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f the humanities and at other times as part of the social sciences.[24] It can also be seen as a bridge between those two broad areas, incorporating methodologies from both. Some individual historians strongly support one or the other classification.[25] In the 20th century, French historian Fernand Braudel revolutionized the study of history, by using such outside disciplines as economics, anthropology, and geography in the study of global history. Traditionally, historians have recorded events of the past, either in writing or by passing on an oral tradition, and have attempted to answer historical questions through the study of written documents and oral accounts.

From the beginning, historians have also used such sources as monuments, inscriptions, and pictures. In general, the sources of historical knowledge can be separated into three categories: what is written, what is said, and what is physically preserved, and historians often consult all three.[26] But writing is the marker that separates history from what comes before. Archaeology is especially helpful in unearthing buried sites and objects, which contribute to the study of history. Archaeological finds rarely stand alone, with narrative sources complementing its discoveries. Archaeology's methodologies and approaches are independent from the field of history. "Historical archaeology" is a specific branch of archaeology which often contrasts its conclusions against those of contemporary textual sources.

For example, Mark Leone, the excavator and interpreter of historical Annapolis, Maryland, USA, has sought to understand the contradiction between textual documents idealizing "liberty" and the material record, demonstrating the possession of slaves and the inequalities of wealth made

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