which quotation best captures...?</p> <p>Which causative factor would you say was most important?</p> <p>Which effects were most significant?</p>
<b>Relationships/comparison</b>	<p>Does this event/period/person/source/reading remind you of anything else we've studied?</p> <p>How was this similar to...?</p> <p>How was this different from...?</p>
<b>Generalizations/synthesis</b>	<p>How do we add this up? From all these sources, what are the conclusions we can draw?</p> <p>Now that you've studied ..., what advice would you give a (world leader, activist, voter) considering ....?</p>
<b>Personal reflection</b>	<p>How did you react to/feel about this topic/reading?</p> <p>What is your personal "take-away"?</p> <p>How does this material connect to anything you've experienced, thought about, heard about in the news or in another class?</p>
<b>Metacognition</b>	<p>What have we just learned?</p> <p>Why did we learn it (that is, how does it fit into the course/unit goals)?</p> <p>How confident are you of your grasp of the material?</p> <p>Can you put that in your own words?</p> <p>What still seems unclear to you? How might you become more clear?</p> <p>What does this make you wonder about?</p> <p>How would you find out...? How would you approach the task of...?</p> <p>How does this connect to other things you know?</p> <p>Can you imagine another time when you might use this knowledge or skill?</p>