

Skill N°1 The method to follow to comment on geographical and historical documents

A. TO INTRODUCE A DOCUMENT

- Historians and geographers get their information from a great variety of sources: they can use written sources, picture documents, maps or graphs... You first have to identify the material you are working on.
- Historians' main tools are of two different types:
 - *primary sources*, such as a witness's account of a historical fact, are first-hand sources;
 - *secondary sources*, such as a historian's analysis, are second-hand sources.
- Examples of written sources: an official document/a private document, a treaty, an Act, a Bill, a report, a speech,

an essay, a memoir, memoirs, a newspaper article, a magazine article, a play...

► To introduce the document:

- *This source is a primary/secondary source because...*
- *It was written/shot/painted/drawn by...*
- *The context of this source is very important to understand it. It was written in.../It dates back to... At that time.../in those days.../then...*
- *It was addressed to.../its audience was...*
- *This document explains.../the article raises the problem/issue of.../the text focuses on...*
- *But it does not mention/it fails to detail...*



B. TO COMMENT ON A DOCUMENT

- To begin with:
 - *First/in the first place/first of all/to begin with/to start with...*
 - *Regarding...*
- To describe the document:
 - *This description is partly/mainly/chiefly true/accurate/biased/false for x reasons: firstly..., secondly..., next..., lastly/finally...*
 - *The author points out that...*
 - *The author's thesis is...*
- To argue/to explain:
 - *They are different explanations as to why/how/what/when...*

- *One explanation is that...*
- *The evidence for this is...*
- *An alternative explanation is...*
- *This explanation is based on...*
- *Of the alternative explanations I think the most likely is...*
- *The evidence the author gives to support the thesis is...*
- *In fact/for example/for instance...*
- To confront points of view:
 - *On the one hand..., on the other hand...*
 - *In spite of this...*
 - *Admittedly/nevertheless/however...*



C. TO INTERPRET THE DOCUMENT

- Verbs:
 - *To show, to illustrate, to prove, to reveal, to explain, to point out, to indicate.*
- To interpret all kinds of documents:
 - *We can conclude that...*
 - *It's obvious that.../it appears clearly that...*
 - *We may notice/observe that.../it may be noticed that...*
 - *All this tends to prove/show that...*
- To interpret, to state the historical or geographical relevance of a picture:
 - *To illustrate, to describe/to depict, to represent, to show, to focus on, to emphasize.*
 - *To symbolize, a symbol of...*

- *To create an effect of...*
- *The artist's intention is to.../the artist's point of view is...*
- *An illustration of...*
- *A satire, satirical, sarcastic, funny, humourous*
- To criticize:
 - *The author is prejudiced against...*
 - *The argument is open to criticism because...*
 - *Actually/in fact...*
 - *The truth of the matter is...*
- To conclude:
 - *To conclude.../as a conclusion...*
 - *To sum up.../to summarize...*
 - *All in all/on the whole...*

Skill N°2 Speaking about a picture

A. TO INTRODUCE A PICTURE

► Different kinds of picture documents:

- In a picture/on a poster/on a photograph/on a cartoon...
- A painting/a miniature
- A photograph taken at an oblique angle/ a vertical angle (a "bird's eye view")/an aerial view
- A satellite image

B. TO COMMENT ON A PICTURE

► To locate the elements :

- At the top/at the bottom
- In the bottom left-hand/in the top left-hand
- In the corner/on the left-hand/right-hand side corner
- In the middle, right in the middle/in the centre
- In the foreground/in the background
- Between foreground and background
- On the right/on the left
- Below/above/in the upper/lower part/next to, behind/under/over/in front of/beside/near
- On one side/on the other side, on either side of...

► To describe the elements:

- The frame
- The setting
- A character/the leading character/a minor character
- A sitter = the person portrayed
- A full-length/life-size portrait
- To look/to seem/to appear
- To be portrayed (as)/to be depicted
- To be considered (as)/to be viewed (as)
- The vanishing point/line, the main outlines
- The diagonal running from the top left to the bottom right corner
- The horizontal line dividing foreground and background
- A close-up: un gros plan
- A feeling of depth, perspective
- The atmosphere is one of...

► The colours:

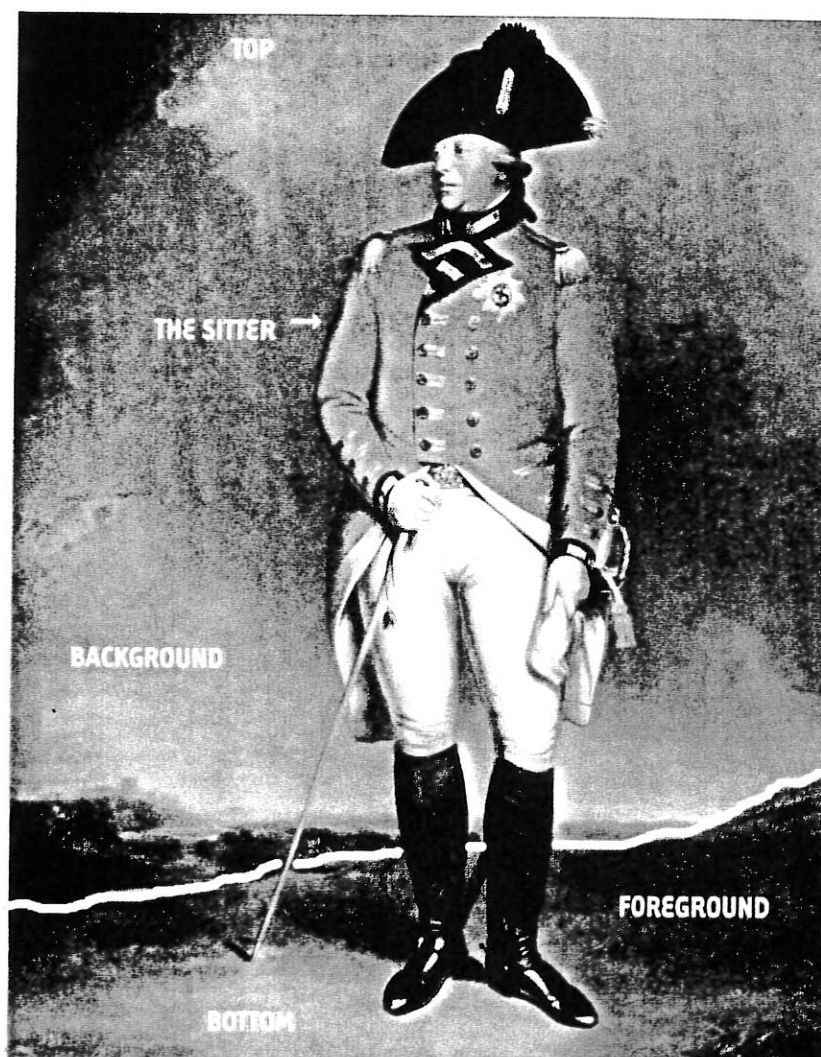
- Shades of (blue, red...), the colour scheme
- Warm/cold tints
- Bright/vivid colour, pale/soft colour
- Gentle ≠ strong: douce ≠ violente/ gaudy ≠ subtle: criarde ≠ subtile
- On a satellite image, the colours stand for...

► The contrasts:

- By light, by lighting effects, the main source of light, the play of light and shade



Hong Kong : aerial view at an oblique angle from Victoria Peak.



Portrait of King George III (1760-1820), copy of a painting by William Robinson (1799-1839), 1831, anonymous.

Skills N°3 Speaking about a map

See also "Getting your bearings on Earth" p. 66-67

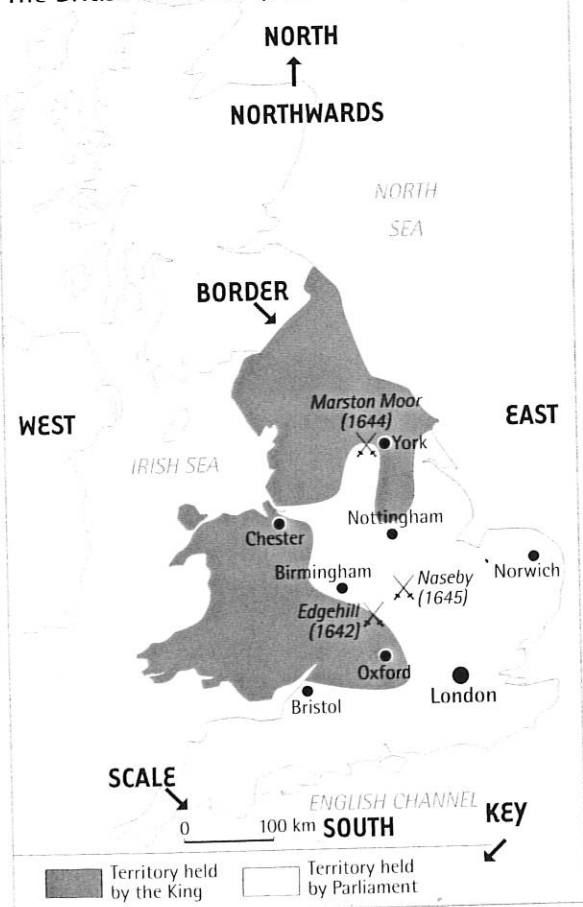
A. TO INTRODUCE A MAP

- Identify the map:
 - Different kind of maps: *a shade map/a dot map* (une carte par points)/*a cartogram* (une carte par anamorphose)...
 - The elements on the map: *the scale/the key/the figures*

B. TO COMMENT ON A MAP

- Describe the map:
 - *The map shows...*
 - *Borders/boundaries*
 - *The location*
 - *On a local/national/regional/global scale, we can see...*
 - *North/East/West/South of...*
 - *Northwards/southwards/eastwards/westwards to...*
 - *In the North East, in the centre of..., in the northern part of...*
 - *On the continent/on the island/on the coast...*
 - *We learn that the land/country/continent is/was inhabited/populated by...*
 - *We see that (land) was divided up between.../was annexed by...*

The British Civil War (1642-1649)

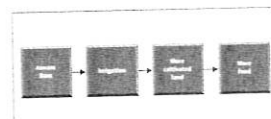


Skills N°4 Speaking about graphs

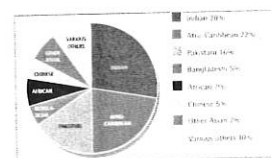
A. TO INTRODUCE GRAPHS AND STATISTICS

- What are statistics?
 - *Statistics* collect and analyse numeral data, especially in and for large quantities. They are usually obtained by polls, surveys and censuses.
 - *An (opinion) poll* is the record of the answers of a group of people who were asked their opinions about a specific topic. Polls aim at judging popularity or predicting outcomes (in presidential elections for example).
 - *A survey* is an investigation of something, for instance land ownership or people's behaviour or opinions.
 - *A census* is the official count of a population or of a class of things, commissioned by the government.
- Identify the graphs and the statistics

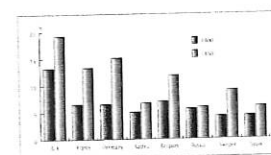
- *A chart* is a sheet of information in the form of a table, diagram or graph.



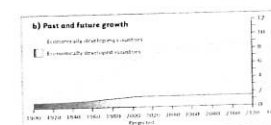
- *A pie chart* is a circle divided into several segments. A whole pie represents 100 % and a slice represents a percentage.



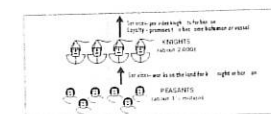
- *A bar chart or histogram* uses rectangular shapes side by side horizontally or vertically.



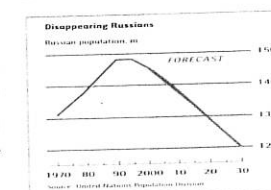
- *A diagram* is a drawing, a graphic representation used to explain a process, an action or a result.



- *A pictogram* is a chart with pictures.



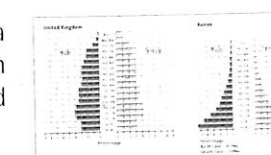
- *A graph* usually is a line or a curve, which shows the relationship between two variable quantities, each measured along one of a pair of axes at right angles.



- *A table* presents information in columns.

Category	Value
1. The first column contains the names of the countries.	1. The first column contains the names of the countries.
2. The second column contains the number of people in each country.	2. The second column contains the number of people in each country.
3. The third column contains the number of people in each country.	3. The third column contains the number of people in each country.
4. The fourth column contains the number of people in each country.	4. The fourth column contains the number of people in each country.
5. The fifth column contains the number of people in each country.	5. The fifth column contains the number of people in each country.
6. The sixth column contains the number of people in each country.	6. The sixth column contains the number of people in each country.
7. The seventh column contains the number of people in each country.	7. The seventh column contains the number of people in each country.
8. The eighth column contains the number of people in each country.	8. The eighth column contains the number of people in each country.
9. The ninth column contains the number of people in each country.	9. The ninth column contains the number of people in each country.
10. The tenth column contains the number of people in each country.	10. The tenth column contains the number of people in each country.





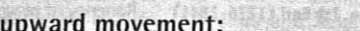
- *A population pyramid* is a horizontal bar graph with data for males on the left and females on the right.



and statistics

B. TO COMMENT ON GRAPHS AND STATISTICS

► Describe the graph

- A curve 
- A straight line 
- A heavy line, a solid line 
- A broken line 
- A dotted line 

► To indicate upward movement:

- Figures/the graph is/are increasing/rising/climbing/going up by... x per cent/x millions
- There is an increase/rise in...
- The increase/growth of... is shown/indicated by the dotted/broken/solid line
- To exceed/to catch up with/to overtake/to take the lead/to rise to...

► To indicate downward movement:

- Figures are decreasing
- There is a decrease/drop in...
- The curve is falling (to fall to a low of.../to fall behind)

► To indicate no movement

- To remain steady/stable
- To stay constant/to stagnate

- To peak: arriver à l'apogée

- The peak year

► To indicate a change:

• in direction :

- to stand at
- to recover
- to stop
- to take off
- The solid line/the broken line shows the increase/decrease of... from... to...

• a degree of change:

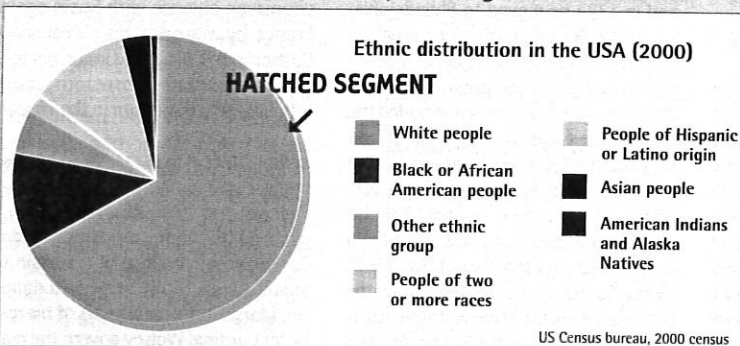
- dramatically/steeply/ hugely/ vastly/enormously
- substantially, significantly, considerably, greatly
- moderately/slightly

• speed of change:

- sharply/rapidly/quickly/fast/swiftly
- gently/gradually
- slowly/at a slow pace
- It spans over x years/x centuries.

Pie chart

- The hatched segment shows the percentage of...

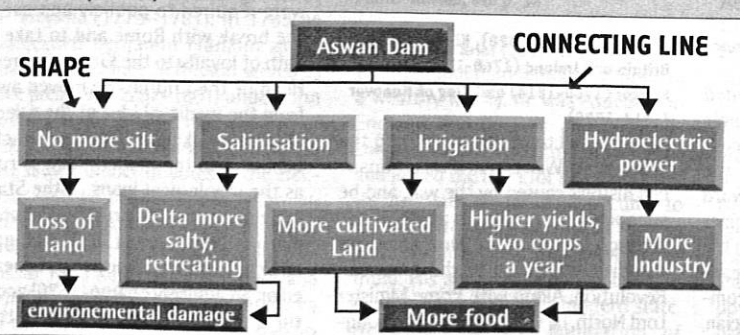


Flow chart

- The shapes

- The connecting lines show cause and effect relationships:

- cause: as.../for.../because.../because of.../given that since...
- consequence: so that.../in so far as.../such... that.../therefore/consequently



Population pyramid

- Horizontal bars

- The 10-14 age group

- A cohort: une classe d'âge

- Age groups depleted by war casualties or low birth rate: classes creuses

Describing the shape of a pyramid:

- a low top means short life expectancy/a narrow top means few elderly people.
- a higher top means longer life expectancy/a wider top means more elderly in the oldest cohorts.
- a broad base means high birth rate/a narrowing/narrow base means falling birth rate.

United Kingdom

