TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: August 2019

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 is excited to partner with the MTSU History Department and the MTSU Center for Educational Media for the third annual Teaching History Today: U.S. and World History Content and Strategies mini-conference, which will take place on Saturday, September 21st from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Register today to hold your spot!

• Have you joined the TPS Teacher Network? The Network is a great way to connect with educators across the county to share ideas, discuss strategies, and share your favorite primary sources. There is no cost to join. Simply create your account and start exploring the rich conversations taking place within this tool.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Join or Die [1754]
Is this political cartoon a metaphor for the American Revolution? For the modern Tea Party? It was actually created (by Benjamin Franklin) during the French & Indian War. How does knowing its context affect how you understand it?

THEME: SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICES

The new Social Studies Practices standards for K-12 challenge teachers to incorporate source-based critical thinking skills into their lessons in more explicit ways. Because the time simply does not exist for most teachers to cover all the standards—SSP’s and grade content standards—in their allotted school calendar, teachers may have to make difficult choices as to what to cover in the classroom. We at TPS-MTSU think it’s actually more important for students to get comfortable with these practices than it is for them to remember all the historical events listed in their chronological eras. Happily, we also think you can cover the content standards by using strategies listed in the SSP’s. All our lesson plans, newsletters lessons, and workshop activities are designed to help you incorporate skills and content.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

• September 21 (Murfreesboro) - Teaching History Today: U.S. and World History Content and Strategies mini-conference at MTSU from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To register, click here to complete the registration form.

• September 25 (Nashville) - Tennessee Council for History Education conference at Scarritt Bennett Center. For more information, visit their website.

• Don’t forget to check out the Discovery Tennessee History Shared Calendar to find a full list of PD events by the TN State Museum, TN State Library and Archives, TN State Parks, TN History Day/TN Historical Society, East TN Historical Society, and TPS-MTSU.

SSP’S AT A GLANCE

01. Select sources
02. Analyze a source
03. Synthesize multiple sources
04. Construct an argument
05. Build historical thinking skills
06. Build geographical thinking skills

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**Lesson Idea—Organizing Data**

Teaching students how to organize data from multiple sources is an important skill within the Social Studies. Whether they are exploring multiple primary sources, their textbooks, or notes from class, it is key that students learn how to organize this information so that they can answer investigative questions and build arguments/interpretations of the content.

Using our Migrant Mother lesson plan as an example, begin by asking your students to develop a list of questions they have about this photograph. Narrow down those questions to the top three to five most important. Then as you work through the various sources included within the lesson plan’s procedure steps, ask your students to summarize the key information from each source. You might choose to have students use different colored post-its to summarize each source. After summarizing each source, ask your students to reflect on your list of questions. Did the source answer any of your questions? Do you need to refine your questions based on the summary of the sources?

After repeating the process with all the sources, ask your students to think about how your questions evolved during the process. What prompted changes in the types of questions you were asking? What other sources are needed to answer your questions? How did organizing information from the different sources in this manner help students?

This lesson idea addresses SSP.03: Synthesize data from a variety of sources in order to establish accuracy and validity by comparing sources to each other, recognize disparities among multiple accounts, frame appropriate questions for further investigation.

**Lesson Idea—Collecting Data: Choosing Sources**

When selecting primary sources for your students to analyze, the teacher must consider the needs of the students and the historical content the teacher wishes to communicate. This lesson idea explores some of the major issues we consider when selecting sources for our workshops and lesson plans.

The first step is choosing the historical event/content that you want your students to explore, as this will shape the types of primary sources you select. For example, if you want your students to explore how Americans reacted to Pearl Harbor, it may be beneficial to look for newspapers or letters first. A teacher must then assess the appropriateness of their primary source in terms of communicating desired historical knowledge and student accessibility. Does your source answer your investigative question? Do your students have the necessary context needed to analyze the source? Can you display or present this source with the materials you have in the classroom or on hand? Finally, the teacher should also choose a primary source analysis guide to assist your students in their analysis of the primary source.

A lesson plan we recently developed featured a pairing of these two sources, with the following primary source analysis sheet. After analyzing the two sources, consider the following questions. What historical topic is covered by the two sources? How does the primary source analysis sheet selected affect the historical information conveyed by the primary sources? Are the sources diverse and appropriate for the classroom? Are the sources effective at conveying historical information? What would you change, and why?

This lesson idea meets SSP.01: Collect data and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including printed materials, graphic representations, field observations/landscape analysis, artifacts, and media and technology sources.
Lesson Idea—Source Examination

Encouraging inquiry by analyzing primary and secondary sources helps students extract significant ideas, discern differences between evidence and assertion, draw inferences and conclusions, recognize author’s purpose and point of view, detect potential bias, and assess the strengths and limitations of arguments. This lesson idea challenges students to critically examine a couple of primary sources to summarize significant ideas and relevant information.

When introducing this activity, explain to students that they will be analyzing and discussing President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Remind them that the devastating battle of Gettysburg had taken place on this site just months previously. Show students this picture from the day of the Gettysburg Address. As a class, use the primary source analysis handout to analyze this image. Fill out the handout together and build background knowledge and create class discussion about the significance of the Gettysburg Address.

Next, give students a copy of the Gettysburg Address. Read this text as a class and provide clarification for the students as needed. After reading the Gettysburg Address as a class, handout the HIPPO sheet to students. Use this handout to break down the Gettysburg Address as a class. Ask students prompting questions and guide them to use relevant information to further investigate and find the significant ideas of the Gettysburg Address. Students can use the information gathered throughout the lesson activity to make further connections to and conclusions about Abraham Lincoln’s presidency.

This lesson activity was created for 4th grade Social Studies (4.36) but it can be adapted to fit any grade level. It also addresses SSP.02: Critically examine a primary or secondary source in order to summarize significant ideas and relevant information.

Lesson Idea—Constructing an Argument: The Stamp Act 1765

The Stamp Act passed by the British Parliament in 1765 galvanized the American colonists into major protests against the Crown, which would culminate eleven years later with the Declaration of Independence. Students are probably already familiar with the colonial justification for protest, “No taxation without representation!” They are probably not familiar, however, with why the Stamp Act was enacted by Britain in the first place, and how it relates to the French and Indian War. In this lesson, they will peruse sources from various perspectives and synthesize them into an argument answering the investigative question: did Britain have the right to impose the Stamp Act?

When constructing an argument, students must keep a few key pointers in mind. First, they need to consult a variety of sources to learn a variety of viewpoints. Second, they must make a claim (i.e., take a side) that answers an investigative question. Third, they must identify key evidence from the primary source texts that articulate the points they are arguing. Fourth, they must take into account sources that do not support their claims.

Split students into nine groups and give each group one of the following sources to read: 1) Letter from a Principal House in England; 2) The Stamp Act (p. 6); 3) A Letter to His Most Excellent Majesty; 4) The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser; 5) No Stamped Paper to be Had; 6) Declaration of Rights and Grievances; 7) George Washington letter to Francis Dandridge; 8) Essex County Resolutions; and 9) Thomas Whately, “The Regulations Lately Made Concerning the Colonies and the Taxes Imposed Upon Them, Considered.” Students should be able to identify how the source supports or does not support the investigative question. Each group should then summarize, aloud to the class, how their source might support their claims or not. Once all sources have been reported on, make them all available to the class as a whole (either through handouts or links). Have students select four of the sources to use in synthesizing points to make their own arguments to answer the investigative question, using the Synthesizing Sources graphic organizer. You may wish to have half the class argue that Britain did have the right to impose the Stamp Act, and the other half argue that it did not have the right, and then hold a class debate at the end of the synthesis step.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.15) & SSP.04: Construct and communicate arguments by citing supporting evidence to: Demonstrate and defend an understanding of ideas; Compare and contrast viewpoints; Illustrate cause and effect; Predict likely outcomes; Devise new outcomes or solutions.
**Political Cartoons**

**Shall women vote? [1909]**

Political cartoons are a fantastic resource to incorporate in the classroom to understand societal tensions and historical events. Show students this political cartoon and ask them what they think it symbolizes. Ask students to use the image analysis form to break down the image or cartoon. Explain the context of the picture—what is happening in America at this time? Use this cartoon or other political cartoons from TPS-MTSU’s primary source set, Political Cartoons, to further understand the author or creator’s purpose, point of view, and potential biases.

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**Landscape Analysis**

**Landscape, Loveland Place [1982]**

Though many associate primary sources with pictures, artifacts, or documents, physical landscapes are also primary sources. By analyzing landscapes and conducting field observations, one can glimpse the history of an area written on the landscape. Have your students read the “Reading the Cultural Landscape” article on the Library of Congress’ Web site. Next, have your students analyze a landscape of their own, writing down what they see, what they know, and what they can infer based on their observations. They can then share their recordings and observations with the class.

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**Multiple Sources**

**New York - Welcome to the land of freedom - An ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty: Scene on the steerage deck [1887]**

Compare this image with Where the Blame Lies. How does each image address immigration in the late 1800s? After comparing each, explore newspaper coverage on immigration from different regions in the country. How does the tone on immigration vary? For more ideas on how to use these sources, check out this lesson plan.

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**Geographical Awareness**

**Tennessee [1826]**

Number 6 of the Social Studies Practice standards looks to develop geographical awareness in students. Coming after no. 5, historical awareness, the SSP’s emphasize the interrelatedness of history and geography, and each provides major contextual clues for interpreting sources of the other. For instance, you can use this 1826 map in a Social Studies lesson to show how Tennessee achieved its basic county-based geography within 30 years of statehood. What was going on in the mid-1820s that might have put Tennessee on the national map, so to speak?