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
• New materials are now available! For our high school world history teachers, we have a primary source set that parallels your full curriculum. For high U.S. history teachers, we have two new lesson plans: The Industrial Revolution and The Triangle Factory Fire.

• Are you looking for resources to support the new social studies standards or just want to learn more about how to use the Library of Congress Web site? On October 16th, we will be offering a special workshop “Resources to the Rescue” that will go more in-depth with using the Library’s online resources than any workshop we have previously offered. We will also have a guest presenter, Joan Lange from Pope John Paul II High, who will share ideas for tech-driven research projects for students.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Washington. From the original portrait painted by Rembrandt Peale [1827?]
As Presidential elections became a routine part of American society, artists like Rembrandt Peale were commissioned to paint portraits of Presidents. Why was it important to record images of these leaders? Where do we see Presidential portraits?

THEME: THE EARLY REPUBLIC

The “Early Republic” usually refers to the time period between the close of the Revolutionary War and the beginning of the Civil War. During this period, the leaders of the United States debated what kind of nation it would be—centered on a strong federal government or loosely united state governments; a country bounded by the Atlantic seaboard or by a constantly expanding Western frontier; a society of equality or one based on slavery and forced removal.

Also during this period, Tennessee became a state, and then, only three decades later, produced its first president, Andrew Jackson. The early history of Tennessee’s settlement and economic and cultural development must be understood against this larger backdrop of federalism, frontier, and the possibility of secession.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:
• October 1 (Nashville) — Tennessee Council for History Education conference. Session times TBA.

• October 10 (Knoxville) — “Examining the Early Republic Period” at the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

• October 16 (Murfreesboro) — “Resources to the Rescue” at MTSU from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

• October 30 (Murfreesboro) — “The Battle of Stones River and Its Legacy” at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

• November 6 (Murfreesboro) — “Teaching Strategies for Middle and High School” Afterschool Workshop at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

• November 13 (Franklin) — “Examining Tennessee’s Last Campaign” with the Tennessee State Library and Archives from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.
Lesson Idea— Thoreau’s Walden

Beginning on July 4, 1845, Henry David Thoreau spent two years living in a cabin in the woods on property owned by his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson. During his time in the woods, he lived (somewhat) isolated from society and had to rely upon himself for subsistence. He wrote about his experience in Walden. The book was not very popular at the time, but was lauded by the counterculture in the 1960s for its stance on returning to nature and focusing on oneself.

After giving students a brief introduction to Walden, divide them up into three groups. Each group will be given a different excerpt and discussion question. Assign the first group the second paragraph on page 7. Why did Thoreau describe inheritance as shackles? The second group will read the first paragraph on page 10. What is Thoreau saying in this passage? The last group will read the second paragraph on page 16. What are the vital necessities that Thoreau names? How does this differ from the students’ ideas of necessities? Have each group summarize their passage and share their response with the class.

For older students, you may choose to have them read all three excerpts. As a class, read the second paragraph on page 346. What did Thoreau learn during this experiment? How might we apply his understandings to today’s world?

This lesson can be adapted to meet curriculum standards for grades 8-12 CCSS for ELA (Reading: Informational Text & Speaking and Listening).

Lesson Idea— The Dred Scott Decision (1857)

Dred Scott v. Sandford, along with Plessy v. Ferguson and Brown v. Board, was the first of three of the Supreme Court’s most important, although controversial, rulings on racial equality in America. The Dred Scott case came to the attention of the Supreme Court when Missouri slave Dred Scott sued his master’s widow for his freedom with the claim that time spent in the free state of Illinois made him a free man. Unfortunately for Scott, the Court ruled that he, like any slave, was property—not a citizen—and therefore not entitled to the right of citizens to sue someone in federal court. The Court further declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional and prohibited Congress from passing legislation that might curtail the spread of slavery into the territories.

The Dred Scott case forced Americans to consider the meaning of equality, what it was and who it applied to. A review of the case today still provides fresh ground for debate over the origins and meanings of the phrase “all men are created equal.” As your students study the Dred Scott case, have them annotate two speeches made in response to the Dred Scott decision: the first by Stephen A. Douglas (The star of the north., July 01, 1857, Image 1) and the second by Abraham Lincoln (The Kanzas news., August 08, 1857, Image 1). Prompt them to think critically about the speeches: Did the founders include African Americans in their reference to “all men”? Is there more than one type of equality? Did Lincoln think it was possible to be both unequal and equal to the same person? Did African Americans have political rights before the Dred Scott decision?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.69); furthermore, a review of Chief Justice Roger Taney’s opinion on the trial is required 8th grade reading.
Lesson Idea– Nat Turner’s Rebellion

In 1831, Nat Turner, a slave in Virginia, led a rebellion of slaves who murdered sixty white Virginians in their homes before being stopped. In order to stop the rebellion, over one hundred African Americans were killed. The woodcut below depicts scenes from the rebellion, identifying several of the victims. Students can read “The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Virginia,” the court document that includes Nat Turner’s testimony of the bloody rebellion in Virginia.

This twenty-four-page document allows students to not only read more about the massacre, but also learn about how court systems operated during the early 1800s. Prompt your students with questions about the document. When was this source written? By whom? What was Nat Turner’s defense for leading the rebellion? Who were the members of the court?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for 4th grade Social Studies (4.65) and High School African American History (AAH.6).

Lesson Idea– “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

Washington Irving’s 1820 story about a timid schoolteacher’s fateful encounter with a headless horseman has fascinated Americans for almost two centuries, and continues to fascinate today with movies and tv shows based on it. “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” is one of the first quintessentially “American” works of literature (even though it was based on stories from European legends) and it was also the first to be admired abroad.

Have students read the full story as homework the night before. (Read straight from volume 2 of the original 1820 edition, or use this link & click “Full view” for an illustrated 1864 edition.) Start off by asking students to discuss Irving’s style of writing. What kinds of words does he use? How are his sentences structured? Then read or have students read pp. 352-356 out loud.

What does this passage tell us about early education in the early 19th century in the rural U.S.? How does this passage contribute to the characterization of Ichabod Crane?

Inform your students that the church and cemetery where the headless horseman vanishes are actually real, National Register-listed properties located in Tarrytown, NY. What does the “Old Dutch church” reveal about immigration patterns in 17th-century America? What other elements of American “Dutch” culture are illustrated in the story? Have students pick up the story immediately after Ichabod falls off Gunpowder, or come up with alternative endings in a writing assignment. Challenge them to mimic Irving’s descriptive style.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.38) as well as CCSS for ELA (Reading: Literature & Writing: Literature).
A map exhibiting all the new discoveries in the interior parts of North America [1802]

This map, created by Aaron Arrowsmith, shows additions made to a previous map of North America. What features are highlighted in green on this map? Why do you think that was done? Why was it important to keep maps and update them during the early 1800s? Does this map look similar to the map we see today of North America? In what ways does it differ?

A steamboat race on the Mississippi, (between the Baltic & Diana) [ca. 1859]

Have your students think about this illustration of two steamboats racing past a flatboat. Before the steamboat, flatboats were the only way to move goods along the Mississippi River. Why were steamboats an improvement over flatboats? What boat could carry more goods? What boat could make better time? Could flatboats even go up river?

Erie Canal at Little Falls [1880-1897]

Construction began on the Erie Canal in 1817 in response to a need to connect Buffalo, New York (Lake Erie), to Albany, New York (the Hudson River). When it was completed in 1825, the canal stretched across 363 miles. Why do you think there as a need for the canal between these two cities? How did the Erie Canal promote trade in New York? How has it become part of folk culture? (Listen to song.)

Cotton gin at Dahomey, Miss. [ca. 1890]

This photograph of a cotton gin was taken around 1890, almost three decades after the United States had declared slavery illegal. Notice the small number of workers and the large amount of cleaned cotton. This industrial cotton gin was much more advanced than the gins available in antebellum America, but ask your students: How much cotton could a single man clean? How much cotton could a gin clean? How did this impact slavery and southern agriculture?