

How do we judge historical significance?

Remember, you could be assessed on any topic you have studied so far!

Last half term you were studying **historical significance (importance)** by investigating the lyrics of Billy Joel's song 'We didn't start the fire'. Across are two topics from within this song. **You will need to know this information for your assessment.**

Criteria for significance:

It is possible to put historical events, people, ideas and places into categories to sum up why they are significant. Here are a few that you may have looked at in class:

- **Shocking/controversial event**, e.g. 9/11 terror attacks
- **Style icon**, e.g. Marilyn Monroe
- **Infamous (famous for the wrong reasons) person**, e.g. Adolf Hitler
- **A big leap forwards in technology or ideas**, e.g. the Moon landings
- **Something devastating or destructive**, e.g. Korean War
- **Something that sums up the time people live in**, e.g. social media

Berlin Wall: 1961 – 1989

Description: A wall built in 1961 by the Russians who ruled East Berlin after WW2. It remained until 1989 when East and West Berliners tore it down.

Explanation: After WW2 a defeated Germany was divided into West and East. The West was ruled by the USA, Britain and France. The West became rich. The East was ruled by Russia, and it became poor. Many East Berliners were moving to the West, which the Russians wanted to stop because it made them look bad. The building of the wall was a **shock event** – barbed wire and checkpoints went up over the night of the 13th August 1961, followed by a physical wall.

Assess: Short term: The wall saw Berlin become a 'battleground' between the USA and Russia during the **Cold War**. The two sides almost started WW3 when US and Russian tanks faced off against one another at Checkpoint Charlie in October 1961. **Long term:** The Wall divided families, and saw several failed escape attempts from the East, including when Peter Fechter was left by East German guards to bleed to death on barbed wire.

Decide: The Wall became a symbol for how cruel the Russian government was. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is viewed as one of the moments that marked the end of the Cold War.



British Beatlemania: 1960s



Description: The Beatles, known as the 'Fab Four', were a rock and roll group from Liverpool active during the 1960s. The members were John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr.

Explanation: The Beatles were **style icons**, and were the first band to gain a huge international following. They began performing in small venues like the iconic 'Cavern Club' in Liverpool, but went on to be summed up by sell out tours, and screaming girls. The quantity and quality of music generated in such a short space of time has also given the Beatles a reputation as musical geniuses. Songs include 'Hey Jude', 'All you need is love' and 'Twist and Shout'.

Assess: Short term: The Beatles came to symbolise the more modern views that were emerging in the 1960s, and a more confident, light hearted view on life after WW2. Their original fashion style was that of 'Teddy Boys'; sharp suits and mop-top hairstyles. **Long term:** The Beatles' music inspired Britpop bands such as Oasis. Tragedy also struck the Beatles with the shock assassination of John Lennon in 1980, after a long solo career and time as a peace campaigner.

Decide: The Beatles were a huge **cultural influence** on Britain and the world. They represented the 'British invasion' of America and continue to influence music today.



Question Technique:

D.E.A.D good answer



Describe - Briefly sum up the impact of the topic you have chosen.

Explain - Now explain the importance of your choice of topic in more detail. It is helpful to link your topic to a category of significance and explain why.

Assess - Judge the short term (at the time) and long term (on today's world) impact of your topic to assess how significant it really is.

Decide - State how far your chosen topic was significant - think about how far reaching its impact was.

C.O.L.D.

Content - Provide 2-3 **suggestions** about what the source reveals from the clues within it.

Origin - Who created the source? Is it biased? When was it created? Why was it created?

Limitations - What has been **left out** of the source or ignored? Is this important?

Decision - **How useful** is the source in answering the question? Is it **VERY** useful (it's honest and unbiased) **or** only **QUITE** useful (it is biased and only takes one side of the story).