

Lesson Title: Understanding Primary Sources

Lesson Type: Lecture, Discussion, Group Activity

NCSS Themes:

I. Culture

d. compare and analyze societal patterns for preserving and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental and social change

II. Time Continuity and Change

d. systematically employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and reinterpret the past, such as using a variety of sources and checking their credibility, validating and weighing evidence for claims and searching for causality.

III. People, Places, and Environments

h. examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

h. evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government

Illinois Learning Standards:

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.

A. Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.

16.A.3a Describe how historians use models for organizing historical interpretation (e.g., biographies, political events, issues and conflicts).

16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.

B. Understand the development of significant political events.

16.B.5a Analyze worldwide consequences of isolated political events, including the events triggering the Napoleonic Wars and World Wars I and II.

16.B.5c Analyze the relationship of an issue in world political history to the related aspects of world economic, social and environmental history.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson students will:

1. Be able to identify what a primary source is.
2. Understand how primary sources can reveal things about the past.
3. Understand how primary sources are used in historical analysis and interpretation.

Materials and Equipment:

1. Computer with PowerPoint slides.
2. Wilson's address to Congress asking to go to war: (set one)
<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/usofficialawardeclaration.htm> (Primary Source)
3. Synopsis of Beatrice Colin, *The Songwriter* (Secondary Source): (set one)
waterstones.com/waterstonesweb/products/beatrice+colin/the+songwriter/6827065/.com
4. Transcript of Espionage Act: (set two)
<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/espionageact1918.htm> (Primary Source)
5. Detailed explanation of Espionage Act: (set two)
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWespionage.htm> (Secondary Source)
6. Zimmerman Telegram: decoding activity

Procedures:

Pre-class Preparation:

- Make handouts of primary sources ("Investigation Waits on Inquest Monday" 6 April 1918 http://www.eiu.edu/past_tracker/pdfs/NYT_6Apr1918-InvestigationWaits.pdf)
- Make handouts of secondary sources (Use example from textbook)
- Ensure computer and PowerPoint are working properly
- Print Zimmerman Telegram: Decoding Activity

Anticipatory Set:

- Explain/review the importance of the Zimmerman Telegram
- Explain instructions of the decoding activity
- Handout decoding activity and have the students complete
- Explain/review the importance of primary sources

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson you will:

1. Be able to identify what a primary and secondary source is.
2. Understand how primary sources can reveal things about the past, and how to use secondary sources properly.
3. Understand how primary and secondary sources are used in historical analysis and interpretation.

Outline of Lesson Contents:

1. Anticipatory Set (see above)

-start PowerPoint presentation-

2. Statement of objectives:

- a. Be able to identify what a primary and secondary source is.
- b. Understand how primary sources can reveal things about the past, and how to use secondary sources properly
- c. Understand how primary and secondary sources are used in historical analysis and interpretation.

3. On slide two

a. Show definition of primary source: *"Primary sources are original materials. They are from the time period involved and have not been filtered through interpretation or evaluation. Primary sources are original materials on which other research is based. They are usually the first formal appearance of results in physical, print or electronic format. They present original thinking, report a discovery, or share new information."*

b. show example of primary source- Pass out handouts created pre-lesson

4. On slide three-

a. show definition of secondary source: *"Secondary sources are less easily defined than primary sources. Generally, they are accounts written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. They are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources. Secondary sources are not evidence, but rather commentary on and discussion of evidence."*

b. show example of secondary source- Pass out handouts created pre-lesson

7. If time permits discuss:

a. information gleaned from trip to cemetery

b. how that information can be portrayed to an audience separate from yourself

c. importance of relating the past through use of primary sources to later generations

Closure:

- **Review objectives with the class**
- **Instruct students on the upcoming homework assignment**
- **Handout homework assignment: Have students write an obituary, news article or short story with the information that they have gathered from the grave stones and class lectures and discussions. This assignment must be at least three well thought out and organized paragraphs utilizing complete sentence structure and proper punctuation.**

Evaluation:

- **Students will be evaluated on how well they utilized content knowledge of local history and the information that they garnered from the local cemeteries. Students will also be evaluated on the organization of their written assignments with respect to sentence structure, proper punctuation and length.**

MIVCA Checklist:

Meaningful: This lesson is meaningful to students because it involves students in looking at primary and secondary sources and how to interpret them.

Integrative: This lesson is integrative by involving math by having student decode the telegram. The lesson also had reading and writing by analyzing primary and secondary sources.

Active: This lesson is active by having students looking at sources and gathering information from the sources.