

Historical Thinking Skill 4: Analyze the context of historical events, developments, or processes

Historical events, developments, and processes do not happen in a vacuum. They cannot be understood without proper examination within the relevant context. While students are often taught to focus on comparison, causality, and patterns of continuity and change over time as ways to look at these events, historical context also plays a part. Analyzing historical events using context helps students see the big picture and make the connections they will need to make when developing thoughtful arguments. These skills guide students through the process of contextual analysis.

Skill	Tasks/Questions	Sample Activity	Instructional Strategies
4.A: <i>Identify and describe a historical context for a specific historical development or process.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What events led up to the one we are studying? What else is happening in the world at this time? 	Have students examine Mohandas Gandhi's 1942 <i>Quit India</i> speech and identify and describe events and developments outside of India that help with understanding Gandhi's arguments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Group
4.B: <i>Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to use historical reasoning to explain how an event relates to a broader process. Why are the events related? How does the relationship help us understand the event we are studying? 	<p>Have students examine Huda Shaarawi's speech at the 1944 Arab Feminist Conference in the context of Islam, global feminist movements, and colonial independence movements.</p> <p>Challenge students to explore how events outside of Egypt might help them understand Huda Shaarawi's position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socratic Seminar