

## Teaching American History Project

Lesson Title: How to analyze a Primary Source

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Grade: 9-12 (can be adapted for lower grades and varying levels)

Length of class period: 45 minutes

Inquiry: (What questions/problems are the students working on?)

1. What information can be deduced/acquired by looking at a primary source based on the students' prior knowledge?
2. Can the students make sense of a primary source that they have little or no prior knowledge of?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to go through a series of questions in an attempt to gain a certain level of understanding about a specific primary source.
2. Students will be able to use higher level thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) to deduce information about a specific primary source.
3. Students will be able to use different analysis sheets based on the type of primary source is being used as well as the level of analysis the student can work at.

Materials:

1. NARA Document Analysis Worksheets for:  
-Written Document, Photo, Political Cartoon, Poster, Map, Artifact, Sound Recording, Motion Picture
2. APPARTS Document Analysis Sheet (to be used for AP level high school students)
3. Primary Sources—9/11 Photos, Preamble to the Constitution, Columbus map, American Revolution cartoon, Vietnam War photo (Power point attached)

Activities:

(Lessons that should be in place before starting this lesson)

1. Students have definitions and activities determining what a primary source and a secondary source is and the difference between the two.
2. Students have discussed the reliability of both primary and secondary sources, measuring their possible biases and strengths.

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1. Students will be placed in a group allowing for students of varying abilities to be mixed together.
  2. Students will be given a primary source that they are familiar with and as a group they write down everything they know about the source, i.e. author/designer, time period, circumstances of source being created, etc.
  3. Students will be given the document analysis sheet and thoroughly complete the sheet.
  4. When a group finishes, hand them a primary source that they are unfamiliar with and have them repeat the process.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

1. Participation in group discussion of source
2. Completion of Document Analysis Sheet

Social Studies Frameworks

- gather historical data from multiple sources;
- engage in reading challenging primary and secondary historical source materials, some of which is contradictory and requires questioning of validity;
- describe sources of historical information;
- identify the main idea in a source of historical information;