

Speed Reading Practice for Eiken Pre-1: No. 7

Name: _____ / Date: __/__/__ Score: __ / 3 ⌚ 12 min

以下の英文を読んで、本文の内容と一致するものを①～⑧の中から3つ選びなさい。

Can History Ever Be Completely Objective?

History is often described as the study of what happened in the past. This definition appears straightforward, but the work of historians involves more than collecting dates, names, and events. The past itself no longer exists in a form that can be directly observed. Historians must reconstruct it from documents, objects, photographs, oral accounts, and other surviving evidence. Because the evidence is always incomplete, writing history requires selection, interpretation, and judgment.

This does not mean that historians are free to invent whatever story they prefer. Historical arguments must be supported by reliable evidence, and claims can be challenged by other researchers. A historian who ignores important documents or deliberately changes facts loses credibility. Nevertheless, even responsible historians may disagree because they ask different questions or attach different importance to the same evidence. One may focus on political leaders, while another examines workers, families, or minority communities.

The survival of evidence itself is also unequal. Governments and powerful institutions have often preserved official records, while the experiences of ordinary people were less likely to be written down or stored safely. Some groups left few written documents because they relied on oral traditions or lacked access to formal education. As a result, the historical record may reflect the interests of those who had the power and resources to produce and preserve it. Silence in the archives does not necessarily mean that certain people or experiences were unimportant.

New evidence can significantly alter established interpretations. Archaeological discoveries, previously private letters, or recently opened government records may reveal information that earlier historians could not examine. Advances in technology can also make damaged texts readable or allow researchers to analyze large collections of data. Historical knowledge is therefore not fixed. Revising an interpretation is not always a sign that previous scholarship was dishonest; it may indicate that new questions or evidence have produced a more complete explanation.

The values of the present also influence the study of the past. Issues that attract little attention in one generation may become central in another. Earlier historians often concentrated on wars, rulers, and political institutions. More recent research has explored environmental change, gender, migration, disability, and everyday life. Critics sometimes accuse historians of imposing modern concerns on earlier societies. This danger is real, since past people should not automatically be judged by standards they could not have known.

However, historians cannot completely remove themselves from the period in which they live. The questions they ask are shaped partly by contemporary interests. The solution is not to pretend that such influences do not exist, but to recognize them and examine them critically. Historians should distinguish between explaining why people acted as they did and excusing harmful actions. Understanding historical context does not require approving everything that occurred within it.

Public memory further complicates the relationship between history and the past. Nations, families, and communities often preserve stories that support a shared identity. Such stories may emphasize courage, sacrifice, or unity while minimizing conflict and injustice. Commemorations and monuments can therefore reveal as much about the society that created them as about the events they claim to represent. Historical research may challenge these comforting narratives, which is one reason debates about the past can become emotionally intense.

Complete objectivity may be impossible, but this does not make historical knowledge meaningless. Historians can compare sources, identify contradictions, explain uncertainty, and revise conclusions when stronger evidence appears. Objectivity should perhaps be understood not as the total absence of perspective, but as a disciplined effort to prevent personal preference from controlling interpretation. History becomes more reliable when different accounts are tested against evidence and when neglected voices are included without abandoning critical standards.

語数:約 540 語

次の①～⑧のうち、本文の内容と一致するものを 3 つ選びなさい。

- ① Because the past cannot be observed directly and surviving evidence is incomplete, historians must select and interpret materials when reconstructing historical events.
- ② Responsible historians may reach different conclusions even when they examine similar evidence because they can ask different questions and emphasize different groups or issues.
- ③ The passage argues that historians may invent any version of the past they find persuasive, since historical evidence cannot provide reliable support for factual claims.
- ④ The absence of written records generally proves that ordinary people and communities without formal education had little influence on historical developments.
- ⑤ New discoveries and technologies may lead historians to revise established interpretations without necessarily proving that earlier scholars deliberately distorted the past.
- ⑥ Historians can achieve complete neutrality only by avoiding modern subjects such as gender, migration, disability, and environmental change.
- ⑦ Understanding the social standards of an earlier period requires historians to defend harmful actions and avoid making any moral distinctions between them.
- ⑧ The author concludes that historical objectivity means eliminating every possible perspective rather than comparing evidence, recognizing uncertainty, and revising conclusions.

1. objective	[əbdʒektiv]客観的な
2. straightforward	[streɪtfó:rwərd]単純明快な、分かりやすい
3. reconstruct	[rɪ:kənstrákt]～を再構成する
4. evidence	[évədəns]証拠、根拠
5. interpretation	[intə:rprətéiʃən]解釈
6. judgment	[dʒʌdʒmənt]判断
7. reliable	[riláiəbl]信頼できる
8. credibility	[krədəbíləti]信頼性、信用
9. responsible	[rɪspánsəbl]責任ある、良識的な
10. attach importance to ～	[ətætʃ impó:rtəns tu:]～を重視する
11.institution	[ɪnstətjú:ʃən]機関、制度
12. preserve	[prɪzə:rv]～を保存する、保護する
13. oral tradition	[ó:rəl trədíʃən]口承、口頭伝承
14. historical record	[histó:rikəl rékərd]歴史的記録
15. archaeological	[à:rkiəládʒikəl]考古学上の
16. alter	[ó:ltər]～を変える、変更する
17. established	[ɪstæbliʃt]確立された、定説となった
18. scholarship	[skólərʃɪp]学問、学術研究
19. impose	[impóuz]～を押し付ける
20. contemporary	[kəntémpərəri]現代の、同時代の
21. distinguish	[distɪŋɡwiʃ]～を区別する
22. commemoration	[kəməməréiʃən]記念、記念行事
23. narrative	[næərətɪv]物語、歴史の語り方
24. contradiction	[kàntredíkʃən]矛盾
25. disciplined	[dísəplɪnd]規律ある、厳密な