

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS HISTORY?

WHY IS THE PAST STILL IMPORTANT TO US TODAY?

LEARNING GOALS

As you work through this introduction, you will

- reflect on why we study history
- review how primary and secondary sources help us learn about the past
- learn how to apply the components of the historical inquiry process
- develop an understanding of the concepts of historical thinking

History is all around us. While history may be the study of the past, it is connected to the present. Historical evidence gives us an understanding of what has come before us and how we have changed over time. It also gives us clues about how the past has shaped who we are today and who we might want to become in the future.

The photo on these pages illustrates the connection between the past and the present. Two time periods are blended into one. It shows the intersection of Front Street and Wellington Street in Toronto in 1873 and the same area today. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Toronto was a fast-growing city with strong industries and trade. Its population grew as neighbourhoods were created and large numbers of immigrants moved into the area.

When we examine the photo, we can see evidence of change and continuity, or what has remained the same and what has changed in the city. We can see what transportation was like in the past and what buildings remain. What other aspects of change and continuity in the photo teach you about Toronto's past?



WHY STUDY HISTORY?

Studying history can help us understand who we are and where we came from. It helps us understand our values, beliefs, and culture. Perhaps even more importantly, studying history can guide us as we move forward. We can use our knowledge of past events, concerns, and people and consider what we have learned and can learn from them. We can then apply this knowledge to make more informed decisions about current issues. The history of residential schools in Canada is a good example of how studying history can help us develop a better understanding of events and lead us to take action toward positive change.

LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST

The federal government in British North America signed many treaties, or agreements, with Aboriginal peoples. The government made a number of promises in exchange for Aboriginal lands. One of these promises was to provide Aboriginal children with education. To accomplish this, the government and the Christian churches created the residential school system.

Historical research into residential schools, including oral history, has revealed many flaws and abuses in this system. From 1870 to 1996, about 150 000 children were separated from their families and communities. Many of these separations were by force. The schools also made Aboriginal children adopt western culture and abandon their own under the threat of punishment. Many children suffered from diseases, neglect, and abuse at the schools.

LEARNING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Examining the past can help us be responsible active citizens. Although events might have occurred in the past, they can still affect individuals or groups today. Remembering and gaining knowledge of our past is only one way of helping us build a better society. As shown in Figure I.1, we also have the responsibility to inform others of what we have learned. Creating memorials is another way to help us remember past events and people, and to educate those around us. Why is it important to share what we learn?



FIGURE I.1 This diagram shows how we move from remembering the past to using this knowledge to take positive action. **Analyze:** How might each element shown contribute to the development of a better society?

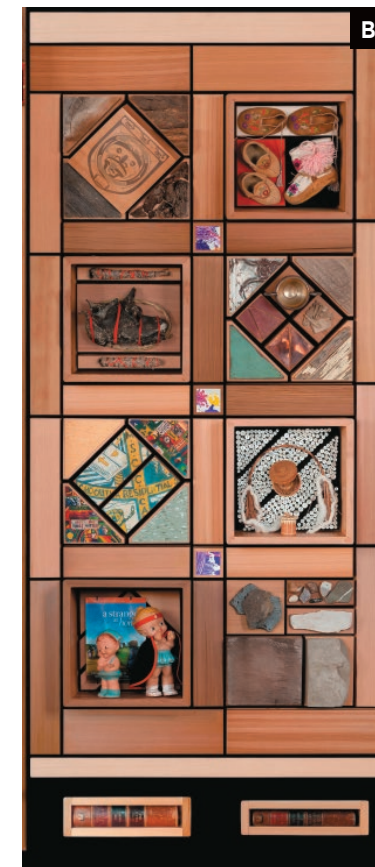
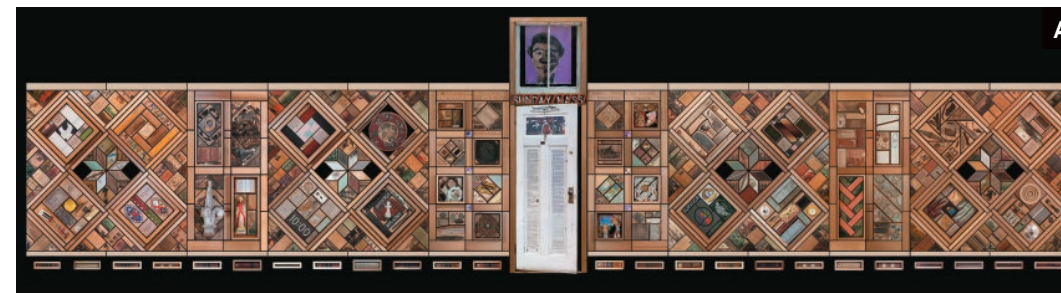


FIGURE I.2 (A) This photo shows the entire Witness Blanket. (B) This photo shows one panel of the Witness Blanket. **Analyze:** Which cultural influences are seen in the items that make up the Witness Blanket?

In 2014, artist Carey Newman led the creation of a memorial for residential schools called the Witness Blanket. Newman is of Kwagiulth, Salish, and British descent. The Witness Blanket is a large wooden structure with almost 900 items collected from residential schools, government buildings, churches, and other cultural centres across Canada. Items include pieces of stained glass, old doors, locks, and belts. Examine Figure I.2A and Figure I.2B, which are photos of the Witness Blanket. What is the impact of the items collected from residential schools in this memorial?

Read Figure I.3, a quote from Newman explaining why he created the Witness Blanket. What reasons does he provide for creating it?

The study of history is not about changing the past. We can use our knowledge of the past to make educated decisions and to take responsible actions. In 2008, to help restore, or reconcile, relations, the federal government gave an official apology to Aboriginal peoples for the residential school system. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was also formed to allow Aboriginal peoples to share their experiences. The commission acknowledges the serious impacts on Aboriginal peoples and promotes public awareness. Acts such as these help make us aware of, and help us avoid, what we now view as injustices of the past. They lead us to become a more respectful and compassionate society. Read Figure I.4, a quote from the final report of the commission, published in 2015. What does it say about the importance of studying history?

“I made this blanket for the Survivors, and for the children who never came home.... I made this blanket so that I will never forget, so that WE WILL NEVER FORGET.... I made this blanket for the people who want to learn.... I made this for the conversations still to come, for the lessons we have yet to learn, and the future we are building together.”
— Carey Newman (*Ha-yalth-kingeme*), master carver of the Witness Blanket memorial

FIGURE I.3 This is an excerpt from a statement that Newman made in 2015 to explain why he created the Witness Blanket. **Analyze:** What is he saying about the importance of remembering history?

“History plays an important role in reconciliation [healing]; to build for the future, Canadians must look to, and learn from, the past.”
— *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*

FIGURE I.4 This is an excerpt from the summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was published in 2015. **Analyze:** How are the past, present, and future connected?

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE PAST?

History is rooted in the past. Historians examine relevant sources, apply their understanding of the time period, and then tell a story about what they think happened in the past.

USING PRIMARY SOURCES

A primary source is an account or a document that was created by someone who witnessed an event. It can also be an artifact created or used during the time period when the event happened. Everything we know about the past is based on primary sources. These sources can be tools, photos, paintings, diaries, eyewitness accounts, oral histories, and even digital recordings.

In the 1800s and 1900s, many Aboriginal children were separated from their parents to live in residential schools. Examine **Figure I.5**, which is a photo taken at a residential school. It is a primary source because the photo was taken during the time the schools were in existence.

Follow the steps in **Figure I.6** to gather evidence from a primary source.



FIGURE I.5 This photo shows children at a residential school in Blackfoot Crossing, Alberta, in 1900. **Analyze:** What can you learn about residential schools from this photo?

Gathering Evidence from Primary Sources

Step	Example
1. Source the primary source. Write down what you know about the origins of the source.	The caption for Figure I.5 tells you where and when the photo was taken.
2. Examine the source in detail.	The children are dressed in identical western clothing, suggesting the clothes were provided; there are priests and nuns in the background, indicating the schools were run by the Catholic Church.
3. Consider the historical context. What was happening in the world at that time in history?	Large numbers of immigrants, mainly from Europe, had arrived in Canada; Aboriginal peoples were living on reserves and were increasingly being forced to adopt western ways.
4. Make inferences about the source; that is, draw conclusions based on evidence.	The children were forced to convert to Christianity.
5. Corroborate your inferences. This means checking to see if other reliable sources confirm your inference.	You might look for other photos of residential schools taken around the same time, or journals written by people who attended or taught at the schools.

FIGURE I.6 These five steps will help you gather evidence from primary sources.

USING SECONDARY SOURCES

A secondary source is an account about an event or time period created by someone who did not experience it first-hand. Secondary sources are created by gathering evidence from primary sources. For example, this book includes many primary sources, but it is a secondary source. The authors are telling a story about events that happened a long time ago.

Examine **Figure I.7**, which provides a modern-day view of the impact of residential schools on Aboriginal children. The poster was part of a year-long public exhibition in Vancouver that began in June 2013 to honour and celebrate the year of reconciliation. The artist, Dionne Paul, is a member of the Nuxalk Nation and Sechelt Nation in British Columbia. Why would this artwork be considered a secondary source?

Follow the steps in **Figure I.8** to gather evidence from a secondary source.



FIGURE I.7 This poster was created by Dionne Paul in 2014 to recognize the effects of residential schools on Aboriginal peoples. **Analyze:** What is the artist saying about the impact of residential schools?

Gathering Information from Secondary Sources

Step	Example
1. Source the secondary source. That is, write down what you know about who made it, when, where, and why.	The caption for Figure I.7 provides information on the artist and the date and purpose of the artwork.
2. Check the reliability of the source.	You notice that the poster was created for Vancouver's Public Art Program so the details would have been checked carefully.
3. Examine the source in detail to gather new information.	The children are dressed in uniforms, and the words "Language," "Family," and "Culture" suggest that the children lost these aspects of their lives. The boy represents how the harm done to Aboriginal children was kept quiet.
4. Corroborate , or double-check, the source against other primary or secondary sources.	You might notice that the children in both Figure I.5 and Figure I.7 are dressed in European uniforms.

FIGURE I.8 These four steps will help you gather information from secondary sources.

DOCUMENTING YOUR SOURCES

If you were going to write about the history of residential schools, you might draw on the evidence that you gathered from the primary and secondary sources on these pages. If you did, you would need to provide where you found your information. It would give your readers confidence in what you are telling them. You might state the sources in your text, or in a bibliography, which usually appears at the end of a text.

WHAT TOOLS CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND THE PAST?

When historical thinkers (both students and experts) investigate the past, they use various tools. They use the **inquiry process**, which is a system of asking questions and finding answers. This helps them understand the past as well as they can.

Historians have special ways of thinking about the past to guide them through the inquiry process. These are called **historical thinking concepts**. Historical thinking concepts include historical significance, cause and consequence, continuity and change, and historical perspective. You will learn more about the historical thinking concepts on pages 12 to 15.

Let's begin our study of history by looking at the inquiry process. You can use the components of the inquiry process in an order that makes sense for your investigation.

GATHER AND ORGANIZE

Gather sources that will help you answer your inquiry question. Try to find primary sources, such as letters, journals, photos, oral stories, maps, buildings, documents, and anything else created or used in the time period you are studying. You may find it helpful to look at secondary sources, such as textbooks and the work of other historians, to see what different people have to say about your topic.

When you collect your evidence,

- keep your inquiry question in mind
- organize and record your evidence in a way that will help you understand it
- make sure that you use reliable sources
- investigate different sources and perspectives
- make a list of all the sources you have chosen to use

FORMULATE QUESTIONS

Brainstorm possible inquiry questions to ask. Good inquiry questions

- are important and meaningful to us
- are open-ended—they do not have just one answer
- are debatable—people may not agree on the answer
- can be answered by gathering evidence and facts

It can be challenging to come up with a good inquiry question, but a good question can help guide your research.

INTERPRET AND ANALYZE

When you interpret and analyze, you make inferences (best guesses based on evidence) about what people thought or felt, or what the information means.

To increase your understanding, you can

- think about your evidence in different ways using the historical thinking concepts
- try to uncover new details and perspectives
- look for ways that different pieces might fit together
- try to find patterns
- put the evidence you have found into your own words

COMMUNICATE

You can communicate the conclusion to your inquiry in many different ways, including digital presentations, posters, poetry, plays, reports, essays, graphic novels, and movies. After communicating the results of your historical inquiry, you can debate with others what can be learned from your inquiry. Remember to cite your sources and use the correct terminology and historical concepts.

When communicating your findings, include

- your inquiry question
- the evidence you found
- your conclusion
- a delivery that will engage your audience

EVALUATE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing and interpreting your evidence, you can evaluate your evidence and draw an informed conclusion. It may be quite different from the answer you thought you would find. Remember that many conclusions are possible from the same evidence, and sometimes there is no one “right” answer. If you cannot answer your question, you may have to go through the inquiry process again with a new question or different sources of evidence.

To draw conclusions about your inquiry question,

- use your new understanding and what you already know
- evaluate your evidence to see if it does or does not support your conclusion
- determine whether you have enough evidence—you may need more sources

HISTORICAL INQUIRY IN ACTION

You are asked to conduct a historical inquiry examining the lives of children in Canada from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. Let’s look at how you might make your way through the inquiry process.

FORMULATE QUESTIONS

In your initial research, you find letters written by children during the time period. **Figure I.9** and **Figure I.10** show excerpts from two letters that appeared in a weekly magazine, the *Family Herald and Weekly Star*.

Both letters were written by rural children in the early 1900s and submitted to the Maple Leaf Club, a children’s feature in the magazine. In both excerpts, you notice that the children have experienced, or are expecting to experience, changes in their lives, including their schooling. You formulate an inquiry question that is meaningful to you, open-ended, and can be answered by gathering evidence: *What were the lives of children like between 1850 and 1914?* You work through the inquiry process and historical thinking concepts to help you answer this question.

“Dear Maple Leaves:

I live on a farm four miles [6.4 km] from Dawson, across the Yukon River. I came here eight years ago with my mother to live with my father. I have had very little chance to go to school while I have been here as four miles is a good [long] way to walk to school in the cold winter.

I go to the Catholic School now, and like it very much....

If there are any of the Leaves interested in composing poetry,

I would like to hear from them....

I am very fond of reading and have read a good many books.... ‘Kilmeny of the Orchard,’ ... ‘Anne of Green Gables,’ and ‘Anne of Avonlea.’”

— Carol M. Stevens, child from Dawson, Yukon

“Dear Maple Leaves:

I have never seen any letters from a cheesemaker’s son or from this part of Ontario. I live twenty miles [about 32 km] from Ottawa and one hundred miles [about 161 km] from Montreal. My father is a cheese-maker. I help in the factory on Monday because that is the hardest day in the week because there is Sunday’s milk as well as Monday morning’s.

I tried the Junior High School entrance examinations this year but do not know whether I passed or not. I can imagine the Editor smiling at this when he sees my poor writing.”

— Roydan Olmstead, child from Bear Brook, Ontario

FIGURE I.9 This excerpt comes from a letter written by Stevens in 1911 to the *Family Herald and Weekly Star*. **Analyze:** What does this excerpt reveal about the child’s life?

FIGURE I.10 This excerpt comes from a letter written by Olmstead in 1914 to the *Family Herald and Weekly Star*. **Analyze:** Compare this quote with **Figure I.9**. What similarities and differences do the children have?

GATHER AND ORGANIZE

Next, you gather information from reliable sources. Keeping your inquiry question in mind, you make the following notes, citing your sources:

- Many children in the 1800s and early 1900s worked instead of going to school.
- Some magazines, such as the *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, had separate sections for children. These sections included riddles, pictures for drawing and colouring, and children’s letters.
- In the 1800s and early 1900s, an increasing number of children’s books by Canadian-born writers were published.

You find statistics that show the number of children attending school in Ontario increased 16 percent between 1870 and 1910. Next, you find data on the number of children in the workforce during this time period, as shown in **Figure I.11**. To help you better understand, you organize your information, keeping your inquiry question in mind. For example, you might use a placemat diagram to arrange your findings.



FIGURE I.11 This graph shows the number of children working full-time between 1870 and 1910. **Analyze:** How does the graph reflect changes in children’s lives?

INTERPRET AND ANALYZE

You examine your evidence, including your notes and sources that you have gathered, such as **Figure I.11**. Look for ways that your information fits together, or does not. For example, you notice that both children in **Figure I.9** and **Figure I.10** live in rural communities and one of them helps with work outside the home. **Figure I.11** shows that more children started to attend school, and fewer were working. Now you have more questions. What caused the changes in children’s lives? How did the experiences of rural and urban children compare? You decide to gather more evidence.

EVALUATE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS

You evaluate your evidence and use your new understanding to settle on this conclusion to your inquiry question: *Different aspects of children’s lives were changing from 1850 to 1914. There was increasing interest in schooling and nurturing children rather than having them work. With a growing number of children being able to read and write, books and magazines with sections for children were being produced to meet the needs of children.* You may have generated new questions that you could continue to investigate in a new inquiry process.

COMMUNICATE

To communicate your conclusion, you consider different options. After thinking about what will interest your audience, you decide to create a digital slideshow for your classmates. You use visuals, statistics, and text to present some of the changes in children’s lives. As you prepare your presentation, you state your inquiry question and conclusion clearly to show how your evidence supports your conclusion.

PRACTISING HISTORICAL INQUIRY

What additional questions do you have about the lives of children in Canada between 1850 and 1914? Develop a new inquiry question and gather and organize the sources that you find to support your inquiry. Carefully review your information to draw a conclusion. Then share your findings in a short blog.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

How can we better understand people who lived in the past? Historians look for evidence that helps them discover how these people thought, felt, and went about their daily lives. They research people's lives, examine evidence, and consider the values and beliefs that were common at the time. Then they make inferences—they reach conclusions based on the evidence they have gathered. Historians are always careful to avoid judging the past using their own present-day values.

When you think about historical perspective, you can ask the following questions:

- **What were the beliefs, values, perspectives, and motivations of the people who lived in that time?**
- **How do those beliefs and values differ from today's beliefs and values?**
- **Did the people make understandable decisions based on the information they had available to them?**
- **What beliefs, values, and ideas do I already have that affect how I think about this event, period, or person?**
- **What inferences can I make about the person's thoughts, feelings, and motivations from the evidence I have?**

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Canadians do not support teachers using corporal (physical) punishment on students. Corporal punishment in Canadian schools has been illegal since 2004. At one time, most people believed that strict discipline helped children become responsible citizens, and teachers had the authority to use corporal punishment.

Read **Figure I.12**, a quote from Ellen Bowes, who began teaching at a school in present-day southwestern Ontario in 1855. She recalls how one teacher disciplined his students. Now read **Figure I.13**, which is a quote from Egerton Ryerson when he was the superintendent of schools for Canada West. Ryerson was a reformer who promoted free, compulsory education for children.

In **Figure I.14**, John Joseph Kelso, superintendent of neglected children in Ontario, expresses his view on corporal punishment. What do these quotes tell you about the perspectives on corporal punishment in schools between the 1850s and the early 1900s?

"The Teacher kept order by the vigorous use of a cane."

— Ellen Bowes, teacher

FIGURE I.12 Bowes's recount of what she witnessed during her teaching years that began in 1855 appeared in an Ontario government report published in 1910. **Analyze:** What attitude is revealed by the action of the teacher described in this quote?

"The best Teacher ... will seldom resort to the Rod [stick used for striking a person]; but there are occasions when it cannot be wisely avoided."

— Egerton Ryerson, superintendent of schools for Canada West

FIGURE I.13 This excerpt was part of a report written by Ryerson in 1865. **Analyze:** Compare this quote to the one in **Figure I.12**. Which words show a shift in attitude?

"It is not whipping that is needed so much as love of the right sort, discernment [understanding] of child-character, individual attention, patience, and self-control."

— John Joseph Kelso, superintendent of neglected children in Ontario

FIGURE I.14 Kelso made this statement in 1904. It was included in a 1905 Ontario government report. **Analyze:** How might Kelso's work have influenced his perspective?

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

All events have causes that make them happen and consequences that result. To better understand a significant historical event, historians try to discover all the causes, especially the causes that had the most influence. Historians also look at the consequences of events, including positive and negative, short-term and long-term, and intended and unintended (planned and unplanned) consequences. The consequences can be different for different people.

When you think about the causes and consequences of a historical event, you can ask the following questions:

- **What were the causes of the event?**
- **Who were the people who influenced the event?**
- **What were the social, political, or economic conditions that influenced the event?**
- **What were the ideas and beliefs that influenced the event?**

- **What were the consequences of the event?**
- **What were the intended and unintended consequences of the event?**

CASE STUDY: ONTARIO FACTORIES ACT, 1884

In the second half of the 1800s, provincial governments faced increasing pressure to protect factory workers, including children. In response, the Ontario government passed the *Ontario Factories Act* in 1884. It was the first workplace health and safety law in Canada. The act made it illegal to have children work more than 10 hours a day or 60 hours a week in factories with at least 20 workers. It was also illegal to hire boys under the age of 12 and girls under the age of 14. The act also outlined health and safety requirements.

What were some of the developments that led to the *Ontario Factories Act*? Examine the diagram in **Figure I.15** to learn about some of the causes and consequences of this law.

Event: ONTARIO FACTORIES ACT, 1884

Cause: IDEAS AND BELIEFS

Starting in the 1830s, many skilled workers called for an end to child labour partly to protect their own jobs and wages. Over time, workers unions and social reformers lobbied against child labour.

Consequence: INTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The number of child workers declined. In Ontario today, there are strict laws to protect workers 14 to 18 years old.

Cause: SOCIAL CONDITIONS

From 1879 to 1884, the federal government's investigations into workplace safety and failed attempts to enact laws led to debates in Ontario. In 1883, the *Labour Union*, a newspaper in Hamilton, urged the Ontario government to act.

Consequence: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Many parents faced financial difficulty because their children could no longer work to help their families. Government factory inspectors recognized this difficulty and were often lenient in enforcing the law.

FIGURE I.15 This diagram shows some causes and consequences of the *Ontario Factories Act* of 1884. **Analyze:** Infer which of the consequences were short-term and which were long-term.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

How can we make sense of the complexity of history? To understand the past, historians look at how people's lives changed over time. They look at social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental changes. They look at the speed of these changes. Historians also identify the continuities: the things that stayed the same when everything else was changing.

When you think about continuity and change, you can ask the following questions:

- **What has changed?**
- **What has not changed?**
- **How quickly or slowly did the changes happen?**
- **Do the changes indicate progress for some groups or individuals and decline for others?**
- **What can we learn from comparing two different time periods?**

CASE STUDY: CHILDREN'S LEISURE ACTIVITIES

By the late 1800s, education reformers had begun to introduce organized, adult-supervised playtime for children. They believed that games and sports were important for children's health and moral development. Through play, children learned discipline, cooperation, and responsibility.

A movement began that promoted organized activities that encouraged youth to enjoy the outdoors and nature. Schools and cities started to build playgrounds so children could play in a safe environment, away from the streets. Clubs such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides were brought to Canada in the early 1900s from Britain. Examine **Figure I.16A** and **Figure I.16B**, which show Girl Guides from 1912 and the present day. Why do you think that organizations such as the Girl Guides continue to exist today?

Today, there are approximately 170 000 boys and girls in Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in Canada. In addition, around 60 percent of Canadian youth participate in organized sports. Swimming and soccer have the highest enrolment.



FIGURE I.16 (A) This 1912 photo shows a group of Girl Guides on an organized hike on Grouse Mountain in North Vancouver, British Columbia. (B) This 2010 photo shows a group of Girl Guides participating in the Girl Empower Challenge during the organization's 100th anniversary celebration on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. **Analyze:** Compare the photos. What has changed about the Girl Guides uniform and what has stayed the same?

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

How do we decide what is important to learn when studying the past? As historians investigate the past, they make choices about what is significant enough to research further. They try to choose events, people, issues, or developments that have had a major, long-lasting impact on many people. Historians also look for events, people, and developments that help us better understand an important issue. For example, knowing about the experiences of Black students who were segregated (separated) might help us understand people's attitudes today.

When you think about the historical significance of various events, people, and developments, you can ask the following questions:

- **Did the event, person, or development create a long-lasting change?**
- **If so, how many people were affected, and were they affected profoundly or deeply?**
- **Was this the first time that an event such as this occurred or an idea such as this was introduced?**
- **Does this event, person, or development reveal something about the past that is different from the present?**
- **How did the significance of this event, person, or development vary for different people?**
- **Has the significance of this event, person, or development changed over time?**

CASE STUDY: SCHOOLS FOR ALL RACES

In the 1800s, Black children did not benefit equally from educational reforms. In classrooms, they sat at the back or on separate benches from white children. Many white parents refused to send their children to schools with Black children. In 1850, the *Common Schools Act* permitted separate schools based on race. Some people spoke out against race-based schools and promoted desegregated, or unified, schools that all children could attend. They believed that integrated schools would help break down racial prejudice.

In 1850, William King, an Irish Presbyterian minister, opened what would become a successful desegregated school. King settled in present-day North Buxton, Ontario. He founded a thriving Black community, the Elgin Settlement, and the Buxton Mission School for the community's children. The school soon earned a reputation for providing a high quality of education. As a result, white parents began enrolling their children at the school. In 1861, the school shown in **Figure I.17** was built in the settlement. It was the settlement's third school. How does the development of desegregated schools like this meet the criteria of historical significance?

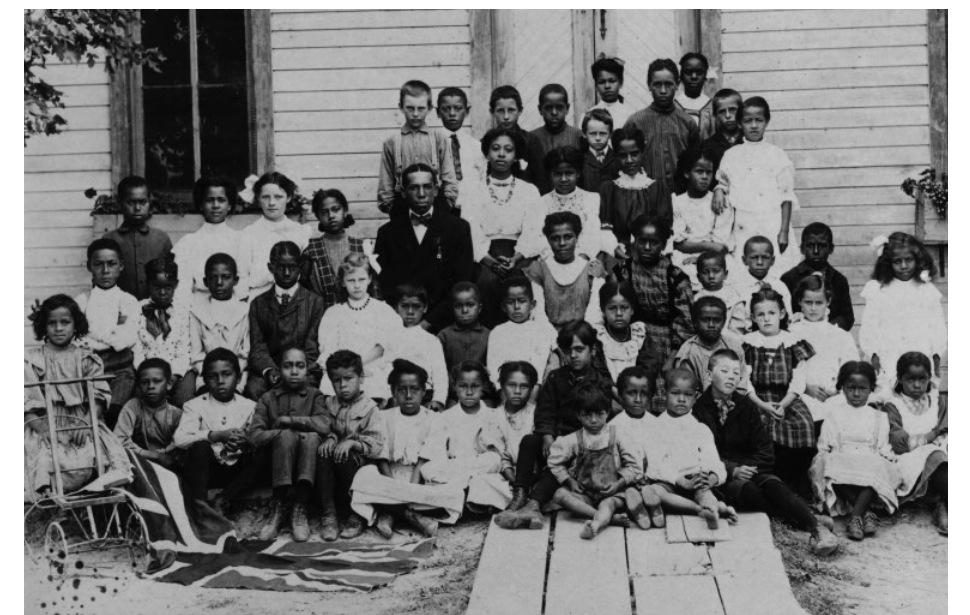


FIGURE I.17 Students at a school in the Elgin Settlement pose for a photo around 1910. **Analyze:** How does this photo support the significance of the desegregated school system?