

Resources for Teaching with Art as Primary Source Documents by Nancy Hope (nfhope@ku.edu)

Seven strategies for using primary sources that are related to thinking-like-a-historian framework and align to specific Common Core State Standards (from [“Examining the Evidence: Seven Strategies for Teaching with Primary Sources”](#))

- 1: Decide what you are looking at.
- 2: Determine the purpose and audience.
- 3: Look for bias.
- 4: Examine closely the source itself.
- 5: Find more information.
- 6: Consider your own role in the interaction.
- 7: Compare a variety of sources.

Document Analysis:

This is the first step in working with primary sources no matter the kind. Teach your students to think through them following this progression:

1. Meet the document.
2. Observe its parts.
3. Try to make sense of it.
4. Use it as historical evidence.

They can use a worksheet (or not) individually or in groups, vocalizing or writing down their answers to these four steps.

Questions for Analyze an Artifact or Object (Elementary Students)

1. Meet the artifact: What do you think it is?
2. Observe its parts:
 - What do you think it is made of?
 - How does it feel?
 - What is its color, shape and size?
 - What are three words that describe it?
3. Try to make sense of it:
 - What do you think it was used for?
 - Who do you think used it?
 - What does the object tell you about the time period it was made and used?
 - Do we still use an object like this today? If so, how is it different?
4. Where can you find more information about it and the people who used it?

Questions for Analyzing an Artifact or Object (Intermediate or Secondary Students)

1. Meet the artifact: What do you think it is?
2. Observe its parts. Describe shape, color, texture, size, weight, age, condition, parts, text, etc.
3. Try to make sense of it: Where and when is it from? Who used it and for what? List reasons you think so. What does this tell you about the people who made

and used it? What does it tell you about technology at the time it was made?
What is a similar item from today?

4. Use it as historical evidence: What did you find out from this artifact that you might not learn anywhere else? What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand the event or time in which this artifact was used?

Follow Up Activities:

1. Beginning: Write your own caption for the image.
2. Intermediate: Predict what will happen one minute, or one hour after the scene shown in the image and explain the reasoning for your predictions.
3. Advanced: Expand or alter textbook or other printed explanations of history based on the images studied.

Extension:

Help students identify questions for further investigation and develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Selected Online Resources for Art as Primary Source Documents including worksheets and example lesson plans

1. "Document Analysis Worksheets, from the National Archives"
<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>
2. "Docs Teach: Online Tools for Teaching with Documents, from the National Archives" <https://www.docsteach.org/>
3. "Using Primary Sources" <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/> and "Analyzing Photographs and Prints" http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Photos_and_Prints.pdf from the Library of Congress
4. "Artifacts and Analysis: A Teacher's Guide to Interpreting Objects and Writing History, from the Smithsonian in Washington DC" <http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/index.htm>
5. Where to find images:
"Google Image Search" <https://images.google.com> and "Wiki Commons Images" <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images>
6. Good examples of using art as primary source documents in the classroom:
"Life in the Floating World: Ukiyo-e Prints and the Rise of the Merchant Class in Edo Period Japan" (<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/life-floating-world-ukiyo-e-prints-and-rise-merchant-class-edo-period-japan>) and "A Case Study of Tokugawa Japan through Art: Views of a Society in Transformation" <http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/curriculum/imaging-japanese-history/tokugawa/index.html>