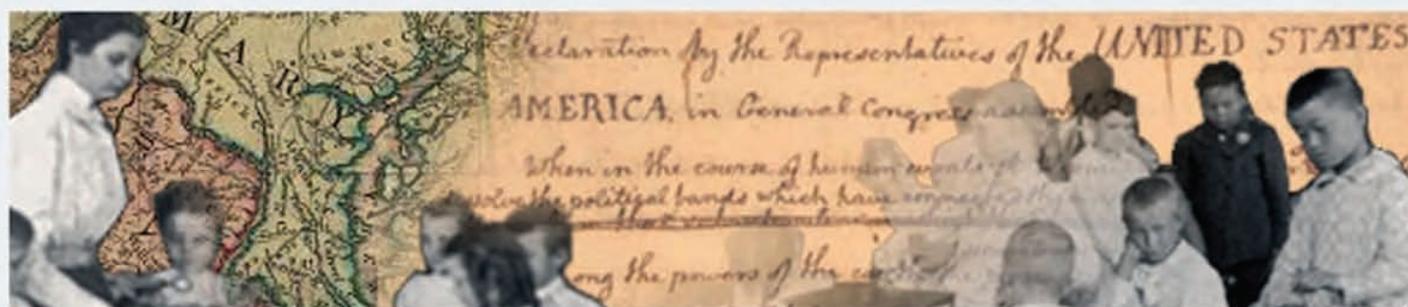


# Teaching with Primary Sources Quarterly

A publication for teachers.



## Primary Source Formats

Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall 2011

**This issue explores how teachers can use primary sources of various formats in instruction.**

Analyzing primary sources in various formats such as letters, maps, drawings, newspaper articles, motion pictures, and sound recordings can deepen not only content knowledge but also students' understanding of the human condition. On the Library of Congress Web site, teachers and students can find the correspondence of presidents and pioneers, recordings of fiddle tunes and opera scores, interviews after the attack on Pearl Harbor and interviews after the attacks on September 11, 2001. This *TPS Quarterly* issue gives strategies for using digitized primary sources of different formats to help students investigate the evidence of everyday lives and extraordinary legacies left behind by those who came before them.

### About TPS Quarterly

*Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Quarterly* is an online publication created by the Library of Congress Educational Outreach Division in collaboration with the TPS Educational Consortium.

Published quarterly, each issue focuses on pedagogical approaches to teaching with Library of Congress digitized primary sources in K-12 classrooms. The *TPS Quarterly* Editorial Board and Library staff peer review all content submitted by TPS Consortium members and their partners. Please email any questions, suggestions or comments about *TPS Quarterly* to Stacie Moats, Educational Resources Specialist, at [smoa@loc.gov](mailto:smoa@loc.gov).

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Previous issues of *Teaching with Primary Sources Quarterly* are always available at [www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/archive.html](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/archive.html)

## **Beyond Typescript and Photographs: Using Primary Sources in Different Formats**

*By Danna Bell-Russel*

As a reference librarian and archivist working in the Educational Outreach Division of the Library of Congress, I answer questions from teachers seeking primary sources to help students engage in inquiry, develop critical thinking skills and construct knowledge. While many teachers use photographs and transcribed documents, which are familiar and accessible to most students, a wider range of formats is available among the Library's digitized collections. Analyzing primary sources in different formats helps students to explore the ways that people have documented their stories throughout history, offers multiple points of view, and shows the historical role and limitations of technology.

### **Handwritten Manuscripts: A Lost Art and a Key to History**

How many of your students write letters? Most probably tweet, use Facebook or Skype to correspond with family and friends. Before such technologies changed the way we communicate, people relied primarily on pen and paper to document their experiences. Today, few students write in longhand. As a personal means of expression, handwritten manuscripts offer unique and intimate perspectives on large-scale historical events. Although some of the Library's manuscript collections include transcriptions, many students enjoy the challenge of reading original handwriting.

During the Civil War, messengers delivered soldiers' letters to loved ones at home and brought back news to the battlefield. One of the Library's manuscript collections, *A Civil War Soldier in the Wild Cat Regiment*, includes letters to and from Tilton C. Reynolds, a member of the 105th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers. Reynolds corresponded with his family and their letters document the difficulties they faced, especially after Confederates captured Tilton and sent him to prisoner-of-war camps in Virginia and North Carolina.

Begin a lesson by analyzing Orlando Gray's letter describing the Battle of Williamsburg. To facilitate student analysis, preselect questions from the *Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Manuscripts*. Guided analysis will help students observe details and reflect on the effects of this battle and of the war on soldiers and their families. Whatever type of source format is used, consider asking students to complete the *Primary Source Analysis Tool* to document and organize their thinking. Encourage them to identify questions for further investigation. For example, "How did Confederates view the Battle of Williamsburg?" might lead to analyzing manuscripts written by soldiers on the opposing side.

### **Posters, Prints and Drawings: Making History Visual**

Many teachers are comfortable using photographs—but perhaps not other kinds of primary source visual materials—to encourage critical thinking among students. Posters, prints and drawings can help students learn about history through the visual media of the time under study. Such primary sources can show what people valued, what they were thinking about and how advertisers and others tried to sway public opinion. Search the Library's *Prints & Photographs Online Catalog* for collections featuring a variety of visual formats--including architectural drawings, baseball cards and cartoon drawings.

The WPA Poster collection is a wonderful resource. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) commissioned these posters to tell communities about upcoming events, provide healthcare information and encourage Americans to learn more about their country. Use preselected questions from the *Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Photographs and Prints* to help students examine one or more of these WPA posters—such as the poster promoting the national parks. Consider why these posters were created and for what audiences. Students can create their own posters to highlight important current issues.

## History and the Movies: Motion Pictures as Primary Sources

Many students routinely use YouTube, Hulu and other websites for watching streaming video online. How many students know that in the past, motion pictures were only in black and white, and that some were silent—though possibly accompanied by live music played by an organist at the theater? Films provide a visual, moving reminder of how people's lives then were very different in many ways from our lives now.

The Spanish-American War was the first U.S. war in which the motion picture camera played a role. The Spanish-American War in Motion Pictures includes films from before and during that war as well as re-enactments filmed after it ended. This collection provides an opportunity to help students understand why some primary sources were created and the bias that exists in most primary sources. Raising Old Glory Over Morro Castle, a reenactment, is brief and visually simple. Use preselected questions from the Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Motion Pictures to help students reflect on the film and place it into historical context. To learn more about what people were saying at the time, check out the historical newspapers available in Topics in Chronicling America – Major Events of the Spanish-American War.

## Giving the Past a Voice: Incorporating Oral Histories

The Library of Congress has a number of oral history collections. American Life Histories and Born in Slavery provide amazing stories of life during the Civil War, Reconstruction and the start of the 20th century. These vibrant and thought provoking firsthand accounts of daily life can help students connect the past to their own experiences.

A few of the Library's oral history collections include sound recordings of interviews as well as the transcriptions. The Veterans History Project collects the stories of American war veterans from World War I to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Students can read transcripts when available as they listen to interview recordings. A veteran's accent or emotions may personalize the war experience.

Voices from the Days of Slavery is another wonderful oral history collection. It includes audio interviews with former slaves recorded during the Great Depression. Through their voices, students may be able to hear both the sadness of the slave experience and the pride of surviving that experience.



*Veterans History Project Website, A Project of the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress.*

Whether students listen to oral history interviews, read the transcripts or both, ask them to determine which questions provoked the most and least interesting responses. They also can identify questions they might have asked if conducting the interview. Ask students why it is important to record and preserve oral histories.

## Historic Sheet Music and Sound Recordings: Soundtrack to the Past

Use selections from the Historic Sheet Music Collection, 1800-1922 to study history through music. Song lyrics, combined with artwork used on some of these sheet music covers, document many important events and social issues in that time period. Encourage students to analyze sheet music to compare and contrast artistic depictions for topics such as women's changing role in society. For example, search this collection using the keyword, "women." Results include What's the Matter with Women?, a song whose lyrics oppose women's suffrage. Use questions from the Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Sheet Music and Song Sheets to help students notice details, reflect on what they can learn from studying this primary source and identify questions for further investigation.

The Library's collections also include musical and spoken word sound recordings. Recently, the Library and Sony Music Entertainment launched the National Jukebox, which provides free access to over 10,000 historic recordings, originally released in the U.S. between 1901 and 1925. Students can explore this era and in some cases, listen to recordings of artists performing songs whose sheet music is available in the Library's collections.

For other musical perspectives on history, the Library also has several folklife collections that feature sound recordings of people's songs, stories and histories. One example is *Voices from the Dust Bowl*, which documents the life and times of Dust Bowl refugees living in Farm Security Administration (FSA) migrant work camps in California.

### **Historic Maps: Providing a Sense of Place**

Maps provide portable images to help find the way to unfamiliar places. Maps also document everything from a certain place at a specific time to special events or celebrations, and even claimed territory. Maps supply visual documentation of terrain, environmental characteristics and more—including clues to a particular mapmaker's point of view— what the mapmaker thought was important at the time.

Have students analyze a map from 1667 titled, "A mapp of Virginia discovered to ye hills" to determine if anything about this map is different from others that they may have seen. Questions from the Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Maps can help students observe details, consider why this map was created, and what can be learned from it.

Teachers may wish to use maps in combination with other primary source formats from the Library's collections. *Railroad Maps* and railroad time schedules found in the *Broadsides and Printed Ephemera* collection can teach about measuring distance and the time needed to travel between two locations. For example, have students analyze the broadside on Great Northern and Western Railroad and Steamboat route to determine the costs of traveling from one place to another, or compare distances using the map of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad.

### **Endless Instructional Possibilities**

This article points to just some of the many different primary source formats available from loc.gov. Teaching with primary sources in a variety of formats, whether used separately or together, offers endless instructional possibilities. Students can better understand the past's complexity and richness by analyzing a different primary source formats that show a diverse range of documentation methods, points of view and technologies. Millions of digitized items from the Library's collections are available for use with students across grade levels and subjects. For assistance, check out the self-guided professional development modules, Themed Resources for Teachers, the web guides developed by the Library's Digital Reference Section, or Ask a Librarian.

*Danna Bell-Russel is an Educational Resources Specialist at the Library of Congress. A reference librarian and archivist, she previously served as a member of the Library's Digital Reference Section, the first reference division created to specifically to answer questions about the online resources found on loc.gov.*

## Research and Current Thinking

For each issue, Teaching with Primary Sources Consortium members submit summaries of and links to online resources—articles, research reports, Web sites, and white papers—that provide research and current thinking relating to the theme. This issue's Research & Current Thinking focuses on helping teachers to use primary sources of various formats in instruction.



*Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer Children at the blackboard. Lake Dick Project, Arkansas Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs*

### All Formats

#### **Four Takes on Technology: Using Digitized Documents in the Classroom**

The first of this article's perspectives on technology in education addresses the use of digitized documents to promote critical thinking and information literacy skills.

[http://imoberg.com/files/Four\\_Takes\\_on\\_Technology\\_Allen\\_S.M.\\_Dutt-Doner\\_K.M.\\_Eini\\_K.\\_Frederick\\_R.\\_Chuang\\_H.\\_Thompson\\_A\\_.pdf](http://imoberg.com/files/Four_Takes_on_Technology_Allen_S.M._Dutt-Doner_K.M._Eini_K._Frederick_R._Chuang_H._Thompson_A_.pdf)

**Historical Thinking Matters** Resources and guidance for high school teachers who want to incorporate historical thinking and primary sources into classroom instruction. <http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/teachers/>

**Learning Center: Teaching with Primary Resources** This resource from the Oregon History Project includes strategies for approaching teaching with maps, photographs, manuscripts, newspapers, artifacts, ephemera, and oral histories. <http://cires.colorado.edu/education/outreach/rescipe/collection/inquirystandards.html>

**Using Primary Sources (Library of Congress)** This resource for teachers includes guides for using primary sources, citing primary sources, and copyright and primary sources, as well as tools for analyzing various primary sources formats. <http://www.loc.gov:8081/teachers/usingprimariesources/index.html>

**Using Primary Sources (TeachingHistory.org)** From the National History Education Clearinghouse, this resource features sections on analyzing different formats of primary sources and links to a large number of guides, primary source sets and analysis tools. <http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices/using-primary-sources>

**What Does It Mean to Think Historically?** The authors describe "the five C's of historical thinking" approach to helping communicate key elements of historians' thinking processes to students: change over time, context, causality, contingency, and complexity. <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2007/0701/0701tea2.cfm>

### Format Specific

**Analyzing Primary Sources: Maps** In this self-paced professional development module from the Library of Congress, learn instructional strategies for using maps from the Library's collections in the classroom.

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/professionaldevelopment/selfdirected/maps.html>

**Making Sense of American Popular Song** This resource from George Mason University's "History Matters," offers a brief history of American popular song, poses questions to ask when analyzing songs, and links to use in teaching with songs and sheet music. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/songs/>

**The Object of Their Attention** This article describes strategies for helping students examine objects up close to encourage critical thinking; these same teaching strategies are applicable to the use of digitized primary sources.

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb08/vol65/num05/The-Object-of-Their-Attention.aspx>

**Scholars in Action: Analyze Nineteenth Century Letters** This resource from George Mason University's "History Matters," presents a case study that demonstrates how scholars interpret historical evidence found in a 19th century letter. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/sia/murphy.htm>

**Seeing Images in History** This article encourages use of still images as historical sources, rather than illustration, in the classroom, and suggests teaching strategies for helping students analyze such images.

<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2006/0602/0602med1.cfm>

**Teaching History with YouTube Revisited** In this article, the author discusses the pedagogy of using primary sources, specifically historic film footage, to teach history, and offers technical tips for accessing film clips online.

<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2011/1104/1104tec3.cfm>

**Teaching with Photographs** This 5-minute video demonstrates creative ways to use photographs in the classroom. [http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/digital/video/teaching\\_with\\_photos.shtml](http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/digital/video/teaching_with_photos.shtml)

To access links to resources cited above please visit the online version of this edition of the Teaching with Primary Sources Quarterly online at <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly>

## Learning Activity - Elementary Level

### COMMUNICATING THROUGH MUSIC: "SCOTT JOPLIN'S NEW RAG"

#### Overview

In this activity, students investigate "How do musicians communicate?" using the ragtime music of African American composer Scott Joplin as an example. They look closely at sheet music for "Scott Joplin's New Rag," and consider what this song would sound like if played. After listening to a historic sound recording of Joplin playing this song, students compare their understandings from observing sheet music and a sound recording.

#### Objectives

After completing this learning activity, students will be able to:

- Observe details of a primary source
- Express an idea based on observation of a primary source and
- Compare reading music to listening to music.

#### Time Required

One 45 minute class period

#### Grade Level

K - 2

#### Topic/s

Arts & Culture; African American History

#### Subject/Sub-subject

Arts and Communication

**Standards** McREL 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards and Benchmarks

#### Arts and Communication

Standard 4. (Role of Culture)

Understands ways in which the human experience is transmitted and reflected in the arts and communication

Standard 5. (Role of Culture)

Knows a range of arts and communication works from various historical and cultural periods

#### Credits

Library of Congress Staff

#### View and download the complete learning activity:

[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/ps\\_formats/pdf/elementary\\_activity.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/ps_formats/pdf/elementary_activity.pdf)



*Joplin, Scott. Scott Joplin's New Rag [Sheet music]. 1912. From the Library of Congress, Performing Arts Encyclopedia*

## Learning Activity - Secondary Level

### FROM THE "UNSINKABLE" TO THE UNTHINKABLE: ANALYZING HISTORIC NEWS COVERAGE OF THE *TITANIC*

#### Overview

Students activate their background knowledge of the Titanic disaster before analyzing the front page of The New York Evening World newspaper's April 15, 1912 final edition. Using this historic newspaper's subsequent front page coverage of the tragedy, students consider "Which is more important to the Evening World in 1912: selling newspapers or reporting accurate information?" They discuss their findings and the historical context before writing letters to the editor from a reader's perspective in 1912 to explain why they would or would not continue to buy the Evening World based on its Titanic front page coverage.

#### Objectives

After completing this learning activity, students will be able to:

- analyze a primary source
- Define the phrase "yellow journalism"
- Express an opinion based on evidence from primary sources and
- Write a fictional letter from a historical perspective using primary source findings.

#### Time Required

Two 45-minute class periods

#### Grade level

9 - 12

#### Topic/s

News, Journalism & Advertising

#### Subject/Sub-subject

Language Arts

**Standards** McREL 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards and Benchmarks

#### Language Arts

Standard 4. (Writing)

Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Standard 7. (Reading)

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Standard 10. (Media)

Understands the characteristics and components of the media

#### Credits

Adapted from "Titanic News," a lesson plan created by Betsy Mecham, Canton High School, Canton, IL

#### View and download the complete learning activity:

[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/ps\\_formats/pdf/secondary\\_activity.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/ps_formats/pdf/secondary_activity.pdf)



*The Evening world. (New York, N.Y.) 1887-1931, April 15, 1912, Final edition. From Library of Congress, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers site.*

## Teacher Spotlight

**Denise  
Tullier-Holly**



**In each issue, we introduce a teacher who participated in Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) professional development and successfully uses Library of Congress primary sources to support effective instructional practices.**

This issue's Teacher Spotlight features art teacher Denise Tullier-Holly. The TPS program at Southeastern Louisiana University nominated Denise for her effective classroom use of primary sources in a variety of formats. Denise has taught art for 16 years at the University's Lab School (Grades K-8) in the Tangipahoa Parish School System, Louisiana. In this interview, she discusses teaching strategies for using different primary source formats and her favorite Library of Congress online resources.

**Tell us about the first time you tried using primary sources in the classroom.**

I introduced a unit to my fourth grade art students using photographs from the National Child Labor Committee Collection highlighting child labor in Louisiana's textile industry. As students observed each photograph, I sparked critical thinking with questions such as, "What's happening in this image?" and "What makes you say that?" The thought that some of the children photographed were about their age made students pause and reflect. I used wait time to help them consider the "silence" of these photographs before comparing it to how the industrial space might have sounded in action and invited students to try recreating the possible sounds.

These analysis strategies work well for posters, maps and other visual images. Most students were unfamiliar with this time period and the labor conditions endured by many children in early 20th century Louisiana surprised them. I also used interview excerpts with the child labor photographs. Whether spoken or written, these interviews allowed students to hear people discuss work conditions, what they made and how they felt. Oral histories afford students the occasion to "meet" the human past and compare it with their own presence in the world.

**Why might a teacher use primary sources in a variety of formats?**

Using Library of Congress primary sources with students links them to the past in a concrete way, and different primary source formats do this by awakening almost all of the senses. I think both art and history can tap into the affective domain to help students become more feeling people.

Returning to the child labor unit, it is easy to incorporate various primary source formats. Students could listen to labor songs that cotton pickers sang to pass time in the fields. Analyzing maps help students visualize physical distances between textile mills and cities of the time period and determine why mills were located where they were—in close proximity to water and large population centers.

For me, teaching with primary sources is all about helping students learn to investigate and hunt for knowledge so that this joyful inquisitiveness will stay with them the rest of their lives. It empowers students because they decide how to interpret their findings. My hope for my students is that these activities will build empathy and tolerance for others, and generate in them a curiosity for learning and desire to be creative.

**What is your favorite resource available on the Library of Congress Web site?**

The American Folklife Center, especially the Alan Lomax Collection, is one of my favorites. My love of music, especially tunes from long ago in this collection, broke open the history of those times for me. Alan Lomax is a personal hero. As an artist and photographer myself, I must mention the immense Prints & Photographs Online Catalog.

Receiving email from the Library is enjoyable, especially when Sheet Music of the Week pops up; it's a wonderful way to connect students to the past. You can subscribe to updates by RSS and e-mail, including a new blog just for teachers.

**What advice do you have for teachers who haven't tried teaching with primary sources?**

Your first visit to loc.gov can be daunting with so much information and so many choices. I suggest teachers consider researching a topic in their content area that they are personally interested in investigating. Enjoy the search pathways and consider how you might use your findings in your classroom. Your enthusiasm for the topic will be contagious and hopefully will inspire students to use the Library of Congress in their lifelong quest for learning.