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.

Contact: Stacey Graham or Kira Duke at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS

• Join us for the fourth annual Civil War Summer Institute: Emancipation June 25th—27th in Memphis! Participants will hear from Civil War experts, explore local sites that help to tell the story of emancipation, examine related primary source materials, and discuss ideas for teaching this important topic to students. To register, contact Kira Duke.

• We will also be conducting “Digging Deeper with Inquiry” in Knoxville on Saturday, April 6. This is ideal for those of you who have already attended introductory TPS workshops and are looking for more in-depth exercises and strategies for integrating inquiry with the Common Core State Standards into your classroom learning experiences. To register, contact Kira Duke.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Angel on Christ’s Tomb, a detail from a fresco in the monastery Mileseva, 1234.

Why would there be such an image on a medieval church’s wall? How did images help spread religion during the Middle Ages?

THEME: MEDIEVAL HISTORY

The Middle Ages refers to the thousand-year time period between 500 and 1500 C.E. (or thereabouts). This era is called “Middle” because it falls between Classical History (ancient Greece and Rome) and the Renaissance. Scholars in the Renaissance believed they were returning to Classical ideals, and neglected to acknowledge the advances made in the intervening (“Middle”) period.

Many of the institutions of modern civilization were established during the Middle Ages, such as national identities, the Catholic Church, rights of the governed, Islam, and the format of books. The Library of Congress—through the World Digital Library in particular (see p.3)—offers primary sources on European and other world cultures during this era.

Coestrumes de Normandie (Customary Laws of Normandy). Manuscript, circa. 1450-1470. [Detail].

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

• March 8—(Franklin) "Integrating Primary Sources with Books and Film" and "Library of Congress Resources to Support Common Core," Tennessee Council for the Social Studies conference. Session times TBA.

• March 11—(Memphis) “Introduction to Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU” Workshop, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at University of Memphis. Email Kira Duke to register.


• March 22—(Knoxville) "War of 1812" Workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. Held in conjunction with the War of 1812 Bicentennial Symposium. To register, email Kira Duke.
LESSON IDEA— THE POWER OF THE POPE

What goes on in Vatican City has a big impact on Catholics and others around the world. When Pope Benedict XVI retired his position as head of the Catholic Church last month, he was the first pope since 1415 to resign rather than die in office. The role of the pope today, however, is not nearly as powerful as it was in the Middle Ages, when the concept of separation of church and state was less distinct than it is now.

The pope’s power derives from the belief that Saint Peter, one of the twelve disciples, was made the first pope by Jesus himself. The tomb of Saint Peter lies beneath the altar of the church that bears his name, St. Peter’s Basilica, in Vatican City. During the Middle Ages, the pope was elevated from Bishop of Rome (one of a number of important bishoprics towards the end of antiquity) to the most powerful person in the western world (who could compel European knights to go on crusades). The pope was even the ruler of a kingdom called the Papal States until the 19th century. All that remains of this kingdom today is Vatican City, which is independent of Italy and still controlled by the pope. Have students do close readings of the hyperlinked texts and discuss the nature of papal power.

Show these images of Vatican City and St. Peter’s to your students. (Click here and here for more.) How do the features of the buildings and structures reflect ideas of power and orthodoxy? What would it mean to have the same person be the head of both the church and the government? Why are there such similarities in the architecture of Vatican City and Washington, D.C.?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for high school World History (Standards 4.0: Governance & Civics and 5.0: History, Eras 4&5) and A.P. European History.

LESSON IDEA— CASTLES OF ALL KINDS!

Today, castles are one of the most romantic and evocative symbols of the Middle Ages, but they were built to be working military fortresses. They could be as simple as a wooden tower (bailey) raised on an artificial hill (motte), or as complex as the 52 towers and nearly two miles of walls of the Cité de Carcassonne. Castles were designed for the defense and control of the surrounding countryside, and the protection of their residents. Many castles changed hands multiple times, and most were altered, upgraded, or even destroyed and rebuilt more than once. Often evidence has been found of a series of castles built on the best sites.

Start by having students familiarize themselves with the characteristics of the main castle types, then move on to the basic parts of a castle. This website offers illustrated descriptions of both. The Library’s Photocrom Prints collection contains images of many European castles. Let students search the collection on their own, or provide them with a group of images like Caerlaverock Castle, Corfè Castle, Pevensey Castle, Château des ducs de Bretagne, Kilkenny Castle, Harlech Castle, Rochester Castle, Auerbach Castle, and Warwick Castle. Ask students to find a motte-and-bailey, a Norman keep, a concentric castle, and a castra. Can they tell why a castle was built on a particular site? What natural defenses does it take advantage of? What architectural elements can they find? Can they find a castle with crenellations? Post holes for hourdes? Arrow loopholes? A barbican? Finally, see if students can find a castle that has been renovated for modern use, or a castle built since 1800. How is it different from a medieval castle? Would the modern castle be defensible? Why or why not?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grade 6 Social Studies (Standards 1: Culture, 3: Geography, and 5: History, Era 5).
LESSON IDEA– THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR’S COURT

The legend of King Arthur is one of the most enduring literary creations of the late Middle Ages. Developed between the 12th and 15th centuries by various writers, the version written by Sir Thomas Malory in 1485 was one of the first books printed in England and became the definitive account of the legend.

In the legend, King Arthur and knights loyal to him successfully battle Saxon invaders, defend Arthur’s headquarters at a place called Camelot, meet at a Round Table, search for a hidden treasure (the Holy Grail), and perform acts of chivalry that manifest such qualities as bravery, honesty, loyalty, and courtesy.

Read.gov on the Library of Congress Web site includes a children’s book about King Arthur, *In the Court of King Arthur* (1918), by Samuel E. Lowe. Ask students to read Chapter Seven, “The Tournament” (use the toolbar at the top to go to p. 43). Students can read the nine-page chapter online, or you can right click on each page of the chapter, save the images, and print them out. This glossary will help students with the medieval terms used in the chapter. Divide students into two groups. Ask one group to summarize the physical activities that took place at the tournament. Ask the other group to summarize the moral lessons conveyed by the actions of the boy Allan (a young page to Sir Percival) and the stranger (eventually identified as Gouvernail, a servant to Sir Tristram). Then, ask the two groups to debate the following assessment: “The moral lessons of the tournament were far more important than the physical tests of skill.”

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grades 6-8 English/Language Arts (Standards 2: Communication and 8: Literature) and Common Core State Standards for grades 6-8 ELA-Literacy (Reading: Literature, Speaking & Listening, and History/Social Studies).

FEATURED FEATURE– WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY

Having trouble finding primary sources to teach medieval or world history? Then you should check out the World Digital Library! This Web site, created by a partnership of the Library of Congress, UNESCO, and numerous other international libraries and archives, makes available significant primary sources that help to tell the story of world history and culture in any era.

The World Digital Library is very user-friendly and set up to appeal to students as well as adult learners. The site allows you to search by place, time, topic, type of item, or partnering institution. Each of the over 6700 items includes a detailed description of the item and its significance. Some items even include short videos from curators providing additional context. Text and manuscript appear in their original language; the site does not currently offer translations for these items. You may want to work with foreign language teachers in your school to translate small sections of text.

To find primary sources from the Middle Ages, click on search by time and select 500 CE—1500 CE. You will find 515 items including Flowers of Abu Ma’shar, the Ottheinrich Bible, the Columbus Manuscript, and a denier coin of Charlemagne.
A CITY OF WOMEN

Christine de Pisan (b. 1364-d. after 1429), *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames (The Book of the City of Women)*, Paris, around 1405, Manuscripts Department, Western Section, Fr. 607, Parchment. [French National Library]. [Detail].

This book is part of the exhibition, “Creating French Culture.” Christine de Pisan celebrated medieval women, including the military heroine Joan of Arc. What are women doing here?

MEDIEVAL AMERICAS

Large polychrome tripod plate. Guatemalan Lowlands, Maya, AD 600–900. Painted orange-gloss ceramic.

One of the most advanced medieval civilizations in the Americas was that of the Mayans. Before clicking on the title to read the blurb, try to figure out what’s going on in this design. What do the figures represent? See more artifacts from the *Exploring the Early Americas* exhibition.

THE CITY GATE

[Ghent gate, Bruges, Belgium] [between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900].

Why would there be gates to medieval cities? How many gates do you think this city might have had? What materials were used to construct the gates? To find out more about this image, be sure to check out the World Digital Library.

MAGNA CHARTA

Oil painting "Magna Charta" located in stairway of Great Hall, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. [1937; photograph taken 2007]

What is the *Magna Charta* (or Carta)? Why might there be a painting of it in the U.S. Department of Justice? Although this document is considered an ancestor to the Bill of Rights, some of our founding fathers had different opinions.