Types of Historical Thinking Skills:

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Can be categorized into Habits of Mind (1,2) and Constructing & Testing Historical Arguments (3,4)

They are then broken down into 9 skills

What does Historical Thinking mean?
According to the College Board, Historical Thinking:

involves the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate the relationships among multiple historical causes and effects, distinguishing between these that are long term and proximate and among coincidence, causation, and correlation.

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1. Historical Causation

Students should:

- Compare causes or effects, both longterm and short term
- Assess historical contingency by distinguishing among coincidence, causation, correlation as well as a critique existing interpretations of cause/effect
- Analyze & Evaluate the interaction of multiple causes and/or effects
- Formulate claims about cause/effect while assessing the arguments historians have offered

From the College Board:
“Understanding the impact of processes such as industrialization requires students to identify and access both short and long term impacts just as understanding the causes of an event requires students to think about which causes they would argue are the most significant.”

2. Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time

Students should:

- Analyze & Evaluate historical patterns of continuity and change over time
- Connect patterns of continuity and change over time to larger historical processes or themes

Historical continuity — that which remains the same over long periods of time.

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Remember that often change and continuity can coexist. The process is long and uneven, affects different groups at different rates.

Example: Objective knowledge and subjective visions . . . traces the evolution from a worldview based on religious faith, communal values and traditional sources of knowledge to one that was more secular, placing more emphasis on the individual and believed knowledge could come from multiple sources.

Students need to understand this long process of change in worldview and be able to identify which groups at any given time were experiencing these changes and which groups or regions were not.

3. Periodization

Describe, analyze, evaluate, and construct models that historians use to divide history into discrete periods.

- identify turning points
- being aware of how the circumstances and contexts of a historian’s work might shape his/her choices about periodization (POV)

Students should:

There should be some recognition of turning points. Turning points are characterized as a moment when several significant changes occurred, which had important long term consequences - even if not every aspect of life changed at that particular moment.

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Periodization  ➔  chronological units that refer to long periods of time that shared many characteristics which distinguished them from earlier and later periods (such as the Age of Enlightenment, Reformation, etc.) A turning point is not always identified as a discrete or specific moment, as sometimes it can be difficult to determine an exact start (example - the Renaissance.)

Students must be able to argue that certain changes were of such significance that they created a new era in the history of the society. The argument should include what should be considered most significant and why.

4. Comparison

Or evaluating developments.

Students should:

Example: Comparing revolutions helps identify what factors make an event a revolution rather than a coup or change of a regime.

• helps us understand why similar causes had different outcomes
• is an important skill when evaluating historical evidence

To practice this skill ➔  Identify similarities and differences in 2 different accounts for the same event. Explain the similarities and differences by taking into account factors such as authorship, intent and audience (POV)

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5. Contextualization

Connecting events and processes.

Students should:

- Explain and evaluate ways in which specific historical phenomena, events or processes connect to a broader regional, national or global processes occurring at the same time.

- Explain and evaluate ways in which a phenomenon, event or process connects to other similar historical phenomena across time and place.

Contextualization is not comparing. Instead it is putting events in a larger context, understanding the political/economic/etc reasons for the event.

It requires students to identify and evaluate the importance of larger trends and processes that shape events.

6. Historical Argumentation

Define and frame a question about the past and address that question through the construction of an argument.

Students should:

- Analyze commonly accepted arguments & explain how an argument has been constructed from historical evidence.

- Construct convincing interpretations through analysis of disparate, relevant historical evidence.

- Evaluate and synthesize conflicting historical evidence to construct persuasive historical arguments.

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Historical argumentation often operates in conjunction with course themes that transcend individual periods. It also operates in conjunction with other skills.

Example: For World War I you must also know colonization, alliance systems, social darwinism, etc.

It requires students to analyze evidence that relates to each item, assess the relative importance of these factors in order to formulate a coherent thesis to construct an argument based on evidence.

7. Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence

Describe and evaluate evidence from diverse sources and points of view. Must be able to extract info, use inferences and draw appropriate conclusions while noting context, recognizing limitations and assessing the pov.

Students should:

- Analyze features of historical evidence such as audience, purpose, point of view, format argument limitations and context germane to the evidence considered.
- Based on analysis and evaluation of historical evidence, make supportable inferences and draw appropriate conclusions.

Be sure to show multiple sources.

Students should use the MOST appropriate evidence to support a thesis and learn to argue that other evidence is LESS appropriate and to explain why contradictory evidence should be set aside.

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8 Interpretation

Ability to describe, analyze, evaluate and construct diverse interpretations of the past AND to be aware of how particular circumstances and contexts to which historians work and write shape their interpretations of past events. Requires students to analyze evidence, reasoning, contexts and point of view found in primary and secondary sources.

Students should:

- Analyze diverse historical interpretations
- Evaluate how historians’ perspectives influence their interpretations & how models of Historical interpretations change over time

Interpretation is the way historians describe and explain events and developments, building from evidence to support or defend their interpretation.

9 Synthesis

Ability to develop meaningful and persuasive new understandings of the past by applying all of the historical thinking skills.

Students should:

- Apply insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances involving the present
- Combine disparate, sometimes contradictory, evidence from primary and secondary works in order to create persuasive understandings of the past

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