Types of Historical Reasoning Skills:

Causation

Students should:

- Describe causes or effects of specific historical development or process
- Explain the relationship between causes and effects of a specific historical development or process
- Explain the difference between primary and secondary causes and between short- and long-term effects
- Explain the relative historical significance of different causes and/or effects

From the College Board:
“Understanding the impact of processes such as industrialization requires students to identify and access both short and long term impacts just as understanding the causes of an event requires students to think about which causes they would argue are the most significant.”

Continuity and Change over Time

Students should:

- Describe patterns of continuity and/or change over time
- Explain patterns of continuity and/or change over time
- Explain the relative historical significance of specific historical developments in relation to a larger pattern of continuity and/or change

Historical continuity — that which remains the same over long periods of time. Remember that often change and continuity can coexist. The process is long and uneven, affects different groups at different rates.

Information adapted from the European History Curriculum Frameworks, published by the College Board. You can access the full, original version at apcentral.collegeboard.com
Example: Objective knowledge and subjective visions . . . traces the evolution from a worldview based on religious faith, communal values and traditional sources of knowledge to one that was more secular, placing more emphasis on the individual and believed knowledge could come from multiple sources.

Students need to understand this long process of change in worldview and be able to identify which groups at any given time were experiencing these changes and which groups or regions were not.

Comparison

Or evaluating developments.

Students should:

- Describe similarities and/or differences between different historical developments or processes.
- Explain relevant similarities between specific historical developments and processes.
- Explain the relative historical significance of similarities and/or differences between different historical developments or processes.

Example: Comparing revolutions helps identify what factors make an event a revolution rather than a coup or change of a regime.
  - helps us understand why similar causes had different outcomes
  - is an important skill when evaluating historical evidence

To practice this skill Identify similarities and differences in 2 different accounts for the same event. Explain the similarities and differences by taking into account factors such as authorship, intent and audience (POV)

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Contextualization

Connecting events and processes.

Students should:

- Describe an accurate historical development or process.
- Explain how a relevant context INFLUENCED a specific historical development or process.
- Use context to explain the relative historical significance of a specific historical development or process.

Contextualization is not comparing. Instead it is putting events in a larger context, understanding the political/economic/etc reasons for the event.

It requires students to identify and evaluate the importance of larger trends and processes that shape events.

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Bonus: Historical Argumentation

Define and frame a question about the past and address that question through the construction of an argument.

Students should:

1. Analyze commonly accepted arguments & explain how an argument has been constructed from historical evidence.
2. Construct convincing interpretations through analysis of disparate, relevant historical evidence.
3. Evaluate and synthesize conflicting historical evidence to construct persuasive historical arguments.

Historical argumentation often operates in conjunction with course themes that transcend individual periods. It also operates in conjunction with other skills.

Example: For World War I you must also know colonization, alliance systems, social darwinism, etc.

It requires students to analyze evidence that relates to each item, assess the relative importance of these factors in order to formulate a coherent thesis to construct an argument based on evidence.

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