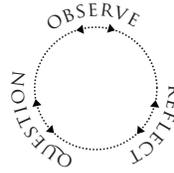


# TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES



---

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

### Ask students to 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 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 so important? • If somebody made this today, what would be different? • What can you learn from examining this?

## QUESTION

### Invite students to ask questions that 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.*

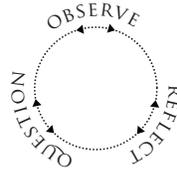
#### Advanced

*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>**

# TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING NEWSPAPERS



---

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

### Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see • What do you notice first?  
• What text do you notice first? • What do you see other than news articles? • How is the text and other information arranged on the page? • What details indicate when this was published? • What details suggest where this was published?

## REFLECT

### Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Who do you think was the audience for this publication? • What can you tell about what was important at the time and place of publication? • What can you tell about the point of view of the people who produced this? • How would this be different if produced today? • How would this be the same?

## QUESTION

### Invite students to ask questions that 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

*Read one article without its headline. Write a headline for the article. Compare this to the original headline.*

##### Intermediate

*Look at individual stories from a newspaper front page. Which is the most important? Why do you say that? How would you organize the stories on the page? What factors might explain any differences between your version and the original?*

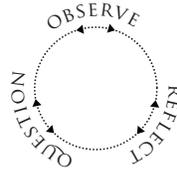
##### Advanced

*Choose one news item. Find another item on the same topic published on a different day, in a different place, or both. Compare the coverage of the same topic in the two news items. What is different? What is the same? What are possible explanations for the differences?*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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

# TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING POLITICAL CARTOONS



---

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

### Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

- Describe what you see. • What do you notice first? • What people and objects are shown? • What, if any, words do you see? • What do you see that looks different than it would in a photograph? • What do you see that might refer to another work of art or literature? • What do you see that might be a symbol? • What other details can you see?

## REFLECT

### Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

- What's happening in this cartoon? • What was happening when this cartoon was made? • Who do you think was the audience for this cartoon? • What issue do you think this cartoon is about? • What do you think the cartoonist's opinion on this issue is? • What methods does the cartoonist use to persuade the audience?

## QUESTION

### Invite students to ask questions that 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

*Think about the point the cartoonist was trying to make with this cartoon. Were you persuaded? Why or why not?*

#### Intermediate

*Compare two political cartoons that are on the same side of an issue. Identify the different methods — like symbols, allusions, or exaggeration — that the two cartoons use to persuade their audience.*

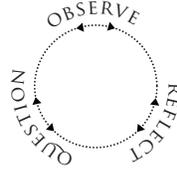
#### Advanced

*Select a political cartoon. Think about the point of view of the cartoonist. Describe or draw how the cartoon might be different if it had been created by a cartoonist with a different point of view.*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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

# TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS



---

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

### Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see. • What do you notice first? • What people and objects are shown? • How are they arranged? • What is the physical setting? • What, if any, words do you see? • What other details can you see?

## REFLECT

### Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Why do you think this image was made? • What's happening in the image? • When do you think it was made? • Who do you think was the audience for this image? • What tools were used to create this? • What can you learn from examining this image? • If someone made this today, what would be different? • What would be the same?

## QUESTION

### Invite students to ask questions that 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

*Write a caption for the image.*

#### Intermediate

*Select an image. Predict what will happen one minute after the scene shown in the image. One hour after? Explain the reasoning behind your predictions.*

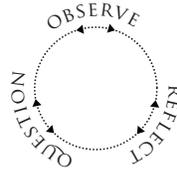
#### Advanced

*Have students expand or alter textbook or other printed explanations of history based on images they study.*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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

# TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING MAPS



---

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

### Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see. • What do you notice first?  
• What size and shape is the map? • What graphical elements do you see? • What on the map looks strange or unfamiliar? • Describe anything that looks like it does not belong on a map. • What place or places does the map show? • What, if any, words do you see?

## REFLECT

### Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Why do you think this map was made? • Who do you think the audience was for this map? • How do you think this map was made? • How does it compare to current maps of this place? • What does this map tell you about what the people who made it knew and what they didn't? • If this map was made today, what would be different? • What would be the same?

## QUESTION

### Invite students to ask questions that 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 description of the map in their own words.*

##### Intermediate

*Study three or more maps of a city or state at different time periods. Arrange them in chronological order. Discuss clues to the correct sequence.*

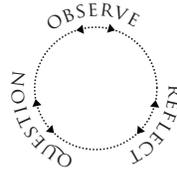
##### Advanced

*Search for maps of a city or state from different time periods, then compile a list of changes over time and other differences and similarities between the maps.*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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

# TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING MANUSCRIPTS



---

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

### Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see • What do you notice first? •  
How much of the text can you read? What does it say?  
• What do you see that looks strange or unfamiliar? •  
How are the words arranged? • What do you notice  
about the page the writing appears on? • What do  
you see on the page besides writing? • What other  
details can you see?

## REFLECT

### Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Why do you think this manuscript was made? • Who  
do you think created it? • Who do you think was  
intended to read it, if anyone? • What do you think  
was happening when it was created? • What tools  
and materials were used to create it? • What can  
you learn from examining this? • If someone created  
something like this today, what would be different? •  
What would be the same?

## QUESTION

### Invite students to ask questions that 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 choose a section of the manuscript and put it in their own words.*

##### Intermediate

*Select a section of a manuscript. Speculate about the purpose of the manuscript, and what the person, or people, who created it expected it to accomplish. Do you think it achieved their goals? Explain why you think so.*

##### Advanced

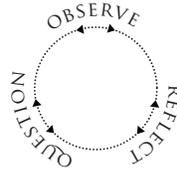
*Examine a section of the manuscript. Think about what you already know about this period in history. How does the manuscript support or contradict your current understanding of this period? Can you see any clues to the point of view of the person who created this manuscript?*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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

# 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

#### Ask students to 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

#### Invite students to ask questions that 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*

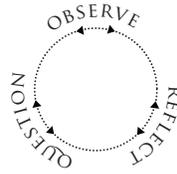
*Think about what you already know about the time period events described in this oral history. How does this oral history support, contradict, or add to your current understanding of the period or events? How could you verify this account?*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## ANALYZING SOUND RECORDINGS



---

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

#### Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

- Describe what you hear. • What do you notice first?
- If you hear any voices, can you understand what is being sung or said? • Does it sound like an interview or a conversation? • Are there any background noises? • Does it sound like a studio recording, or just “off the street”?
- If the recording is musical, do you know the song, or do you recognize any instruments?
- What other details can you hear?

### REFLECT

#### Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

- What was the purpose of this recording? • Who do you think recorded it? • Was it the same person who was being recorded? • Who would be interested in hearing this? • What was happening at the time it was recorded? • What kind of equipment was used for the recording? • Do you like what you hear? • If it is musical, could you dance to it? • What can you learn from listening to this recording?

### QUESTION

#### Invite students to ask questions that 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 description of the recording in their own words.*

##### Intermediate

*Speculate about the purpose of the recording and what its creators expected the recording to accomplish. Do you think the recording achieved its creators' goals? Explain why you think so.*

##### Advanced

*Think about what you already know about this period in history. How does this recording support or contradict your current understanding of this period?*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

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



The Library of Congress > Teachers > Using Primary Sources > Primary Source Analysis Tool

# PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL



Use this tool to record your responses to a primary source.

If you need guidance, use the sample questions. Feel free to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

Select format of your primary source

## OBSERVE

Record responses here

## REFLECT

Record responses here

## QUESTION

Record responses here

## FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Record responses here

[Download](#) [Print](#) [E-mail](#)