

**Historian tip # 1:** Historians keep records of information they learn, and often rewrite this information to share their knowledge with others.

## Today's investigation: **What is a historian?**

**Outcome of the investigation:** Our historians will be able to

1. state the role of historians in investigating the past and sharing it with others
2. examine numerous multi-media resources for historian influence
3. enumerate eight or more different types of media a historian may use in order to share his or her knowledge with others
4. begin organizing a Historian's notebook

**Vocabulary:** historian

**Materials:** Any media available to you that a historian may have contributed to (history books, read alouds, magazine articles, news stories, documentary film, recording of a news broadcast...)

General map of China (a large one for the classroom)

General time lines and maps of China (hand-outs)

List of 20 Historian tips on a chart

D is for Doufu: an alphabet book of Chinese culture, by M.S.

Krach

A is for Asia, by Cynthia Chin Lee

**Mini lesson:** Historians are people who investigate the past. They are like detectives, using clues that they find in the present to piece together something that happened in the past. In a way, historians are always trying to solve mysteries of the past. Let's look at this list of Historian's tips to see some of the fun activities they participate in, to help them figure out some of these mysteries. (Shared reading of list). The best part is that anybody can be historian! Anybody who has ever asked a question about the past is already on his or her way! Today, we will begin bringing out the historian in all of us. You will be using your own knowledge and tools to lead an investigation over the next few weeks into China's history. Just like detectives use note pads to keep information and write their thoughts on their investigations, historians often use notebooks to gather information and keep track of their thoughts. These are your own personal historian's notebooks, and you will need to bring them every day since they are important to your work (pass out notebooks). Historians also like to keep important information close by, so I'm going to pass out a time line and a map of China for you to glue into the inside covers of your notebook. Now today, we are just going to begin with a quick investigation. With your notebook, walk around the room with a partner and identify anything you see that a historian might have helped create in order to share information with others.

**Activities:** The various media (history books, read alouds, magazine articles, news stories, documentary film, recording of a news broadcast...) should be visible in the room. Students walk around and jot in their notebooks anything they see that a historian might have helped create in order to share information with others.

**Group share:** Debrief on lists of resources the students develop (these can also be charted). Show the two alphabet books, flip through them, and speak for a minute on how these are especially good ways to share information with children. Remind the students that historians share information with others, so as historians, they have a responsibility to do that as well. Mention that the **cumulative project** for the unit will be for them to create an alphabet book (or other small history based book) on China, which they will then take to read to elementary school children who we will visit as a class. (at your discretion, students can work individually, in pairs, in small groups, or choose between those options in order to complete the project.