



# ANALYZING SOCIAL SCIENCE SOURCES

6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Guide for  
Diving Deep into Written Documents, Objects, Oral  
Accounts, Maps, Data Sets and More

By focusing on the documents, objects, photographs, and oral histories—students can get a glimpse into the past beyond what a textbook can provide. Analyzing sources is crucial to the study of history. They provide tangible links to the past that help students build personal connections to history.



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Analyzing sources should be a part of every K-12 classroom but also an important part of college and/or career life. Rather than students glancing through sources or having someone telling them what sources reveal, students should be challenged to become better equipped to analyze sources and come to their own conclusions. The following tools can provide educators assistance in helping students analyze a variety of documents important to the Illinois Social Science Standards.

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Adapted from <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>

## Social Science Standards Connection to Sources

To meet the Illinois Social Science Standards for all grades K-12, students must engage with a wide variety of sources. The following Illinois Social Science Standards address sources specifically at the 6-12 level.

<b>6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS.IS.3.6-8: Determine <b>sources</b> representing multiple points of view that will assist in organizing a research plan.</li> <li>• SS.IS.4.6-8.MC: Gather relevant information from <b>credible sources</b> and determine whether they support each other.</li> <li>• SS.H.2.6-8.MC: Analyze how people’s perspectives influenced what information is available in the <b>historical sources</b> they created.</li> <li>• SS.H.3.6-8.MC: Use other <b>historical sources</b> to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for <b>historical sources</b> where information is not easily identified.</li> </ul>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grades</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS.IS.3.9-12: Develop new supporting and essential questions through investigations, collaboration, and using <b>diverse sources</b>.</li> <li>• SS.IS.4.9-12: Gather and evaluate information from <b>multiple sources</b> while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the <b>sources</b>.</li> <li>• SS.IS.5.9-12: Identify evidence that draws information from <b>multiple sources</b> to revise or strengthen claims.</li> <li>• SS.IS.6.9-12: Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using <b>multiple sources</b> and <b>relevant, verified information</b>.</li> <li>• SS.G.1.9-12: Use <b>maps</b> (created using geospatial and related technologies, if possible), <b>satellite images</b>, and <b>photographs</b> to display and explain the spatial patterns of physical, cultural, political, economic and environmental characteristics.</li> <li>• Use self-collected or pre-existing <b>data sets</b> to generate spatial patterns at multiple scales that can be used to conduct analysis or to take civic action.</li> <li>• SS.H.9.9-12: Analyze the relationship between <b>historical sources</b> and the <b>secondary interpretations</b> made from them.</li> </ul>

# Analyzing Written Documents

**Documents** are printed or written materials that communicate, record, or prove something.

**Purpose for Using Written Documents:** Every piece of paper that people leave behind is an artifact full of clues. From diaries, letters, newspapers and census reports, documents tell us about the circumstances of everyday life and about significant events. Historians spend time in archives studying all kinds of documentary evidence and glean rich information from the written word.

**Examples** include, but are not limited to the following: Diaries, letters, certificates of birth, death, or marriage, deeds, contracts, constitutions, laws, court records, tax records, census records, wills, inventories, treaties, report cards, medical records, passenger lists, passports, visas, naturalization papers, and military enlistment or discharge papers.

**'Look for':**

- While it might be clearly stated who the writer is and who the audience is, the intended message may not be obvious. Researchers, whether student or professional, must look beyond the intended meaning to consider hidden agendas, unintended meanings, and bias or point of view of the creator of the document.
- Other elements to analyze include tone, grammar, word choice, and style. This information will enable the researcher to interpret the document with a critical eye.



## Teacher Tips

Like all other primary sources, documents must be studied in conjunction with other evidence. While documents often reveal information, it is important to verify the information with photographs, objects, oral histories, or other available sources. If the document is lengthy or difficult to comprehend, try chunking the text in smaller sections. Then ask students to respond to the chunk with any combination of the following:

- Take notes
- Paraphrase ideas
- Draw a visual
- Answer a question
- Discuss with a partner

Questions for Analyzing Documents	Strengths and Limitations of Using Documents
<p><b>First Impressions Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your first impressions?</li> <li>• What kind of document is it (letter, ad, newspaper, etc)? How do you know?</li> </ul> <p><b>Looking More Closely</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read through the document closely. Make a list of any unusual words or phrases.</li> <li>• Is there a date on it? If so, what is it?</li> <li>• If not, are there any other clues that might indicate when it was written?</li> <li>• Is there a location indicated? What is it?</li> <li>• Who wrote or created the document? How can you tell?</li> <li>• For whom was the document written or created? How do you know?</li> <li>• What is the purpose of the document? What made you think this?</li> </ul> <p><b>Thinking Deeper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think the writer thought was the most important information to convey? Why?</li> <li>• Does the document convey a certain tone? What does it imply without stating directly?</li> <li>• Can you tell the point of view of the writer? Is it objective?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between the writer and the audience? How can you tell?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides information on the who, what, where, when, why, and how of an event</li> <li>• Can be a clue to the level of education of the author</li> <li>• Sometimes offers evidence of emotion</li> <li>• Can stimulate the personal involvement of the reader</li> <li>• Can identify the bias and agenda of the author</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a thoroughly objective source</li> <li>• Possibly difficult to read: handwriting difficult to decipher; words or phrases that are unfamiliar as their meaning may have changed over time</li> <li>• Must be evaluated in conjunction with other evidence to determine whether the document presents information that is exceptional or conforming with previously established patterns</li> <li>• Identity of the author often unclear (especially true in the case of government documents)</li> </ul>

# Analyzing a Written Document

Title/type of Document: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Meet the Document</b>	<b>Try to Make Sense of It</b>	<b>Observe its Parts</b>
<p>Are there any special markings on the document?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stamp</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Postmark</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten Note</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Official Seal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Special Letterhead</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Is the document</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> handwritten</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> typed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> both</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p>What is the main idea of this document?</p>  <p>Use two quotes (words from the document) that help support the main idea.</p> <p>1.</p>  <p>2.</p>  <p>Why do you think this document was written?</p>	<p>Who wrote this document?</p>  <p>Who read or received this document?</p>  <p>What is the date of the document?</p>
<p>Write down any words you don't know. Look them up and define them in your own words.</p>          		<p>What else did you notice/wonder about this document?</p>          

Adapted from the National Archives

# Analyzing Written Documents

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Choose what type of document you are analyzing.

- Letter
- Chart
- Report
- Speech

- Patent
- Email
- Presidential document
- Congressional document

- Telegram
- Identification document
- Advertisement
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is it handwritten or typed? Is it all by the same person? Are there stamps or other marks? What else do you see on it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who wrote it?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who read/received the document?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. When is it from and where is it from?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the document talking about?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why did the author write it? Quote evidence from the document that tells you this.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Write one sentence summarizing this document.  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What was happening at the time in history this document was created?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What did you find out from this document that you might not learn anywhere else?  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes:

## Analyzing Posters

Posters, also called broadsides, were a popular form of communication in Colonial America. Posters use visuals and words to convey ideas and compress ideas into a limited amount of space. The purpose of posters could be informational, persuasive, or a combination of the two.

### Propaganda Posters



Posters served as propaganda tools in the past, especially during World War I and World War II. The United States Government issued propaganda posters to encourage citizens to “take action” by enlisting, buying war bonds, or working in factories. Propaganda posters often appeal to emotion over logic. They do this by using popular images of home or nation, vibrant colors, and large fonts to convey simple, direct commands or statements.



## Teacher Tips

- When introducing students to analyzing posters, begin by modeling the process using any of the following questions or graphic organizers. It is imperative to model the analyzation process.
- Note and provide any background knowledge students may need to be taught before understanding the poster.
- It is beneficial for students to work within collaborative groups to answer questions as discussion can lead to deeper analysis when they are part of a collaborative group.
- Different groupings of students can work to answer specific questions and then come together to share their insights. Following group discussions, students can independently analyze the posters in order for the teacher to determine what students have learned.
- After the lesson is complete, take a few moments to discuss with students how they experienced this process of analyzing posters. For many, it may feel uncomfortably slow, but by practicing and discussing this process, students will begin to respond more thoughtfully and critically.

### Questions for Analyzing Posters

1. Ask students to look deeply at the poster for a good long time. Have them observe shapes, colors, textures, the position of people and/or objects.
2. Have students write down what they see without making any interpretation about what the poster is trying to say.
3. Ask students: What questions do you have about this poster that you would need to have answered before you can begin to interpret it? Ask as many questions as you have. Have students discuss their questions with two other students in the class to try to find some answers.
4. Given the historical context and subject of the piece, ask students what they think the artist is trying to say (what does the poster mean), and who they think is the intended audience.
5. Discuss students' interpretations with the class, and have students prepared to support their view by referring to specific elements of the image and what they know about the history of the time.
6. Find an additional source to back up findings.

### Strengths and Limitations of Using Posters

#### Strengths:

- Visual record of a particular moment in time.
- Conveys a variety of details about people, places, objects, and events.
- Conveys information about everyday life and behavior that is best communicated in visual terms (hair and clothing styles, interior design).
- Sometimes provides evidence of the photographer or painter's attitude.
- Important to the study of people who did not leave many written records.
- Can stimulate the personal involvement of the viewer.
- Can be used to stimulate the memory of an oral history informant.

#### Limitations:

- Not a complete or objective source: the image that serves as the lasting record may not equate directly with the reality of the event itself.
- One must consider the bias or perspective of the person/persons who created the poster.
- The people, place, date, and creator are often not identified.

#### Resources:

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog : <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>  
 PBS Lesson - WWII; The Art of Persuasion - <http://www.pbs.org/oph/historydetectives/educators/lessonplan/wwii-the-art-of-persuasion/> (Propaganda Analysis Document included)  
 World War II: Posters and Propaganda  
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/world-war-ii/resources/world-war-ii-posters-and-propaganda>

# Analyzing Posters

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Scan the poster. What do you notice first?

## Words

Is there a printed message on the poster? If so, write it here.

Who created the poster?

What word(s) do you think are the most important and why? ‘

## Visuals

List the people, objects, places and activities in the poster?

What are the main colors used?

---

Are there any symbols on the poster?  
Draw or list them here:

## Additional Questions:

What time period is the poster from?

What was happening in history when this poster was created?

Who do you think is the intended audience?

Why was the poster created? List evidence from the poster that tells you this.

Additional Notes/Conclusions/Thoughts:



# Analyzing Posters

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the answers to the following questions. Once all questions have been attempted, write a short summary of your analysis of the poster.

1. What is your initial reaction upon seeing this for the first time? Is it appealing? Informative? What emotions (if any) does it bring?
2. Who created this?
3. When was it created?
4. List any objects depicted.
5. List any persons portrayed.
6. Describe any symbols or logos on the poster.
7. Explain the message(s).
8. Who is the intended audience?
9. What action did/does the author of the poster want the audience to take?

Summarize the Poster's Purpose:

Do you think the poster accomplished its purpose? Why or why not?

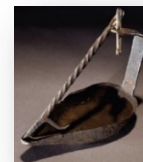
# Analyzing Objects

Historians study objects/artifacts, the material culture that people from the past left behind, to understand history. Because objects are the products of human workmanship—of human thought and effort—objects tell something about the people who designed, made, and used them.

**Purpose:** Sometimes objects/artifacts are the only evidence remaining from past peoples who, for various reasons, did not leave a written record of their lives. Some cultures did not have a written language. Others, like many enslaved African Americans in the early 19th century, were legally forbidden to learn to read and write. Still other cultures placed less emphasis on the written word and instead followed an oral tradition. In many cases, written evidence was not preserved.

**Look Fors:** Objects alone will not tell us the whole story, but they help us to understand parts of the story that other sources cannot. Like other primary sources, objects must be studied carefully and critically.

**Examples:** Objects may also include artistic works such as paintings, sculpture, architecture, and jewelry and can give insight into people and their culture.



## Teacher Tips

The Smithsonian X 3-D is a tool released by the museum allowing students, educators and laypeople to eventually interact with 3D models of the museum's 137 million artifacts. They are scanning items each year, while only a fraction is available right now. This tool offers students the ability to explore some of Smithsonian's most treasured objects with a level of control that has never been possible until now. The tool will also allow for 3D print scale models of artifacts that could otherwise never be touched. Explore this new resource at <https://3d.si.edu/article/educators>.

### Questions for Analyzing Documents

### Strengths and Limitations of Using Objects

*(If examining a picture of an object, you will not be able to answer all of these questions. Write answers to as many questions as possible based on what is seen.)*

#### First Impressions Questions

- What are your first impressions of this object?
- Do you have any idea what the object might have been used for?

#### Looking More Closely

- What is it made of? What is the texture, color and smell?  
Can it be held? Is it heavy or light?  
Is it intact, or does it look like parts are missing? Is it clean or dirty?  
Does it look old or new? Does it make a noise?  
Is it handmade or made by machine?  
Where was it made? Who made it?
- **Function:**  
Does it have a practical use? Is it or was it a tool or a toy?  
Has it been used? Is it still in use? Has the use changed?  
Where can it be found? Where could it have been found?  
What value does it hold to you and to others?

#### Design:

- How is it structured? What is its function? Are there decorations?  
Does it remind you of anything else?

#### Who May be Connected with the Object?

- What type of person might have used the object?
- What type of person might have made this object?
- What does this object tell us about the maker and user?

#### Thinking Deeper

- Is this type of object still being made today? Is it still in use? If not, why do you think it isn't use?
- Should this object be in a museum collection? Why or why not?
- What questions do you have about the object that you can't answer from just looking at it?
- How did the object shape this period/overall history?

#### Strengths

- Provides clues about its function
- Conveys information of everyday life
- Tells of ideas and information which either are not or cannot be expressed effectively in writing or speech (forms, colors, effects of visual arts; personal fantasies, idioms of taste, unspoken significance, customs, and prejudices)

#### Limitations

- If there is only one object to look at, the following challenges exist:
  - How typical the object is of its time or of its type.
  - Parts may be missing

# Analyzing an Object

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think the object is?

What do you think the object is made of?

How do you think the object feels?

What is the color of the object?

What is the shape of the object?

What size is the object?

What are three words that describe the object?

What do you think the object was used for?

Who do you think would have used the object?

Do we still use this object today?  
If so, how is it different?

**Draw the object:**

(Did you learn any more about the object when you drew it than when you just looked at it? If so, what and why?)

Adapted from National Archives

# Analyzing an Object

Object Under Analysis: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Look carefully at the object. At first glance, explain what it is:
2. What material(s) is it made of?
3. Describe how it looks and feels: shape, color, texture, size, weight, and moving parts:
4. Describe any designs or lettering that appear
5. Who do you think made it? How can you tell?
6. Where do you think it was made? How can you tell?
7. What do you think the purpose of this object was? How can you tell?
8. What can you tell about the culture of the people who made it and used it?
9. What questions do you have about the object?
10. Name a present-day item similar to this object.

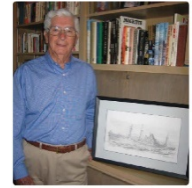
Additional Notes/Questions/Observations:

Sketch the Object Here:

Adapted from Truman Library

# Analyzing Oral Histories

Oral histories are the collections of people’s reminiscences, accounts, and interpretations of the past in their own words. They are a record of an individual’s direct feelings and opinions about the events in which he or she was involved. Often, oral histories provide information about significant events that may otherwise lack documentation in written or archival records. Oral histories are obtained through interviews and are preserved on audio and video recordings, in films, and in written transcripts.



## Teacher Tips

Collecting oral histories, or documenting the experiences of people who have lived through a particular aspect of history, allows students to see themselves as storytellers and historians. Underrepresented histories or perspectives often make rich subjects for oral history projects.

The following are strategies to assist students with preparing to conduct an interview to create an oral history:

1. Invite a guest speaker to the classroom with experience relevant to the curriculum. Instead of having the guest give a lecture, ask the students to interview him or her.
2. Prepare for the speaker's visit by teaching students the difference between closed questions and open questions. Help students create a list of questions they will ask in an agreed-on order, and direct them to take notes on the speaker's responses.
3. Afterward, ask the students to discuss how their initial expectations of the activity compared with the actual interview, and talk about any differences between textbook accounts of the topic and the speaker's experiences. Students could also use the interview as a jumping-off point for journal entries.
4. Be sure to have students write thank-you letters to the speaker at the end of the segment.
5. A variation on the assignment is to invite three or four people to the classroom with different perspectives on a single topic. Ask students to prepare questions for each interview subject, then give them ten minutes to conduct interviews with each guest in small groups. Students can share their findings in jigsaw fashion.

### Questions for Analyzing Oral Histories

#### Before the Interview/Recording

Write down/record the following:

- Name and date of the interview, location, personal circumstances, and the topic of the interview
- What people, places, and dates does the informant mention?
- What topics is the informant discussing?

#### During the Interview/Recording:

- Are there any unusual word or phrases used? Do they tell you anything about the informant’s character or history? What was the informant’s role in the events he or she describe?
- Does the informant reveal any emotions about these topics such as excitement, sadness, or happiness?

#### After the Interview/Recording:

- How was the informant affected by the events he or she described?
- How does the informant and his or unique story fit into the broader history you are studying?
- How could information obtained from other primary sources reinforce the informant’s story?
- Does the informant mention any previously unknown aspects of the event that deserve further exploration?

### Strengths and Limitations of Using Oral Histories

#### Strengths

- Personalizes history by recording an individual’s remembrances (or opinions) about their life or an event in which they were involved.
- Provides information about a topic or time period that may otherwise lack documentation in written or archival records.
- Often conveys emotion clearly.
- Contains spontaneity and candor not always present in a personally written account.
- Often informant is living and may be consulted for clarification or additional information.

#### Limitations

- The oral history can contain unusual dialect or speech patterns.
- Memory is fallible. The reliability of the informant’s information may be in question.
- The informant may, intentionally or unintentionally, distort the event or their role in it, thereby compromising the record’s validity. Does this concur with other sources?
- Some informants may be reluctant to discuss certain topics, resulting in an inaccurate or an incomplete record.
- As with all sources, oral histories must be evaluated along with other documentation to determine whether they present information that is exceptional or conforms to previously established patterns.
- The bias, objective, or the relationship of the interviewer to those being interviewed must be considered.

#### Resources:

The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide

<https://folklife.si.edu/the-smithsonian-folklife-and-oral-history-interviewing-guide/smithsonian>

Oral History and Social History Lesson: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/using-history/>

Oral History Association: <http://www.oralhistory.org/education/> - Click on Resources

PBS – Works Progress Administration Slave Narratives: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/resources/wpa.html>

# Analyzing an Oral History

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hear in the sound recording?

- Talking
- Singing
- Speech
- Music
- News Report
- Interview
- Discussion

Is there a title? \_\_\_\_ If so, what does it tell you about the recording? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you hear in the sound recording?

What is the recording about?

Write the two words that describe the recording?

Who do you think made the sound recording?

Who do you think the recording was made for?

What questions do you have about this recording?

# Analyzing an Oral History

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What is the title? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think you will hear? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of recording is it?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campaign Speech     | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Speech   | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech to or in Congress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musical Performance | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment   | <input type="checkbox"/> Press Conference         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convention          | <input type="checkbox"/> Court Arguments | <input type="checkbox"/> Testimony                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> News Report         | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview       | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio               | <input type="checkbox"/> Podcast         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

Check all that apply:

- |   |                                    |  |  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Live broadcast | <input type="checkbox"/> Narration | <input type="checkbox"/> Commentary    | <input type="checkbox"/> Studio recording  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conversation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound effects | <input type="checkbox"/> Background sounds |

List any people or topics you hear while listening:

People	Topics

Write one sentence summarizing this sound recording.

When is this sound recording from?

What was happening at the time in history it was created?

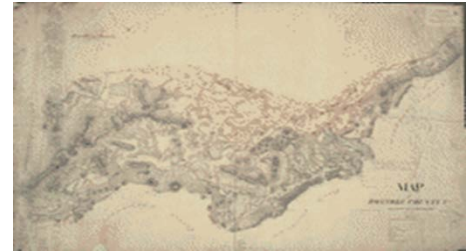
Who made it? Who do you think is the intended audience?

How do you think the creator wanted the audience to respond?

List evidence from the sound recording or your knowledge about who made it that led you to your conclusion.

# Analyzing Maps

Historical maps often hold information retained by no other written source, such as place-names, boundaries, and physical features that have been modified or erased by modern development. Historical maps capture the attitudes of those who made them and represent worldviews of their time. Spatial thinking is important for students to develop as they connect the “why of where” in geography, Earth and environmental sciences, and history. Students who acquire robust spatial thinking skills will be at an advantage in our increasingly global and technological society and will also build a foundation for analyzing environmental issues and challenges.



## Teacher Tips

- Do not assume students know how to read maps. To read geographic maps, students also have to understand how space is represented —the ability to conceptualize space through an abstract system like a coordinate grid. Those concepts are necessary to understand scale or to measure distance and angle.
- Model, model, model how to read the types of maps that will be used and referred to in the classroom.
- Note any background knowledge or spatial concepts students will need to be taught before understanding specific maps.
- It is beneficial for students to work with a partner or in collaborative groups when learning to read and work with maps.

### Questions for Analyzing Maps

- Have students identify and note details.
- Observation:
- Describe what you see...what did you notice first?
  - What size and shape is the map?
  - What on the map looks strange or familiar?
  - Describe anything that looks like it does not belong on the map.
  - What place or places does the map show?
  - What, if any, words do you see?
- Reflect:
- Why do you think this map was made?
  - Who do you think the audience was for this map?
  - How do you think this map was made?
  - How does it compare to current maps of this place?
  - What does this map tell you about the people who made it knew and what they didn't?
  - If this map was made today, what would be different? What would be the same?
- Question:
- What do you wonder about?

### Strengths and Limitations of Using Maps

#### Strengths

- Maps can measure and describe places.
- Different maps can show us different things about the world and our place in it.
- Maps have become more accurate over time.
- Historical maps often hold information retained by no other written source, such as place-names, boundaries, and physical features that have been modified or erased by modern development.
- Historical maps capture the attitudes of those who made them and represent worldviews of their time.

#### Limitations

- Students reading a map must understand the idea of *representation*. (what symbols mean, etc...)
- Students need deliberate instruction to understand the idea of representation.
- Not every map is well-designed or well-explained.
  - Historical maps capture the attitudes of those who made them and represent worldviews of their time and they do not necessarily represent all views.



# Analyzing A Map

Name \_\_\_\_\_

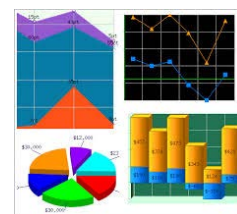
1. What is the map of? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the date of the map?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who created the map?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was the map produced?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In your opinion, why was this map produced?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What evidence do you have to support your opinion?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. List three important things learned by studying the map.
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Check the physical qualities of the map.

___ Compass	___ Handwritten	___ Cartographer	___ Scale
___ Date	___ Title	___ Legend (key)	___ Other
9. What questions are left unanswered by the map?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from the Truman Presidential Museum & Library

# Analyzing Tables, Charts and Graphs

Tables, charts and graphs and other types of infographics are visual presentations of information and statistics in a simpler format for easy reference. Historians and other social scientists use these to organize, simplify, and summarize information and statistics in a way that makes the data more meaningful or easier to remember.



## Teacher Tips

While tables/charts/graphs present complex or detailed information in a simpler format than a text, students will need help to develop the skills necessary to analyze and interpret the information correctly. Use a table/chart/graph on a regular basis for students to develop and hone their table/chart/graph reading skills.

Questions for Analyzing Tables, Charts and Graphs	Strengths and Limitations of Using Tables, Charts and Graphs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the title or caption to find out what content is being presented. Ask:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is the subject or topic of the chart/table/graph?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read all the headings and labels to determine what is being grouped and presented in each subcategory.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What kinds of information is being presented in the table/chart/graph?</li> <li>○ What kind of categories or labels does the table/chart/graph contain?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Look up any unfamiliar terms that appear.</li> <li>• Analyze the relationship among the numerical data and the text provided in the chart/table/graph.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can help the audience grasp visually the message that must be conveyed.</li> <li>• Helpful if there will be a great deal of details that normally take too much time explaining.</li> <li>• Can be very powerful in visual presentations if done effectively.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Limitations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be very confusing by lacking clarity or include irrelevant information.</li> <li>• There is a limit in how much data can be shown at one time.</li> <li>• It can be very simple to make information misleading.</li> </ul>

**Resources:**

Teacher Guide to Graphing Resources: This resource provides a variety of resources to help identify the different types of graphs commonly used and why they are used. <http://www.teach-nology.com/themes/math/graphing/>

SAT Graphics: Insight into how students may need to analyze tables, charts, graphs. <https://blog.prepscholar.com/data-graphics-sat-reading-and-writing>

Piktochart in the Classroom: Infographics & Education <https://piktochart.com/blog/piktochart-classroom-infographics-education/>

## Analyzing Tables/Charts/Graphs

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What is the title or caption?

What is the subject or topic?

Read all the headings and labels. List them here.

What information is being presented?

What is the main idea of the entire visual?

Summarize the information and apply it to what you are learning in class or in what you are reading.

# Analyzing Political/Editorial Cartoons

The decisions students make about social and political issues are often influenced by what they hear, see, and read in the news. For this reason, it is important for them to learn about the techniques used to convey political messages and attitudes that can be found in political/editorial cartoons. Analyzing political/editorial cartoons can be challenging. To analyze cartoons, it is important to be aware of the persuasive techniques used. Some of these techniques include:

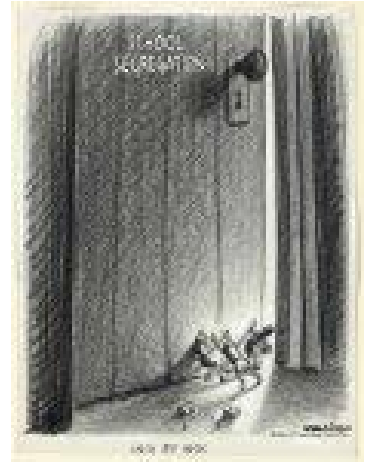
**Symbolism:** Cartoonists use simple objects, or symbols, to stand for larger concepts or ideas.

**Exaggeration:** Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or exaggerate, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point.

**Labeling:** Cartoonists often label objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for.

**Analogy:** An analogy is a comparison between two unlike things. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light.

**Irony:** Irony is the difference between the ways things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use irony to express their opinion on an issue.



## Teacher Tips

1. Model, model, model analyzing cartoons.
2. After showing students how the teacher analyzes a cartoon, place students in collaborative groups to work together. Provide groups a graphic organizer or a series of questions to help them identify the key parts of a cartoon that need focus in order to analyze the author's message(s).

### Questions for Analyzing Political Cartoons

Once the persuasive techniques listed above have been identified, the following questions should be used.

1. What issue is this political cartoon about?
2. What do you think is the cartoonist's opinion on the issue?
3. What other opinion can you imagine another person having on this issue?
4. Did you find this cartoon persuasive? Why or why not?
5. What other techniques could the cartoonist have used to make this cartoon more persuasive?

### Strengths and Limitations of Using Political Cartoons

#### Strengths

- Can provide many kinds of evidence in a vivid, entertaining way.

#### Limitations

- Political cartoons are expressions of opinion. They use all sorts of emotional appeals and other techniques to persuade others to accept those opinions. They cannot be treated as evidence either of the way things actually were or even of how everyone else felt about the way things were. They are evidence only of a point of view, often a heavily biased point of view.
- Political cartoons employ complex visual strategies to make a point quickly in a confined space.

### Resources:

**Political Cartoons by Clifford Berryman:** <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/running-for-office/>

The political cartoons in this exhibit, drawn by renowned cartoonist Clifford K. Berryman, illustrate the campaign process from the candidate's decision to run for office to the ultimate outcome of the election

**Interpreting Political Cartoons in the History Classroom:** <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21733>

**Cartoon Analysis Checklist:** [http://teachinghistory.org/files/Cartoon\\_Analysis.pdf](http://teachinghistory.org/files/Cartoon_Analysis.pdf)

### Evaluating Political Cartoons Lesson Idea:

In this lesson, high school students learn to evaluate political cartoons for their meaning, message, and persuasiveness. Students first develop critical questions about political cartoons. They then access an online activity to learn about the artistic techniques cartoonists frequently use. As a final project, students work in small groups to analyze a political cartoon and determine whether they agree or disagree with the author's message.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/analyzing-purpose-meaning-political-794.html>

# Analyzing a Cartoon

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Meet the cartoon.

Quickly scan the cartoon. What do you notice first?

What is the title or caption?

## Observe its parts.

### Words

(Are there labels, descriptions, thoughts, or dialogue?)

### Visuals

(List the people, objects, and places in the cartoon.)

## Try to make sense of it.

### Words

(Which words or phrases are the most significant?)

(List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed.)

### Visuals

(Which of the visuals are symbols?)

(What do they stand for?)

Who drew this cartoon?

When is it from?

What was happening at the time in history it was created?

What is the message? List evidence from the cartoon or your knowledge about the cartoonist that led you to your conclusion.

## Use it as historical evidence?

What did you find out from this cartoon that you might not learn anywhere else?

What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?

Adapted from National Archives

## Analyzing an Editorial/Political Cartoon

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the action taking place in the cartoons

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Explain the cartoonist's message in the drawing and caption

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is this cartoon easy to figure out? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does this cartoon require you to have a lot of background information on this issue, event or person?

\_\_\_yes \_\_\_no Explain

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who is the cartoonist?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. List any persons portrayed in the drawing:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Did the cartoonist exaggerate any physical features of a person? If yes, describe how it was done.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Were any symbols use? \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no If yes, what do they represent?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Which person or group(s) may be most likely to agree with its message?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which person or group(s) may disagree with the cartoon's message?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from Truman Presidential Museum & Library

# Analyzing Photographs

Photographs provide us with images of past events. Photographs can convey countless details about life. For historians, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Historians who study the everyday lives of anonymous people find photographs are an invaluable source. Sometimes photographs are the only means of reconstructing the material world and behavior of people who did not leave many written records. While photographs appear to be the most objective and accurate of all primary sources, they MAY not be. Photographs are the product of many variables, including, the photographer’s intention, the user’s need, the viewer’s interpretation and the equipment’s technical abilities. It is the photographer—and the camera’s frame—that defines the picture’s content.



## Teacher Tips

- If using photographs as a primary source it is important that students identify the subject and content of the photograph, as well as the contextual information that may not be in the photograph. Like all other primary sources, photographs must be studied in conjunction with other evidence. One must look at many photographs, related documents, and oral histories to determine if a photograph’s information is unusual or part of a larger pattern.
- It is beneficial for students to work within collaborative groups to answer the questions as discussion can many times lead to deeper analysis.

### Questions for Analyzing Photographs

### Strengths and Limitations of Using Photographs

#### Take a closer look...make sure to examine the whole photograph.

- Make a list of any people in the photograph.
- What is happening in the photograph?
- Make a list of any activities you see going on in the photograph.
- Make a list of any animals in the photograph.

#### Looking More Closely

- Are there any captions? A date? Location? Names of people?
- What kind of clothing is being worn?
- Is there any lettering on signs or buildings?
- What time of year is pictured? Time of day? Cite your evidence.
- Where was the photograph taken? Cite your evidence.

#### Thinking Further

- If people are in the photograph, what do you think is their relationship to one another?
- What do you think happened just before picture was taken?
- What do you think happened just after the photograph was taken?
- Who do you think took the photograph? Why?
- What questions do you have about the photograph? How could you try to answer them?
- What is one thing you would remember most about this photograph?

#### Strengths

- They are important to the study of people who did not leave many written records
- Can stimulate the personal involvement of the viewer.
- Do not require fluency in a language to understand.
- Can be used to stimulate the memory of people.

#### Limitations

- People, place, date, and the name of the photographer are often not identified.
- The emotions and thoughts of those involved often are not evident.
- Information from this kind of source is often suggestive rather than definitive.
- Photographs must be studied in conjunction with other evidence. One must look at many photographs and/or other source materials such as documents and oral histories to determine if the information is unusual or part of a larger pattern.

#### Resources:

**Analyze a Daguerreotype** (earliest form of photography): This website allows viewers to view a daguerreotype and hear/read how Frank H. Goodyear, III, (associate curator of photographs at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery) analyzes the daguerreotype. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/sia/photo.htm>

**Annenberg Learner:** A multidisciplinary professional development resource for middle and high school teachers. Five video programs for analyzing photographs across the curriculum: <https://www.learner.org/resources/series223.html>

**History Detectives:** Detective techniques for analyzing photos. <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/technique/photographs/>

**Arts Edge - Analyzing a Photograph: From Theory to Practice** - [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-6-8/Analyzing Photographs From Theory To Practice](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-6-8/Analyzing%20Photographs%20From%20Theory%20To%20Practice)

# Analyzing Photographs

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the answers to the following questions. Once all questions have been attempted, write a short summary of your analysis of the poster.

What do you notice first when you look at the photograph?

Type of photo (check all that apply):

- Portrait    Landscape    Aerial/Satellite    Action    Architectural    Event    Family  
 Panoramic    Posed    Candid    Selfie    Documentary    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a caption?  yes  no

If yes, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List the people, objects and activities you see in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities

Write one sentence summarizing the photograph.

Answer any of the following questions that you can find the answers for:

Who took this photo? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it from? \_\_\_\_\_

When is it from? \_\_\_\_\_

What was happening at the time in history this photo was taken? \_\_\_\_\_

Why was it taken? \_\_\_\_\_

List evidence from the photo or your knowledge about the photographer that led you to your conclusion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where might you find more information about this topic?



# Analyzing Photographs

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the answers to the following questions.

What do you see?

Is the photo?      \_\_\_\_\_Black & White    \_\_\_\_\_Color

Is there a caption?    \_\_\_\_\_Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_No

If so, what does the caption tell you?

What objects do you see?

What people do you see?

Write two words that describe the photo.

\_\_\_\_\_

Who do you think took the photo?

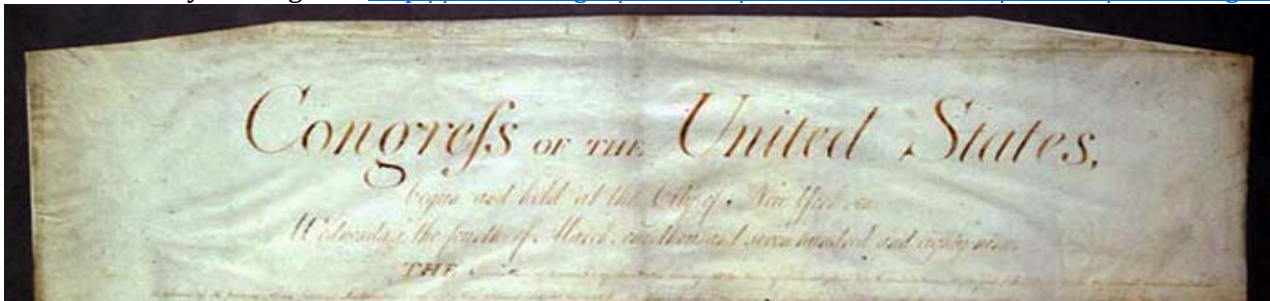
Where do you think this photo was taken?

How is this photo different from life today?

Where do you think we could find out more information about the people or objects in the photo?

# The Bill of Rights: Debating the Amendments

Adapted from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/bill-of-rights/>



## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will examine a copy of twelve possible amendments to the United States Constitution as originally sent to the states for their ratification in September of 1789. Students will debate and vote on which of these amendments they would ratify and compare their resulting “Bill of Rights” to the ten amendments ratified by ten states that have since been known by this name.

## Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze a document as a primary source;
- Develop persuasive arguments;
- Gain insight into the process by which the Bill of Rights came to be.

## Materials:

- [John Beckley’s copy of the Bill of Rights, 1789 as sent to the states](#) (PDF, 9.54 MB) (one assembled copy per student or per group)
- [The first ten amendments](#) to the U.S. Constitution, later known as the Bill of Rights (PDF, 245 KB) (one copy per student or per group)

## Illinois Social Science Standards:

- SS.IS.4.6-8LC Determine the value of sources by evaluating their relevance and intended use.
- SS.IS.6.6-8LC Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging their strengths and limitations.
- SS.IS.7.6-8 Critique the structure and credibility of arguments and explanations (self and others).
- SS.IS.8.6-8LC Analyze how a problem can manifest itself and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address it.
- SS.IS.8.6-8.MdC Assess individual and collective capacities to take action to address problems and identify potential outcomes
- SS.CV.2.6-8.LC Describe the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.
- SS.CV.4.6-8Mdc Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States and other countries, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- CV.5.6-8.MdC. Analyze the purposes, implementation, and consequences of public policies in historic and contemporary settings.
- IS.4.9-12 Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources.
- IS.5.9-12 Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to revise or strengthen claims.
- IS.6.9-12. Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources and relevant, verified information.
- CV.1.9-12. Distinguish the rights, roles, powers, and responsibilities of individuals and institutions in the political system.
- CV.3.9-12. Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, and agreements on the maintenance of order, justice, equality, and liberty.

- CV.4.9-12. Explain how the U.S. Constitution established a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and are still contested while promoting the common good and protecting rights.
- CV.4.9-12. Explain how the U.S. Constitution established a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and are still contested while promoting the common good and protecting rights.
- H.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical developments were shaped by time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- H.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity within and across historical eras.
- H.5.9-12. Analyze the factors and historical context that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- H.7.9-12. Identify the role of individuals, groups, and institutions in people’s struggle for safety, freedom, equality, and justice.
- H.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

**Procedure:**

1. Share the information found on page 3 of this document when analyzing documents. Working with the entire class, discuss students’ understanding of a document.
2. Teachers can use or adapt the graphic organizers on page 4 and 5 of this document for students to record their thoughts as a class, in pairs or in small groups.
3. Explain that in this lesson, students will take a close look at an important historical document. Distribute copies and engage students with John Beckley’s copy of the Bill of Rights 1789 as sent to the states (Note: Do not identify the document). Using pages 3-5 of this document.
  - Ask students to examine the document. Possible questions include:
    - Where does your eye go first?
    - How would you describe what you’re seeing? What do you notice about the physical condition?
    - Which words or phrases can you read? Has the document been altered in any way?
  - Encourage students to speculate about the document, its creator, and its context. Possible questions include:
    - Are there any indications (e.g., names, dates) of ownership or time period?
    - Who do you think wrote this?
    - What do you think this document is about? What words or phrases give clues?
    - What about language, its tone and style? Type of print?
    - Do you think this is a public or private document? What might have been the author’s purpose in writing this?
    - Who might have been the intended readers?
    - Do you think this is the complete document or are pages missing?
  - Help students to think about their personal responses to the document. Possible questions include:
    - What surprises you about what you’re seeing?
    - What do you want to know about this document?
4. Ask students to draw conclusions about what this document was for, who created it, and why. Reveal (or confirm) the document’s identity as John Beckley’s copy of the Bill of Rights 1789 as sent to the states. Probe students about their prior knowledge.
  - Ask students to summarize what they know about the Bill of Rights. Possible questions include:
    - Why do you think Congress felt the need for specific rights to be clearly articulated?
    - Why attach these rights as appendages rather than incorporate them into the body of the Constitution?
    - How many amendments did the states ratify of these twelve sent to them in 1789? How many amendments to the Constitution do we have now?

- Encourage students to think about the ratification of the Bill of Rights.
    - How might states have determined which amendments to ratify?
    - What debates might have taken place regarding each amendment?
  - Ask students how they would select which amendments to ratify. Discuss how an analysis and debate of each amendment should inform their decisions.
- 5. Model the analysis process using one of the twelve amendments from John Beckley’s copy of the Bill of Rights 1789 as sent to the states. The graphic organizers on pages 3 and 4 of this document may be helpful to students.
- 6. Assign students (working in pairs or groups) specific amendments to analyze and present to their classmates for ratification.
  - Ask students to first identify unfamiliar vocabulary.
  - Encourage students to analyze the amendment’s wording by making notes on a separate piece of paper.
  - Ask students to respond to the following questions on another piece of paper:
    - What is the specific right articulated in this amendment in your own words?
    - Do you think this amendment should be included in the Bill of Rights? Why or why not?
- 7. Working with the entire class, have students present and debate their analyses, by amendment, to the questions above. Conclude by holding a secret ballot on which of the twelve amendments should be ratified. Compare the students’ “Bill of Rights” to the Bill of Rights.

# The Titanic: Shifting Responses to Its Sinking

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/titanic/>



## Lesson Overview

In 1912, popular media headlined the sinking of the world's largest luxury passenger ocean liner while on its maiden voyage. Newspapers captivated the world's attention with stories from survivors and about victims who did not survive. Students will examine responses to the disaster and evaluate bias and different ways information is presented, and then apply what they learn to interpreting a political cartoon about the sinking of the *Titanic*.

## Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Examine a set of primary sources and grapple with incongruities of information and bias
- Construct an account of events based on multiple sources
- Interpret a political cartoon about the event in light of what they've learned

## Illinois Social Science Standards

- IS.4.6-8.MC. Gather relevant information from credible sources and determine whether they support each other.
- SS.IS.6.6-8.LC Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging their strengths and limitations.
- H.2.6-8.MdC Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- H.3.6-8.MdC Detect possible limitations in the historical record based on evidence collected from different kinds of historical sources.
- H.4.6-8.MC. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- IS.1.9-12. Address essential questions that reflect an enduring issue in the field.
- IS.3.9-12. Develop new supporting and essential questions through investigation, collaboration, and using diverse sources.
- IS.5.9-12 Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to revise or strengthen claims.
- IS.6.9-12. Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources and relevant, verified information.
- H.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.
- H.11.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

## Procedure:

Activity One:

1. Briefly survey students to assess their background or prior knowledge of the *Titanic*; invite students to brainstorm what they know about the *Titanic* either from modern media or historical knowledge. Have them also identify where they learned each piece of information.
2. Review the concept of primary sources as necessary. Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience.
3. Tell students that analyzing primary sources and comparing the information found in multiple sources is one way to construct knowledge about historical events. Tell them that the class will work together to analyze one primary source, and then students will become investigators of the event through the use of additional historical materials.
4. Display or distribute [The Great Titanic Disaster](#) and ask students to consider what can be learned from this photograph about the sinking of the *Titanic*. Model using a graphic organizer on pages 23 or 24.
5. Before beginning the activity, use questions from page 22 as students continue learning about the *Titanic*.

#### Activity Two:

1. Divide class into groups of 3– 4 students each for this activity. Tell students that they will study and analyze newspaper accounts from the days and weeks after the sinking of the *Titanic* to re-construct an account of the historical event.
2. Distribute copies of [New-York tribune. April 16, 1912](#). Direct the teams to examine and study the newspaper, discuss it, and record their thinking on a graphic organizer like one found on page 4 or 5 in this document. Before beginning the activity, select questions from page 3 to focus and prompt analysis and discussion. Be prepared to focus student attention on the intended audience for the newspaper, who created the newspaper, and possible biases reflected in the article.
3. Working as a group or individually, students should write a summary of the sinking of the *Titanic*. (They will revisit the summary in the next activity.)

#### Activity Three:

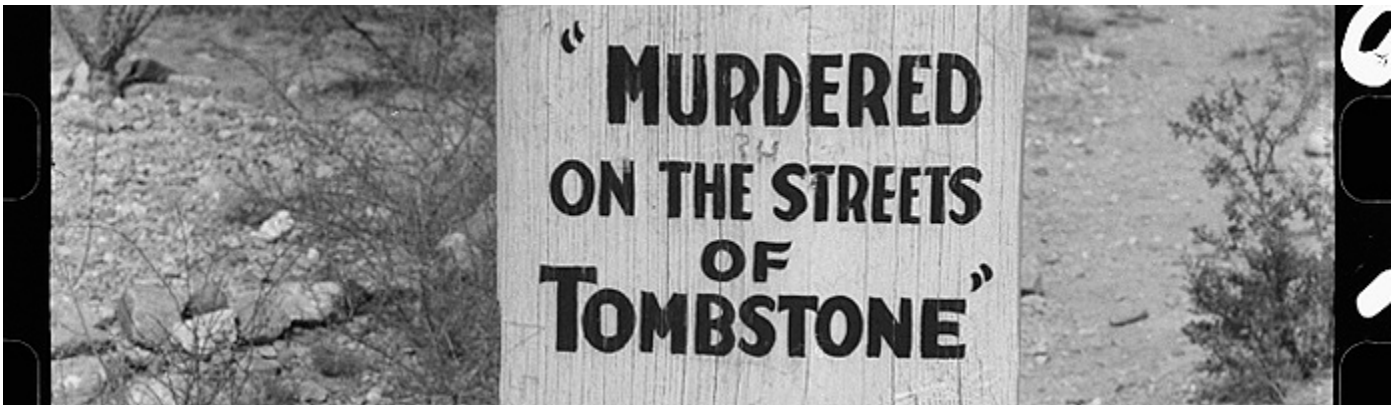
1. Review student summaries from the previous activity as necessary.
2. Distribute copies of one or more additional newspaper accounts to each group. Direct the teams to carefully examine the new information, discuss it, and record their thinking on one of the graphic organizers. Before beginning the activity, select questions from page 3 to focus and prompt analysis and discussion. Be prepared to focus student attention on the intended audience for the newspaper, who created the newspaper, and possible biases reflected in the article. How does the new information compare to the information in the newspaper analyzed in the previous activity?
3. Working as a group or individually, students should revise the summary of the sinking of the *Titanic*, editing or adding information from the additional analysis.

#### Activity Four:

1. Distribute copies of the political cartoon [“Which? fate--or economy in life boats?”](#) and a graphic organizer on pages 20 or 21 to each student.
2. Students should work in pairs or small groups to analyze the cartoon. Ideally, the students will have studied newspaper accounts with differing perspectives on who was responsible for the sinking of the *Titanic*.
3. Working individually or in pairs, students should respond to the cartoon, either agreeing or disagreeing with the point the cartoonist makes, based on their understanding of events from studying and analyzing the newspapers. Responses can be written or can take the form of a debate or other product.

# Billy the Kid: Perspectives on an Outlaw

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/billy/>



## Lesson Overview

This lesson relates to the westward movement in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Students analyze the role that gunfighters played in the settlement of the West and distinguish between their factual and fictional accounts using [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940](#). Billy the Kid alias, William H. Bonney, alias Henry McCarty, alias Kid Antrim, etc. is an example of the typical gunfighter. He was born in the 1850s and died in 1881 when he was shot by Sheriff Pat Garrett. Billy serves as the focus of the lesson.

## Lesson Objectives

After completing this unit students will be able to:

- develop techniques to analyze primary sources;
- become aware of effective interview techniques;
- assess the significance of the contributions of the gunfighter to the settlement of the West; and
- become familiar with the American Memory collections and learn how to use them effectively when doing historical research.

## Illinois Social Science Standards

- IS.6.6-8.LC. Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging their strengths and limitations.
- H.2.6-8.MC. Analyze how people's perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.
- H.3.3-8.MdC . Detect possible limitations in the historical record based on evidence collected from different kinds of historical sources.
- IS.4.9-12 Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources.
- IS.5.9-12 Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to revise or strengthen claims.
- H.5.9-12. Analyze the factors and historical context that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.



## Procedures:

### Step 1: Finding the Real Billy the Kid

Provide students with a brief summary of the historical time period from the 1870s to the 1890s, using online or other resources.

#### Analysis of two descriptions of Billy the Kid

Use the following conflicting passages as examples of the difficulties that historians face when they are trying to determine what really happened when the West was settled. Which of the following passages "captures" the real "Billy the Kid"? Why?

- "One of Billy the Kid's guards - Ollinger - was eating dinner at Mr. Thornton's hotel when he heard the "Kid's" shot that killed Bell, the other guard. On running from the dining room Ollinger, at a call from Billy the Kid looked up and received a volley of shots from his own gun that he had left leaning against the wall at the jail. With both guards killed within two or three minutes' time Billy the Kid ordered his shackles sawed off by the jailer, mounted a horse and made his sensational escape." [J.Y. Thornton](#)

OR

- "I remember good times I had with Billy the Kid. He was not an outlaw in manners - was quiet, but good company always doing something interesting. That was why he had so many friends. We often raced horses together. He was not very large - weighed a hundred and twenty five or thirty pounds. He was a fine rider." [Charles L. Ballard](#)

### Step 2: Introduction to Library of Congress online collections

1. Tell students there are a number of collections that can be searched online such as the Library of Congress. This can be done by doing a search on the home page <http://loc.gov>. Show students the links below for possible collections that can be searched:
  - [Buckaroos in Paradise: Ranching Culture in Northern Nevada, 1945-1982](#)
  - ["California as I Saw It": First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900](#)
2. Share the following resource and model a search by using words such as Billy the Kid, immigrants, Lincoln County, etc. [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940](#).

### Step 3: Analyzing Primary Documents

1. Have students find [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940](#) and do a search for *Billy the Kid*.
2. Direct students to find the interview titled "[Interview with Jose Garcia y Trujillo](#)" or [Dr. J.R. Carver](#). (or provide copies of the interviews if students do not have access to the Internet.)
3. Look through the questions and tips found on page 12 of this document to help focus on an analysis of the interviews.
4. Assign students to read both interviews. Have students record information on one of the graphic organizers found on pages 13 or 14 of this document.
5. Have students pair up with another student or small group and have them Identify similarities and differences in the views of Billy the Kid.
6. Share findings with the class while the teacher records the similarities and differences on a chart or screen for the whole class to view.