

Annex I: Example of a Source Comparison Activity in a Secondary 1 History Classroom

Note: Activity was implemented through Google Classroom and SLS on different occasions, targeted at Secondary 1 Express students who have no prior experience of making source comparisons.

Today's Investigation: What was education like in 19th century Singapore?

Source A: A 1870 account of a school inspector, inspecting an English school.

I found, on descending to the basement floor of a small house, 33 children crowded together in a small room. The students are broadly divided into the 'fourpennies' and the 'sixpennies'*; the latter, consisting of those who write in copybooks, where text from old literature, great writers, and verses of the bible was copied in repetition. No other written or memory exercise are given. The students are very inactive and ignorant as nothing much else was taught.

*Different school fees that were paid.

Source B: An 1872 account by Mr. Woolley, inspecting a Malay school in Singapore.

When I visited the school, the old teacher was in the middle of a recitation lesson with 12 boys. They were repeating verse of the Quran in Arabic, and this continued for half an hour before the boys stopped for a break. The old teacher told me that the repeating of verses is to help with memorising the Quran. In every of such schools that I have visited, the sole aim in such schools is to teach the boys to read a few chapters of the Koran, and no general knowledge is attempted to be communicated.

Question:

Did students in colonial Singapore experience a **similar** education to each other? Elaborate and explain your answer.