



HOLDEN & ME

Tales from a Working Life

Lesson 2: Responding to Oral Histories
Secondary School



In this lesson, we will...

Learn about what oral histories are and why they are used by historians.

Listen to and reflect on the perspectives presented in the oral histories of real people.

Reflect on the insights we can gain about community life and how we can connect to their personal experiences.



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



Explain what an oral history is and why historians choose to use them in their research.



Listen to an oral history and explain the unique perspective of the person telling the story.



Find connections between their story, my own experiences, and the wider world.



Important Words

Argument

Oral history

Community

Perspective

Experience

Primary source

Historian

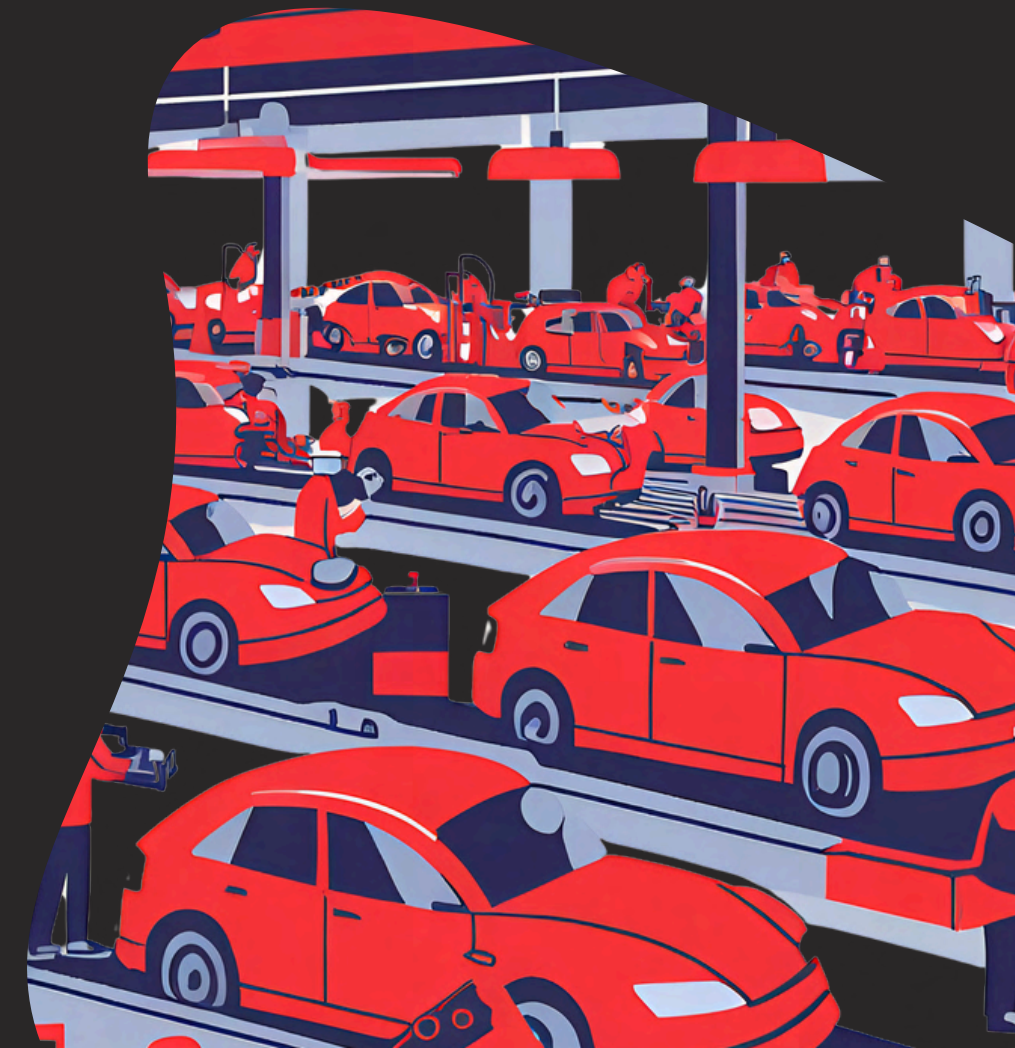
Secondary source

Holden

Significant

Identity

Social



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?

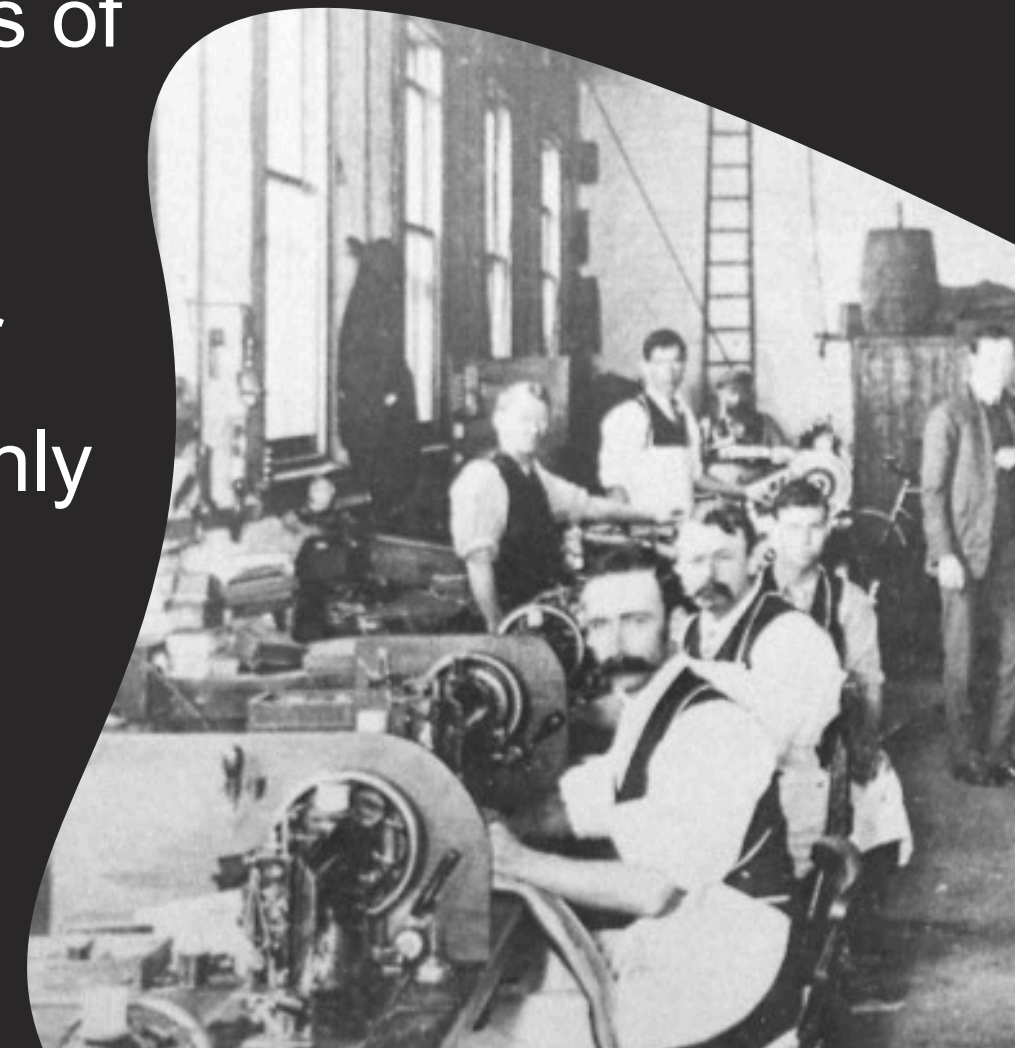
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Holden and South Australia

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, transient and longterm.

In 1962, Holden opened a new factory in the then-new suburb of Elizabeth. This location was selected strategically to attract new migrants with the promises of modern homes and a jobs.

The 2017 closure of the Elizabeth plant marked the end of an 55 year long era. Over 1700 men and women at the Elizabeth plant lost not only their jobs, but the life they had with Holden. Elizabeth lost its main source of employment and a large part of the community's identity.



Historical Sources

Watch this video to understand what a source is, the types of sources that exist, and how historians use sources to understand what might have happened in the past.





What is an oral history?

An oral history is a **primary source** of information spoken by a person about their **experience** of an event.

Remember: Some people prefer to think of oral histories as a separate category of historical sources.

Oral histories are usually recorded sound but can often include video and/or written elements too.





How do historians use oral histories?

Oral histories can be used to **answer questions** about the past.

Historians use oral histories to help them build an **argument** of what happened in the past.

They use oral histories to understand the **perspectives** of different people that were involved.



Holden Oral Histories

Joan & David Matthews



Joan started working at Woodville Holden when she was 15-years old in the typing pool. She met David while he was working in electrical maintenance. They have been married for more than 60 years.

Lynette Tainsh



Lynette has fond memories of attending Holden Christmas parties long before she became an electrical fitter like her father. She was only the second female apprentice at Elizabeth and later became a supervisor.

George Vassallo



George migrated with his parents from Egypt after World War II. He did an apprenticeship at Woodville, and later relocated to Elizabeth. His father also worked at Holden. George worked hard to create a specialist tool and was recognised for his work.

Keith Hamilton



Keith started at Elizabeth as a 19-year-old. He held a variety of roles from forklift driver to warehouse team leader. Some of his happiest memories are of lunchtime games of indoor bowls, darts and table tennis, and soccer and cricket games against other factories.

Hear, Think, Me, We



Hear

- List the **people** and **locations** they mentioned.
- Does the person mention a **date**, **year**, or **decade**?
- Do they talk about any significant **objects**?
- Did they participate in any significant **events** or **projects**?



Think

- Reflect on the **emotions** the person might have **felt**. Did they use emotive words? Can you hear it in their voice?
- Consider what the person might have **left out** of their story. What **extra questions** do you have about their experience?



Me

- Can you think of any times you might have **felt similar** to the person in the story?
- What **might you have felt or done** if you were in their position?



We

- Do any of their experiences **remind you** of something in your life or the life of someone close to you?
- Based on their story, what do you think the reaction of the wider **community** might have been to Holden closing down?

Time to share!



Final Question



**Share a question you would ask
the person from your oral history
recording with the class or a
partner.**

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