Introduction to History and Government

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In this subject you will learn about the past and present which will eventually help you understand the future. You will therefore be in a position to recognize the relationship between the events of today and the world of tomorrow. This subject opens you to the universe.

Sources of Information on History and Government

This is where information on History and Government is obtained. There are three main sources of historical information,

1. Unwritten

2. Written

3. Electronic In this topic we shall discuss only the unwritten sources of historical information.

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Unwritten Sources

They are sources of Historical Information which are not found in any recorded form. They include;-

oral traditions
Archaeology
Anthopology
Genetics
Linguistics
Palaeontology

We shall discuss each source in detail.
Oral Traditions
Oral tradition is the passing of information from one person to another or from one generation to another by word of mouth. This information is passed through:

1. Poems
2. Proverbs
3. Riddles
4. Myths
5. Discussions
6. Interviews
7. Stories

8. Folk tales

Oral traditions are very important in informing History and Government. However they have their own advantages and disadvantages

Advantages of oral traditions

Oral traditions have the following advantages;

1. it compliments other sources
2. makes history real and practical
3. it is cheap
4. makes history fascinating and interesting

Disadvantages of Oral tradition

Oral traditions have the following disadvantages;

1. Information may be exaggerated
2. some information or facts may be omitted
3. information given maybe biased
4. information obtained may be inaccurate
5. some historical information may be forgotten due to loss of memory
6. Verification of facts is difficult

Historical linguistics is the study of language as it changes in the course of time. It traces the form, content and vocabulary in order to understand the historical background of the people who speak it. Please click on the start button in the animation below to take note of the pronunciation of the word 'person' by different Bantu communities.

Advantages of linguistics

Linguistics has the following advantages;

1. compliments other sources of information on History and Government
2. helps to trace the movement of people and their relationships
3. helps historians to know which groups shared a common origin
4. enables historians to establish links between different communities which were previously unknown

Limitations of Linguistics

Linguistics has the following limitations;

1. it may take a long time to learn a particular language

2. wrong interpretation of linguistic materials may distort historical information, for example, similar words in different communities may have different meanings, for example the word 'mutumia' among the Akamba and the Kikuyu as shown in the following pictures.

Archaeology is the study of material remains from past human life and culture. This is done through the following methods;

1. excavation
2. survey
3. experimentation
4. ethno archeology

Archaeology is the main source of history

Excavation

Archaeological excavation is the scientific recovery of past cultural materials by means of digging. Such materials include bones, stone tools and pieces of pottery and remains of houses, among others. Excavations at Marmonet Drift, Naivasha 2003- courtesy M D Kyule
Archaeological remains, stone tools

Other archaeological methods

Other methods of Archeology besides excavation inclue the following;
Survey
This is the deliberate search for archeological sites and materials
Experimentation

It is a recreation of artefacts and patterns found in excavated sites in order to understand how the artifacts were made and how the patterns were formed Ethno archeology
It is the study of present day pre industrial cultures to help interpret materials found in archeological sites

Anthropology

Anthropology is the study of a peoples culture. Anthropologists help archaeologists to use present day human relationships to suggest what may have been happening in the past. The picture below depicts an aspect of peoples culture

Paleontology

Paleontology is the study of fossils. Fossils are preserved remains of animals and plants that existed in the past. Paleontologists help archaeologists by establishing the nature of plants, humans and other animals that existed in the past.

Genetics is the study of how biological characteristics (genes) are transmitted from parents to their children. Genetics provides archaeologists with information that can be used to establish the biological relationship between different communities.

Geology

This is the study of earth's structure and processes. Geology helps archaeologists to know

when certain events happened in the past. Fossils entrapped in the rocks can have their age traced if one can trace the years the rocks were formed.

Geologists from University of Nairobi at work along the the Enamankeon region, Narok District, Kenya-Kyule

Advantages of archaeology

Archaeology has the following advantages;

1. helps to recapture the remotest period of human past
2. enables historians to understand how cultures have developed over time
3. provides tangible evidence for past events

Limitations of Archaeology

Archaeology has the following limitations;

1. archaeological material is limited
2. archaeological material is non renewable
3. large areas have not yet been surveyed or excavated because there are very few archaeologists
4. archaeological interpretations based on inference may be inaccurate

Early Man

Various theories are advanced about the origin of man. In this session we will look at some of these theories that explain where man came from. This picture from the museum of Kenya show the various phases of man's development.

Stages of mans development

The video clip shows the various stages of evolution

Origin of Man

Human beings are different from animals because they;

1. are able to think and reason
2. are able to communicate
3. make tool and weapons
4. have cultures and traditions
5. are moral beings
6. are spiritual beings
7. invent and discover things

This makes human beings unique. Historians are therefore interested in understanding the origin and development of human beings. In this lesson we are going to learn about the various theories of origin of man.

Lesson Objectives
By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

1. explain the religious view on the origin of man
2. explain the traditional view on the origin of man
3. explain the evolution theory on the origin of man

THEORIES ON THE ORIGIN OF MAN

There are three main theories which explain the origin of man
1. creation theory
Gods creation
2. traditional / mythical theory

An illustration of mythical believe on origin of Maasai

3. evolution theory

Social, Economic and Political organisation of Kenyan Societies in the 19th century. Before we start on this topic, it is important to review the topic on the peoples of Kenya up to the 19th century.

THE BANTU

The term Bantu refers to a group of people who speak related languages. They make up the largest language group in Africa

Bantu migration and settlement

The Social, Political and Economic Organization of The Ameru In The 19th Century

The Ameru belong the Eastern group of the Bantu. As they migrated, they interacted with various communities. This interaction enabled them to develop a system of government that ensured high standards of morality and stability.

There are several sub-tribes of the Ameru
These are:
-Igembe
-Tigania
-Imanti
-Miitine
-Igoji
-Mwimbi
-Muthambi

-Chuka
-Tharaka