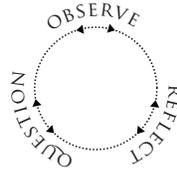


TEACHER'S GUIDE

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>