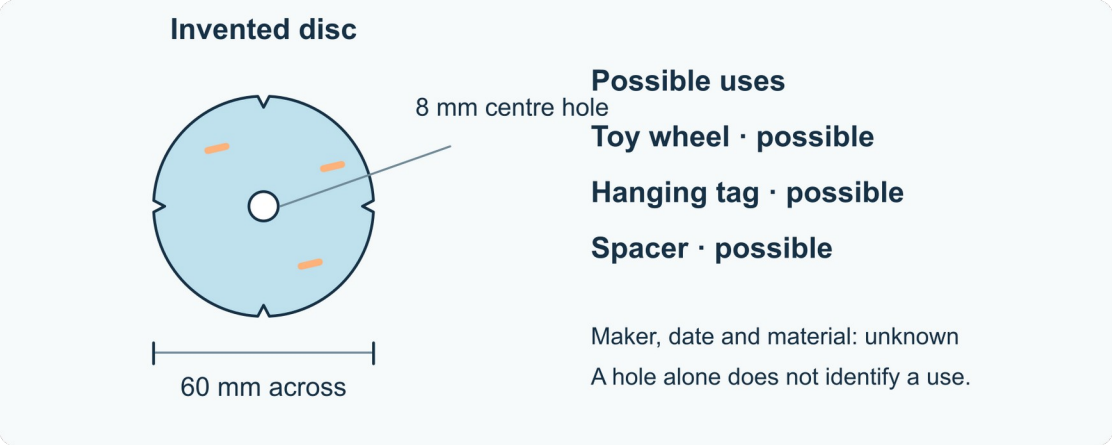
An object and three possible explanations

Which details support an explanation of an invented historical object?

Compare possible uses of a completely invented object while keeping observation separate from a guess.

Investigate | 10–20 minutes, or one small comparison | Scrap paper and a pencil or pen, The supplied original model; no account, purchase or online search needed

Start here Use the supplied drawing of a 60 mm disc with an 8 mm centre hole, four edge notches and worn paint.



One object, several possible uses

1 Describe first

List the round outline, hole, notches and paint wear without naming a function or date. These details are supplied fictional observations.

2 Offer explanations

Try toy wheel, hanging tag and spacer. More than one explanation can fit a centre hole; you may add or reject a possibility.

3 Match clues cautiously

A centre hole and edge wear could fit a toy wheel, but neither proves one. A hanging tag or spacer can also have a hole.

4 Choose a next check

Suggest a useful record or test, such as a matching axle drawing with dimensions. Do not invent that evidence or claim the object's age.

Original example an unidentified disc

This is an invented object drawing, not an artefact or a discovery from a real place.

• Observed: 60 mm across, 8 mm centre hole, four edge notches and worn paint.

• Tentative idea: a toy wheel, supported weakly by the hole and wear.

• Alternative: a tag or spacer could share those details. A matching dimensioned parts record would be useful.

What this example can show No supplied detail identifies the maker, date, material or actual use. A plausible explanation remains a hypothesis.

A different way

Point to details, dictate a description, or compare the three written hypotheses. No real object or collection visit is needed.

If you want to go further

Add one explicitly fictional new record: an axle drawing with an 8 mm shaft. Explain what it supports and why a match still needs context.

Something to notice

Where did I move from describing a clue to interpreting it?

Read or explore more

Horizon topic Archaeology Objects

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/archaeology-objects/

Horizon topic Evidence Archives

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/evidence-archives/

Horizon topic History

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/history/

National Museum of Australia What is this?

https://www.nma.gov.au/learn/classroom-resources/what-is-this

National Archives of Australia Research skills

https://www.naa.gov.au/learn/learning-resources/research-skills

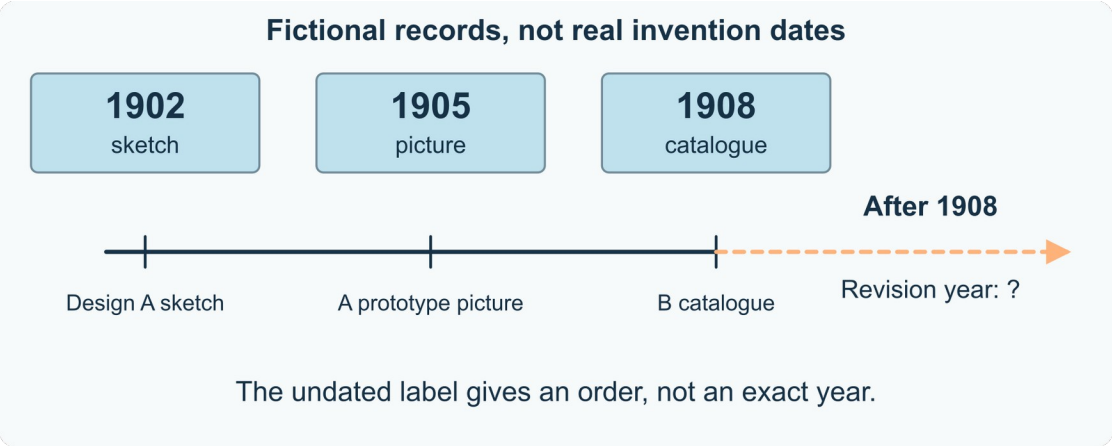
A timeline with honest gaps

How can I order supplied records while making missing information visible?

Order supplied fictional records without turning missing dates into facts.

Investigate | 10–20 minutes, or one small comparison | Scrap paper and a pencil or pen, The supplied original model; no account, purchase or online search needed

Start here Write four record cards: 1902 sketch, 1905 picture, 1908 catalogue, and an undated revision label.



A dated sequence with an open end

1 Read the records

The sketch shows design A; the picture shows an A prototype; the catalogue offers design B. The last label says revised after the 1908 catalogue.

2 Place dated items

Put 1902, 1905 and 1908 in order. These dates belong to the fictional records, not necessarily to the first invention of either design.

3 Place the uncertain item

The revision must come after the 1908 catalogue under the supplied label. Use a dashed area after 1908 rather than assigning a guessed year.

4 Write an honest caption

State what is dated, what order is supported and what remains unknown. You can leave the timeline unfinished.

Original records a made up display stand

The dates, designs and record labels are invented for this exercise.

• 1902: a design A sketch. 1905: a picture of an A prototype. 1908: a catalogue offering design B.

• The undated label says revised after the 1908 catalogue, so it belongs somewhere later than that catalogue.

• The exact revision year and the original invention date are not supplied.

What this example can show The earliest surviving record in a set is not automatically the date something was invented. The fictional cards are not historical evidence about a real product.

A different way

Read dates aloud, point to an ordered list or ask someone to move the labels for you. No scissors or real archives are required.

If you want to go further

Add a fictional dated revision receipt from 1911. Decide what this new record would change and what uncertainty would remain.

Something to notice

Have I given an unknown event a date that the records do not supply?

Read or explore more

Horizon topic Timelines Sequencing

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/timelines-sequencing/

Horizon topic Everyday Inventions

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/everyday-inventions/

Horizon topic History

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/history/

Museums Victoria Gather materials

https://museumsvictoria.com.au/education/making-history/3-research/gather-materials/

London Museum Paper clip, letter clip: object Z 6182

https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/v/object-66830/paper-clip-letter-clip/

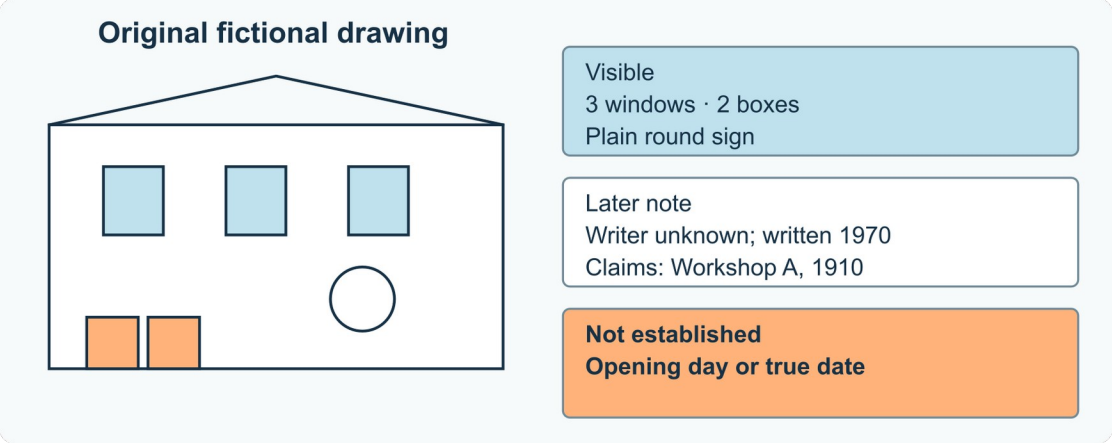
Separate a picture from its caption

Which claim comes from visible detail and which depends on a record?

Compare what an original drawing shows with claims supplied by a separate caption.

Investigate | 10–20 minutes, or one small comparison | Scrap paper and a pencil or pen, The supplied original model; no account, purchase or online search needed

Start here Look at the invented workshop drawing: three windows and two boxes beside a plain round sign.



Visible, reported and unknown

1 Record visible details

Describe the windows, boxes and sign. The drawing itself contains no readable date or place name.

2 Read a separate label

A fictional note written in 1970 calls the scene Workshop A, 1910. Its writer is unknown. This is a record claim, not something visible in the drawing.

3 Test another caption

Try Opening day at Workshop A. Nothing supplied establishes an opening day. Label that phrase unconfirmed rather than treating it as an observation.

4 Write a careful label

Combine a visible description with the attributed note and its uncertainty. A short label can still make the evidence boundary clear.

Original model a drawing and a later note

The picture, workshop, dates and note are all fictional; this is not an archival photograph.

• Visible: three windows, two boxes and a plain circular sign.

• Supplied note: an unknown writer in 1970 labelled the scene Workshop A, 1910.

• Not established: whether 1910 is correct or whether the scene shows an opening day.

What this example can show A later caption can be useful but is not automatically accurate. Appearance alone does not supply the maker, location or date.

A different way

Point to the supplied image, dictate a label or sort statements into visible, reported and unknown. Personal photographs are unnecessary.

If you want to go further

Write two careful captions for different purposes: a short display label and a fuller research note. Keep the same uncertainty in both.

Something to notice

Did my caption make an interpretation look like a visible fact?

Read or explore more

Horizon topic Photographs Clues

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/photographs-clues/

Horizon topic Place Histories

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/place-histories/

Horizon topic Evidence Archives

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/evidence-archives/

Library of Congress Teacher's guide: Analyzing Photographs and Prints

https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Photographs_and_Prints.pdf

National Archives of Australia Research skills

https://www.naa.gov.au/learn/learning-resources/research-skills