

HTAV Annual Conference: Ignite History

Friday 7 August 2026

Scan the QR code or visit www.htav.asn.au to register.



VCE



MIDDLE YEARS



GENERAL



BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE

9.00 AM **Registration**

9.45 AM **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Welcome and Housekeeping**

10.20 AM **Session 1:** Please choose one workshop from this session.

F1A **Lenin Was Right All Along!**

Samuel Cavnoudias, Haileybury

Lenin split the Social Democrats into the Menshevik and Bolshevik factions, but was he right to do so? Absolutely! Let's dive into Lenin's writing and events from 1900 to 1917 and explore his impact on Russia leading up to the revolution.

VCE REVOLUTIONS

Sam Cavnoudias is a senior History teacher working at Haileybury. He feels lucky that he is being paid to tell stories for a living and loves giving back at these events, which have helped him tremendously during his time teaching History. He has worked in exam development and assessment and is always open to mentoring new teachers of this subject.



F1B **Clever Measures: Lessons from the History of Assessment**

Ben Lawless, The University of Melbourne and Lawless Learning

What did assessment look like before grades, rubrics or tests? This session traces the history of assessment from informal parental judgement to religious, bureaucratic, scientific and data-driven systems. Each era reveals what was gained, what was lost, and what was valued. By exploring how the purposes and practices of assessment have changed over time, participants will reflect on what we can learn from each stage. The session will combine clear historical framing with highly practical suggestions drawn from every era, offering teachers new ways to think about evidence, judgement and progress in the classroom. Come curious, leave with tools.

GENERAL | BYOD

Ben Lawless is an award-winning educator, researcher, author and independent assessment consultant. He has taught across sectors, written widely used textbooks including the Good Humanities series, and lectured in assessment at the University of Melbourne. Ben has contributed to VCAA reforms, created units for the National Museum of Australia, and designed internationally recognised political simulation games for schools. He is now working as a consultant to schools, systems and organisations (see [Lawless Learning](#)) providing support in developmental learning, rubrics, and using assessment data to improve teaching.



F1C **Year 7 to VCE: Building Pathways through Mesopotamia**

Sara Bellamy, Shepparton Christian College

This workshop will explore practical ways to build student interest and confidence in ancient history by introducing and integrating Mesopotamia through the Years 7 to 8 curriculum, creating pathways to VCE study. The workshop will focus on how teachers can embed key themes such as early cities, kingship, religion, law and writing through engaging inquiry tasks, source work, and historical skills development, while comparing to Egypt, Greece and Rome (Year 7/8). Participants will leave with classroom-ready strategies that strengthen historical thinking, improve continuity across year levels, and help more students see Mesopotamia as a compelling pathway into senior History.

LEVELS 7 AND 8 | BYOD

Sara Bellamy is a History teacher, presenter and curriculum writer with 14 years of classroom experience, including extensive work teaching Ancient History across Years 7 to 12. Her teaching and conference interests centre on making complex historical content accessible, engaging and teachable, particularly in ancient history, Australian history, and archaeology. She holds a Master of History (Australian Past) and is currently undertaking a PhD. Sara brings a grounded, practical perspective to her sessions, with a strong focus on developing strategies teachers can use immediately in their own classrooms.



Check out the workshops.

Log into the website to unlock your member discount.

Register for the conference!

F1D Developing Historical Thinking through Active Learning

Liesl McPeake, University Senior College, Adelaide

This workshop will explore the use of active learning strategies to enhance engagement, historical inquiry, and empathy in Years 10 to 12 History classrooms. While these approaches are often associated with middle years pedagogy, this workshop will demonstrate their relevance and impact in senior settings. Participants will be introduced to a range of practical strategies, from structured role-plays to courtroom simulations and Socratic seminars designed to deepen understanding of complex historical contexts. This workshop will also examine how these approaches align with summative assessment tasks, supporting students to not only engage meaningfully with History but also develop the analytical and evaluative skills required for academic success.

LEVELS 10 TO 12 | BYOD

Liesl McPeake has over 30 years of experience teaching History across Years 8 to 12 and brings extensive expertise to twentieth-century Modern History. Liesl's teaching is driven by a strong interest in movements for change, including revolutions and struggles for rights and freedoms. Currently teaching at University Senior College in Adelaide – an adult-style learning environment for Years 10 to 12 students – Liesl aims to make History meaningful and accessible. Committed to engaging both students and colleagues, she continually explores innovative approaches that respond to the evolving role of technology in education. She hopes to encourage learners to recognise the ongoing relevance and value of History in understanding the modern world.

F1E The Power of the Press: Using Newspapers to Bring Australian History to Life

Professor Sally Young, The University of Melbourne

How the media reports significant events plays a crucial role in shaping political continuity and change in Australia, and in determining how power is exercised and resisted. Rather than being a neutral conduit of information, newspapers have been strong advocates for various political causes, from *The Age's* support for protectionism to the ardently pro-conscription *Sun* or *The Australian's* role in the dismissal of the Whitlam government. Newspapers have been key players in debates highlighted in the History curriculum, exploring topics such as economic and work rights, race and immigration, women's suffrage, equal opportunity and ideas about sexuality. This presentation will include practical examples of how to use newspapers to teach Australian history – one of the best primary sources available and graciously archived by Trove, a national treasure.

VCE AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

*Professor Sally Young is a historian at the University of Melbourne and Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Her work centres on Australian political and media history. She is the author of the award-winning book *Paper Emperors: The Rise of Australia's Newspaper Empires (2019)*, a corporate and political history of Australian newspapers from 1803 to 1941, as well as its sequel, *Media Monsters (2023)*, covering the period 1941 to 1972. Sally has also published books on election reporting, press photography, political advertising and government communication.*

F1F What Would 'Knowledge-Rich' Teaching in History Look Like?

Dr Deb Hull, HTAV

Developing a knowledge-rich curriculum, and a knowledge-rich approach to teaching, is going to require a bit of a gear shift for many of us. History is probably the subject where the difference between a skills-based approach and a knowledge-rich approach is most stark. That doesn't mean saying goodbye to historical thinking skills and inquiry-based learning, but they will play a different role. In this session, you will be the student in a lively lesson that illustrates what knowledge-rich teaching is, and why your students will like it.

GENERAL

Dr Deb Hull is the Executive Officer of the History Teachers' Association of Victoria. Her previous roles include positions at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Department of Education. She has also worked as an independent consultant, specialising in planning and evaluation in school education, including evaluation of the effectiveness of professional learning programs. Deb has a PhD in History and a passion for great History teaching in schools.

F1G Write Like a Historian (But Not a Boring One)

Leah Kemp and Sam Krine, Strathmore Secondary College

For students, synthesising a cohesive and detailed historical argument is like finding their way through a maze but hitting the dead ends and never reaching the exit. But never fear, we are here to help you help them connect the spider web that is History and argue their points like a pro. Our strategies are designed with both you and your students in mind – strategies to unpack questions, scaffolds, and writing tasks and exemplars for Years 9 to 12 that can be easily and quickly adapted for all topics and units.


LEVELS 9 TO 12 | GENERAL | BYOD

Leah Kemp has been a History and English teacher since 2008. She has taught both VCE English and History at schools in the northern suburbs. Leah has led English and Humanities departments in her many different leadership roles and has worked on whole-school curriculum. Sam Krine has been teaching History since 2015 and has a master's degree in History. In their teaching of History, Sam has utilised expertise as an English teacher to improve their students' writing skills. They have developed a wide range of strategies focused on identifying the correct paragraph structure for a specific command term in VCE Modern History and History Revolutions.

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11.15 AM	Morning Tea
11.55 AM	<p>VCAA Update: VCE History Ashley Keith Pratt, Curriculum Manager, Humanities, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority</p> <p>Ashley will share an update on the status of the VCE History Study Design and related matters.</p> <p><i>Ashley Keith Pratt is the Curriculum Manager for Humanities at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. He has a long history as a classroom teacher and school leader, having previously been a Head of Humanities, Director of Teaching and Learning, and Deputy Principal in schools across Victoria. He is also completing his doctoral studies in History curriculum analysis and evaluation at the University of Melbourne and was a previous President of HTAV.</i></p>
12.10 PM	<p>Keynote Session: Cyborgs in History: What's Here and What's Coming for AI Matt Esterman, The Next Word</p> <p>AI is already in our schools and in our students' hands, affecting how we think and learn and 'do history'. In this keynote, Matt will explore some of the amazing and confronting ways in which AI is playing a role in society right now. We may feel like we are riding a constant wave of change, but as historians, we should feel energised to be part of a revolution that may – with intent and guidance from educators – shape a truly better world for everyone.</p> <p>Following this presentation, Matt will be available for book signing. Matt's books will also be available for purchase throughout the conference at the HTAV Publishing exhibition table.</p> <p><i>Matt Esterman has over 20 years of experience working in schools and beyond as a leading voice in the thoughtful adoption of technology. He is a trained History teacher with two master's degrees who has made a significant contribution to educational thinking in Australia and overseas. Matt founded The Next Word, a consultancy that seeks to leverage AI and other technologies to help shape a better future. He works with schools, universities and other organisations to increase awareness and capability in using AI. He has co-authored two books with Dr Nick Jackson, The Next Word: AI and Teachers (2024) and The Next Word: AI and Learners (2025), which was also co-written with award-winning high school student Amy Wallace.</i></p> 
1.10 PM	Networking Lunch
1.40 PM	Exhibitor Passport Prize Draws
2.00 PM	Session 2: Please choose one workshop from this session.

F2A **The Anatomy of a (French) Crash: Seven Hidden Gears That Broke the French Monarchy, 1774 to 1795** 

Adrian Puckering, Marymede Catholic College

The French Revolution was a structural collapse decades in the making. This fast-paced workshop will deconstruct the 'machinery' of the fall by examining seven hidden gears that bridged systemic failure and radical upheaval. These are as follows. 'Legal Gridlock': restoring the *parlements* (1774) blocked fiscal reform. 'Moral Decay': the Flour War (1775) broke the peasantry's trust. 'The Fiscal Trap': funding the American Revolution (1778) created unsustainable debt. 'Climate Shock': the Laki Eruption (1783) triggered crop failures. 'Economic Disruption': the Eden Agreement (1786) radicalised the unemployed. 'Political Blueprint': provincial assemblies (1787) empowered the Third Estate. 'Total Collapse': hyperinflation (1795) invited military dictatorship. Explore how these specific events turned a crisis of governance into a total societal crash.

VCE REVOLUTIONS

Adrian Puckering is an educator with over 30 years of experience specialising in VCE History. He has written textbooks, including Twentieth Century History: 1900–1945, and produced resources on Ancient Egypt. Adrian has presented for HTAV on numerous occasions and supports History teachers by sharing his pedagogical experience, particularly in the study of Revolutions. His work connects academic research with classroom practice, with contributions to curriculum development and teacher mentoring.

Check out the workshops.

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Register for the conference!

F2B No Bus, No Budget, No Bother!

Emily Wilkinson, Box Hill High School

Big excursions can equal big headaches, so much so that many schools avoid excursions altogether. This workshop will explore different ways to deliver powerful History lessons without leaving your postcode! Explore ways to use local sites (no matter where your school is located) and online resources, and how to design your own engaging mini incursions. Walk away with practical, low-cost strategies that bring History to life – no buses required!

LEVELS 7 TO 10 | BYOD

Emily Wilkinson has a Master of Teaching from the University of Melbourne and has been teaching Levels 7 to 12 History for 12 years. She is interested in creating fun and inclusive ways for all students at all schools to engage with History and experience success. Emily has previously presented at HTAV conferences on VCE revision techniques, whole-school History planning, and managing the Years 7 to 10 curriculum.

F2C Using the Yoorrook Justice Commission in the Classroom

Alana Ryan, Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School

The Yoorrook Justice Commission, Australia's first formal truth-telling inquiry, produced its final reports in 2025. The official public record created by Yoorrook over five years is an incredible resource for History teachers in Victoria. The reports combine different approaches to history to offer a new perspective on Victoria's past, supported by thousands of historical documents. This presentation will provide an overview of the process undertaken by the Yoorrook Commissioners and offer teachers some practical ideas about how Yoorrook materials can be used in the classroom.

LEVELS 9 AND 10 | VCE AUSTRALIAN HISTORY | BYOD

Alana Ryan is the Deputy Head of Humanities at Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School. She is an experienced teacher of VCE Australian History who has successfully reintroduced it at her school. Alana has been following the progress of the Yoorrook Justice Commission and has been experimenting with ways that it can be integrated into her History lessons with her students. Alana has served as a Director on the HTAV Board for four years and is the current HTAV President.

F2D The Humble Timeline: Backbone of History

Lyndon Pratt, Bacchus Marsh Grammar

Often, the timeline is treated as a simple introductory activity used to help younger students grasp basic sequencing and chronological order. However, its potential extends far beyond the early years. In higher year levels, including VCE, timelines can be powerful analytical tools that support students in developing a deeper understanding of key historical concepts such as change and continuity, cause and consequence, and historical significance. This workshop will explore a range of strategies for using timelines in more sophisticated ways to enhance critical thinking and conceptual understanding.

GENERAL

Lyndon Pratt is the Head of Humanities at Bacchus Marsh Grammar. He has taught History from Years 7 to 10 and VCE, engaging students and exploring a diverse range of eras, from ancient history to modern history. Utilising a variety of different approaches, Lyndon seeks to engage students in undertaking key historical concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, and significance.

F2E Reimagining History through Live Place-Based Learning

Tegan Kearny and Aleksandra Merry, Casey Grammar School

How can live virtual journeys deepen historical understanding beyond the textbook? This workshop presents a case study exploring the integration of a Vyatra live learning session into Years 7 to 10 and/or VCE History. We will outline planning, logistics and curriculum alignment, and reflect on student engagement and historical thinking outcomes. Participants will experience a short live demonstration from the featured location of Gallipoli. The workshop will invite discussion on how real-time global connections can enrich source analysis, empathy and inquiry in the History classroom.

LEVELS 9 AND 10 | VCE AUSTRALIAN HISTORY | EXHIBITOR SESSION

Tegan Kearney is in their twentieth year of teaching History and English across all secondary year levels, including VCE Modern History and VCE Ancient History. As Head of Humanities at Casey Grammar School, Tegan is passionate about building the profile of the Humanities across the school, seeking innovative and engaging ways to inspire curiosity, critical thinking and enthusiasm for the subject.

Aleksandra Merry has been teaching History for six years across all secondary year levels, including VCE Modern History, VCE Ancient History and VCE Revolutions. She is constantly on the hunt for ways to build student engagement and connection with History. Aleksandra's motto is 'History is life', and she hopes that students take this on board.

F2F **Modelling to Mastering: Scaffolding Extended Responses**



Michelle Walker, Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School

History students often find the extended response difficult to write. As History teachers, especially those teaching 'out-of-field', it can be tricky to pinpoint and communicate exactly what makes a 'good' extended response. This is where effective and scaffolded modelling can play a crucial role, but it can sometimes be challenging and time consuming. This workshop will provide practical strategies, scaffolded steps, and ready-to-use activities to support the modelling of extended responses. It will explore how to effectively introduce students to the extended response in the middle years, and how to finesse students' extended responses in VCE.

LEVELS 9 TO 12 | BYOD

Michelle Walker has been teaching History and Music (Years 7 to 12) for over 10 years at both Catholic and independent girls' schools. She has most recently been Head of Humanities at Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School. Michelle has a passion for implementing pedagogies that simultaneously enhance student engagement, autonomy and confidence, while fostering a love of learning.

F2G **Leading the History Enthusiasts and Out-of-Fielders**



Katrina Davey, Education Services Australia

Leading a History department that includes both History enthusiasts and reluctant out-of-field teachers is challenging. It can require strong people management to ensure the academic integrity of your school's History courses remains consistent across classes. This workshop will refer to the content knowledge in Levels 8 and 9, where differences in History teaching experience and motivation are most obvious. It will outline how to plan a knowledge-rich unit which sequences a progression of concepts, skills and assessment expectations across these two years. This workshop will also provide clear strategies to please the History evangelists and upskill the out-of-fielders.

LEVELS 8 AND 9 | LEADERSHIP

Katrina Davey has taught History for two decades covering all secondary year levels, including VCE Revolutions. Her faculty leadership at various schools is what has inspired her recent book release, Humming Along, which provides practical strategies for teaching and leading Humanities. Katrina has been a HTAV mentor and contributing author to HTAV's Modern History 2 textbook and Agora, and to the Oxford Humanities 7-10 textbook series. She thoroughly enjoys engaging students in the narrative of history, while building their understanding of historical concepts and skills.

2.55 PM

Session 3: Please choose one workshop from this session.

F3A **Incorporating Indigenous Language into the Historical Classroom: A Focus on Māori History**



Emily Klahm, Mentone Girls' Grammar School

This workshop is designed to support teachers in exploring how language can be used effectively to teach Indigenous history, with a particular focus on Māori history. It is especially relevant for teachers delivering Year 8 Polynesian history or the Year 9 investigation on Asia; however, the strategies are transferable across a wide range of History topics. The workshop aims to help teachers and students move away from Eurocentric words and incorporate Indigenous language to engage students without overwhelming them.

LEVELS 8 TO 10 | BYOD

Emily Klahm is an early-career History educator with experience teaching Years 7 to 10 at Mentone Girls' Grammar School. She teaches a broad range of historical topics, including Māori history, Australian history, and many more. Emily is passionate about integrating Indigenous/local languages within historical study, with the aim of challenging Eurocentric narratives and fostering students' historical curiosity.

F3B **Move, Feel, Remember: Embodied Learning in History**



Alice Backhouse, MacKillop Catholic Regional College

This workshop will explore how embodied pedagogy can deepen historical understanding by transforming passive learning into active interpretation. Drawing on approaches from Stand Up for Shakespeare and *Engaging the Past* (2024), this workshop will demonstrate how physicalising ideas, movement-based activities, and dramatic conventions help students internalise complex historical concepts and perspectives. Participants will experience practical, adaptable activities suitable for all History classrooms – from source analysis to historical empathy tasks. By integrating embodied learning, teachers can boost engagement, improve retention, and create richer, more inclusive opportunities for students to think, feel and act like historians.

GENERAL

Alice Backhouse is the Humanities Learning Leader and a History teacher, including for VCE Revolutions, at MacKillop Catholic Regional College in Werribee. A recipient of the 2025 HTAV Award for Excellence in History Teaching by a Secondary Teacher, Alice supports History education at her school by mentoring early career teachers and sharing practical strategies to strengthen student engagement. She has applied embodied pedagogy techniques in her History classrooms since completing her 2015 capstone research project on the topic and continues to champion approaches that help teachers feel confident, connected and inspired in their practice.

Check out the workshops.

Log into the website to unlock your member discount.

Register for the conference!

F3C The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Empire

Dr Natasha Wilson, The University of Melbourne

When the Soviet Union was established in 1922, why did the Bolsheviks structure this revolutionary state as a federation of national republics and an empire – choices that seem far from natural for these anti-colonial Marxist internationalists? This early history of the Soviet state highlights its national and ethnic diversity – factors that this workshop emphasises based on recent directions in the historiography of the Russian Revolution and the decolonising agenda that has emerged in the field following the war in Ukraine.

VCE REVOLUTIONS

Dr Natasha Wilson is a historian of the Soviet Union based at the University of Melbourne. She received her PhD in History from University College London. She was a visiting doctoral scholar at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow and the European University of St Petersburg. Natasha is currently completing a book manuscript titled The Young Socialists: Left-Wing Dissent in the Soviet Union from the Brezhnev Years to Perestroika.

F3D Australians at War: Innovative Classroom Practices and Resources

Helen Se arson, Department of Veterans' Affairs

This workshop will provide innovative approaches to teaching the world wars for Levels 9 and 10 History classrooms. It will include approaches to source analysis skills, student-ready lessons with explicit explanations, scaffolded tasks and skills practice, as well as extension activities and sources that explore the first-hand experience of veterans. Content examples will include the Kokoda Campaign, Gallipoli and the Western Front.

LEVELS 9 AND 10 | BYOD

Helen Se arson is a senior content writer with the [Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) Education team, bringing to her role over 35 years of experience in teaching History, curriculum leadership and teacher mentoring. Specialising in developing innovative and motivating History lessons and resources, her work is informed by contemporary pedagogical practices and current historical research. The Education team in the Department of Veterans' Affairs is a group of highly experienced History teachers from around Australia who focus on developing innovative, historically accurate and fully resourced lessons and learning resources.

F3E Literate Practices in Secondary History Classrooms

Dr Benita Champion, Coburg High School

Does your school expect everyone to teach literacy but is vague about what this should look like in the History classroom? Emerging from my own research on the relationships of teacher disciplinary knowledge and classroom literate practices, this workshop will assist teachers in exploring how their classroom literate practices intersect with their own historical knowledge and practices, thereby creating opportunities for developing historical literacy in the classroom.

GENERAL

Dr Benita Champion is a Levels 7 to 12 History teacher who is passionate about what it takes to be literate in History classrooms. To deepen her understanding, Benita completed a PhD investigating the specific literate practices required in History subjects from Years 7 to 12.

F3F Predicting the Past: Unravelling History with Game Theory

Timothy Ringwood, Carey Baptist Grammar School

Game theory is the analysis of strategic choices made by actors in various contexts, often utilised these days in economic theory and geopolitics. This workshop will explain the key tenets of game theory while demonstrating how you can bring it to life with analytical simulations in your classrooms. Participants will learn how to map out the strategic decision-making behaviour of actors in the Study Design, with a focus on skills appropriate for students in Years 11 and 12. Examples will be given using content from Modern History and Revolutions.

VCE MODERN HISTORY | REVOLUTIONS

Timothy Ringwood is a passionate teacher of History and Politics with a background in research and political philosophy. He uses game theory to enhance his understanding of decisions made by historical actors in a variety of historical subject areas, specialising in the French and Russian revolutions.

Check out the workshops.

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F3G **Cold Cases and Conspiracies: Innovative Electives for History**



Andree Buchanan, Luther College, and Astrid Morgan, Victory Lutheran College

Promoting History has never been more important. Discover how two schools tripled their number of senior classes by introducing new electives with innovative and unconventional assessment opportunities. The subjects are called 'Conspiracy Theories' and 'Cold Case Australia', offered at Year 9. All students study Year 9 Core History while the electives cater for students who love History – but also for those who don't know that they love it. Learn how to foster sheer joy in your classroom and enrich your History program.

LEVELS 9 AND 10 | GENERAL

Andree Buchanan has taught History Years 7 to 12 at independent schools for over 30 years. She is currently teaching History Years 7 to 10. Andree is passionate about all things History and has worked closely with Astrid Morgan at Luther College to increase the number of students selecting to study History.

Astrid Morgan has taught in government and independent schools for 37 years, having taught VCE Revolutions and Ancient History. She is currently Humanities Learning Leader at Victory Lutheran College in Wodonga. Astrid is passionate about all things History and has worked together with Andree to build numbers in History.

3.45 PM

Social Hour Networking Drinks

Stampton Bar, Novotel Hotel

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