

Historian tip # 19: Historians often look at old documents and new documents on the same topic, so they can observe changes from the past to the present.

Today's investigation: School Rules, in 1315 and today

Outcome of the investigation: Our historians will be able to

1. list similarities and differences in school rules from 1315 and school rules which are in place today.
2. evaluate the changes which have occurred in school rules from 1315 to today.
3. argue what these changes in school rules, as a whole, may suggest about old China as compared with the China of today.

Vocabulary: There are a number of new vocabulary words for students in the 1315 school rules. This passage can be “worked through” together as a class.

Materials: School Regulations from the Academy for Establishing Virtue (1315)

List of school regulations for today, compiled by a university professor

Mini lesson: As we all know, changes in our lives can occur even during a very short period of time. Think for a minute about a baby picture of yourself, and place that in your mind next to a picture of yourself today. If so much change can occur quickly, just imagine how much can change over hundreds of years! One of the ways we can study change that has happened over a long period of time is to study documents from the past and from the present, which are on the same topic. For example, today we are going to look at a list of school rules in China from about 700 years ago! We will also look at a list of school rules from today, so we can notice the similarities and the differences between them. The old rules are a snapshot of the past, and the new rules are a snapshot of the present. Today we'll place them side by side, and look to see what has changed. Let's look at the 1315 rules together (this document should be read as a class due to some daunting vocabulary).

Activities: Give the students a list of school rules from today. Which rules have been eliminated? What does their elimination suggest about what has changed in China over the past 700 years? Which rules have stayed the same? What does their resilience suggest about what has remained the same in China today?

Group share: Debrief from the activity