

## Cause and effect

The concept of cause and effect is used by historians to identify chains of events and developments, both in the short term and in the long term. Cause and effect aims to identify, examine and analyse the reasons why events have occurred and the resulting consequences or outcomes. It helps to think of cause and effect as the 'why' and 'what' of history.

Sometimes the link between cause and effect is very clear. For example, heavy rain over many weeks (cause) leads to flooding and the destruction of crops (effect). However, often this link is not quite so obvious. Generally, there are many causes (reasons) that lead to an event or action. There can also be many effects (outcomes). Sometimes the effects are simple to identify, while in other cases they are more difficult to predict and may not even become obvious until long after the event.

When Edward Hargraves found gold near Bathurst in New South Wales in 1851, it was the first gold to be found in the region. The find quickly triggered the first Australian gold rush. The chance to strike it rich was irresistible for thousands of people who flocked to the goldfields in New South Wales and Victoria from around Australia and overseas. In the 10 years after the first discovery of gold (cause), the population of Australia more than doubled from 405 400 to 1 145 600 (effect).



**Source 4** The Australian gold rushes of the mid-1800s brought people and wealth to Australia and led to a period of growth and expansion, as these illustrations of Melbourne in 1860 show.

The discovery of gold and the subsequent gold rushes in New South Wales and Victoria resulted in a range of effects – some short term, others long term. Short-term effects included:

- the arrival of large numbers of **immigrants** from Britain, Germany, Poland, the United States and China
- further **dispossession** of Indigenous people from their land
- discrimination and violence against Chinese miners on the goldfields
- unsanitary conditions in the gold camps leading to outbreaks of dysentery and typhoid
- establishment of businesses such as shops, traders and transporters to support the gold miners.

Long-term effects included:

- huge increases in the amounts of money flowing into the economies of New South Wales and Victoria through taxes and increased spending
- a growth in overseas trade
- improvements in infrastructure including the construction of grand public buildings, roads, train and tram networks, and sewerage systems as well as the creation of schools, churches, libraries and other community amenities.

## Evidence

Evidence is the information gathered from historical sources. The concept of evidence is an essential part of historical inquiry. Evidence can come from many different sources; for example, interviews and accounts from people who lived at the time, letters, diaries, films, maps, newspapers, buildings, paintings, photographs, song lyrics, nursery rhymes, clothing, photographs and even cartoons. But how do we use these sources to piece together the story of the past? We can make an educated guess (called a **hypothesis**) and then look for evidence to support it.

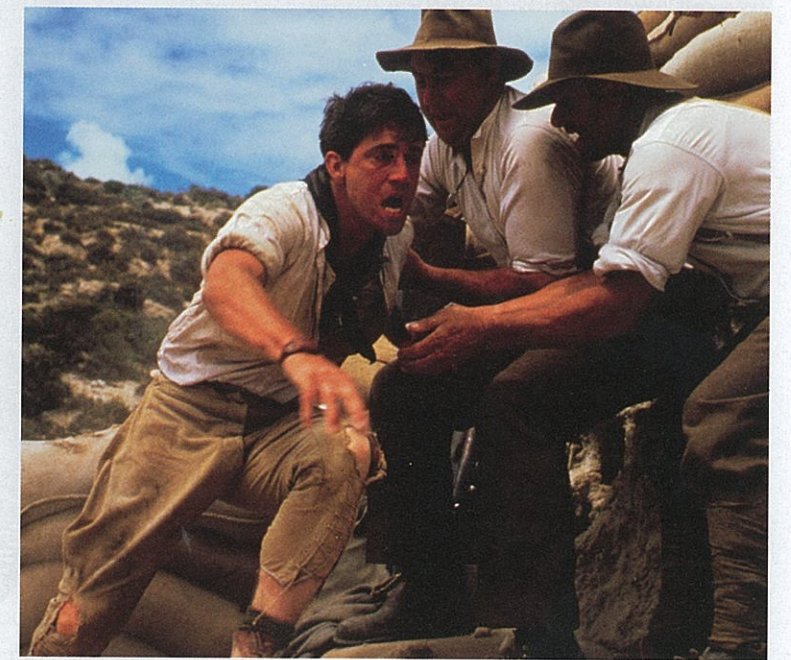
Evidence can be gathered from two types of sources:

- **primary sources** – objects created or written at the time being investigated, for example, during an event or very soon after. Examples of primary sources include official documents, such as laws and treaties; personal documents, such as diaries and letters; photographs or films; and documentaries. These original, firsthand accounts are analysed by historians to answer questions about the past.
- **secondary sources** – accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated and which often use or refer to primary sources and present a particular interpretation. Examples of secondary sources include writings of historians, encyclopaedia entries, documentaries, history textbooks, films, illustrations, reconstructions and websites.

Historians do not always agree on evidence, even when it is coming from the same source. They often have different opinions or points of view. This is why historians are constantly searching for new sources of evidence. They need to use a range of different sources to help them gain a more complete picture of the past.



**Source 5** This photograph taken in 1915 shows Australian troops charging a Turkish trench during the final days of the Gallipoli campaign. The photograph clearly shows the rocky terrain of the Gallipoli Peninsula and is an example of a primary source. War photography became a part of warfare at all levels for the first time during World War I. As well as documenting military offensives, photographs were used for surveying and mapping territory and for propaganda campaigns. Photographs were not only taken by military photographers, they were also taken by ordinary soldiers in order to document their personal experiences.



**Source 6** This still from the 1981 feature film *Gallipoli* starring Mel Gibson shows Australian soldiers in battle during the Gallipoli campaign. The movie recreates the experiences of a number of Australian soldiers who fought as part of the Anzac forces. It is an example of a secondary source.