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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/123/2021_2022_GRE_E5_87_BA_E5_9B_BD_E8_c86_123465.htm Issue "When we concern

ourselves with the study of history, we become storytellers. Because we can never know the past directly but must construct it by interpreting evidence, exploring history is more of a creative enterprise than it is an objective pursuit. All historians are storytellers." Sample Essay There would seem to be two different perspectives presented in the above statement. The first two sentences are concerned with exploring history and would seem to discuss looking at history that has already been written. People who concern themselves with the study of history are not storytellers, but rather story interpreters. The last sentence refers to the people that write about history, the historians themselves. Certainly, to a certain extent, historians must be storytellers because they have a story to tell. But the term "storyteller" seems to imply a greater amount of creativity than what is involved in actually explaining what has happened in history. For the purposes of this essay, I will focus on the perspective of the historian, as it would appear to be the underlying core idea. From the perspective of the historian, most historians do not have the benefit of having lived through the period of history that they are writing about. By researching through thousands of old letters, legal documents, family heirlooms and the like, historians must look at fragments of history and somehow put these pieces together to reconstruct what actually happened. In this

sense, they must be storytellers because inevitably, their personal insights become part of what others will see when they read the historian ' s writings. As an example, there are many differing opinions as to whether Thomas Jefferson actually fathered children with one of his slaves. Some historians have written that it is a virtual certainty, while others argue that it was his brother, rather than Thomas himself, that fathered the children. They both cannot be right. Although they are all historians, they are also storytellers giving their opinion on what version of events actually transpired.

Historians that are documenting events as they happen today have much less of an opportunity to fall into the "storyteller" category as they are present as witnesses to these events as they are happening. Television, newspaper and other media coverage is widespread and almost unrelenting. Television captures visuals and audios that are spread rapidly around the world and theoretically can last forever. There is much less room for putting one ' s own "spin" on an event, especially regarding the exact details of what happened. But even with today ' s events, there is room for opinion on the part of the historian. For example, historians are already arguing what evidence the United States government had regarding potential terrorism prior to the incredible tragedy of September 11, 2001. Looking back now, it seems obvious that the government should have known that something on a large scale was going to happen. With the benefit of hindsight, there were several failures in the government ' s counter-terrorism efforts. Historians will now argue over the exact version of what happened, as they become storytellers to try to

explain 9/11 to future generations. Another example showcasing the idea that all historians are storytellers is that of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Variations on who was responsible and what actually happened have been the focus of hundreds, if not thousands, of books and historical accounts. Many historians argue vehemently that his or her account of history is the "true" version. Given the same evidence, historians decide which evidence is credible and which is not to arrive at their own conclusions. Clearly storytelling is a big part of how history is written. Particularly when it concerns ancient history, all historians must be storytellers to a certain degree. "Connecting the dots" of surviving evidence from the time period or event being examined requires a certain amount of personal intuition and supposition. Historians that write about events from the more recent periods will probably be less inclined to be "storytellers" as the sheer mass of evidence that is presented will likely lead to better documentation of historic events as they happen.

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