

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Viva History learner's book Grade 10*

**(Vivlia education for the nation Publishers & Booksellers (Pty) Ltd,  
Florida, 2011, ISBN 978-1-4307-1142-1)**

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The implementation of the new CAPS document is eased with the publication of the Viva History Learner's Book Grade 10. All in all it is a thoroughly researched, user-friendly, thought provoking and including intriguing information that encompasses the ideal of 'teaching beyond the curriculum.' The Grade 11 and 12 textbooks are still based on the prescriptions of the old NCS document, however, eager teachers who would like to prepare in advance for the final implementation of the CAPS document will be able to use some of the information provided in these textbooks. If the Grade 10 book is a precursor for the Grade 11 and 12 textbooks, we can expect textbooks of high quality for the implementation of the CAPS document.

Chapter 1 of Viva History Learner's Book Grade 10 covers the main prescribed theory about China (pp. 13-21), however, the authors also brought in some interesting extra and relevant information e.g. footbinding as well as the contact with Europeans. A bit more information could have been added about Zheng He. With regard to Songhai (pp. 22-30) all the prescribed CAPS information is included with added information about the role of women as well as contact with the Europeans. The same extra information is also provided in the India (pp. 31-37) and the role of women in the European (pp. 38-46) sections. Under the India section more information is needed about astronomy and technology. Clear explanations about the different types of sources (p. 10) are accompanied with examples. In the first Chapter an introduction for essay writing (pp. 47 - 49) and a brief explanation of the

structure for essay writing is discussed.

Chapter 2 (pp. 52-113) looks at European expansion, and the case studies about America include the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs and the Incas. Under the African case study the authors included South Africa. According to the CAPS document each case study should include the process of colonialism: why slavery started; slave trading; the consequences of slavery to the indigenous societies. The slavery example that the authors chose pertains to Mexico (p. 81). This chapter includes a useful example of how to read source attribution (pp. 54-56), comparing visual sources (p. 81) and brainstorm ideas. These are useful hints in order to achieve the required skills. An introduction to essay writing skills (pp. 47- 49) is presented in a practical and user-friendly manner. Also included is the matrix used to mark the essay that will assist the student to see what is required in the essay. On page 59 there is a map that might be difficult for a colour blind person to see the difference. The tonal values of the map must be changed, because it is difficult to make out the key. This aspect must also be taken in consideration with regard to some of the other maps as well as some of the photos.

Chapter 3 (pp. 114-163) focuses on the French Revolution and all the required information within the topic is covered. The authors also included the March of Women (p. 135). The authors describes the sequence of the French Revolution as according to the different phases, which makes it simple to comprehend cause and effect. This is much more sensible and systematic. Clear guidelines are provided to explain and analyse cartoons (pp. 116- 117).

Chapter 4 (pp. 164-229) covers two topics, which is understandable since the topics are overlapping. However, careful consideration must be taken to determine if there is enough content about all of the themes within each topic. For instance, according to the CAPS document various southern African kingdoms must be discussed to indicate that resettlement was not solely due to the Difaquane/ Mfekane. The skills focus (pp.167-169) in this chapter relates to judging the reliability of sources as well as developing paragraph writing skills.

The final chapter (pp. 278 - 351) includes the South African War also known as the Anglo-Boer War and South Africa becoming a Union. The authors use the term *Randlords* to refer to the capitalists and this will help the student to relate capitalism to the South African context. A suggestion would be concept clarification – the student must be made aware why the term South African War is used, as opposed to the Anglo-Boer War. On the technical

side, the photo on page 302 of a communal room in the Workers Museum is printed too dark and the student will not be able to make anything out. The authors could have elaborated more on the concentration camps; the given information is too little for a student to form an opinion. There are many photos that could have been used for this section to teach the students the value of photos as primary sources. The skills focus refers to answering source-based questions. What makes this a well-structured textbook with regard to assessment is the mark allocation given with the activities. This will inform the students from the beginning how many facts they need to write in order to obtain the maximum marks.

A matter of concern is the photo and information used (p. 325) about Helena Wagner. Women would dress up in male clothes for photos, but that did not mean that they participated in the Anglo-Boer War itself. In fact, according to Act No 20 of 1898 of the ZAR specified that only men should do military service. There are some cases where the wives of officers were accompanying the men on commando; and another example was that of Miss E Lotz who was a nurse. None of these women fought during their time on commando. According to F Pretorius, the photo of Wagner was taken for publicity purposes and the same female, and most probably during the same photo shoot is shown on her own in a photograph where her name is Mrs Berrett. Both photos were used for pro-Boer publicity. In 1903 the Wagner couple photo (the same one that is used in the textbook) was published in Germany. Then the latter photo of the same lady, but now known as Mrs Berrett was published in 1904 in the Netherlands. It is cardinal that the factual evidence is correct before the textbooks are distributed to schools. If the authors want to refer to a woman who fought in the Anglo-Boer War they should rather refer to Sara Raal.<sup>1</sup> It is quite refreshing to have a history textbook that also includes the role played by women under each section.

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<sup>1</sup> F Pretorius, *Kommandolewe tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog 1899-1902* (Human & Rousseau, Kaapstad, 1991), p. 347-350.