

History?

WHY STUDY

To be ignorant of what occurred before you
were born is to remain always a child.
For what is the worth of human life,
unless it is woven into the life of our
ancestors by the records of history?

—Cicero



1

History increases your employability

The Australian Government's Australian Jobs 2019 report identifies high-demand skills by Australian companies, including creativity, initiative, complex problem-solving, leadership, and emotional intelligence. These capabilities are the hallmark of humanities training.

—*Australian Academy of the Humanities (2020)*

The jobs most in demand today, like engineering and computer science, could potentially become the most easily automated jobs in the future. The most attractive recruits will possess soft skills—like social and emotional capabilities, providing expertise, coaching and developing others, and creativity—that machines can't replicate.

—*Haley Kim (2019)*



The Business Council of Australia lists the top employability skills as problem-solving, critical thinking, empathy, flexibility, leadership, communication, teamwork and decision-making.

—*Marie Clark (2021)*

Communication, observation, empathy and logical thinking. ... These essential skills are the ones most sought by some of the largest, most successful organizations. Those blue-chip employers recognize that their future leaders are people who can understand and communicate about the world around them, who can see the whole picture and find ways to fit into it. People learn to do this by studying the humanities.

—*Anna Moro (2018)*

The Bachelor of Arts is the most common degree among non-executive directors of Australia's 100 biggest public companies.

—*The University of Sydney (2021)*

Humanities, arts and social sciences disciplines supply two thirds of Australia's workforce.

—*Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (2018)*

2

Where can History lead you?



For humanities and social science graduates, employment rates range from 94.4% to 95.8%.
—*RMIT ABC Fact Check (2020), citing Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) 2020 Graduate Outcomes Survey*

According to results from a QILT (2019) survey, humanities and social science graduates (AUD\$70,300) earn more than maths and science graduates (AUD\$68,900).
—*Peter Hurley (2020)*

Two thirds of chief executives of ASX200 listed companies have degrees in humanities, 62% of government senior executives and 66% of federal parliamentarians.
—*Cait Kelly (2020)*

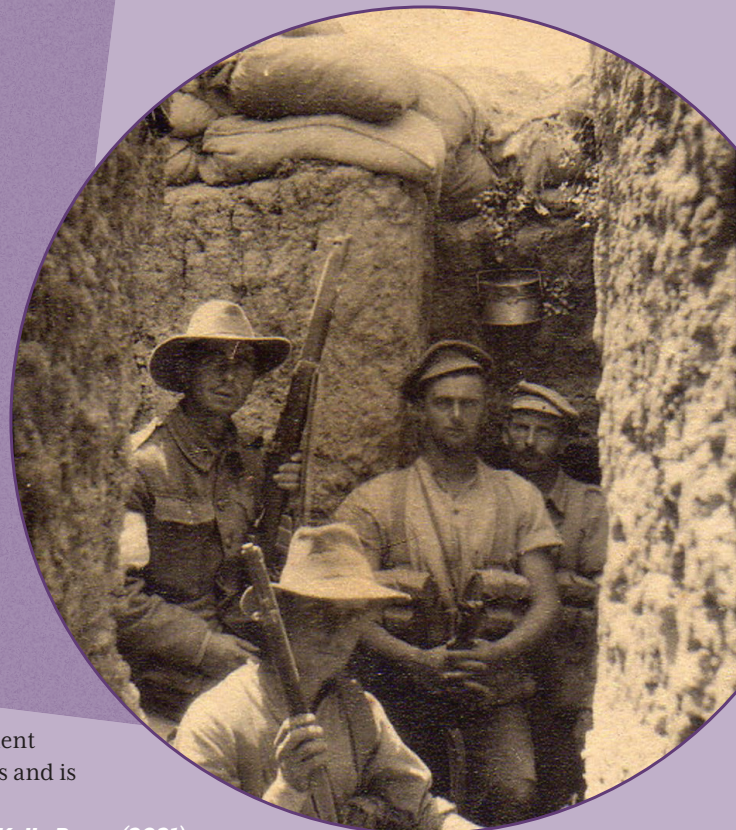
According to surveys by the federally funded QILT, three years after graduation, humanities graduates are employed at a rate of 91.1%, above both science and maths, which have a 90.1% rate of overall employment.
—*Anthony Albanese (2020)*

A history major can lead to all kinds of careers. Some of the more popular options include government positions (e.g., Departments of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Aboriginal Affairs), all kinds of NGOs, teaching, journalism and the media, tourism, heritage consultancy and planning, museums, libraries, archives, public history, and project management.
—*Tony Joel (2020)*

On the government's own jobs projections, the top five destinations for humanities graduates (Education and Training, Public Administration and Safety, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Health Care and Social Assistance and Arts and Recreation Services) are all projected for substantial growth in the near future.
—*Australian Academy of the Humanities (2020)*

The humanities and arts provide the underpinning skills and pipeline of talent to Australia's creative economy, which employs in excess of 600,000 workers and is worth \$112 billion of the nation's GDP.

—*Lesley Head, Christina Parolin and Kylie Brass (2021)*



3

History develops your critical thinking

Humanities students master the skills needed to pierce the fog of propaganda and distortion that passes for much “information” in the new digital age. ... Humanities students become conversant with the techniques of critical analysis. They develop the skills necessary for informed reading. These skills are crucial in the current moment.

—*Timothy Hampton (2018)*

Good historical thinkers are ‘informed, educated, thoughtful, critical readers, who appreciate investigative enterprises, know good arguments when they hear them, and who engage their world with a host of strategies for understanding it’.

—*Bruce A. VanSledright (2004)*

History helps us to understand ‘the social space where encounters take place and where new conditions for humans and societies ... are unfolding and negotiated’.

—*Sverker Sorlin and Melissa Lane (2018)*

Historians [are] more likely to source, contextualize, and corroborate documents. Historians viewed critical analysis as essential in determining which sources could be considered reliable evidence in light of the questions at hand.

—*Abby Reisman and Sarah McGrew (2018)*

Over the last three years the proportion [of company recruiters] that demand critical thinking has increased by 158%, creativity by 65%, presentation skills by 25% and teamwork by 19%.

—*Peter Acton (2016)*

History students prioritise “interpretations and evidence”, recognizing the strengths and limitations of different kinds of sources and adjusting their evaluations and arguments accordingly.

—*Abby Reisman and Sarah McGrew (2018)*

The medical humanities allow us to probe the delicate balance between scientific empiricism and critical thinking ... [and] prod us into questioning the social value and hence validity of current knowledge.

—*Claire Hooker (2008)*

The development of general ability for independent thinking and judgment should always be placed foremost, not the acquisition of special knowledge. If a person masters the fundamentals of his [sic] subject and has learned to think and work independently, he will surely find his way and besides be better able to adapt himself to progress and changes than the person whose training principally consists in the acquiring of detailed knowledge.

—*Albert Einstein (1954)*



4

History builds compassion, empathy and cultural understanding

Coming up with solutions for complex social issues requires thinkers with superior critical thinking along with a sense of empathy and emotional sensitivity. People with humanities backgrounds are good at this—and it allows them to put things into the bigger picture.

—*Tim Soutphommasane (as cited in Deloitte Access Economics, 2018)*

History teaching is a key tool to 'reduce stereotypes and prejudices'.

—*Deloitte Access Economics (2018)*

When history flourishes through the study of history in schools, young people flourish, which, in turn, becomes one of the key means by which we establish 'well beings'.

—*Natalie Charles (2021)*

The beauty of historical empathy was its ephemeral nature, the way that it fit between the cracks of hard historical reasoning skills to produce nuanced understanding of human behavior.

—*Jason Endacott and Sarah Brooks (2018)*



Students of history 'are tolerant of differing perspectives because these perspectives help them make sense of the past'.

—*Bruce A. VanSledright (2004)*



Empathy is what enables the student of history to "provide interpretations that more fully comprehend a foreign climate of opinion, and thus to understand otherwise inexplicable actions and statements". That is to say, empathy equips one to draw on human commonality to help understand unfamiliar and sometimes confusing human ideas and actions.

—*Jason Endacott and Sarah Brooks (2018)*

5

History trains you for life and not just for work

Humanities sets out to achieve its very definition—“learning or literature concerned with human culture” (Short Oxford English Dictionary). This leads one to see the humanities as those areas of study that help children to explore what it is to be human and how people live, think and interact in diverse societies, cultures and environments, especially in terms of time, place and belief.

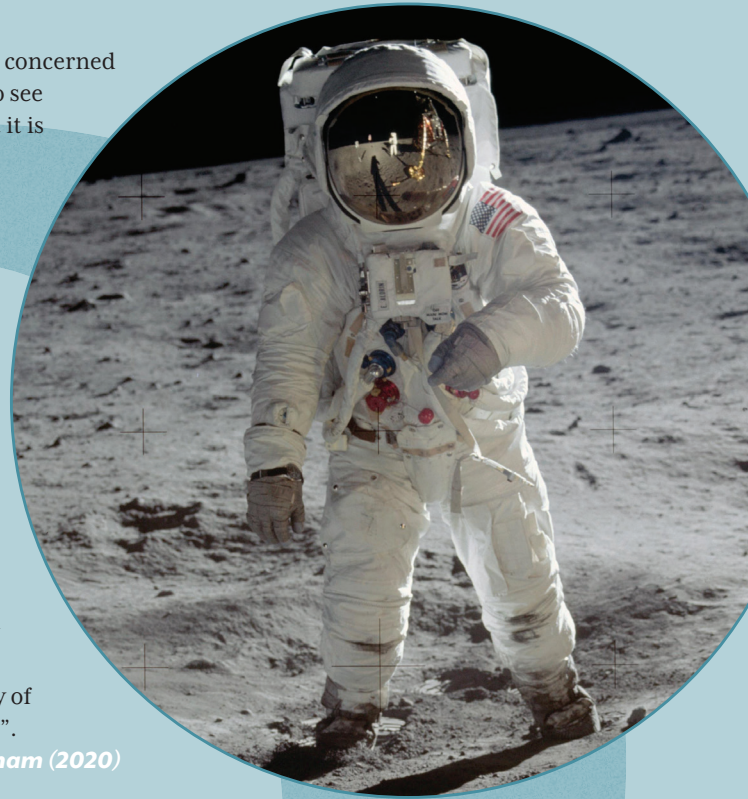
—*Tony Eaude and Simon Catling (2019)*

According to Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westcott, humanities-trained employees bring ‘balance and human perspectives’ to decision-making: ‘There are going to be more and more human-related challenges, so we will need human skills to overcome this.’

—*Joy Damousi (2020)*

All branches of the human intellect should be taught, because the aim is to help students achieve a “real cultivation of mind” rather than a narrow technical skill, and to equip them with the intellectual capability “to have a connected view or grasp of things” thus, exhibiting “good sense, sobriety of thought, reasonableness, candour, self-command, and steadiness of view”.

—*Ben Eltham (2020)*



The practice of history helps us to understand who we are as Australians and what experiences have shaped our identity. It is an essential part of civics education to give young people a sense of purpose by locating them in the past and the contemporary world as well as informing policies for the future.

—*Richard Broome AM (2020)*

History helps people craft solutions that meet community needs. At the heart of democracy are individual citizens who come together to express views and take action. Understanding the history of contemporary issues that confront our communities, nation and world can clarify misperceptions, reveal complexities, temper volatile viewpoints, and open people to new possibilities, leading to more effective solutions.

—*History Councils of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia (2019)*

Awareness that one’s beliefs are influenced by societal factors is fundamental to the respectful deliberation that democracy requires. Similarly, the affective component of historical empathy also has the potential to prepare students for life in democratic society.

—*Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2004, as cited in Endacott and Brooks, 2018)*

The best way to prepare students for their future working lives is to broaden their minds by teaching them about change. Their future lives will revolve around change—and history is about the study of change.

—*Glenn Davies (2018)*

History ‘offers the only extensive evidential base for the contemplation and analysis of how societies function, and people need to have some sense of how societies function simply to run their own lives’.

—*Peter N. Stearns (1998)*



6

History teaches you how to analyse and solve complex problems

History and the humanities teach students how to accumulate, translate and communicate knowledge. Students 'move into new domains and begin making intellectual and social connections. ... The translation work that transforms information becomes more concentrated as ideas are assimilated, integrated, written down, and revised.'

—*Carole L. Palmer and Laura J. Neumann (2002)*

Students of history 'know what it means to build and defend evidence-based arguments'.

—*Bruce A. VanSledright (2004)*

History students constantly rearticulate and analyse a question they have never thought about before. History students must envisage what form an answer might take, generate one or more theories, and decide what information is needed for an informed decision. They find ways to gather and interpret data, test their theories and generate new ones, and finally choose the most promising answer and support it with rigorous evidence and logic.

—*Peter Acton (2020)*

Data must be understood and grounded in our human context. The right questions must be asked, which consider the complexity and nuance of behaviour and the nebulous ways in which groups of people interact. The answers must be unpacked qualitatively, not just quantitatively. The humanities and social sciences offer these skills, along with the consideration of ethics and longer-term consequences to our actions, the ability to learn from history and have empathy for others.

—*Marie Clark (2021)*

Current technological innovation, for example, is bringing up multiple ethical and legal issues. It's vital to understand how new products interact in human application and to have people thinking about such issues in the design phase. To do that, Schubert says, we need people with a cross-disciplinary perspective.

—*Jonah Lehrer (2011)*

Technology alone is not enough—it's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing.

—*Steve Jobs (2011)*

In our everchanging technology-focused world, the humanities are needed in our classrooms now more than ever to provide balance and perspective. The humanities strengthen our global view, broaden our intellectual foundation, teach us to communicate clearly, help us to develop creative and critical thinking skills, teach us to be problem solvers, create engaged citizens and thinkers, reinforce cultural and ethical responsibilities and values, help us to understand the impact that science, technology, and medicine have had on society, and create well-rounded academics, students and thinkers.

—*Christine Reiter (2017)*

The arts and humanities build a richer, more complex picture of human behaviour to better understand economic activity and to design and develop improved economic policy.

—*Duncan Ivison (2020); The University of Sydney (2021)*



7

History improves your writing and communication skills

History requires particular kinds of reading and writing strategies that are critical to students being college-, career-, and citizenship-ready. It requires that students become creators and connoisseurs of arguments, careful readers, and good questioners.

—*TeachingHistory.org* (2011)



In addition to being a generic concept, applicable to many subject areas, argumentation is crucial to history in its orientation to interpretation and evidence. In contrast to what many students believe, history is not a given set of fixed information, rather it is a deliberative process of constructing arguments grounded in the available evidence.

—*Susan De La Paz et al.* (2014)

[History] students have opportunities to create a wide range of texts to communicate, explore, discuss, explain and argue a point of view, selecting and employing text structure and language knowledge to express their thoughts and ideas logically and fluently, supported by evidence.

—*Australian Curriculum* (2021)

To illustrate the connections between reading and writing, historians develop a keen sense of audience as they critically analyze the purpose behind texts written by others, and as they consider their own purposes for writing.

—*Jeffery Nokes and Susan De La Paz* (2018)

Writing is fundamental to “doing” history, as is speaking about and discussing interpretations and ideas of the past. Writing and speaking help to focus thinking and to clarify understanding to express ideas.

—*Matthew Downey and Kelly Long* (2016)



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