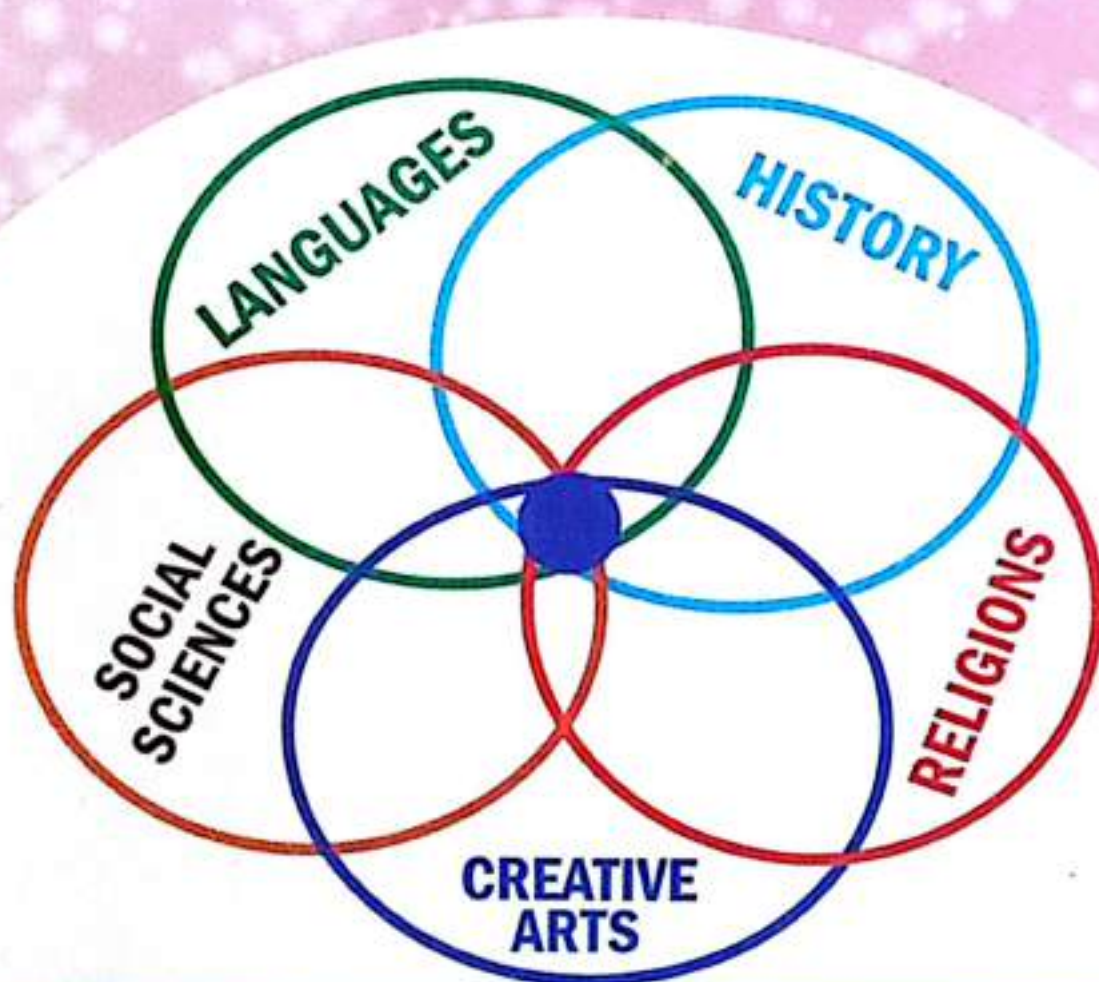


TEACHING METHODOLOGY *in* **THE HUMANITIES**



Edited by
'Raheem Adebayo Lawal

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CHAPTER 54

WHAT TO TEACH IN HISTORY

Abubakar SAIDU,
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A. J. OLANIYI

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to give an insight into what to teach in the Nigerian secondary school History. It will expose both pre-service and in-service teachers to concepts of historiography and historical skills. It will also enable learners to understand that historical events and personalities (e.g. Usmanu Dan Fodio, Jihad, British Rule and the Nigerian Reaction, and Decolonisation process) are some of the themes taught in History in the Nigerian senior secondary school. Political institutions also are an important theme in the History curriculum.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the chapter, you should be able to explain the following themes that are taught in History:

1. historiography and historical skills
2. events
3. personality
4. indigenous political institutions

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL SKILLS

According to Agboola (1999), historiography means the writing of History. From this simple and concise definition, it can be advanced that historiography is the art of writing History. Historiography is in a sense an art because the people who are engaged in the writing of the history of any people, period, place or event exercises some skills, consciously or otherwise, in selecting and deciding from the facts and evidences available to them which ones actually deserve to be written down as History, i. e. what ultimately reaches the reader as History.

There is a set of skills for the teaching and learning of History, which include the skills associated with chronology, the use of historical terms and concepts, historical questions and research. Others are the skills of analysis and use of sources, perspectives, interpretation, explanation and communication.

Chronology: is essential to history. It sequences events and provides students with a mental map of the past. Students need this map before they can make links among events, understand and apply concepts such as continuity and change or cause and effect. Chronology involves the use of historical terms to describe time, periodisation and dating systems.

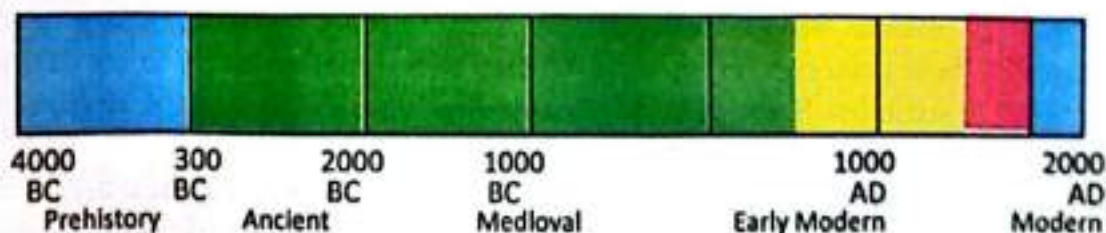


Figure 1: Historical periodisation on a timeline

History uses the historical periodisation represented in Figure 1. It also employs alternative terms for BC and AD, i.e. BC = BCE (Before the Common Era) and AD = CE (Common Era). While these periods give us a convenient way for talking about the past, they reflect a European view and may not be as useful when describing historical eras in other parts of the world.

Use of historical terms and concepts: History has a vocabulary for naming objects from the past (e.g. artefact, monument), for describing time and historical periods (e.g. decade, century, Medieval, Renaissance), for terms associated with historical processes (e.g. oral history, source analysis, archaeology) and for historical concepts such as colonialism, imperialism, invasion, and revolution. For each topic there are specialised terms and concepts that will need to be explicitly taught. This can be done through a variety of strategies, such as labelling diagrams, tracing and annotating voyages on a map, entering relevant information on a timeline and vocabulary building activities, including the analysis of the language of primary sources.

Interpretations: Histories are interpretations of the past, intentional reconstructions and explanations based on evidence. For some aspects of the past, there are many sources; for others there are very few, and sometimes there are significant gaps in the evidence. Historians analyse, organise and make sense of the information they find.

With reference to the secondary school History curriculum (NERDC, 2007), the following are the topics that are under this theme (historiography and historical skill): Concept of History; Why we teach History; Sources of History and Dating; Historical skills; and Prospects of ICT in historical studies

Event

Event is anything that takes place or happens at anytime especially a significant occurrence. The study of events is significant in History in that an event unveils the past occurrences in a particular society. Some momentous and far-reaching events which occurred in the past are embedded in the History curriculum with a view to fostering learners' critical and imaginative thinking. For instance, in the 19th century, some Islamic movements occurred which were far-reaching in the History of Africa at large. These movements led to the establishment of large Muslim states or empires. In the same period, there were also Christian missionary activities in the region on an unprecedented scale. Both events represented the religious factors in West African History.

The following are the events that we teach in History in Nigeria's secondary school

- a. Trans-Atlantic slave trade
- b. Early European contact with coastal states
- c. The British rule and Nigerian reaction
- d. Decolonisation process in Nigeria
- e. Military intervention in Governance
- f. Post-civil war in Nigeria
- g. Scramble for, and partition of Africa
- h. Apartheid

Personality

Personality is one of the themes that are taught in History. It is through various personalities that events which make History today unfold. The legendary works and achievements of these personalities have contributed in no small measure to the development of their respective societies. Some of these personalities, as embedded in the senior secondary school History curriculum and would not be discussed, include:

Sheik Usman Dan Fodio: Sheik Usman Dan Fodio was a religious teacher, writer and Islamic promoter, and the founder of Sokoto Caliphate. He was one of the urbanised Fulani living in the Hausa States in what is today called northern Nigeria. He was a leader who followed the Sunni Maliki School of Jurisprudence and the Qadiri branch of Sufism. A teacher of Maliki School of Law, he lived in the city state of Gobir until 1802. Motivated by his reformist ideas while suffering increasing repression by local authorities, he led his followers into exile. This exile began a political and social revolution which spread from Gobir throughout modern Nigeria and Cameroun, and was echoed in a Jihad movement led by

the Fula ethnic group across West Africa. Dan Fodio declined much of the pomp of rulership, and while developing contacts with religious reformists and Jihad leaders across Africa, he soon passed actual leadership of the Sokoto state to his son, Muhammed Bello. He wrote more than a hundred books concerning religion, government, culture and society. He developed a critique of existing African Muslim elite for what he saw as their greed, paganism, violation of the standards of Sharia Law, and use of heavy taxation.

King Jaja of Opobo: Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891) was the first known Nigerian richest man, nationalist, a merchant prince and the founder of Opobo city state which now forms part of Nigeria's River State. Jaja, whose real name was Mbanaso Okwaraozurumbaa, was also a savvy political and military strategist. Brought to the Bonny kingdom as a slave, he was perhaps the most troublesome thorn in the flesh of 19th century British imperial ambition in Southern Nigeria. As a youth, he worked as a paddler on his owners' great trade canoes, travelling to and from the inland markets. He demonstrated exceptional abilities and business acumen, quickly identified with the Ijo custom of the Delta, and won the hearts of the local people as well as those of the European supercargoes.

By 1867, his remarkable success had become common knowledge throughout Bonny. Oko Jumbo, his bitterest opponent, was determined that such a prospect would never materialise. In 1870, feeling reasonably secure, Jaja proclaimed the independence of his settlement which he named Opobo, after Opobo the Great, the illustrious King of Bonny and founder of Anna House who had died in 1830. Out of the 18 houses in Bonny, 14 followed Jaja to Opobo. The British consul tried to coerce Jaja to come back to Bonny. Against the admonition of the consul and in the face of Bonny's displeasure, many British firms began to trade openly with Opobo while others transferred their depots there. By May of 1870, the Jaja revolution had driven the death-knell on Bonny's economy. British firms anchoring there are said to have lost an estimated £100,000 of trade by mid- 1870.

He armed his traders with modern weapons for their own defense and that of the state. He monopolised trade with palm-oil producers and punished severely any community that tried to trade directly with the European super-cargoes. In 1873, the British recognised him as King of independent Opobo because he waged a war for the British against the Ashanti Kingdom in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Jaja's reign was described as a striking instance of selective modernisation. He retained most of the socio-political and cultural institutions of Bonny.

Queen Amina of Zaria: Amina of Zaria commonly known as the warrior-queen expanded the territory of the Hausa people of the North Africa to the largest borders in history. More than 400 years later, the legend of her reign became the model for a television series about a fictional warrior-princess, called Xena. Amina was the warrior queen of Zazzau (now Zaria). She is known as Amina Saravinya Zazzau. She lived approximately 200 years prior to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate federation that governed Nigeria during the period of British Colonial rule following the Islamic Jihad (holy wars) that overtook the region in the nineteenth century. According to most accounts, Queen Amina ruled for 34 years at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

By the time Amina assumed the throne, following the death of her brother, Karama, in the tenth year of his rule, she had matured into a fierce warrior and had earned the respect of the Zazzau military. Within three months of inheriting the throne, Queen Amina embarked on what was to be the first in an ongoing series of military engagements associated with her rule. She stood in command of an immense military band and personally led the calvary of Zazzau through an ongoing series of campaigns, waging battle continually throughout the course of her sovereignty. She spent the duration of her 34 years' reign in military aggression. According to all indications, she came to dominate much of the region known as Hausaland and beyond, throughout an area called Kasashen Bauchi, prior to the settlement of the so

called Gwandarawa Hausas of Kano in the mid-1600s. At one time, Amina dominated the entire area, along with the associated trade routes connecting the Western Sudan with Egypt on the East and Mali in the North. She collected tributes of Kola nuts and male slaves from her subject cities. Amina built walls around the encampments of the territories that she conquered. Some of the walls survived till modern times. Thus, her legacy remained entrenched in both the culture and landscape of her native Hausa city states.

Indigenous Political Institution

Indigenous political institution is an ethnic or sub-ethnic group with an organised political structure. Numerous indigenous political institutions were situated in the region that is today known as Nigeria. With reference to the NERDC (2007) curriculum, the following are the indigenous political institutions that are taught in History at the senior secondary school level: Kanem-bornu Empire, Nupe Kingdom, Hausa States, Sokoto Caliphate, Oyo Empire, Jukun Kingdom, Benin Empire, and so on. Below are the highlights of these indigenous political institutions.

Kanem-Bornu Empire, which gave birth to the Bornu Empire, was an empire that existed in modern Chad and Nigeria. It was known to the Arabian geographers as the Kanem Empire from the 9th century onward and lasted as an independent kingdom in Bornu until the 19th century. The major factor that influenced the latter history of the state of Kanem was the early penetration of Islam. North African traders, Berbers and Arabs, brought the new religion.

Hausa states, according to Palmer (1928), were a collection of states started by the Hausa people, situated between the Niger River and Lake Chad. Their history is reflected in the Bayajidda legend, which describes the adventures of the Baghdadi hero, Bayajidda culminating in the killing of the snake in the well of Daura and the marriage with the local queen, Magajiya Daurama. According to the legend, the hero had a child with the queen, Bawo, called Hausa Bakwai and another child with the queen's maid-servant, Karbagari, called the Banza Bakwai.

Old Nupe Kingdom was established in the middle of the 15th century in a basin between the Niger and Kaduna rivers in what is now central Nigeria. Early history is mostly based on verbally-transmitted legends. King Jibiri, who reigned around 1770, was the first Nupe king to become Muslim. Etsu Ma'azu brought the kingdom to its period of greatest power, dying in 1818. During that period the Fulani were gaining power across Northern Nigeria. After Ma'azu's death and during the subsequent wars of succession the Nupe Kingdom came under the control of the Gwandu Emirate. Masaba, son of the Fulani leader, Mallam Dendo and a Nupe mother, gained power in 1841.

Sokoto Caliphate was an independent Islamic Caliphate in West Africa. Founded during the jihad of the Fulani in 1809 by Usman dan Fodio, (McKay & Bennett, 2011), it was abolished when the British defeated the caliph in 1903 and put the area under the Northern Nigeria Protectorate.

Oyo Empire was a Yoruba empire, located in present day Nigeria and Benin. Oyo rose to become the most important city state, surpassing Ife during the 1300s. Unlike other Yoruba states, which were located in the forest area, Oyo was situated in woodland savannah.

Benin Empire was a pre-colonial empire located in what is now southern Nigeria. It should not be confused with the modern-day country in the West African sub-region called Republic of Benin, formerly called Dahomey. The Benin Empire was one of the oldest and most highly developed states in the coastal hinterland of West Africa, dating perhaps to the eleventh century CE, until it was annexed by the British Empire in 1897.

Jukuns are an ethno-linguistic group or ethnic nation in West Africa. The Jukun are traditionally located in Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Adamawa, and Gombe States in Nigeria and parts of northwestern Cameroon. They are descendants of the people of the Kwararafa kingdom. Most of the tribes in the north-central part of Nigeria trace their origin to the Jukun people and are related in one way or the other to the Jukuns. If not for the coming of both Christianity and Islam, the Jukun people were traditionalists. Most of the tribes, Alago, Agatu, Rendere, Gumai in Shendam, and others left Kwararafa when it disintegrated as a result of a power tussle.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, the themes that are taught in History are discussed. It is believed that the teacher has been exposed to various themes that are embedded in the History curriculum particularly at the senior secondary school level so as to be well grounded in the content of the curriculum.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept of "Historiography".
2. Discuss "event" as one of the themes that is taught in History.
3. Explain the concept of "personality" as one of the themes taught in History.
4. What is indigenous political institution?

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