

History and Memory Worksheet

Directions: Read the following excerpt and use the information provided to come up with examples that would fit into the categories presented in the Venn diagram.

History is what trained historians do, a reasoned reconstruction of the past rooted in research; it tends to be critical and skeptical of human motive and action, and therefore more secular than what people commonly call memory. History can be read by or belong to everyone; it is more relative, contingent on place, chronology, and scale. If history is shared and secular, memory is often treated as a sacred set of absolute meanings and stories, possessed as the heritage or identity of a community. Memory is often owned; history is interpreted. Memory is passed down through the generations; history is revised. Memory often coalesces in objects, sites, and monuments; history seeks to understand contexts in all their complexity. History asserts the authority of academic training and canons of evidence; memory carries the often more immediate authority of community membership and experience. In an essay about the slave trade and the problem of memory, Bernard Bailyn aptly stated memory's appeal: "Its relation to the past is an embrace. . . ultimately emotional, not intellectual."

- Excerpt taken from Horton, James Oliver, and Lois E. Horton. 2006. *Slavery and public history: the tough stuff of American memory*. New York: New Press.

