

LEAVING EVIDENCE OF OUR LIVES

GOAL	Understanding Primary Sources	Time Required
OBJECTIVES	Participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define primary and secondary sources Recognize that primary sources are created daily and provide insight into personal lives 	45 minutes Standards AASL 2.1.1 AASL 2.1.3 AASL 2.3.1
MATERIALS	Materials/Resources Using Primary Sources in the Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> How to Use Primary Sources	
PREPARATION	Print one copy of the following for each participant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How to Use Primary Sources</i> Read and understand the following Library of Congress resource before the activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How to Use Primary Sources</i> Have ready flip chart and markers	
PROCEDURE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to think about all the activities they were involved in during the past 24 hours. Working in groups of four or five, have them list as many of these activities as they can remember on chart paper. For each activity on their list, have them write down what evidence, if any, these activities might have left behind. Examples might include receipts, notes, text messages, security surveillance data, signed credit card documents, voice messages, etc. Engage participants in a discussion about what constitutes a primary source. Discuss the evidence they have generated as examples of primary sources. Have participants review their list and what they wrote about the evidence their activities left behind. Lead a group discussion based on these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of your daily activities were most likely to leave trace evidence behind? 	

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- What, if any, of that evidence might be preserved for the future? Why?
 - What would a person from the future be able to tell about your life and your society based on evidence of your daily activities that might be preserved for the future?
6. Lead a full group discussion about a more public event currently happening (a court case, election, public controversy, law being debated), and as a group, have participants answer these probing questions:
 - What kinds of evidence might this event leave behind? Primary sources? Secondary sources?
 - Who records information about this event? How might their perspective impact their recording? Give a possible example.
 - For what purposes are different records of this event made?
 7. Based on what the participants have learned from this activity, have groups record their own criteria for primary and secondary sources.
 8. Distribute *How to Use Primary Sources*, and request that a few groups report on how their own criteria compared to the definitions offered under the “quick start” section of the handout.

ASSESSMENT Discuss importance of primary sources in daily life and have a few participants share how they might use this activity in their classrooms.

Teaching with Primary Sources • Professional Development

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There is 1 resource for this activity...



How to Use Primary Sources

A quick start guide to using primary sources in the classroom

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/additionalresources/downloads/resources/handout-green.pdf>

(2 pages)



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How to Use Primary Sources



A Quick Start Guide

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.

Examining primary sources gives students a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. Helping students analyze primary sources can also guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills.

Before you begin:

- Choose at least two or three primary sources that support the learning objectives and are accessible to students.
- Consider how students can compare these items to other primary and secondary sources.
- Identify an analysis tool or guiding questions that students will use to analyze the primary sources.



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How to Use Primary Sources



1. Engage students with primary sources.

Draw on students' prior knowledge of the topic.

Ask students to closely observe each primary source. • *Who created this primary source?* • *When was it created?* • *Where does your eye go first?*

Help students see key details. • *What do you see that you didn't expect?* • *What powerful words and ideas are expressed?*

Encourage students to think about their personal response to the source. • *What feelings and thoughts does the primary source trigger in you?* • *What questions does it raise?*

2. Promote student inquiry.

Encourage students to speculate about each source, its creator, and its context. • *What was happening during this time period?* • *What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source?* • *What does the creator do to get his or her point across?* • *What was this primary source's audience?* • *What biases or stereotypes do you see?*

Ask if this source agrees with other primary sources, or with what the students already know. • Ask students to test their assumptions about the past. • Ask students to find other primary or secondary sources that offer support or contradiction.

3. Assess how students apply critical thinking and analysis skills to primary sources.

Have students summarize what they've learned. • Ask for reasons and specific evidence to support their conclusions. • Help students identify questions for further investigation, and develop strategies for how they might answer them.

Analysis tools and thematic primary source sets from the Library offer entry points to many topics.



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