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## Integrating Resources from the Library of Congress to Teach Historical Concepts

**Essential or Investigative Question**

*How is doing history different than knowing history?*

**Audience**

This activity is best suited for social studies educators of Grades 6-12

**Time Required**

Pre-activities (on-line, self-paced modules) - about 2 hours

Face-to-face session (presentation, discussion, and workshop) - about 2 hours

Follow-up coaching sessions – 1 to 3 hours

**Goals**

Participants will be able to:

- Locate primary source resources in the Library of Congress digital archive
- Understand how students learn historical concepts (time, change, empathy, cause, evidence and accounts)
- Teach historical concepts using Library resource

**Standards**

- 21st Century Learner Standards <http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/learning-standards>
- ISTE Standards for Teachers <http://www.iste.org/standards/standards-for-teachers>
- Learning Forward The Professional Learning Association [http://learningforward.org/standards#.U8amn\\_lDUk0](http://learningforward.org/standards#.U8amn_lDUk0)

**Objectives**

By the end of this PD Activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe examples of the benefits of teaching with primary sources.
- Analyze a primary source using Library of Congress tools.
- Access teaching tools and primary sources from loc.gov/teachers.
- Identify key considerations for selecting primary sources for instructional use (for example, student needs and interests, teachings, etc.).
- Access primary sources and teaching resources from loc.gov for instructional use.
- Facilitate a primary source analysis using Library of Congress tools.
- Demonstrate how primary sources can support historical thinking
- Create primary source-based activities that help students engage in learning, develop critical thinking skills and construct knowledge.



**Digital  
Resources****Primary sources from loc.gov:**

Learning is Wealth, Wilson, Charley, Rebecca, and Rosa. Slaves from New Orleans. 1864.  
Chas. Paxson, photographer, New York. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010647859/>

**Other resources:**

Primary Source Analysis Tool: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/>

**Classroom  
Materials**

Computer/laptop and LCD Projector

**Preparation**

Facilitator should:

- Recruit participants and assign self-paced, online modules from LOC
- Review PowerPoint presentation
- Prepare LCD projector and room arrangement
- Print out copies of select slides from PowerPoint (those with student interview data)
- Print out copies of the Analyzing Primary Sources worksheet  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/>

**Procedure****Pre-activity:**

1. Teacher participants should complete these self-paced PD modules:

- “Introduction to Primary Sources”  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/professionaldevelopment/selfdirected/introduction.html>
- “Finding Primary Sources”  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/professionaldevelopment/selfdirected/finding.html>

**Optional Resources:**

- Making it Easier to Find and Use Primary Sources:  
<http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2012/05/library-of-congress-search-making-it-easier-to-find-and-use-primary-sources/>
- Short Cuts for Finding Primary Sources: <http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2012/05/shortcuts-for-finding-primary-sources/>
- Finding Primary Sources: Moving Beyond the Teacher’s Page:  
<http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2012/06/finding-primary-sources-moving-beyond-the-teachers-page/>

2. Teacher participants should read the chapter, “Putting Principles into Practice: Understanding History” by Peter Lee.



**Face-to-face session:**

1. Continuum activity
  - Ask participants to stand at the front of the room. Ask them to imagine the front of the room is a continuum. As you read statements they are to arrange themselves along the continuum based on their level of agreement.
  - You can begin with demographic questions to make participants feel more comfortable. For example: Arrange yourself along the continuum based on your years of experience as an educator. (One side of the room is 1 year ...the other is 20+ years).
  - Move on to questions that connect with your presentation. For example: Rate your level of agreement with the following: “My students are interested in learning about history.” “I feel confident in my ability to teach using primary sources from the Library of Congress.” “I think it is important to integrate primary sources into the classroom.” “My students come to my classroom with historical thinking skills.”
  - After each statement, allow participants opportunities to move along the continuum. Ask participants to use “I” statements to tell why they are in their position along the continuum. Allow this activity to begin to spark conversation.
2. Interactive PowerPoint presentation and discussion
  - Assign members of the group to help read the slides that include student interview data. (You should print these slides out in advance.)
  - Work through the presentation, pausing for conversation as needed.
3. Primary source activity
  - This activity focuses on the photography of Charles Paxson (see slides and links in PowerPoint). Model using the Library’s Primary Source Analysis tool and ask participants to locate corroborating evidence in the Library database.
4. Workshop: Creating teaching and learning activities
5. Follow-up: Coaching/feedback sessions in classrooms  
As possible ask teachers to allow for observation in their classrooms as they implement the primary sources teaching/learning activities they developed into their own classrooms. Provide coaching to participating teachers.

**Assessment/  
Reflection**

- Participant pre-survey
- Completion of teaching and learning activity (rubric)
- Participant post-survey



## Teaching with Primary Sources: Integrating Resources from the Library of Congress to Teach Historical Concepts

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### Pre-survey

- Please take a few minutes to complete the brief survey:

[INSERT HYPERLINK HERE.](#)



*Kirsty (fifth grade):*

*Why are there different dates?*

*One of the stories must be wrong.*

*How could you decide when the Empire ended?*

*See what books or encyclopedias say.*

*Does it matter if there are two different dates?*

*Yes, because if someone reads it and it has the wrong date in it then they will be wrong and might go round telling people.\**

*Lara (eighth grade):*

*Why are there different dates?*

*Because there is no definite way of telling when it ended. Some think it is when its city was captured or when it was first invaded or some other time.*

*How could you decide when the Empire ended?*

*By setting a fixed thing what happened for example when its capitals were taken, or when it was totally annihilated or something and then finding the date.*

*Could there be other possible times when the Empire ended?*

*Yes, because it depends on what you think ended it, whether it was the taking of Rome or Constantinople or when it was first invaded or some other time.*

What's going on here?



How is doing history different than knowing history?



## How Students Learn History & Historical Thinking

National Research Council



## Guiding principles

- Students have **prior knowledge**.
- Students need a firm foundation of factual knowledge ordered around key concepts of the **discipline**.
- **Metacognitive** approaches enable students to reflect on and control their own understandings



## Substantive knowledge

- “Content” of the curriculum – facts and concepts; understanding particular periods of the past

### And 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Conceptual Knowledge

- Understanding of the **discipline**
- Not just skills, requires **metacognition** [think about what you are doing and whether you understand it]



## 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts

- Time
- Change
- Empathy
- Cause
- Evidence
- Accounts



## Time

- Dates: allow students to order past events and processes in terms of sequence and duration
- Periodization of history




**BOX 2.3 Periods in History**

Periods in history are not necessarily transparent, as this example from Sweden indicates. The students are responding to the teacher's question about which historical period came after the Renaissance.

Student	The Baroque Period.
Teacher	In the fine arts, yes.
Student	The Age of Greatness.
Teacher	Yes, but that was in Sweden.
Student	The Age of Freedom.
Teacher	That came a bit later.
Student	The Age of Monarchic Absolutism.
Teacher	Yes, or the Age of Autocracy. What's the period that we're reading about now?
Student	The Age of Freedom.
Teacher	In Sweden, yes.
Student	The Age of Enlightenment.
Teacher	Yes.


Haldén, who reports this exchange, comments, "It is tragic-comical that, in this particular case, the concepts that are supposed to help the students grasp the continuity of history become a problem in themselves." He adds, "It is highly probable that this is not an exceptional case."

SOURCE: Haldén (1994).



## Change

- History deals with longer scales than moment-to-moment
- Continuity, state of affairs, and themes
- Myth of progress




explained the end of witch trials like this:

*When they accused like the mayor's wife or somebody's wife that they were a witch, and he said, "This has gone too far, we've killed enough innocent people, I want you to let everyone go, my wife is not a witch, and this has just gone too far," and then, just like that, everybody just forgot, and they didn't accuse people of witches anymore.*


Jenny has turned a process of change into an event. Someone important made a rational decision that everyone accepted forthwith.

SOURCES: Barton (1996), Lee and Ashby (2001).



## Empathy

- Similar to "historical understanding" or "perspective taking"
- People in the past did not all share our way of looking at the world
- Process of "entertaining" ideas



Some students, however, will recognize that people in the past not only found themselves in different situations from those of today, but also thought differently, as is evident in this eighth grader's explanation of trial by ordeal.<sup>16</sup>

*I think that the Saxons used the ordeal partly because of their belief in God. I think that the Saxons believed that as the ordeal was the judgment of God, and because God had power over everyone, God would heal your hand or make you sink if you were innocent, or make you float or your hand not heal if you were guilty. I think that the Saxons believed that God would save you, and God was saying if you were guilty or innocent.*

The ordeal becomes intelligible as a different way of thinking about things from our own, and our job in doing history is to understand it in past

## Cause

- Effort to explain why something happened historically
- Actions have unintended consequences or fail to achieve their purposes
- Misconception of causes as discrete [unconnected] events



James, an eighth grader, shows that he is thinking of causes as necessary conditions. (He replies using his own labels—A and B for the two rival causes he is considering and X for the event he was asked to explain.)

*If without A, X doesn't happen, but it does [happen] even without B, then A is more important than B.*

*If point A [the Roman Empire was rich and properly looked after] wasn't true, could the Roman takeover of Britain still happen?*

*If point B [the Romans beat the Britons in a battle by the River Medway] wasn't true could the Roman takeover of Britain still happen?*

*A good explanation would mean the Roman takeover of Britain couldn't really happen while a bad explanation wouldn't stop it happening even if the explanation wasn't there/wasn't true.*

In a further example, in which James is testing the explanation that the Romans took over Britain because they had good weapons, he asks:

*If the Romans didn't have good weapons, would they have been able to take over Britain anyway? If they could, then [the suggested explanation] is wrong.*

SOURCES: Lee (2001, p. 80), originally in Lee and Ashby (1996).

## Evidence

- Difference between sources
- Younger students assume history is just known
- Construction of the past through inferences
- Disconfirmation equally important





### BOX 2-7 Finding Out About the Past: Received Information or Evidence?

Denis Sherritt explored U.K. students' ideas about evidence. He found that for some students the question of how we know about the past does not arise, whereas others understand that historians used evidence to produce knowledge about the past. Research conducted under Project CHATA more than a decade later found very similar patterns of ideas.

When students stick with common-sense ideas they can run into difficulties. This is clear in the following excerpt, in which Annie, a ninth-grade student, responds after being asked how she knew that Hitler started World War II:

Annie I've read it.

Interviewer How did the author [of the book] know?

Annie He might have been in the war or have been alive and know what happened.

Interviewer How do people who write books know about cave men?

Annie The same . . . only they've to copy the books out again and translate some of 'em.

Interviewer Are you saying that cave men wrote history books?

Annie No, they'd carve it on the rocks.

Contrast this with Jim, an eighth grader, who can see that sources must be interrogated if we are to say anything about the past.

Interviewer Is there anything you have to be careful about when you're using sources to find out what's happened?



Jim You have to think about how reliable they're going to be . . . either if they're a long time after the event they, they're not likely to be, erm, primary sources of evidence, there's going to be more passed on either by reading something or having a story told to you, which if it's told you it's less likely to be accurate because details. . . .

Interviewer . . . Details go in the telling?

Jim Yeah, and also if it's a particularly biased piece of evidence [we] might have to look at it and compare it to another piece of evidence, and it might not be much good on its own to get information, just opinion—it would only be good if you wanted an opinion of how people saw the event.

Interviewer Right.

Jim So you have to look at what context you're looking at the evidence in and what you want to find out from it.



## Accounts

- Historical narratives or whole passages of the past
- Ways of looking at the past
- Accounts demand selection and a position from which the selection is made



### Adolf Hitler

*In 1933 Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany. In elections held soon after he became chancellor, he won a massive majority of the votes. Pictures taken during his chancellorship suggest his popularity with the German people. He presided over an increasingly prosperous nation. A treaty signed with France in 1940 enabled Hitler to organize defenses for Germany along the Channel coast, and for a time Germany was the most militarily secure power in Europe. Hitler expressed on many occasions his desire to live peacefully with the rest of Europe, but in 1944 Germany was invaded from all sides by Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Unable to defeat this invasion of his homeland by superior numbers, Hitler took his own life as the invading Russian armies devastated Berlin. He is still regarded as one of the most important and significant figures of the twentieth century.*

## Orientation to the Library of Congress Collection: Looking for Evidence



## Identify Corroborating Evidence

- Search box
- Historic newspapers ("Chronicling America" 1836-1922)
- World Digital Library
- Exhibitions
- Kids and Family
  - America's Library



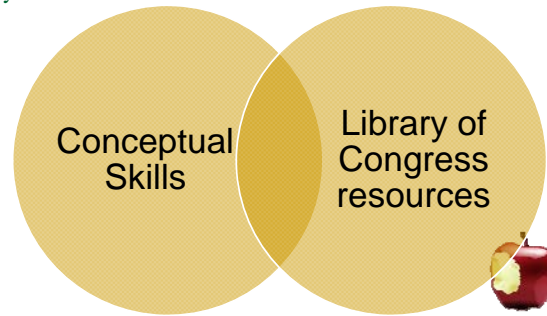
## Explore: Library of Congress Teacher's Page

[www.loc.gov/teachers](http://www.loc.gov/teachers)

- Using Primary Sources
  - Primary Source Analysis Guides and Tools
- Classroom Materials
  - Primary Source Sets
  - Lesson Plans
  - Presentations & Activities
  - Themed Resources
- Professional Development
  - Build and Deliver
  - Take Online Modules



How can you integrate these ideas into your instruction?



- Work with school library media specialists
- Work in interdisciplinary teams

