



Walter Scott 1771-1832

Writing the Nation

Introduction

Representation of places in the arts, including literature and film, is highly influential. Benedict Anderson has shown that people develop collective self-identity through how their regions and countries are portrayed in media. Additionally, people's ideas of what other places are like are influenced by how those places are represented. Walter Scott is often accredited with creating, or at least deepening, a global understanding of Scotland that became entrenched over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The names of tourist attractions, such as the Loch Katrine steamships ('The Lady of the Lake,' 'The Sir Walter Scott,' and 'Rob Roy') testify to his continual importance in the global imagination (even if people do not know what underpins their expectations of Scotland). Walter Scott, however, did not present Scotland as a stereotype, monolith, or timeless utopia. Rather, he engaged with the relationship between land, people, and time in ways that are still relevant today.

It is important for young people to feel part of the country in which they live, but it is equally important for people to recognise that other countries have as varied and as interesting a history as their own. Through a comparison of extracts from Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and 'On Camera' from Ye Guangqin's *Mountain Stories*, pupils will discover how the nations of Scotland and China are presented in high-quality literature. Pupils will be encouraged to:

- recognise how representations of nations and their histories affect the reader.
- discuss how different readers may interpret the same text differently.
- compare Scotland and China.
- think about the difference between national and regional identity.
- think about how humans exist within space and time.
- consider the differences between literature written at different times and places.



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Levels and Warnings

This lesson involves reading two pages of unfamiliar text (a page from a Chinese story which refers to historical events that may be unfamiliar to your pupils, and a page of early nineteenth century poetry). It is therefore advised to use this lesson with high-level and/or mature secondary school pupils.

The speaker in Walter Scott's poem mentions the death of his son in battle. This may be distressing for pupils who are bereaved or who have been in or known people involved in war.

Curriculum for Excellence

The resource targets the following curriculum for excellence targets.

LIT 3-02a	When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion.	The discussion task encourages pupils to share different points of view. The 'Having discussions' sheet provides pupils with helpful sentence starters.
ENG 3-12a	Through developing my knowledge of context clues, punctuation, grammar and layout, I can read unfamiliar texts with increasing fluency, understanding and expression.	Both texts in this lesson will likely be unfamiliar to pupils. One is from China and the other is from the nineteenth century. The questions help guide pupils through these texts so that they gain an understanding of them.
ENG 3-19a	I can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discuss and evaluate the structure, characterisation and/or setting using some supporting evidence• identify the main theme of the text and	The questions on both texts prompt pupils to think about key aspects of them as literature.



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	<p>recognise the relevance this has to my own and others' experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and comment on aspects of the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre using some relevant evidence. 	
SOC 3-02a	I can make links between my current and previous studies, and show my understanding of how people and events have contributed to the development of the Scottish nation.	The extract from Scott provides insight into different periods of Scottish history that can illuminate or be linked into pupil's studies in social science and history.
SOC 3-04a	I can explain the similarities and differences between the lifestyles, values and attitudes of people in the past by comparing Scotland with a society in Europe or elsewhere.	There are two passages in this lesson: one set in Scotland in the eighteenth century and one in China in the twentieth. Pupils are able to compare temporal and geographical differences in values and attitudes.
SOC 3-13a	By comparing settlement and economic activity in two contrasting landscapes, I can reach conclusions about how landscapes influence human activity. I can explain my findings clearly to others.	The two passages in this lesson look at how people interact with their environment. This lesson can, therefore, give an additional perspective to their studies on settlement and economic activity in landscapes.

Materials required

- If possible, ask the pupils to research China and Scotland before the lesson begins. They should bring in pictures.
- Large paper and pens (see starter below).



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- Copies of two texts in either printed or digital formats.

Plan

Starter (20 minutes + prep):

Preparation:

Ask pupils to bring in images and information about China and Scotland. You may wish to ask half the class to research China and the other half to research Scotland.

You may also wish to extend the activity by asking the pupils to research countries of their choice. You will need at least one group to work on Scotland and one to work on China.

In class:

Pupils should create mood boards for China and Scotland. They should write key words about the countries and attach/glue any images. Only allow them a very short amount of time to complete the task – the idea is to get their first impressions of the countries instead of doing an in-depth study.

They should then compare their posters with at least one other group.

Keep the posters to return to later in the lesson.

Reading Task 1

Pupils should read the extract from 'On Camera.' During this first reading, they should aim just to understand what happens in this story. We will return to it in more depth later. Advanced pupils can move onto the development and discussion questions.

Discussion Task 1

This task can be used as the starter for the next lesson, if your lessons are in 50-minute blocks.



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- In groups or as a full class, pupils should discuss how the story matched with their mood boards of China. Was the story what they expected from a story from China?
- How was the experience of creating the China mood board different from making the Scottish one? Did your own experience affect your board? Did you think more about local/regional issues or national ones?

Reading Task 2

Tell the pupils that they will now read an extract, 'Sweet Teviot,' from Walter Scott's poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This was first published in 1805 but has two different time periods. An elderly minstrel (storyteller/singer) in the eighteenth century tells a story to the Duchess of Buccleuch. The poem keeps on coming back to his point of view. In the passage we shall read, he mentions the death of his son. The story he tells is the main narrative of the poem and is set during a sixteenth century border feud. In the poem, the speaker starts by comparing the flowing of the Teviot river to the flowing of time. The minstrel then talks about the death of his son in his past, and then moves into the action of the narrative (in the sixteenth century).

The pupils should read the poem and answer the comprehension questions. At this stage, they are just working out what the poem is about. We will return to the poem in more depth later.

Comparison Task

To find the similarities between the two texts, pupils should complete the comparison activity. There are 8 statements. They should underline the statements that pertain to 'On Camera,' draw a squiggly line next to the statements that pertain to 'Sweet Teviot' from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and circle the statements that pertain to both. They will find that even though the two texts are very different (different genres, time periods and countries), they have a lot in common.

Three Time Periods

In the comparison task, pupils should have discovered that each passage has at least three different time periods. Now it is time to look at these. Allocate half the pupils to work on 'On Camera' and half to work on 'Sweet Teviot' from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. They should summarise each time period in one sentence, and then write down at least one sentence on how the earlier time period/s affect the later period/s.

You may wish to use the three time period sheets. Pupils can write or draw in the boxes.



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The answers are:

'On Camera'

1. In the seventeenth century (1606-45), Li Zicheng used the village as his base, riding from there to the Imperial Palace.
2. Some time in the 1960s or 1970s, Upright Li, who is now a film director, was rusticated in the village (sent to live there). However, he only lasted a few months.
3. In the present (unspecified time), a film crew wants to film in the village. The narrator is talking to the village head about this.

Both earlier time periods establish the idea that the people are quarrelsome. This means that the narrator, in the present, has the difficult job of getting difficult people to work together.

'Sweet Teviot' from The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

Please note that the time periods go from most recent to oldest as you read through the passage.

1. In the past, (mid 1500s, but no dates are given in the passage itself), the area is being attacked by raiders. The local people have fled from their homes and are sheltering in Branksome Tower. The watchman sees smoke in the distance and tells people to prepare to fight.
2. The minstrel's son died in battle 'by the side of the great Dundee.' (Dundee refers to John Graham, First Viscount of Dundee, a Jacobite leader).
3. In the present, the minstrel is telling his story.
Without the raids, the minstrel would not have a story to tell. More advanced pupils may also notice that the minstrel is preoccupied with the grief caused by the collective history (the attack described in the earliest time period) and his personal history (the death of his son).

Discussion

This is the point where the pupils should be encouraged to think about deeper issues relating to the texts.



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The following questions can be given to the pupils in small groups or discussed as a class. Try to encourage them to share different opinions politely. You may wish to use the “ways to agree and disagree” sheet to help them in their discussion.

- How do the two passages relate to the mood boards you created earlier? What similarities and differences are there between your mood boards and the representation of China and Scotland in the passages?
- Do you think writing about regions (Qinling Mountains – the real-life location of ‘On Camera’ – and the Teviot River) help us understand more about a specific country?
- What problems might there be in trying to understand a country from a passage about just one place?
- What do you think of each passage?

Research

Tell the pupils to pick a place that is near to either where they live now or where they have lived in the past.

- Find one thing about the place from its past.
- Write down one memory of the place from your own past.
- Write one sentence about the place now, which incorporates elements of its past.

See the example from ‘Sweet Teviot’ from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Creation

Pupils should turn their three moments into a description about the place, bringing in the three different time periods.

They can either tell or write their descriptions.



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Taken from 'On Camera' by Ye Guangqin.

"On Camera" is a piece of jargon used in the media circle. It actually means to make an appearance on the film screen. If you mention this word to ordinary people most of them will not understand it. If you mention it to a peasant he will be more perplexed still.

At the moment, I am talking to a peasant about the problem of being on camera.

The peasant I am speaking to is the Village Head, Old Man Defu. He is sixty-three this year. As per the cadre system he should have retired long ago. Defu still remains in post, mainly because they cannot find a suitable successor. The village is too poor and lacks rain and running water, so nobody is willing to take on the role. Upper Mirth Village used to be the encampment of Li Zicheng (1606-45), the peasant rebel who became emperor. It was from here that Li Zicheng quit the mountains and rode directly to the imperial palace. Ninety per cent of the villagers have inherited the spirit of Li Zicheng. To quote the words of the Curator of the County Cultural Centre, they have "a strong rebellious streak" and "a vigorous battling spirit." Those who have had contact with people of Upper Mirth Village know that the villagers are easily incited to take up anything that can serve as a weapon. When some matter crops up, they will come to bloody blows first and then discuss it later. What is more, their tussles follow a unique patten, which includes scratching, biting, jabbing, grabbing, kicking, shaking, beating, and wrestling. They employ all these skills very adeptly and to perfection. If one were to deploy a national-level martial arts squad to fight with them not even they would be able to win. No matter how capable you are, should one of the locals refuse to fight with you there

The cadre system is the Chinese government's system of government personnel.

Tussles = small fights.
Adeptly = with skill



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is no alternative way of dealing with him. On this point, they have inherited the spirit of Li the Insurgent King. Maybe Li Zicheng fought with the Ming Imperial Court in this way and thereby proved victorious. In Upper Mirth Village whoever wishes to be the Village Head must be fully-prepared to be beaten by other people. It has been said that since Defu became the Village Head his scalp has been sliced open four times. There are forty or fifty stitches from the top to the bottom where it has been sewn back together. Someone claimed, "If the Village Head shaved off his hair, his head would look like a basketball. It has segments clearly picked out on the surface."

Our camera team came here from Beijing. We have been shooting footage for several days. We chose this place as our location simply because our Director Upright Li was rusticated here for three months during the Cultural Revolution. By the fourth month, he was violently driven away. According to my estimation, Upright Li was himself a troublemaker. When he was young, activities like stealing chickens and dogs and plucking off the shoots from the farmers' garlic proved too tempting for him to avoid. His forcible ejection from Upper Mirth Village must have been a case of "it takes more than one palm to make a clap." Li Zicheng was not entirely to blame. When Upright Li recalls what happened at that time his heart still flutters with fear. He says, "Barren mountains and untamed rivers produce wild people. The villagers there are really wild." "Wild and unruly folks are surely no match for you, Upright Li," I remark. "In recent years, you've been running rings around everyone in the media circle, and to great success! You've given us full proof that you did in fact stay in this village for a while. You are a trickster too."

We selected this spot as the location for the TV serial *The Sun is Still Red* because we were satisfied with the scenery here. The more barren and unruly the mountains and rivers are, the more splendid the scenery will be. The more inaccessible and un-trodden by traffic the less interference from modern civilization there will be. Today, such locations are becoming increasingly difficult to find.

The Cultural Revolution was a movement in China in the 60s and 70s which aimed to get rid of traditional values. Educated middle-class teenagers in the cities went to the countryside to do manual labour (rusticated). 'forcible ejection' = he was made to leave.



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Upright Li must coordinate the crowd scenes in Upper Mirth Village.

The hitch is that Upright Li dare not meet the Village Head Defu face-to-face. Perhaps the old man has some hold over him. He has asked me, the scriptwriter, to go and negotiate these matters. He said that the peasants have an instinctive closeness and trust where women are concerned, while his reputation in the village is in the pits. Were he to approach Defu maybe there would be no way of pulling things off.

I said, "As far as shooting a TV series goes, if something is a goer, it's a goer, if it's not it's not. The two parties should engage in discussion. Neither the village nor the team should make the situation hard for one another."

Upright Li replied, "If it goes like that it will be great."



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Comprehension Questions:

1. What does 'on camera' mean?
2. Who is the narrator speaking to?
3. What job does this person have?
4. What historical person/event is Upper Mirth Village famous for?
5. How do the people of Upper Mirth Village deal with their problems?
6. Why are the film crew filming near Upper Mirth Village?
7. What job does Upright Li have?
8. Based on what you have read, which word best describes Upright Li? Explain your answer.
 - Friendly
 - Argumentative
 - Clever
 - Lonely
9. In your own words, what is preventing Upright Li from coordinating the village scenes?
10. Do you think Upright Li thinks everything will go well?

Development Questions:

1. What do we find out about the narrator?
2. What sort of story do you think this will be?
3. Analyse how the following sentence effectively shows that the villagers fight a lot?
 - 'What is more, their tussles follow a unique patten, which includes scratching, biting, jabbing, grabbing, kicking, shaking, beating, and wrestling.'
4. How does this extract leave the reader wanting more?

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think that people can inherit personality traits from their ancestors?
2. What do you think is the best way to solve disagreements?



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Answers:

Comprehension Questions:

1. What does 'on camera' mean? **'to make an appearance on the film screen'**
2. Who is the narrator speaking to? **Old Man Defu (the village head)**
3. What job does this person have? **Village Head**
4. What historical person/event is Upper Mirth Village famous for? **Li Zicheng/the peasant King who rode from the area the story is set in to the capital, where he led a revolution and became emperor.**
5. How do the people of Upper Mirth Village deal with their problems? **They fight.**
6. Why are the film crew filming near Upper Mirth Village? **Their director, Upright Li, spent time in the village when he was younger (he was rusticated there). The scenery is appropriate for the show they are making. They want unruly and barren mountains and rivers.**
7. What job does Upright Li have? **He is the director.**
8. Based on what you have read, which word best describes Upright Li? Explain your answer.
 - a. Friendly
 - b. Argumentative **Yes. He argued so much with the villagers that he was thrown out when he was young.**
 - c. Clever
 - d. Lonely
9. In your own words, what is preventing Upright Li from coordinating the village scenes? **He is too scared to speak to Old Man Defu.**
10. Do you think Upright Li thinks everything will go well? **No, when the narrator says that it is best if everyone works together, his response, 'If it goes like that it will be great' suggests that he thinks it is unlikely that that would happen.**

Development Questions:

1. What do we find out about the narrator?
We know two things for sure – she is a scriptwriter and a woman. Pupils might also say that she seems diplomatic and optimistic.
2. What sort of story do you think this will be?
Accept any answer that the pupil can justify. However, the most likely options are that it will be funny and/or dramatic. The fact that it will be funny is established by the language (e.g. the contrast between the peasant being perplexed by the concept of being on camera followed immediately by the statement that the narrator is talking to a peasant about being on camera) and the plot (the set up between the film crew and the argumentative villagers, and between Defu and Li).



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3. Analyse how the following sentence effectively shows that the villagers fight a lot?
 - a. 'What is more, their tussles follow a unique patter, which includes scratching, biting, jabbing, grabbing, kicking, shaking, beating, and wrestling.'

The long list of gerunds/-ing verbs suggests action, making it seem that the fighting is continual.
4. How does this extract leave the reader wanting more?

Accept any answer that the pupil can justify. However, Li's statement at the end suggests that it will not go well. This implies that there will be comedy/drama in the future.



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From *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

A minstrel (singer) is singing a story to his audience. He is already about halfway through his story, but he has taken a break. He starts in the present by saying that the Teviot river seems peaceful; it has been a long time since fighting happened there. The minstrel then thinks back to the death of his son, who died fighting alongside a great military leader, whom Scott refers to as both Dundee and Graham. The word 'Now,' in the fourth stanza indicates that the minstrel is returning to his story. In his story, there is a fight between warring families. The people at the Teviot are waiting for an attack.

Sweet Teviot, on thy silver side
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willowed shore;
Where'er thou wind'st by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they rolled their way to Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn.

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime,
Its earliest course was doomed to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to memory's eye
The hour, my brave, my only boy
Fell by the side of the great Dundee.

Why, when the volleying musket played
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid!

- The Teviot is a river
- Bale fires were lit to warn people of invaders
- Wind'st refers to the river winding through the countryside
- The Teviot shows The Tweed
- 'Started' = moved suddenly (in this case in response to a loud noise)
- Time is compared to a river here. Human time carries every sadness with it from the beginning of time.
- The singer remembers his son who died in battle. This is one of the sad moments that humans cannot forget.
- A musket is a kind of gun. The minstrel, who is a musician, thinks of the firing of the gun as a type of music.
- The minstrel is still thinking about his son.



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Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Graeme.

Now, over Border dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Showed southern ravage was begun.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side.
Comes wading through the flood.

- The minstrel goes back in time to his story, which takes place during a battle between different families. He picks up the story at a time when attackers are coming and everyone is afraid.
- 'pent' – the animals were taken to the tower for better defence.
- Dun = brown
- 'southern ravage' = the attackers from the south have begun their attack.
- Heedful = paying attention
- Watt Tinlinn is a new character; we do not know anything about him yet.



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Comprehension Questions:

1. Look at stanza one. What sound used to be heard by the Teviot?
2. And what sound is heard now?
3. What other difference does the minstrel draw attention to between the past and the present?
4. How many sons did the minstrel have?
5. What weapons were used in the battle that Graeme fought in?
6. Did Graeme win?
7. In the present time of the poem, where have all the people and animals gone?
8. What two things does the watchman see from Branksome tower?

Development Questions:

1. How does Walter Scott create a sense of peacefulness in the first stanza?
2. Alliteration is when words start with the same sound e.g. dirty dog. Find an example of alliteration in the poem. What effect does it have?

Discussion Questions:

1. How has a place near you changed over time?
2. What do you think will happen next?



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Answers

Comprehension Questions:

1. Look at stanza one. What sound used to be heard by the Teviot?
The bugle horn
2. And what sound is heard now?
The shepherd's reed
3. What other difference does the minstrel draw attention to between the past and the present?
There used to be warriors but now everything is peaceful.
4. How many sons did the minstrel have?
One
5. What weapons were used in the battle that Graeme fought in?
Muskets
6. Did Graeme win?
Yes
7. In the present time of the poem, where have all the people and animals gone?
To the tower (for protection)
8. What two things does the watchman see from Branksome tower?
Smoke and Watt Tinlinn

Development Questions:

1. How does Walter Scott create a sense of peacefulness in the first stanza?
Accept anything that the pupil can justify. A good answer is the way the repetition and parenthetical comment slows down the line 'All, all is peaceful, all is still'. The pupils might also notice the softness caused by the repeated oh sound.
2. Alliteration is when words start with the same sound e.g. dirty dog. Find an example of alliteration in the poem. What effect does it have?
Pupil's own choice could include
 - **Bale-fires blaze** – the b sound suggests action, which helps the reader visualise the fire
 - **Wild and willowed** – the w sound is very soft, which helps establish a relaxed tone
 - **Darker downward** – the d sound is hard, reflecting the negative description
 - **Past and present** – the aspirated p sound reflects the idea of something go on forever
 - **Maids and matrons** – the alliteration connects the two together



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'On Camera,' 'Sweet Teviot,' or both?

Draw a line underneath the statements that are about 'On Camera,' draw a squiggle next to the statements that are about 'Sweet Teviot,' and circle the statements that are about both.

The local people like to argue.

It suggests that knowledge of the past helps us understand the present.

There will probably be a fight after this passage.

The narrator is a singer.

It is about a place and the people who live there.

There are at least three different time periods.

A watchman warns that attackers are coming.

The narrator is a scriptwriter.



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'On Camera,' 'Sweet Teviot,' or both?

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The local people like to argue.

~ The narrator is a singer.

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It is about a place and the people who live there.

The narrator is a scriptwriter.

It suggests that knowledge of the past helps us understand the present.

~ A watchman warns that attackers are coming.



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Comparison Task Answers

Statements that are about 'On Camera':

The local people like to argue.

The narrator is a scriptwriter.

Statements that are about 'Sweet Teviot'

The narrator is a singer.

A watchman warns that attackers are coming.

Statements that are about 'On Camera' and 'Sweet Teviot'

There are at least three different time periods.

There will probably be a fight after this passage.

It is about a place and the people who live there.

It suggests that knowledge of the past helps us understand the present.



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Three Time Periods

What are the three time periods mentioned in the passage? Write a sentence for each one in the boxes below, starting with the oldest time period on the left.

Oldest time period

Middle time period

Most recent time period

How do the older time periods affect the most recent one?



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Discussions

It is really important to listen to each other when we have discussions. We do not want to make the same point as someone else has made, and we do not want anyone to think that their thoughts and ideas are not valued. Every time you say something in our discussion, use one of the phrases below.

Adding

- Another piece of evidence to support your point is ...
- Yes, I agree, and ...
- To support what you said, I would like to add ...
- My point is very similar. I think that ...
- I have some evidence to support your point ...

Asking

- Can you explain that?
- Why do you think that?
- Is there another way of interpreting that?
- What is the evidence for that?
- I am not sure if I follow. Can you explain it in a different way?

Disagreeing

- Thank you for sharing your point but I disagree about ...
- Although I agree with you about ..., I think you may have overlooked ...
- Have you considered looking at this from another angle?
- That is an interesting point but I do not think it works because ...
- I have another point of view, which I would like to share. It is ...



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Three Moments in History



What happened in the distant past?

Long ago, there used to be battles. Border families would fight each other like in the story I am singing.



What is your memory of the place?

The river reminds me of my son who died in a battle.



Describe the place now.

Sweet Teviot, on thy silver side, The glaring bale-fires blaze no more; / No longer steel-clad warriors ride, Along thy wild and willowed shore.



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Three Moments in History

What happened in the distant past?

What is your memory of the place?

Describe the place now.