TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: August 2016

WELCOME!
Teaching with Primary Sources—Middle Tennessee State University, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.
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NEWS

• **TPS-MTSU has been awarded funds** by the Library of Congress to continue offering workshops and developing new educational resources in the next federal fiscal year. Moving into 2017, we will be exploring the content theme “Expanding Citizenship: From Civil War to Civil Rights.” In addition to this content theme, we will be exploring strategies for improving student research skills including critical thinking, historical thinking, literacy, and writing.

• Are you struggling to find resources for the State of Franklin, Watauga Compact, and other Tennessee history standards? Check out the Teach Tennessee History website created by our partner the East Tennessee Historical Society.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

![Mulberry Street, New York City](ca. 1900)

Why did Jacob Riis use photography to communicate his point about the conditions of urban life at the turn of the century? Have your students read more about Riis’s use of photographs to advocate for social change in the exhibit Revealing “How the Other Half Lives.”

THEME: AUTHOR’S PURPOSE

When a young child watches a toy commercial on TV, she probably thinks the reason for the colorful, happy images and music is to entertain her or helpfully give her ideas for her birthday wish list. If she knew that the commercial was specifically designed to make her want (her parents) to buy it, she might be able to think about the message more critically. (And then ask her parents to buy it!)

Too often, students take primary and secondary sources at face value, thinking that they come from “the past” or some impersonal authority (if they think about it at all). But primary and secondary sources above all come from people, and everyone has a reason for writing or creating in a certain way. This does not mean that students should be suspicious of nefarious agendas behind each and every thing they read in class. It simply means that everything—even something as neutral-seeming as a map or chart—was made with certain choices in mind, to achieve a certain purpose. Helping students always wonder “Why did the author write this?” with sources will help them recognize how the source influences them and others. This may in turn help them think about their reasons for writing and creating things themselves, and what they hope to achieve by it.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

• **August 3 (Jefferson City)** - “Resources and Strategies for the Social Studies” Jefferson County School In-service. Sessions offered throughout the day for different grade levels.

• **August 9 (Chattanooga)** - “Tennessee in the New South Period” Tennessee History for Kids Tent Revival for Hamilton County Schools. Session time TBA.

• **August 23 (Dickson)** - History Day and Teaching with Primary Sources workshop at Renaissance Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.

• **August 24 (Martin)** - History Day and Teaching with Primary Sources workshop at the University Center at UT-Martin from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.

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Have you ever wondered why our courthouses and town halls have columns? Why scientific classifications are written in Latin? Or even why certain paintings and cartoons are done a certain way? These everyday objects are easy to overlook and dismiss as being not all that important when in fact they are carefully crafted to convey the author’s or creator’s purpose. Learning the purpose behind these different sources can reveal much about the author/creator and ourselves.

Discovering the purpose behind different sources can be difficult for students. The values, imagery, and issues of this generation differ from previous generations. Even when there are similarities between generations, the way those similarities are portrayed and conveyed may not resonate with the younger audiences like it did with the older audiences. Equipping your students with the tools necessary to uncovering the purposes behind these different sources will increase their critical thinking skills and allow them to make important connections between the past and present.

Divide your students into groups. Give each group a printed source. The suggested sources for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade can be found at the bottom of this page. Make sure that the sources are laminated or inside protective sleeves so that dry erase markers can be used on them. You can decide if you want just one source for each group or if each individual student gets a copy. Allow the students time to circle and identify elements of their source that they find interesting and share these with others in their group. Once they have had time to discuss their observations, have the students answer some of the following questions on a sheet of paper. What are the major people/features in these sources? What symbols/features are present in your source that you have seen in your everyday lives? What do you think the message of your source is? Is that message obvious or more subtle? If your source is a painting, cartoon, or piece of propaganda, what can you assume about the views of the artist/author? Did the artist/author live during the time he/she was depicting? If not, how does that change the way you interpret the source? If your source is a building, what do you think the architect or the person that lives there wants visitors to feel and why? Based on your observations and answers to previous questions, do you think the authors/creators were successful in conveying their messages?

Based on the content that your are covering you can add or subtract as many questions as you would like to. You can use the questions as a stand-alone assessment or you can couple it with our Image Analysis Form for a quiz grade. This lesson idea meets state curriculum standards for grades 6-8 Social Studies (6.14, 6.48, 6.49,6.62, 7.36, 7.48, 7.54, 8.16, 8.43, 8.74, 8.77) and English Language Arts (Writing).

**IMPORTANT LINKS:**
- It’s No Laughing Matter (Lesson plan)
- TPS-MTSU Newsletter: Medieval History
- Cartoon Prints, British (Collection)
- Roman Architecture
- Toolkit: Decoding Photographs

**History repeats itself / J. Keppler, [1885]**

**6th Grade**
- Triumph(us) Caesaris
- Oil Painting “Hammurabi”
- The Parthenon, Nashville, Tenn.
- Mosaic, “E pluribus unum.”

**7th Grade**
- Oil Painting “Magna Carta”
- Das Zeitalter der Reformation
- Life of Martin Luther
- Fireplace at Biltmore House

**8th Grade**
- Poor old England
- Another bloody nose for John Bull
- The Eagle’s nest
- The old general
Lesson Idea—Understanding “Why” with the WPA

President Franklin D. Roosevelt founded the WPA (Works Progress Administration) as part of his New Deal in 1935 to help combat high levels of unemployment within the U.S. during the period. The program put millions to work building infrastructure across the country and helped stimulate economic growth across both rural and urban America. The WPA expanded its initiative in July of 1935 to include Federal Project One. This program hoped to promote art, theater, and music to Americans through the form of federally-funded art exhibits, plays at local theaters, and free symphony concerts. It employed thousands of artists and actors while hoping to connect many Americans, both rich and poor.

The poster division of the Federal Art Project portion of Federal Project One started in New York, but would eventually include posters from eighteen states. The WPA initially consisted of pieces dealing with the importance of hard work and how it would help ease the troubles the nation was facing during the period. It continued with its promotion with the hope of spreading the arts of music and theater across the country. Finally, the WPA changed its stance and geared its efforts toward the war efforts of WWII. It began to push for Americans to do their part, both at home and abroad, to ensure a victory for the United States. Present students with posters from the WPA. Ask students what they think the intent of the posters is. What time period do they believe the items are from? Why did President Roosevelt believe there was need for the program? How did the program use the posters to bring national interest in those particular areas (art, music, theater)? How did the imagery or message change when WWII became the primary issue for Americans at the time? Why did the message change in this way?

This lesson idea meets state curriculum standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.49), and English Language Arts (Informational Text).

Featured Feature—New Lesson Plans

In addition to all of the fantastic lesson ideas and links in this newsletter, we are also happy to announce a new wave of lesson plans for use in the classroom! These lesson plans include the following topics:

- First up is the Identifying Angles and Lines in Historical Photographs lesson plan. Created for 3rd and 4th grade by Jesse Neugebauer (Metro Nashville Public Schools), this lesson plan gives your students the opportunity to analyze primary source photographs while also learning about angles and lines. Students will work in groups, present their findings to the class, and receive feedback from their peers. This lesson plan also features some excellent extension ideas, such as a lines-and-angles scavenger hunt in the school and an art project in which students draw pictures that contains angles and lines.

- The Mountain Dew: Prohibition in America lesson plan brings the Prohibition era to grades 9-12. In this lesson plan the students will analyze multiple sources and formats to discover how Prohibition affected American society. The students will complete a PBL worksheet on the first day and then stage a town hall meeting on the second day in which they will build an argument for or against Prohibition using primary sources to support their position. The students will then vote on the fate of Prohibition. Extension activities include songwriting, newspaper letters, and student-made advertisements.
**Popular Portrayal**

The rebel chivalry as the fancy of "My Maryland" painted them; as "My Maryland" found them. [1862]

The Confederacy presented a certain image of class over its adversaries in the Union. The actual product found did not always represent what they hoped to project. How do the two men differ in appearances? Can this be considered Union propaganda or just the harsh reality for rebel soldiers?

**Symbol of Power**

The Washington Monument is one of the grandest and most easily recognizable monuments in the United States. Despite being an American icon, it is not of American origin. It is modelled on the Egyptian obelisks, structures that symbolized reverence and power. Have students look up the obelisk's meaning. Why do you think it was chosen for George Washington? Can you think of a monument that would represent him better? Look at the image of the monument above. Is that how it looks today? What are the impressions this version is trying to make?

**Making a Statement**

Korea Emperor in uniform of a Korean General [ca. 1890]

This picture shows Sunjong, last emperor of Korea, in full general’s regalia. Throughout history, many heads of state dressed in full military uniform with medals adorning their chest even though none had ever seen the frontline. Why would a civilian leader of a nation want to be seen in military uniform? What do modern civilian leaders model themselves after?

**American Spirit**

The spirit of ’17 as America enters the World War [1917]

The “Spirit of ’17” is one of the variants of the Spirit of ’76, but instead in the form of a song. It calls on the efforts of Americans to help its allies in Europe during WWI by crushing the bullies that torment them. What ideas did the author choose to include to portray American qualities? How was the author trying to contribute to the war effort with these lyrics?