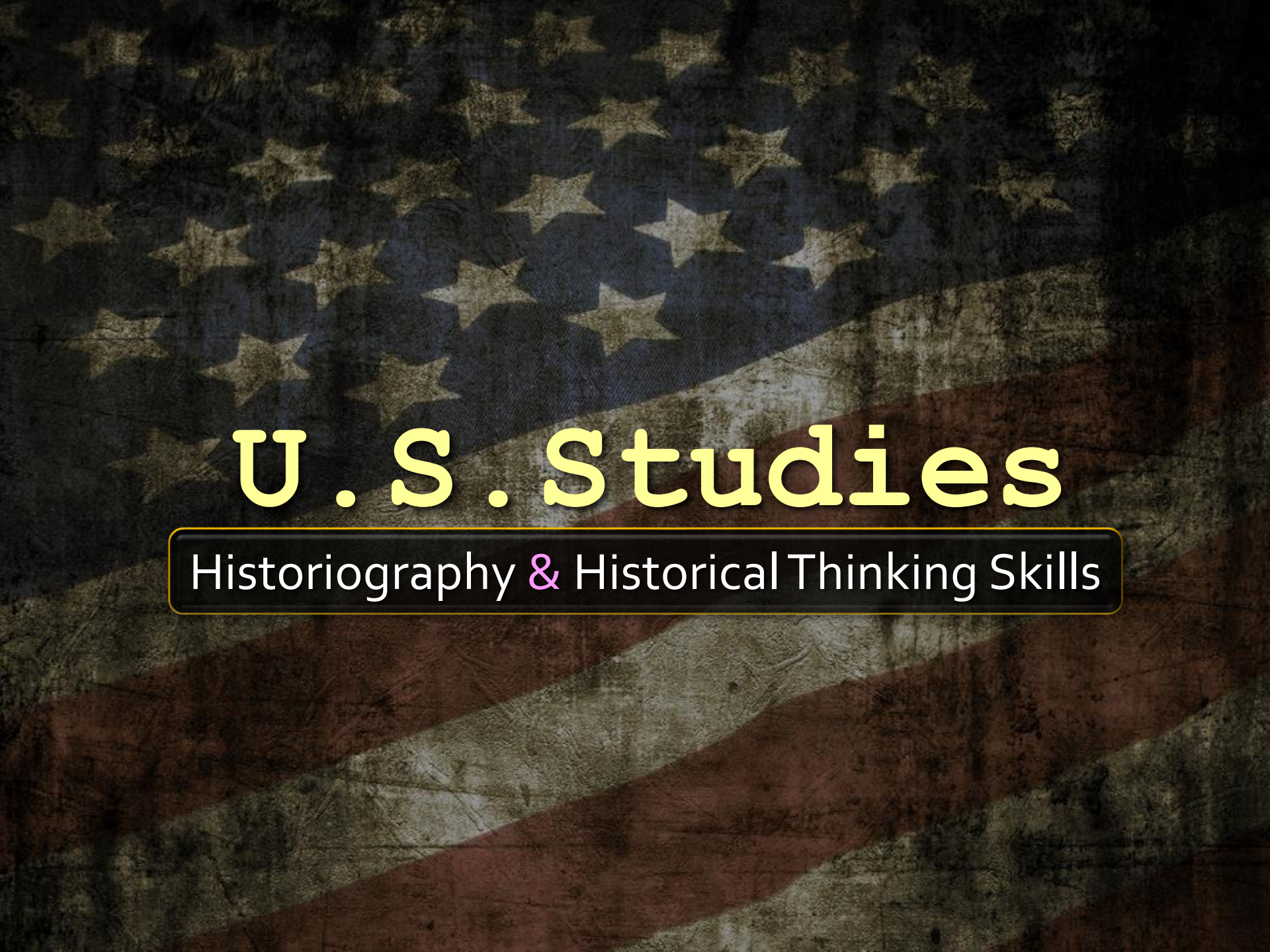
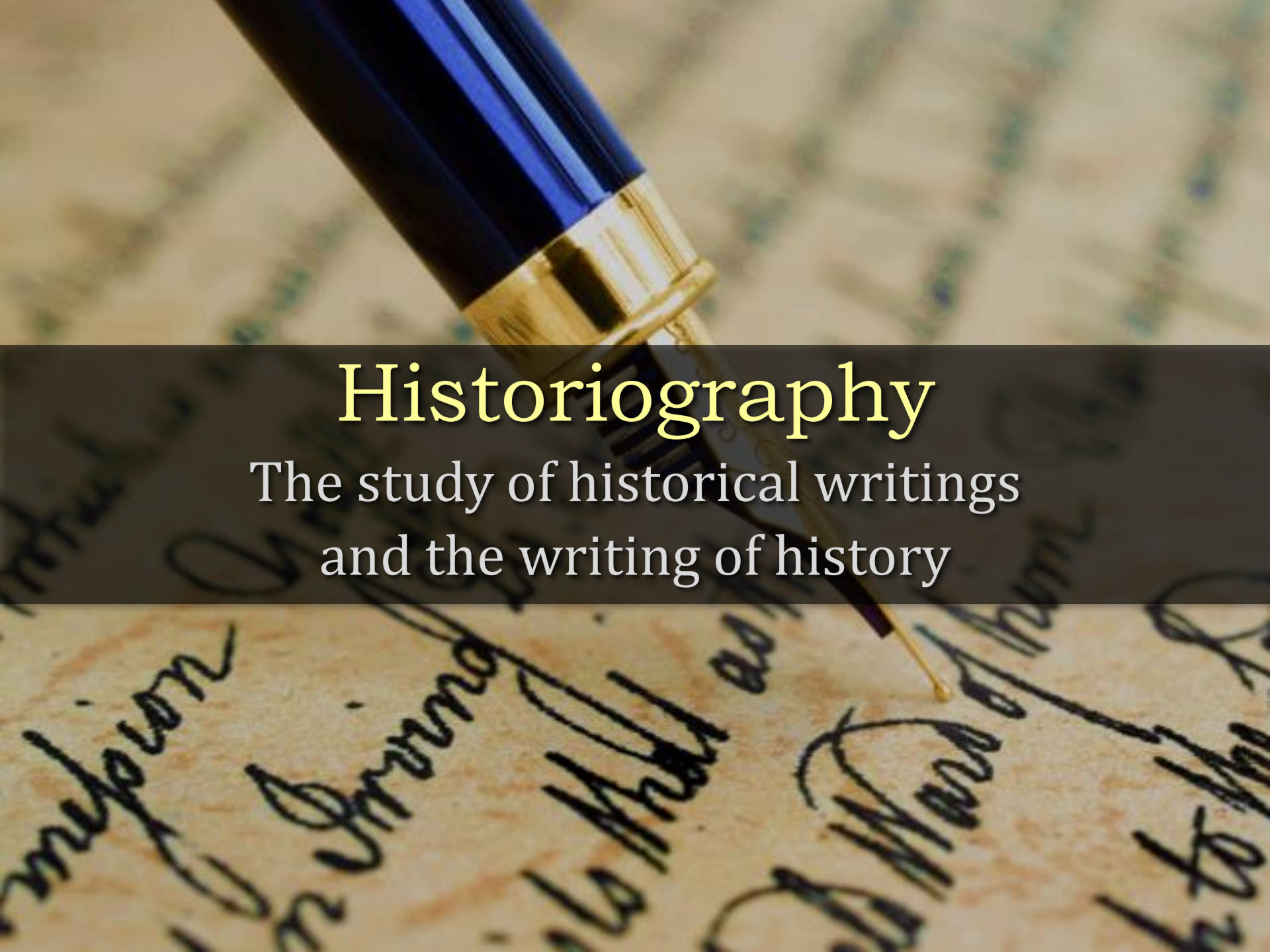

U.S. Studies
Historiography & Historical Thinking Skills



Historiography

The study of historical writings
and the writing of history

How do we *know* the account of the past is *true*?

We rely upon *multiple pieces of evidence* that are collected & reliably tested to construct the past

Primary Sources

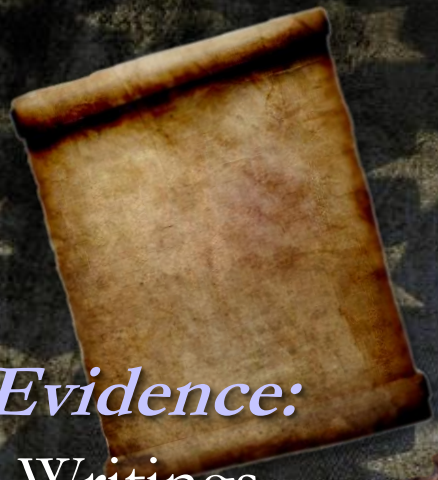
Original pieces of evidence

The actual writings, bones, artifacts, & buildings from the past

Secondary Sources

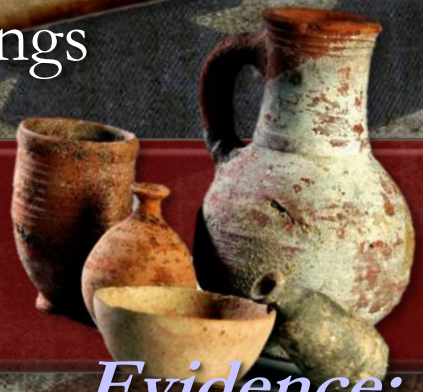
Sources created after the actual event took place

Things that talk about the primary sources. *Like Textbooks, biographies, encyclopedias, documentaries & websites*



Evidence:
Writings

PAST



KNOWING
"Seeing"

Evidence:
Artifacts

Evidence:
Fossils/Bones

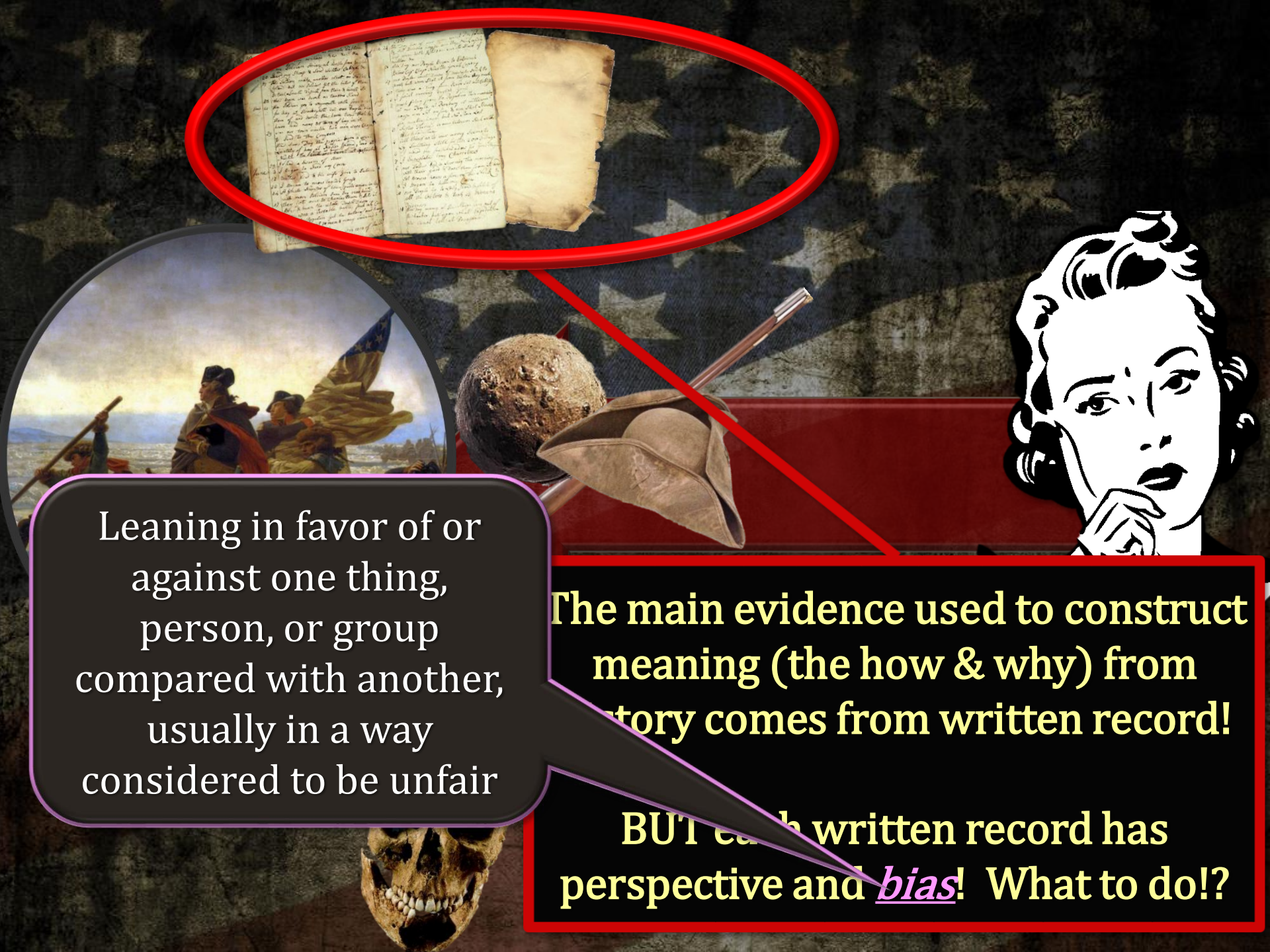
It Did OR Didn't Happen?

Letters, Diaries, Military Reports (Popes, kings, warriors), newspaper articles

Clothing, jewelry, utensils, weapons, trinkets, buildings, military gear

Skeletal remains, grave sites, body counts

WHY did it happen?


Leaning in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair
The main evidence used to construct meaning (the how & why) from
tory comes from written record!
BUT
written record has
perspective and bias! What to do!?

THE PAST

The TRUTH of events

The writings from the past (with biases, perspectives, opinions)

Q:

How do we get through the wall of biases, perspectives & opinions?

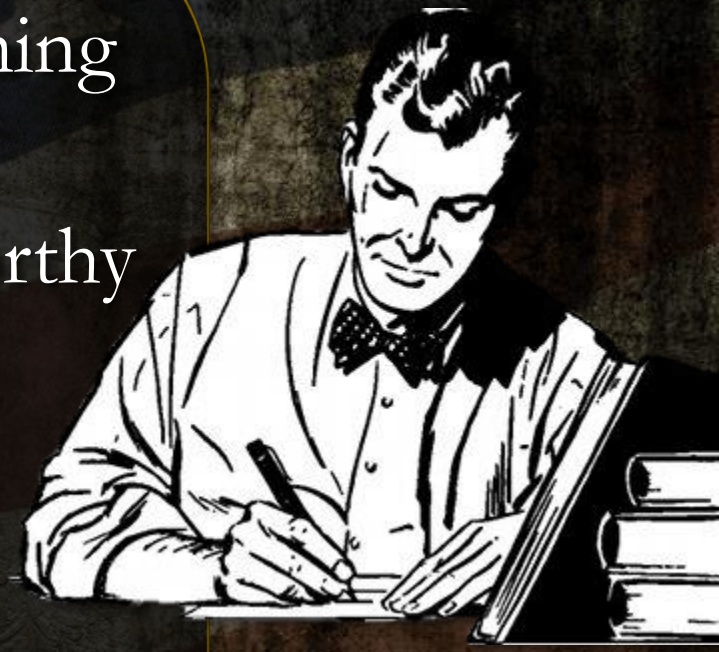
A:

We have to use historical thinking and reading skills with any and ALL written accounts of the past!!

Historical Thinking & Reading Skills

Sourcing: The act of questioning a piece of evidence (written) and trying to determine if it's trustworthy

- Who wrote this?
- What is the author's perspective?
- When was it written?
- Where was it written?
- Why was it written?
- Is it reliable? Why? Why not?



Historical Thinking & Reading Skills

Contextualizing:

Understanding how background information influences the content of a document

- When and where was the document created?
- What was different then? What was the same?
- How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?

Historical Thinking & Reading Skills

Corroboration:

Collecting & looking at other evidence to see similarities and differences among them.
Then making connections & reasonable conclusions.

- What do other documents say?
- Do the documents agree? If not, why?
- What are other possible documents?
- What documents are most reliable?

Historical Thinking & Reading Skills

Close Reading:

Carefully and with great focus reading a text to get what it is actually saying. It is making sure you interpret a text correctly!

- What claims does the author make?
- What evidence does the author use?
- What language does the author use? (words, phrases, images, symbols)
- How does the documents language show the authors perspective?

THE PAST

The TRUTH of events

The writings from the past (with biases, perspectives, opinions)

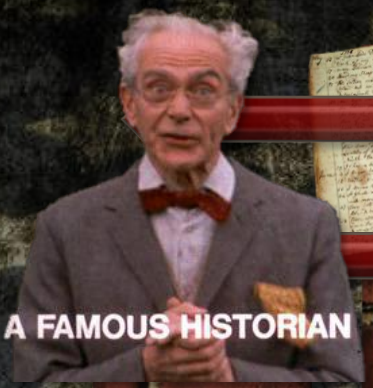
Corroborating

Sourcing

Contextualizi

Archeology

Paleontology/ Osteology



Corroborating

Sourcing

Contextualizi

THE PAST

The TRUTH of events

The writer of the past (with biases, perspectives, opinions)

The writings from the past (with biases, perspectives, opinions)

Archeology

Paleontology/ Osteology

How do we *know* the history writers account is *reliable*?

We use *evidence, reason & review* to gain more accurate & reliable accounts

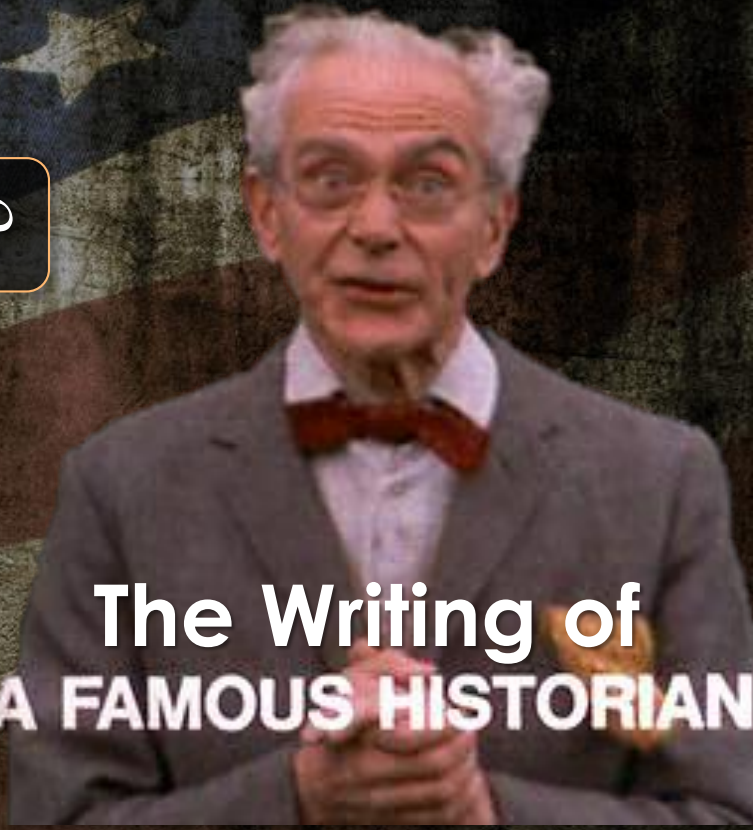
EVIDENCE

How much evidence is available?

How much evidence was used & not used?

Why was certain evidence used & some not?

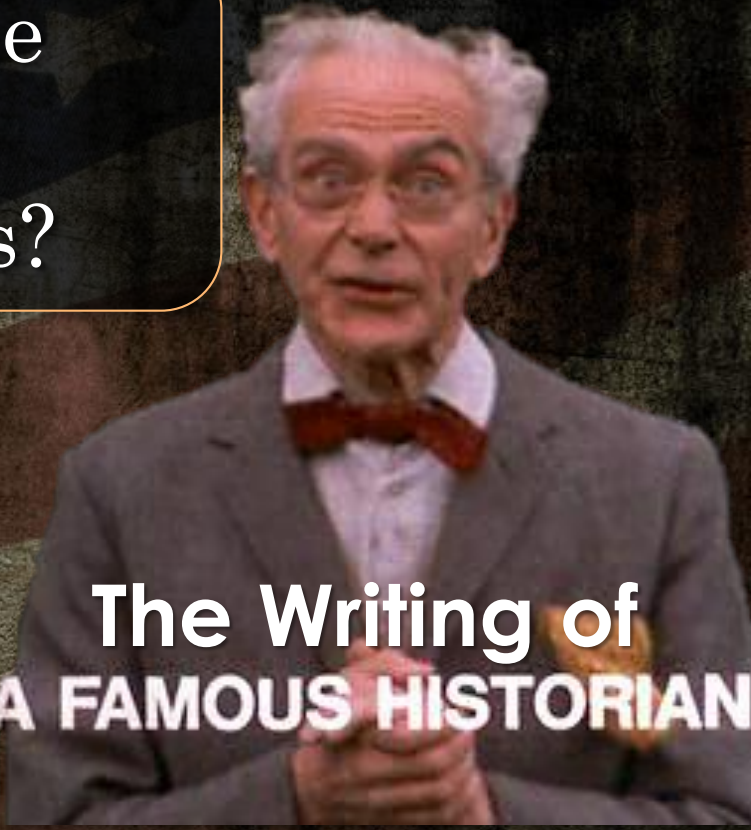
Do the pieces of evidence accumulate & connect?



REASON

What are the reasonable explanations?

Is this explanation reasonably based on the evidence (facts)?



Given what is known (the facts) does this explanation fit what is known?

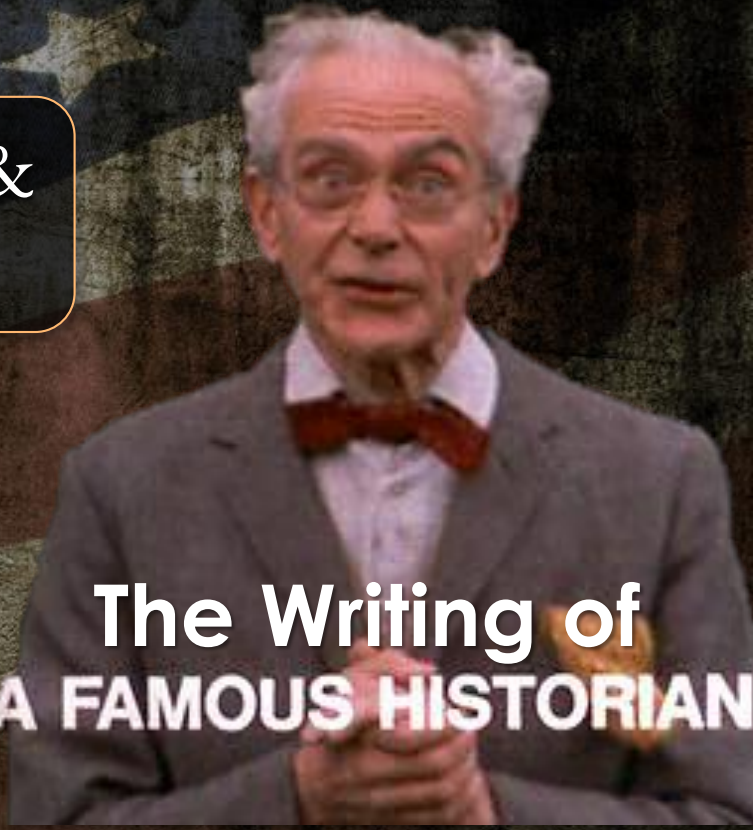
REVIEW

What are the beliefs, values, & setting of this writer?

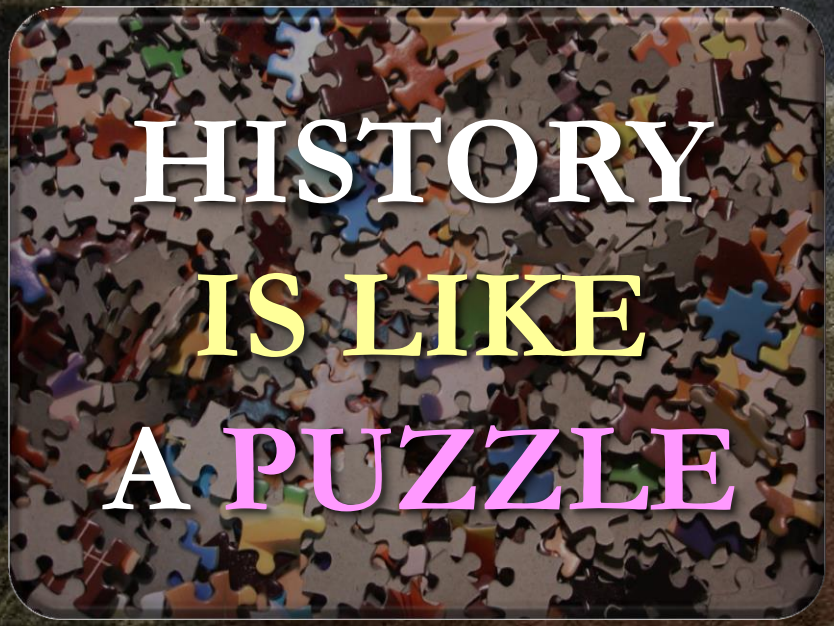
What is their motive for writing this?

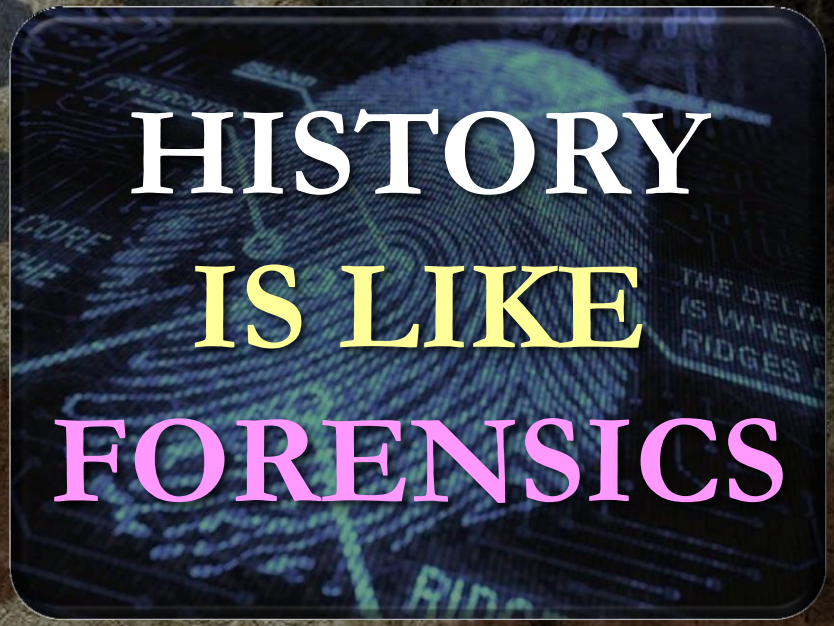
What do other historians & fields of study say?

What does more evidence unearthed show?



REMEMBER THAT HISTORY IS LIKE:





Its about gathering as much available evidence (puzzle pieces) as possible and reconstructing what happened (what the picture is) with the use of reasoning & investigative knowledge & skills

HOW HISTORY COMES TO YOU & ME:

Someone dug up fossils

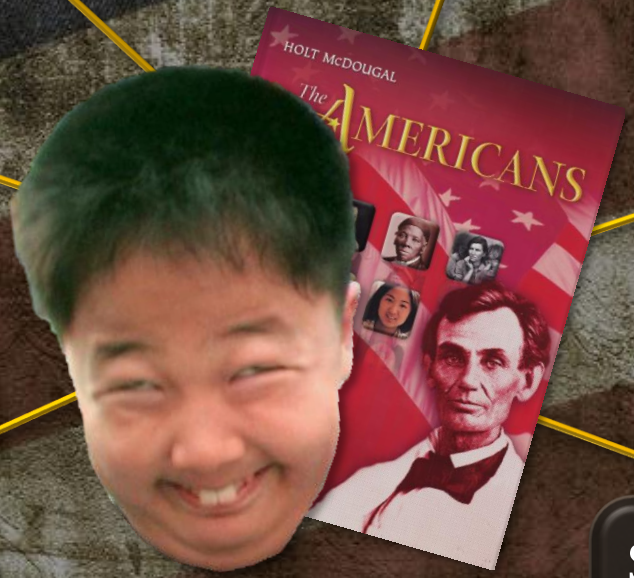
Someone dug up artifacts

Someone read old documents

Someone dug up bones

Someone made maps

Someone studied & wrote about the evidence



OUR JOB HAS BEEN MADE EASIER

Studying, Reading, & Writing History

BECAUSE OF OTHERS HARD WORK

My "Your Awesome" Face

For Finishing This!