Primary Source Analysis and Historical Thinking Skills

Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU
Kira Duke
The Basics to Primary Source Analysis

Goals of analysis

- Provide students with a better understanding of the past and the complexities of history
- Higher-order thinking skills
- Critical thinking skills

Election Day! [c1909]
Analysis as Part of Inquiry

Inquiry Learning Process

Connect
to the primary source...
- What do you observe?
- What do you think you know? (inference)

Wonder
about the primary source...
- What do you want to find out?
- Make predictions.

Reflect
on your learning...
- How can you use what you have learned?
- What new questions do you have?

Investigate
additional sources...
- Find a variety of sources to answer your questions.
- How will you evaluate this information?

Express
your findings...
- What is the most important idea to share?
- How will you communicate what you have learned?

Construct
new knowledge...
- How has your investigation changed your thinking?
- What evidence supports your conclusions?

Adapted from Barbara Stripling’s Inquiry Model
Analysis as Part of Inquiry

- What do you see?
- What do you know?
- What do you wonder?

The Georgetown elections - the Negro at the ballot-box / Th. Nast. New and becoming styles of headdressing. [1867]
Analysis Builds Common Core Skills

- Evidence
- Summary
- Supporting Details
- Inference
- Main Idea
- Sequence
- Author's Purpose
- Vocabulary
- Point of View
- Argument & Support
- Text Complexity
- Diverse Formats
- Text Structure
- Multiple Sources
- Change Over Time
Digging Deeper – Historical Thinking Skills

- Enable students to interpret, analyze and use information about past events
  - Chronological Thinking
  - Historical Comprehension
  - Historical Analysis and Interpretation
  - Historical Research Capabilities
  - Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

Woman suffrage in Wyoming Territory. -- Scene at the polls in Cheyenne / from a photo. [1888 Nov. 24.]
Analysis Geared to Historical Thinking Skills

- H - Historical Context
- I - Intended Audience
- P - Point of View
- P - Purpose
- O - Outside Information
Historical Context

- Connecting a document to specific historical events, circumstances of time and place, and/or broader ideas.
- When/where was the source created?
- What was going on when the author wrote this document?
- How does this help you better understand the document?
Intended Audience

- Identify the person or the group the author expects to inform or influence.
- Does the audience affect the tone or content?
Point of View

- What is the author’s relationship to the event?
- How does this affect the author’s understanding of that event?
- How reliable is the author?
Factors that might impact the source:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Social status
- Economic status
- Religious beliefs
- Political beliefs
- Position (job)
Purpose

Why did the author write the document at this time?
- To inform
- To persuade
- To entertain
- To influence
- To record
- Argument/authors thesis
Outside Information

- What historical information can you get from the document? (outside info)
  - Not specifically stated in the document, must be connected
  - May support or refute the info in the document
- How does the document help you make your argument? (inferences)
AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE

TRIAL OF

SUSAN B. ANTHONY,

OF THE CHARGE OF ILLEGAL VOTING,

AT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NOV., 1872.

AND ON THE

TRIAL OF

BEVERLY W. JONES, EDWIN T. MARSH

AND WILLIAM B. HALL,

THE INSPECTORS OF ELECTION BY WHOM HER VOTE WAS RECEIVED.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.:
DAILY DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE BOOK PRINT, 3 WENX MAIN ST.
1874.
Other Resources for Historical Thinking:

- **Historical Thinking Volume I**
- **Historical Thinking Volume II**
- **Historical Thinking Volume III**

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**TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU**

**Lesson Plan: Immigration: A Case Study on Multiple Perspectives and Diverse Formats**

**Grades: 8th and High School**

**Subjects: Social Studies and English/Language Arts**

**Time required: 1 class period**

**Author: Brittany Walker, Teaching With Primary Sources—MTSU**

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**OVERVIEW**

When using primary sources, it is important to consider multiple perspectives and diverse formats to enrich students’ learning experience. This lesson plan uses diverse sources and multiple perspectives to discuss immigration in the United States during the first part of the 20th century. By analyzing these sources, students will learn varying perspectives on immigration in the United States from the time period.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Students will analyze and synthesize different types of sources to answer research questions.

**INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS**

How do these diverse sources represent the various perspectives on immigration at the turn of the century? Why were some people in support of or against immigration at the time?

**MATERIALS AND RESOURCES**

- **Multiple Perspectives: Immigration** (Graphic Organizer)
- **Primary Sources**
  - Ellis Island: Migration.com
  - Don't bite the hand that's feeding you [1915]
  - Don't bite the hand that's feeding you [1915, recording]
  - Life on the Lower East Side, cor. Pitt and Rivington Streets, North, N.Y. [1913]
  - A Spanish Stonecutters’ Widow [ca. 1916-19]

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**CHILDMARK STANDARDS**

**8th Grade**

- 8th Grade English Language Arts: Informational Text 7. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or text.
- 8th Grade Social Studies 8.7: Explain the causes and effects of the wave of immigration from Northern Europe to the United States, and describe the growth in the size, and spatial arrangements of cities as a result of events such as the Great Potato Famine.

**High School**

- Grades 9-10 English Language Arts: Informational Text 7. Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- Grades 11-12 English Language Arts: Informational Text 7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- US 9 Describe the difference between “old” and “new” immigrants and analyze the assimilation process and consequences for the “new” immigrants and their impact on American society, including ethnic clusters, competition for jobs, rise of nativism, the work of Jane Addams, the documentation of living conditions by Jacob Riis, Chinese Exclusion Acts, and the Gentlemen’s Agreement.