When studying historical events, it is important for students to realize that there are always differing points of view. It is important for readers to be able to read the opinions of others and to identify and assess differing viewpoints or perspectives. After reading and summarizing differing viewpoints or perspectives, it is then necessary to make judgments as to which side of the argument they agree. By using the opinions of historical figures, it will make the reader think critically about historical evidence.

To make reasoned judgments, the reader must ask questions to help process the information, assess the importance and relevance of the information, and apply it in a new context. Evaluating is a skill that readers use when thinking critically about a particular text.

Readers make judgments about:
   a. The validity and accuracy of ideas and information
   b. The logic of the writer’s or speaker’s arguments
   c. The quality of the writer’s or speaker’s style
   d. The effectiveness of organization
   e. The reasonableness of events and actions
   f. The bias of the writer or speaker

Why is recognizing point of view important?

Point of view is crucial to the understanding of historical events. Examining the point of view of historical figures is necessary to try and figure out why people acted the way they did and why people supported or rejected various ideas and historical events. Understanding the point of view...
of historical figures requires the student to put themselves in the shoes of others. The reader must try and understand the views, beliefs, morals, and standards of other eras and cultures.

A person’s point of view can be affected by the writer’s age, background and experiences. A historical figure’s point of view is a reflection of when he or she lived. If it seems different from our own, the reader must suspend their own opinions and try and understand the opinions of others. The reader must also recognize that historical issues are in fact issues because they are controversial. An issue, by definition, is a debatable matter that will naturally have different points of view.

The reader must be able to identify differing points of view, analyze them and make judgments as to which points of view are better than others. For example, if a city council debates whether or not a century old city park should be turned into an apartment complex, there will be different points of view. The reader will need to examine the points of view and develop criteria to evaluate which point of view is best. Being able to identify point of view is important to help the reader begin to identify bias in what he or she reads. The reader needs to recognize that when a person gives their point of view their opinions may not be totally objective, but include their own feelings or vested interests. If a councilor gets campaign contributions from an apartment developer, that councilor arguing for the apartment, instead of keeping the park, may be biased in his point of view and may lose his objectivity.

**How can I identify a writer’s point of view?**

The first step in identifying the point of view of a passage is to figure out the main idea being presented by the writer. The reader must identify what the writer is stressing most and what side of the issue the writer is on. Then the reader must identify what arguments are being presented to support the writer’s point of view. Usually the writer will use adjectives that show how the writer feels about the issue. The reader must determine if credible evidence is provided to support each argument. The reader must also figure out what arguments are not represented. When a writer is giving their point of view, the writer will usually not present a balanced treatment of the issue, but will write in a way that tends to try and sway the reader to their point of view.
A writer will use several techniques to try and convince the reader to their point of view. The writer may over generalize and exaggerate their evidence. The writer may also use appeals to the reader’s emotions. For example, a person writing in support of keeping the city park may make reference to wonderful childhood experiences that tug at the heartstrings of readers. A writer may also try and pass off opinions as facts. The writer might state that putting up the apartment building will bring in $100,000 in property taxes, but may not provide proof that this is really the case.

Using Both Sides Now to work with point of view

When a political issue arises, there will most assuredly be different points of view. Using Both Sides Now provides a framework to summarize and analyze different points of view.

The student must first identify the issue or question that must be answered. Then the student reads several writers who give their point of view on the issue. The student then selects the main arguments that are presented both for and against the issue. The student also needs to state the evidence that is presented to support or verify each argument. After summarizing the arguments and evidence, the student then makes a decision about the issue, or answers the question and writes it down. The student explains the reasoning behind their decision.
Read the following four letters to the editor about a local political issue regarding the demolition of a historical home, the Scanlon Mansion. Complete the Both Sides Now organizer that follows.

**Get Rid of Eyesore**

I am writing to congratulate city councillors on voting to get rid of the Scanlon mansion. While it may have been a wonderful piece of architecture fifty years ago, it is an eyesore today.

The chance to build new apartment condominiums continues the city’s efforts at downtown renewal. The city is to be applauded for looking ahead to what we need. New condos in the downtown will help to revive the city’s image and bring in new residents.

Scanlon Mansion has been a blight on our downtown for years. It has become a safety concern and there have been recent incidents that show it has been harbouring a criminal element. The new condos will eliminate this problem.

In a time of shrinking tax dollars, the new development will bring in much needed revenue to the city to continue its renewal program. Scanlon Mansion has had its day. It’s time to move ahead.

Joan Winston
Elm Street

**Can’t We Save Anything!**

Well once again the city council has sacrificed a piece of our past for the sake of a few measly dollars. I am deeply perturbed by this rash decision, pushed through by councillors who are in the developers’ pockets.

Scanlon Mansion has been the centre of the downtown core for over a century. Built by our first mayor, it has remained a reminder of our past and a unique style of building unseen today. And yes, while it may be in a state of some disrepair, why can’t the city see the potential of a restored mansion.

In a mad rush to get a few tax dollars, the council has missed an opportunity put forward by the Friends of Scanlon Mansion to renovate the mansion and turn it to a first rate museum. For once why can’t the city preserve some of our past rather than demolishing it.

Councillors, I know who voted for what and you can be assured that you won’t get my vote.

Erik Schmidt
Maple Avenue

**We Need a Museum**

I find it ironic that the day after council votes to destroy Scanlon Mansion with a wrecking ball, that Councillor McGee states that we need an art gallery. How blind can this man be.

Scanlon Mansion would be the perfect setting for the gallery. With its park like setting in the middle of the city, the mansion would be a natural venue for a local gallery or museum. What more logical place for our history than in a historic building of style and flair.

Oh, no! Instead we will tear it down and put up a 10 story eyesore that has no connection to the city or the historic nature of the location. It’s a money grab pure and simple. I wonder how much the developers from miles away gave our councillors to vote for this.

Everyone I’ve talked to are appalled by the decision. We can all remember as children the fun we had playing around the mansion’s park. Let’s restore a sense of pride to our community and build something that we all can share and be proud of again.

Agnes Winterbottom
Oak Crescent

**Enough Nostalgia**

Enough already. I am fed up with the whiners in the city that make Scanlon Mansion sound like it was the most remarkable building on the face of the earth. Let’s get our facts straight before we cause such a fuss.

Do you remember who Scanlon was? Back in the 1920s, our beloved Mayor Scanlon was ripping off the city for thousands of dollars with his development schemes. He was pocketing our tax dollars while developers were paying him off. He would have went to prison if he hadn’t decided to run again. How soon we forget.

I don’t know where these old stories of fun and games at the mansion come from. My parents told me that the park was rarely used and that the Scanlons treated it as their private grounds. These heart filled stories sound far-fetched to me.

Let’s end the nostalgia fest and get the facts straight. Getting rid of that mansion will be no loss.

Dennis Langevin
Birch Lane
### Apartment Complex: For and Against

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify the Decisional Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguments for the Demolition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments Against the Demolition</td>
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<tr>
<th>Answer to the Decisional Question</th>
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<tr>
<th>Reasons for the Decision</th>
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Read the following four letters to the editor about a local political issue regarding the need to get a passport to travel into the United States. Complete the *Both Sides Now* organizer that follows.

**Nice Way to Treat Friends**

After hearing some Americans suggest that Canada poses a security threat to the United States, I was left shaking my head. And we’re supposed to be your best friend. I’d hate to be your enemy.

Canada and the United States have been allies for hundreds of years. We share a common history, a common ancestry and a common bond. We have fought wars together, traded together, and celebrated together as two neighbours should.

Sure we have the odd disagreement from time to time like all relationships do. But to make us have to pay for a passport to visit the United States is insulting. I would never make my friends have security cheques and pay almost $100 for a piece of paper I shouldn’t need.

Instead of taking a shot at your best friend, we should be working together to fight the global terrorism issue. This is only going to push us further apart by putting up these stupid barriers. Hey America, do the right thing.

Colonel William Eagle (retired)  
Kenora

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**Better Safe than Sorry**

I can’t believe what all the uproar is about regarding the American decision to require all foreign travellers to have a passport to enter their country by June 1, 2009. It is their country!

The United States went through one of the most despicable attacks in world history when the World Trade Centre was attacked. Americans have every right to protect themselves as they see fit.

Two years ago, I was the victim of a home invasion. I was attacked and robbed by three punks. It changed my life forever. I totally understand why so many Americans want to feel totally safe.

We have been friends with the Americans for a long time and I love their country. But it is their country and they have the right to do what they see fit. If it means having to have a passport, then so be it. Our borders are mainly undefended and therefore this is one step to add security.

I know my new security system helps me sleep more soundly at night. A passport will help our neighbours.

Ivana Kreschuk  
Peterborough

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**It Wasn’t Our Fault**

The Americans make me so mad with their rash judgments. I get so sick and tired of hearing politicians say that the 9/11 terrorists got into the United States through Canada.

An investigation conducted by the American government concluded that notion was totally false. The terrorists came into the United States from other countries and passed through American security. It wasn’t our fault.

However, we get to pay for it anyways. I have to cough up over $300 to get passports for my family of five. I don’t have a choice either. My wife’s family lives in Rochester, so we travel there frequently. We all have spotless records, but we get herded in with the rest of the criminals.

All this hassle at the border is going to effect tourism. Many Americans don’t have passports so they sure aren’t going to get one. There goes millions of tourist dollars down the toilet. Thanks a lot!

Omar Farquan  
Niagara Falls

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**Just Like Everyone Else**

I’ve been following the debate about passports in the newspaper and on television the past couple of weeks. I have to say that I am in favour of a passport.

I recently moved to Canada from Uganda and a passport is standard issue where I live. I travelled a lot in my job there and every country I went to I had to have my passport.

It’s time for Canadians to wake up to the reality of global travel. Potential terrorism is a global problem and no one is immune to it. Making everyone carry some official form of national identification only makes sense in these senseless times.

The United States imposing these new rules are not doing anything new. In fact, she is just playing catch up with the rest of the world. We are the ones with our heads in the sand. Having a passport is the new price of doing business. Of course you do have a choice and you can just stay home.

Walter Ugula  
Brampton
## Having a Passport: For and Against

### Identify the Decisional Question

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments for a Passport</th>
<th>Evidence Provided</th>
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### Answer to the Decisional Question

### Reasons for the Decision

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4. 
5.