

A LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRIMARY SOURCE STARTER

INTERVIEW WITH FOUNTAIN HUGHES



Quick and easy activity ideas to start using Library of Congress primary sources in the classroom

Teacher Instructions

Goal

Students can think critically about what can be learned from a person's own account of historical events, and about the differences between oral histories and other ways of exploring history.

Background

A voice from the past can make long-ago events seem like they happened yesterday.

At the end of the Civil War, over four million enslaved Americans gained their freedom. Today, we can still hear 26 of them speak to us in their own words, with their own voices.

In the middle of the 20th century, African Americans who had endured life under slavery told their stories in personal interviews, or *oral histories*, that were recorded and are now available on the Web site of the Library of Congress.

Fountain Hughes of Baltimore was interviewed in 1949, when he was 101 years old, 84 years after emancipation. Even at the distance of many decades, Hughes provides vivid details of the brutality the slave regime and the daily struggles of enslaved people.

Activities

Teachers can have students:

- Listen to the interview with Fountain Hughes, particular the sections describing slavery and the period following emancipation
- Read the transcript of the interview. How does listening to Fountain Hughes tell his story have a different impact from reading it?
- Speculate about the point of view and the purpose of the people involved in making this recording

Ask themselves:

- What do you think Fountain Hughes hoped to accomplish by telling his story?
- What do you think the interviewer hoped to accomplish by making the recording?
- Do you feel they accomplished their goals?

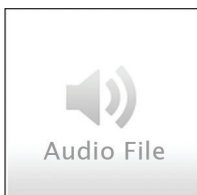
For more information and more interviews:

Voices from the Days of Slavery: Former Slaves Tell Their Stories

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/index.html>

For more classroom materials and other teacher resources from the Library of Congress, visit loc.gov/teachers

Primary Source



Interview with Fountain Hughes

Fountain Hughes interviewed by Herman Norwood. June, 1949. From Library of Congress: *American Folklife Center*.

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/afc9999001.9990a>



PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

OBSERVE

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

REFLECT

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

QUESTION

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

OBSERVE

Have students identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

What do you notice first? · Find something small but interesting. · What do you notice that you didn't expect? · What do you notice that you can't explain? · What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Where do you think this came from? · Why do you think somebody made this? · What do you think was happening when this was made? · Who do you think was the audience for this item? · What tool was used to create this? · Why do you think this item is important? · If someone made this today, what would be different? · What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION

Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

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

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

Beginning

Have students compare two related primary source items.

Intermediate

Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.

Advanced

Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf

TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING ORAL HISTORIES



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

OBSERVE

Have students identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you notice. · What do you notice first? · Are any words unfamiliar to you? · Do you notice any accent? · What format is used for the oral history you are examining now? (An audio recording, video or film, or a written transcript) · Does it seem like an interview or a conversation? · Do you notice any background noises? · What other details do you notice?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

What was the purpose of this oral history? · What do you think was happening when it was recorded? · What can you tell about the person telling the story, and about that person's point of view? · What is the significance of this oral history? · Is it more personal or historical? · How does encountering this story firsthand change its emotional impact? · What can you learn from this oral history?

QUESTION

Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

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

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

Beginning

Have students write a brief retelling of the oral history in their own words.

Intermediate

Speculate about the purpose of the oral history. What do you think the person telling the story, and the person recording it, expected it to accomplish? Do you think it succeeded? Explain why you think so.

Advanced

Think about what you already know about the time period events described in this oral history. How does this oral history support, contradict, or add to your current understanding of the period or events? How could you verify this account?

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Oral_Histories.pdf