



# HOLDEN & ME

## Tales from a Working Life

Lesson 1: Holden and South Australia  
Secondary school



# In this lesson, we will...

Learn about the history of Holden in South Australia.

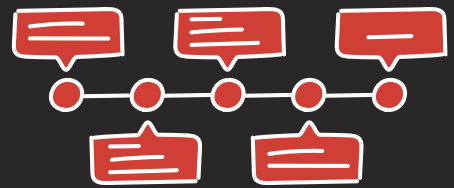
Understand how timelines are used by historians to understand the past.

Create a class timeline of Holden and South Australia from the 1940s until the 2020s.





# At the end of this lesson, I will be able to...



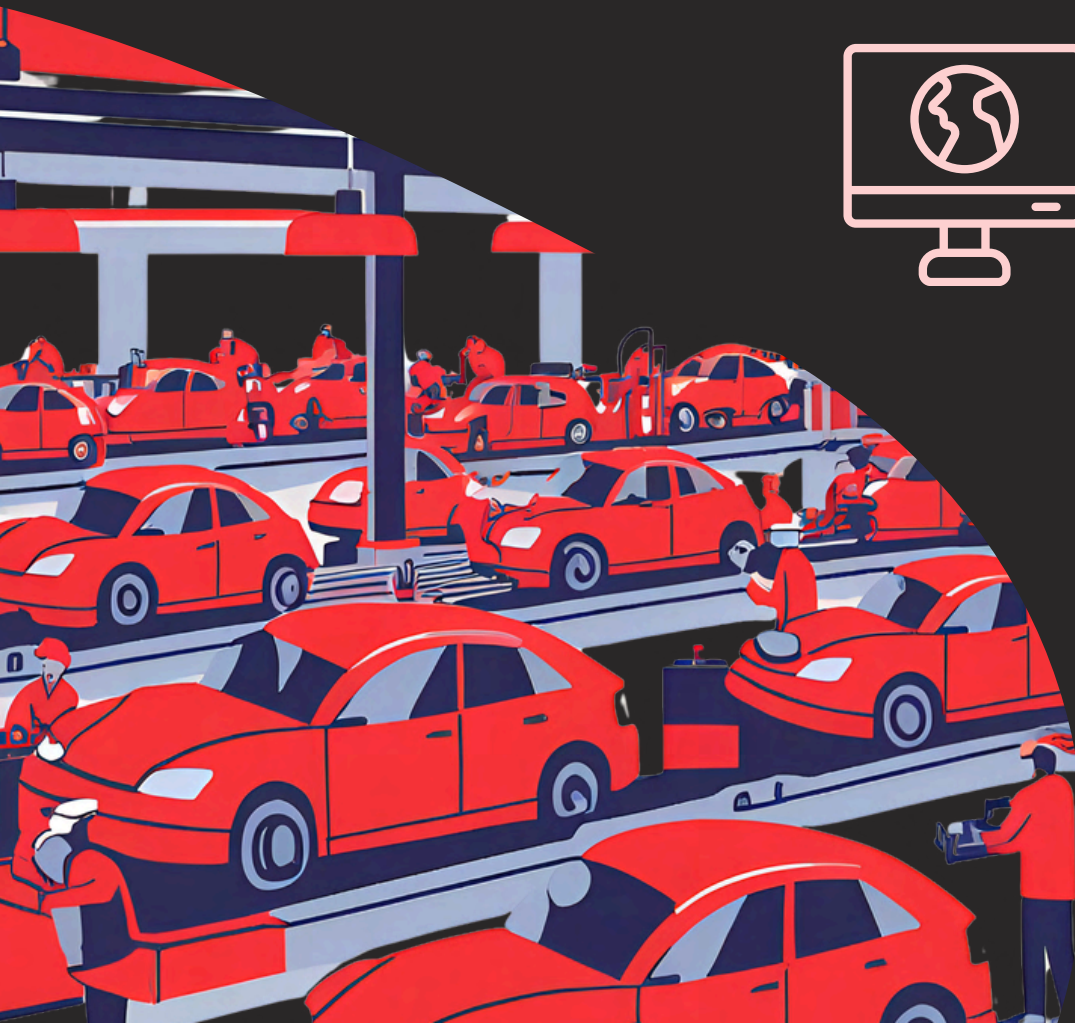
Explain what a timeline is and the key features.



Use my researching skills to identify key moments in the history of South Australia.



Confidently share my findings with the class.



# Important Words

Advantages

Political

BCE (Before common era)

Significant

CE (Common era)

Social

Disadvantages

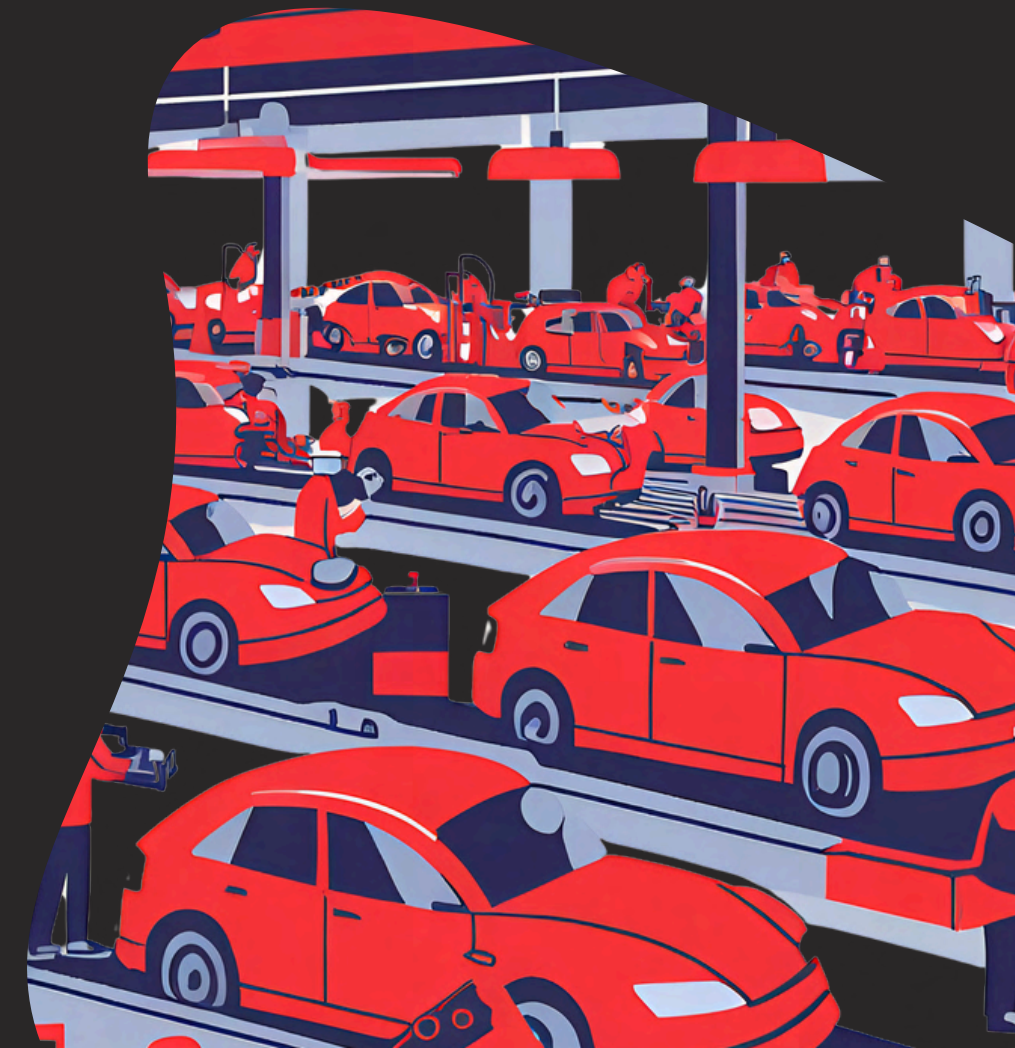
State Premier

Factory

Successful

Migrant

Timeline



Brainstorm:  
What do you know about...

***HOLDEN***

# Holden's History



## **Nexus: Holden, the 'all-Australian car'**

What made Holden cars symbols of Australia during the 1950s, 60s and 70s?

 ABC Education / Dec 6, 2021



# Holden and South Australia (1)

In 1859, James Alexander Holden established a saddlery business at the Beehive Corner in Adelaide. His son Henry expanded the business in 1885, and Holden & Frost employed many South Australians in their Grenfell Street factory.

By 1923, Holden and Frost had outgrown their Grenfell street location and moved to Woodville. In this factory, they made car bodies by hand, which was a very labour intensive job. Trimmings and leather seats were made by a large team of women, also by hand.



After the war, despite labour and part shortages, the factory manufactured 10 pilot cars in 1948. By November, Holden and Frost had succeeded in creating the first fully Australian-made car.



# Holden and South Australia (2)

At its peak Holden employed over 24,000 workers across five states. Holden employees were diverse: working men and women, migrants, young and old, skilled and unskilled, professional, short and longterm.

In 1962, Holden opened a new factory in Elizabeth. This was an important location as the new suburb attracted new migrants with the promise of a modern home and a job.

The 2017 closure of the Elizabeth plant marked the end of an era. After 55 years, Elizabeth lost its main source of employment and a large part of the community's identity.





# Timelines

Watch this video to understand what a timeline is, and the the key features of a useful timeline such as topic selection, time spacing, and labeling.



# Research



1. Read the questions on your research sheet and clarify any new words.



2. Starting with the suggested sources, research the car on your sheet.




3. Again, starting with the suggested sources, research the South Australian, Australian, and global context of your car.



4. Share your findings and add your research to the class timeline.

**1946**  
**Prototype No. 1 Holden Sedan**



1. List some of the key design features of this model.

2. Who was this model marketed towards?

3. Describe the advantages and/or disadvantages of this model.

4. Do you think this model was successful? Why/why not?

**Vehicle Specs:**

Engine:	cylinders	Capacity:	cc
Power:	hp	Weight:	kgs

**1946**

What was the **population** of South Australia?

What were some of the big **social or political changes** happening during the decade?

Can you list any **new inventions** in Australia or South Australia around this time?

Who was the **State Premier** of South Australia?

What else was happening in the **world** during this time?

During this decade, where were **new Australian migrants** arriving from?

Other important moments?



# Fast Finishers



**Can you add any other important moments  
from South Australian history to the  
timeline?**

**Can you find any other...**

- **Significant changes to laws**
- **Changes in social ideas**
- **Special events**
- **New inventions**
- **Important people**
- **Anything else?**



# Time to share!



Prototype No. 1  
Holden Sedan



1946

1948

1951

The Woodville plant  
is now able to  
produce 100 cars  
each day.

Holden Series 50  
2106 Utility



1952

1953

1954

One third of all cars  
in Australia are now  
made by General  
Motors Holden.



Chevrolet  
Stylemaster Sedan



WM Holden  
Cooper Bristol



Chevrolet Bel-Air Sedan



1959

General Motors  
Holden reaches  
1 million sales  
globally.

1962

General Motors  
Holden opens a  
new factory in  
Elizabeth.  
Production booms!

Holden HT Panel Van

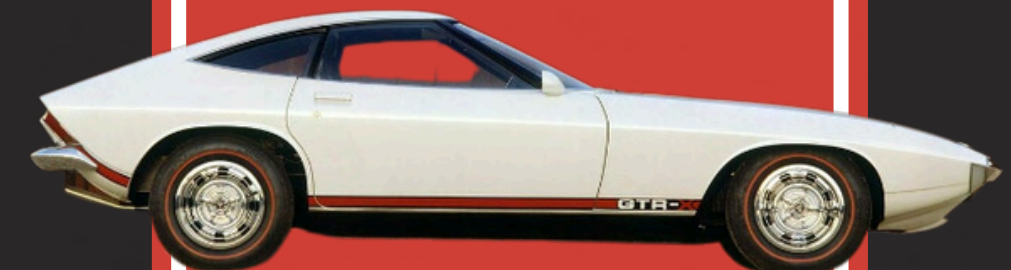


1969

Holden HT Monaro  
350 GTS 'Bathurst'



1970



Torana GTR-X



Holden HX Sandman



1976

Holden VB Commodore  
SL Sedan



1979

Holden VC  
Commodore Junk Car



1982

Sales are strong and  
41,000 vehicles are  
exported.

1973

But at the same  
time, the car industry  
faces industrial  
disputes, strikes,  
retrenchments and  
pay claims.



Holden WB  
Kingswood Prototype

Holden VQ Caprice  
Armoured Vehicle



1991

Holden loses its  
primary place in  
the Australian car  
market for the first  
time.



Torana TT36



1998

2004

2005

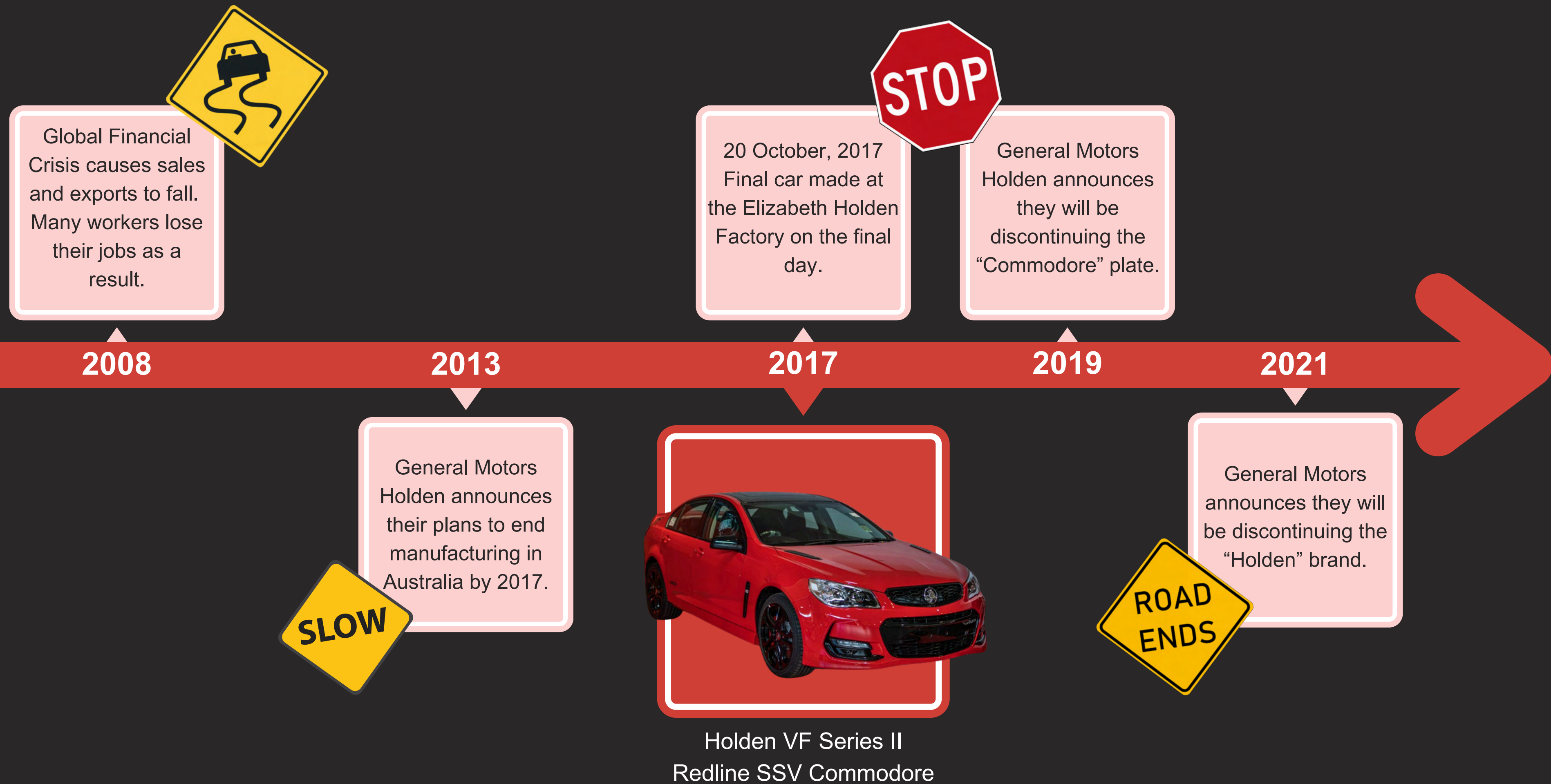


Matilda



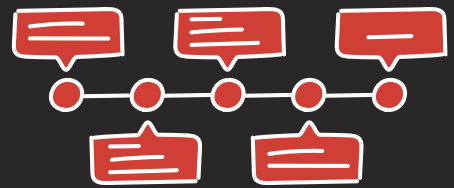
Holden EFIJY







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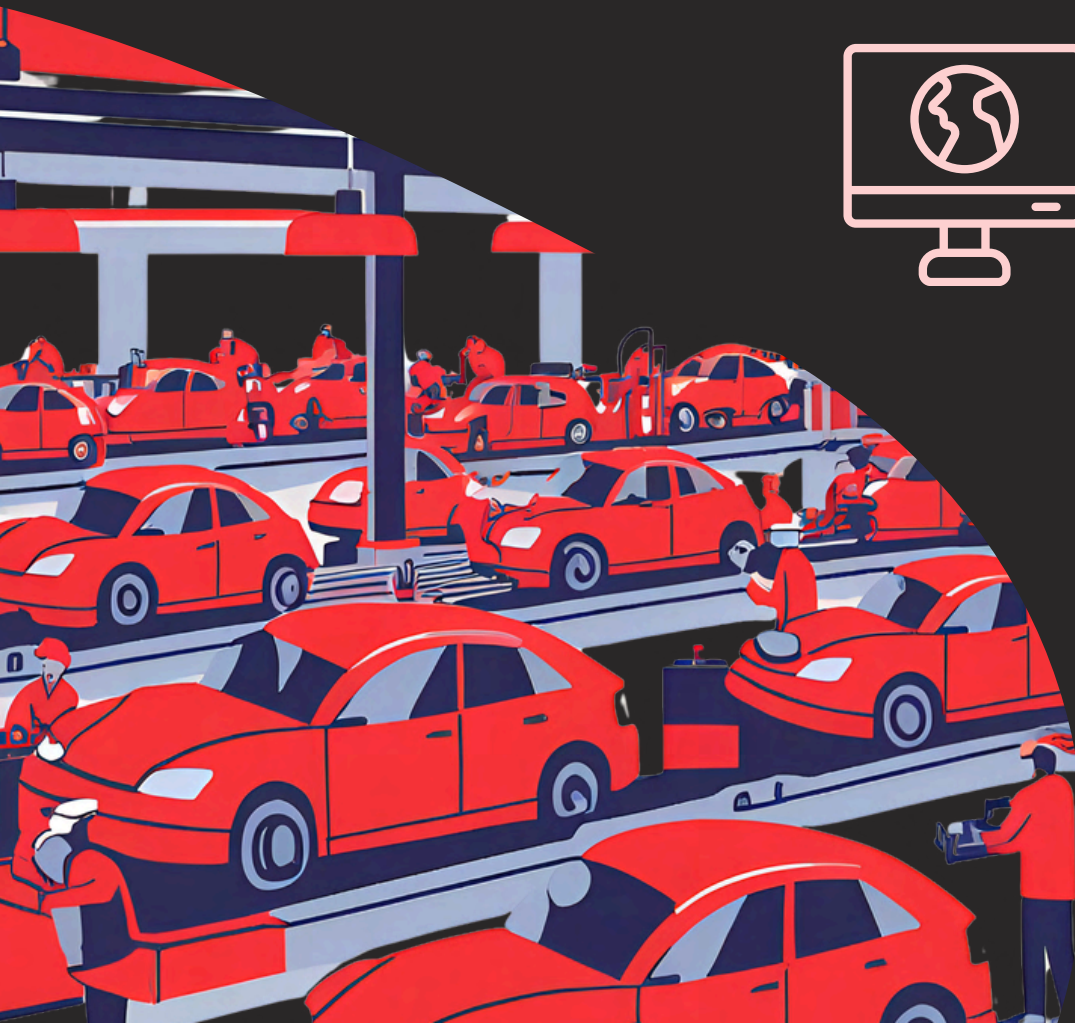
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# Optional: Researching History

Watch this video to understand how historians research. This includes selecting a topic, where to find useful sources, applying a research method, and including a balanced perspective.

