  **Work with Evidence:**

***Using Historical Novels***

**Reading Novels**

* You can learn a lot about history by reading historical novels;
* The following is an extract from *L’enfant cigarier* (The Child Cigar Maker), written by Marie-Paule Villeneuve;
* Tells the story of Jos, an 11-year-old boy employed in a cigar factory.

**Verse One and Two**

* The Queen Cigar Factory waited for him… Whenever he saw it, Jos always felt his heart flutter: A dungeon. From seven in the morning to six at night… he was held prisoner there, six days a week…
* Jos had been employed at Queen’s since September 6, 1885, his ninth birthday. That year, the Quebec government passed a law preventing manufacturers from employing boys less than 12 years old, or girls less than 14…

**Verse Three and Four**

* As the morning passed, Jos placed the cigars in piles. The supervisor passed by regularly, collecting each batch of 50, eliminating at least five that were too long, too ripped, too fat, or too thin. Jos didn’t hear his criticisms any more. He knew that the darned cigars wouldn’t get thrown out. Subtracted from his pay, that was all…
* Jos had worked at Queen’s for two and a half years. His work contract, which his father had signed with an X at lawyer Archambault’s office, stated that he would get a dollar a week the first year; two the second and three the third. After two and a half years, he never earned more than a dollar, his wages always being cheated by fines that he thought was unjustified…

**Verse Five**

* [At the end of the week, Jos’s fines are greater than his wages. He owes the factory 15 cents. His father complains to the manager. The manager explains,] “It’s very simple. He’s made 500 cigars, of which 200 were ruined. He talked to his work companions ten times and was late for work once. In future, when he’s not on time, he must report to the police station, as stipulated in his contract. The company has agreed to teach him the trade of cigar maker. It’s a change for him. Do you want him to be a packer like you all his life? It’s for his own good. He’s only an apprentice.”

**Conclusion**

* What does the text of *L’enfant Cigarier* tell us about the life and times of Canada at the end of the 1800s?
* How would you feel about having to work in a cigar factory instead of going to school?