

CAPTURING PUBLIC COMMENTS ON HISTORY CAPS DOCUMENTS

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Organization: Stellenbosch University / LEAP

Phase: Senior Phase

Grade: 7-9

Subject: History

Section 2	Page Number	Issue	Challenge	Recommendation
	13-16	The Specific Aims of School History (Section 2.3, p. 16) focus on historical knowledge, procedural skills and values. No aim addresses understanding economic processes or how societies generate and distribute prosperity.	The Senior Phase is the last phase of compulsory History. Learners who do not choose History in Grades 10-12 will leave school without having been asked to think systematically about how economies work or why some societies are richer than others. In a country with youth unemployment exceeding 60 percent, this omission limits the curriculum's relevance.	Add to the Specific Aims (p. 16): 'Develop an understanding of the economic processes by which societies generate and distribute prosperity, and why some succeed while others do not.'
	31-36	Section 2.8.4 (Historical Sources and Evidence) lists source types that learners should work with. The enquiry process framework mentions 'texts, histories, internet sites, archives, oral sources, interviews, images, archaeological collections, material culture, landscapes, structures, objects.' Numerical/quantitative sources (graphs, tables, data series) are absent.	Senior Phase learners already interpret graphs in Mathematics and Economic Management Sciences. Adding numerical sources to the History skills framework would reinforce cross-curricular learning and equip learners to engage with historical change as it is routinely communicated in public discourse -- through data over time.	Under source analysis skills, add numerical sources (graphs, tables, data series) to the types of evidence learners should be able to interpret. Include the expectation that learners interrogate quantitative sources critically: How was this data collected? What is being measured? Whose experiences are captured and whose are left out?
	13-16	No mention is made of the relationship between History and Economic Management Sciences (EMS), despite both being compulsory in the Senior Phase and sharing overlapping content on trade, markets, labour and production.	EMS teaches markets, trade and opportunity cost. History covers the Indian Ocean trade, the Mineral Revolution and industrialisation. Without explicit cross-referencing, learners miss the opportunity to see economic concepts as both analytically useful and historically grounded.	Note in the introductory section that economic concepts taught in Economic Management Sciences (markets, trade, opportunity cost) have natural historical counterparts. Encourage teachers to make these connections explicit.

Section 3	Page Number	Issue	Challenge	Recommendation
	43-44	Grade 7 Term 1 (Indian Ocean Trade): The focus areas include 'intended and unintended consequences of trade (exchange of cultural ideas and religious beliefs, shipwrecks, mixing of people of different languages and cultures, introduction of new animals and plants, spreading of new diseases)' (p. 44). The assessment asks learners to 'explain some of the unintended consequences of trade links, such as the exchanges of ideas, beliefs, languages, the introduction of new animals, plants and diseases' (p. 44). Economic consequences of trade are absent from both the focus areas and the assessment criteria.	The curriculum lists cultural, linguistic and biological consequences of Indian Ocean trade but not economic consequences. Why did trade make Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe prosperous? Who controlled the trade and who received the profits? These are questions about institutions -- the rules that determine who benefits from economic activity -- and they are relevant to understanding contemporary South Africa.	Add to the focus areas (p. 43-44): 'Include the economic consequences of Indian Ocean trade alongside cultural and linguistic consequences. Ask: What institutions (rules about who controlled trade and received profits) determined who benefited from trade? Why did trade make Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe prosperous?'
	45-47	Grade 7 Term 2 (Pre-colonial economies): The overview discusses livestock herding, trade networks and economic production (p. 45-46). The governance section notes 'the notion of fluidity of polities and constant movement of individuals and groups as a result of the abundance of land and relative shortage of people' (p. 54). This observation is present but not developed into a systematic economic concept.	The curriculum already notes the 'abundance of land and relative shortage of people.' This is the land-to-labour ratio, perhaps the single most important structural feature distinguishing pre-colonial African economies from European ones. It explains why lobola functioned as compensation for lost labour, why chiefs competed for followers rather than territory, and why African societies were vulnerable to the slave trade. Without naming and developing this concept, learners lack the framework to understand its far-reaching consequences.	Add to the focus areas (p. 45-46): 'Introduce the concept of the land-to-labour ratio: in pre-colonial southern Africa, land was abundant but people were scarce. This shaped marriage customs (lobola as compensation for lost labour), political organisation (chiefs competed for followers rather than territory), and economic vulnerability. This framework helps learners understand why African institutions differed from European ones without recourse to cultural stereotypes.'
	54-56	Grade 8 Term 2 (Industrial Revolution): The key question is: 'What factors gave rise to the Industrial Revolution in Europe and what was its impact in Britain c.1750s to 1900' (p. 55). The focus areas cover inventions, social consequences and imperialism. The assessment asks learners to 'explain how the Industrial Revolution changed the way in which humans live to this day' (p. 56). Two critical questions are absent: (1) Why did the Industrial Revolution happen in Britain and not in China, India or Africa? (2) What actually changed in economic terms?	The Industrial Revolution is the single most important economic event in human history. The curriculum focuses on inventions and their social consequences but does not ask why this transformation occurred in Britain rather than in China (which had printing, gunpowder, the compass), India (which had superior textiles), or elsewhere. The answer -- involving property rights, scientific culture, and institutions that rewarded innovation -- is relevant to understanding why South Africa has not yet achieved its own industrial transformation.	Add to the focus areas (p. 55-56): 'Ask why the Industrial Revolution occurred in Britain rather than in China, India or elsewhere. The answer involves property rights, scientific culture and institutions that rewarded innovation. Frame the Industrial Revolution as a productivity revolution -- the systematic application of scientific knowledge to production -- connecting it to the curriculum's existing assessment goal of explaining how it changed human life to this day.'
	57-59	Grade 8 Term 3 (Mineral Revolution): The focus areas cover 'the creation of a	The curriculum focuses rightly on exploitation and racial hierarchy but does	Add to the focus areas (p. 57-58): 'Introduce the concept of structural transformation -- how the discovery of diamonds (1867)

		hierarchical labour system based on race' (p. 58), migrant labour and indentured labour. The concept of structural transformation -- the shift from an agricultural to a mining/industrial economy -- is absent. The impact of railways on regional economic geography is not discussed.	not explain how mineral discoveries transformed the entire economic structure of southern Africa. The story of black farmers in Basutoland (Lesotho) who profitably supplied grain to Kimberley by ox-wagon, only to be undercut when railways made imported Australian wheat cheaper, illustrates how infrastructure creates economic winners and losers -- relevant to contemporary debates about regional inequality.	and gold (1886) shifted the economy from agriculture to mining. Discuss how railways, built to service mines, reshaped economic geography -- for example, black farmers in Basutoland who had supplied grain to Kimberley were undercut when railways made imported wheat cheaper.'
	64-65	Grade 9 Term 2 (Bantu Education): The assessment already includes: 'recognise that Bantu Education was intended to produce semi-skilled cheap labourers and submissive and subservient citizens' (p. 65). This is good. However, the economic dimension -- that Bantu Education systematically destroyed human capital -- is not developed. The connection to contemporary unemployment is not made.	Bantu Education was not only a moral atrocity; it was an economic one. By deliberately preparing black South Africans for unskilled labour, the apartheid government destroyed productive potential on a massive scale. The consequences persist: South Africa's education system remains one of the weakest in the developing world, and this is a direct cause of unemployment. Without framing Bantu Education as an attack on human capital, learners understand the moral dimension but miss the economic dimension that bears on their own job prospects.	Add to the focus areas or assessment (p. 64-65): 'Frame Bantu Education as an attack on human capital -- by deliberately limiting black South Africans to unskilled labour, the apartheid government destroyed the productive potential of millions. The consequences persist: South Africa's education system remains weak, contributing directly to unemployment. Ask learners to consider how education policy affects economic development.'
	66-68	Grade 9 Term 3 (Women's Protest Movements): The focus areas include: 'the onerous responsibilities that rural women had to shoulder in the context of men migrating to urban mining towns and cities (2 hours)' (p. 67); 'worsening conditions in the rural areas that forced women to join migrancy to the towns (2 hours)' (p. 67); 'the various forms of work that women performed in towns -- women working in factories and the informal sector -- beer brewing, and formal low-paid work such as washerwomen and domestic work, etc. (2 hours)' (p. 67). The curriculum frames these economic realities primarily as causes of political mobilisation rather than as economic phenomena worth understanding in their own right.	The curriculum is deeply concerned with economic questions -- labour markets, gendered wage discrimination, structural exclusion -- but frames them primarily as context for women's politicisation rather than as economic forces worth understanding independently. Domestic work remains a defining feature of black women's labour in South Africa today. Without greater emphasis on the economic forces themselves, learners understand why women protested but not why the economic structures that produced those protests persist.	Add to the focus areas (p. 67): 'Emphasise the economic forces that shaped the kinds of work women performed -- domestic work, washing, beer brewing, factory jobs at wages below those paid to men -- alongside the existing emphasis on women's political mobilisation. Connect to the continued importance of domestic work as a phenomenon of black women's labour in South Africa today.'
	70-71	Grade 9 Term 4 (World War II): The focus areas include: 'the Great Depression of 1929 and failure of democracy in the Weimar Republic (2 hours)' (p. 71). The overview	The curriculum allocates 2 hours to the Great Depression and the failure of the Weimar Republic and mentions hyperinflation and economic crisis in the	Add to the focus areas or assessment (p. 70-71): 'Make explicit how economic crises (hyperinflation in the 1920s, mass unemployment during the Great Depression) directly caused the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism. Ask

		mentions that 'The amount Germany was forced to pay resulted in economic hardships such as hyperinflation, leaving the Germany economy in ruins' (p. 70) and that 'During the worldwide economic crisis of the Great Depression in the 1930s, many people lost faith in liberal democracy' (p. 70). The economic causes of democratic collapse are present but implicit rather than explicit in the focus areas and assessment.	overview. But the causal mechanism -- how economic crises directly destroy democratic institutions -- is not made explicit in the focus areas or assessment criteria. This is a lesson with obvious contemporary relevance in a country where economic exclusion fuels political instability.	learners to consider how economic exclusion can fuel political instability -- a question relevant to contemporary South Africa.'
Section 4	Page Number	Issue	Challenge	Recommendation
	77-81	The cognitive levels framework (pp. 77-81) and all examples of source-based assessment involve written, visual or oral sources. No examples involve interpreting graphs, data tables or statistical evidence.	Senior Phase learners are capable of interpreting graphs and data tables. Without examples in the assessment framework, the addition of numerical sources to Section 2 will have no practical effect on classroom assessment.	Add examples of quantitative source analysis to the assessment framework. For Grade 8 (Industrial Revolution): present a graph of British GDP per capita from 1700 to 1900 and ask learners to identify the inflection point and explain what caused the acceleration. This models how quantitative sources can be used within the existing cognitive levels (extract, interpret, evaluate).

Summary of Recommendations & Comments:

This submission proposes that economic history be more prominently woven into the amended CAPS History curriculum for the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9). The Senior Phase is the final phase of compulsory History; learners who do not choose History in Grades 10-12 will never encounter a systematic account of how economies work or why some societies are richer than others. The proposals enrich existing topics with economic dimensions: (1) add economic consequences to the Indian Ocean trade topic; (2) introduce the land-to-labour ratio for pre-colonial economies; (3) reframe the Industrial Revolution as a productivity revolution and ask why it happened in Britain; (4) add structural transformation to the Mineral Revolution; (5) frame Bantu Education as destruction of human capital; (6) emphasise the economic forces shaping women's work; (7) make explicit the economic causes of the Weimar Republic's collapse; (8) add quantitative source analysis to the assessment framework; and (9) note the links between History and Economic Management Sciences. A detailed report accompanies this submission.

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