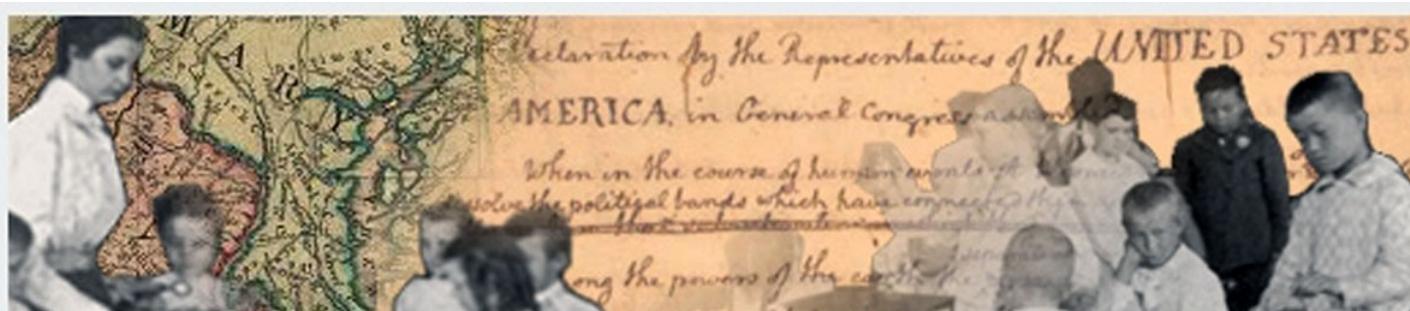


The Teaching with Primary Sources Journal

Strategies and resources for K-12 classrooms from the Library of Congress



Primary Sources and the Common Core State Standards

Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 2012

This issue illustrates how primary sources can support teaching to meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Nearly every state in the country has adopted the CCSS, which present grade-by-grade goals devised to help students gain skills needed for college, career, and citizenship. These goals emphasize advanced literacy skills such as analyzing multiple points of view and providing evidence for conclusions beginning in elementary grades. Primary sources, which represent the raw materials of history, offer teachers and students a treasure trove of authentic documents and objects with which to hone these skills.

About The TPS Journal

The Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Journal 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 Journal* Editorial Board and Library staff peer review all content submitted by TPS Consortium members and their partners. Please email questions, suggestions or comments about *The TPS Journal* to Vivian Awumey, TPS Program Manager, at vawu@loc.gov.

[The TPS Journal Archive](#)

Previous issues of *The Teaching with Primary Sources Journal*, formerly known as the *Teaching with Primary Sources Quarterly*, are available at www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/journal/archive.html.

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Primary Sources: At the Heart of the Common Core State Standards

By Rich Cairn

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) outline grade-by-grade goals for all K-12 students—goals that are attuned to the advanced literacy skills needed for college, career and citizenship. The CCSS communicate a common understanding of what students should know and be able to do by their high school graduation. The standards are the result of a state-led initiative overseen by organizations of the nation’s governors and state education commissioners. Nearly all states and the District of Columbia have adopted the CCSS.

What role do primary sources play in meeting the standards?

Primary sources are integral to helping students achieve the CCSS. The standards require students to digest and apply information using discipline-specific skills, such as analysis, comparing sources, persuasive writing, and research. Students generate questions, take and organize notes, find, analyze, and cite sources. Additionally, learning new content vocabulary is essential, as is the ability to compare historical interpretations and form hypotheses. Note that literacy skills embedded in the CCSS include oral communication. Presentations provide vital opportunities for students to listen and speak.

Under the English Language Arts standards, students beginning in the earliest grades must substantiate written arguments with evidence. Students also learn to “*gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as media.*”

The Common Core approaches science and social studies with a particular emphasis on literacy. This has several implications for teaching with primary sources. The CCSS greatly increase the focus on informational text at all grades. Assessment designers explicitly recommend a 50-50 split between literature and informational texts, starting at the primary grades. Students must be able to use subject-specific concepts and particular academic vocabulary in context.

Through the grades, students increasingly shift to writing explanation, argument, and analysis. Students’ capacity to source, organize, analyze, cite, discuss, and write about information gained from both primary and secondary sources is paramount.



Children studying a horse and buggy outside the Tyler School, Washington, D.C. . Johnston, Frances Benjamin, 1864-1952, photographer . 1899. Prints and Photographs Online Catalog. Library of Congress

Primary sources provide authentic materials for students to practice the skills required by the CCSS. Encouraging students to grapple with the raw materials of history, such as photographs, newspapers, film, audio files, government documents, and economic data, provides opportunities for them to practice critical thinking, analysis skills and inquiry.

What does using primary sources to achieve the CCSS look like in practice?

Teachers across grade levels and disciplines may wonder how to use primary sources to help students meet the CCSS. The following examples illustrate ways to address specific standards using primary sources from the Library of Congress.

Elementary Level

While students in lower grades may not yet be proficient readers, the CCSS require them to demonstrate the ability to formulate ideas based on their analysis of texts. For example, the Reading Standards for Informational Text K-5 under English Language Arts require Grade 2 students to “*Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.*”

Primary sources in formats such as photographs, maps and sound recordings can help meet this requirement by providing rich learning opportunities for early readers.

For example, as part of a unit focusing on transportation, images relating to the development of the car could help students observe technological advances from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the present. For instance, they might analyze photographs, including a horse and buggy; a very early automobile; a Ford Model T; and a car from the 1950s. Students might compare car designs from the past to those of today, and speculate about the cultural shifts that led to, or resulted from, this evolving form of personal transportation.

By Grade 4, students are required to explain cause and effect using evidence identified in informational text. To address this standard, a teacher might select primary sources from The Dust Bowl Migrations Primary Source Set. Analyzing items from this set, which includes a map, photographs and song lyrics, will allow students to investigate the environmental disaster that triggered the largest migration in U.S. history.

Grade 5 students are required to, “*Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and difference in the point of view they represent,*” under the English Language Arts standards. Teachers could select items from another primary source set, such as Women’s Suffrage, to help students understand how people expressed different viewpoints through political cartoons, physical protests and publications, for example.

Secondary Level

At grade levels 6–12, the CCSS provide distinct literacy standards for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Many of these discipline-specific standards implicitly include primary sources among essential types of evidence; some refer specifically to primary sources.

For example, Grades 6-8 students must “*Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources,*” to meet Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Standard 1. Students studying the Civil Rights Movement could read and cite evidence from a letter, such as Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine, which describes the treatment of African-American students who integrated their local high school.

Students can also explore and cite evidence from additional primary sources featured in the Library’s online exhibition, “With an Even Hand”: *Brown v. Board at Fifty*. The object list includes images and documents, including legal correspondence relating to the case.



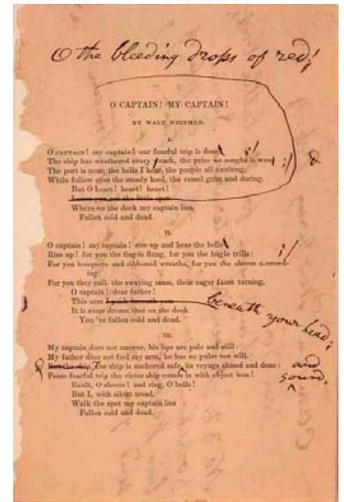
Daisy Bates to NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins on the treatment of the Little Rock Nine, Dated December 17, 1957. Typed letter. NAACP Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Grades 11–12 students need to "Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole." To meet this reading standard, students might examine the rhetorical construction of a key speech such as Theodore Roosevelt's second inaugural address. Students can also learn from analyzing drafts of famous literary works, for example, the poems "The Ballad of Booker T.," by Langston Hughes and "O Captain, My Captain," by Walt Whitman.

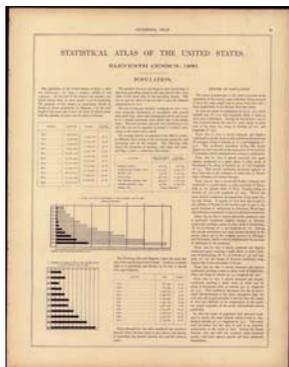
A collection of manuscripts, such as The Thomas Jefferson Papers, could provide a varied yet manageable pool of sources that students could mine to inform an explanatory essay on the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.

The Common Core State Standards also call for skills with numerical, digital, and multi-media sources. Under Reading Standards for Grades 11–12, students, "Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem. A nearly identical standard is in history/social studies.

For example, for a unit on Immigration, students could analyze historical tables, charts and maps, such as those on page eight of a statistical atlas of the United States, based upon the results of the eleventh census. They can observe data trends going back to 1790 and compare this data to more recent U.S. census data. Students investigating a larger question, such as "How did Americans at the turn of the last century react to large numbers of new immigrants?" might analyze a leaflet from the Immigration Restriction League along with a 1916 sound recording of a popular song, "Don't Bite the Hand That's Feeding You," for examples of expressed anti-immigrant sentiment. These and other primary sources in a range of formats are available in the Library's immigration-themed primary source set.



Letter and corrected reprint of Walt Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain" with comments by author, 9 February 1888. Walt Whitman Collection. Library of Congress.



Statistical atlas of the United States, based upon the results of the eleventh census. Creator: United States Census office. Published Washington, Govt. print. off., 1898. Library of Congress

Conclusion

Primary sources can provide the raw materials teachers need to support student achievement in the CCSS. Primary source-based learning is at the heart of the standards. Using photographs, maps, manuscripts, and other primary sources to engage students in learning and building critical thinking and constructing knowledge will help prepare students for success in school and beyond.

Rich Cairn is the director of the Teaching with Primary Sources program at the Collaborative for Educational Services, based in Northampton, Massachusetts.

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 use primary sources to help students meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).



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

Articles and Research: Common Core State Standards

www.hunt-institute.org/knowledge-library/articles/#articles-by-common-core-state-standards
The non-profit James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy's website offers links to articles and videos on the topic of the CCSS.

The Common Core: Literacy in History csmp.ucop.edu/files/resources/files/636_CommonCore_Source.pdf

This issue of *The Source*, a publication from the California History-Social Science Project, includes several articles on the CCSS, including: "Reading the Common Core Standards," "Together, Toward the Common Core in History-Social Science" and "The Common Core for History – No Fear!"

Common Core State Standards Implementation Tools and Resources essentialeducator.org/?p=5890

This blog post from The Essential Educator, the online version of the *Utah Special Educator Journal*, provides a list of quality tools and resources available to states and educators as they implement the CCSS.

Common Core State Standards Initiative www.corestandards.org/

The main website for the CCSS Initiative provides complete lists of Common Core State Standards, information about the standards and adoption process/timeline, as well as links to various other related resources.

Disciplinary Literacy in the Social Studies prezi.com/7gsmqjzuz1og/disciplinary-literacy-in-social-studies/

This online Prezi presentation from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, addresses implementing the CCSS for literacy in all subject areas.

History and the Social Studies: At the Core of Common Core www.mdcss.org/userfiles/file/History%20and%20Social%20Studies%20-%20At%20the%20Core%20of%20the%20Common%20Core.pdf

This white paper written by the Maryland Council for the Social Studies gives a succinct and interesting explanation of the importance of social studies in CCSS discussions.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) www.parcconline.org/

PARCC, one of two state-led consortiums developing CCSS-aligned assessments, provides information and resources, including Model Content Frameworks for ELA/Literacy (2011) and **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium** www.smarterbalanced.org/ Information about and resources from a state-led consortium developing assessments aligned to the CCSS.

P21 Common Core Toolkit p21.org/storage/documents/P21CommonCoreToolkit.pdf

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills published this guide to help state- and district-level educators align the CCSS with the Framework for 21st Century Skills. It includes lesson starters in addition to resources.

Trickle or Tsunami?: Getting Involved with the Common Core Standards

teachinghistory.org/nhec-blog/25306

This blog post offers advice on interpreting the standards and connection between history and literacy, and urges social studies teachers to get involved in state and local efforts to understand and use the CCSS materials.

What Do the Common Core State Standards Mean for History Teaching and Learning?

teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/roundtable/25348

This National History Education Clearinghouse page shares educator expert statements voicing opinions regarding the impact of the CCSS on history education.

To access links to resources cited above visit the online version of this issue of *The Teaching with Primary Sources Journal* at <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/journal>.

Learning Activity - Elementary Level

DETERMINING A POINT OF VIEW: PAUL REVERE AND THE BOSTON MASSACRE

Overview

Students analyze Paul Revere's famous engraving of the Boston Massacre to consider his purpose and intent. Students use evidence from this primary source to examine Revere's point of view. They use information from a secondary source to discuss the value of using more than one source to gain insight into an event in history.

Objectives

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

- Use primary source-based evidence to explore the creator's point of view; and
- Compare information from a primary source to a secondary source about an event

Time Required

One or two class periods

Grade Level

5 - 6

Topic/s

American Revolution
Primary Source Analysis

Subject

American History



The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt. Revere, Paul. 1770 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Standards

Common Core State Standards <http://www.corestandards.org/> Reading: Informational Text

RI.5.6. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

RI.6.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

RI.6.7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.6.8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Credits

Adapted from Blood Massacre - Or Was It? created by Emerging America, the Collaborative for Educational Services.

View and download the complete learning activity:

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/journal/common_core/pdf/ElementaryLevelLearningActivity.pdf

Learning Activity - Secondary Level

TEACHING SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

Overview

Students practice speaking and listening skills while exploring General Winfield Scott's "Orders No. 25" for the general removal of the Cherokee from their eastern lands.

Objectives

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

- Explain in detail the nature and content of General Scott's orders regarding the Cherokee; and
- Practice college-ready listening and speaking skills

Time Required

Two 45-minute class periods

Grade level

9 - 12

Topic/s

Cherokee Removal

Subject

American History

Standards

Common Core State Standards <http://www.corestandards.org/>
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening



*Orders No. [25]
Head Quarters,
Eastern Division
Cherokee Agency,
Ten. May 17, 1838.
Library of Congress*

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate

Credits

Adapted from a lesson plan created by Terry Roberts, National Paideia Center

View and download the complete learning activity:

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/journal/common_core/pdf/SecondaryLevelLearningActivity.pdf

Teacher Spotlight

**Joyce
Mason**



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 library media specialist Joyce Mason. The TPS program at California University of Pennsylvania nominated Joyce for her effective use of primary sources in helping students meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). An educator for more than 25 years, she has spent the last 17 years in her current position at Canon-McMillan High School in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. In this interview, Joyce discusses teaching strategies and her favorite Library of Congress online resources.

Tell us about the first time you tried teaching with primary sources.

As a library media specialist, I collaborate with teachers to enrich lessons. An example is a lesson developed for Jack London's *To Build a Fire*, which featured images to aid students in understanding the environment and challenges that the character in this short story faced. To introduce the story, students analyzed images from the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Online Catalog that depicted the Yukon, gold miners, packers hiking the mountains, clothing, and campsites. These images helped spur discussion about survival skills, knowledge versus instinct, a theme in the story, and connected a fictional story to actual history.

Based on your experiences, how can teaching with primary sources help students meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?

Integrating primary sources into design to develop a student-centric, inquiry-driven lesson helps engage students and develop critical thinking skills. Primary sources provide evidence for deep analysis, interpretation based on previous and new knowledge, and opportunities for comparison of different sources. In English Language Arts (ELA) standards of the CCSS, students must cite specific textual evidence to support primary and secondary source analysis. Primary sources provide the impetus for students to describe the source, summarize what it tells, contextualize the source, consider inferences, and finally ask, "What else do I need to know or find out?"

I designed an inquiry lesson for a social studies class that examined the theme of revolution, reaction, and reform as it pertained to the influx of immigrants during the 1900s and its effect on the people and government of the United States in what turned out to be a tumultuous two decades. The lesson aimed to answer the guiding historical question, "How did the reactions of the United States' citizens, politicians, and government to increased immigration and events abroad influence legislation resulting in the Immigration Act of 1924?"

Students responded to the editorial cartoon, *The immigrant. Is he an acquisition or a detriment?* This cartoon depicts the arrival of immigrants surrounded by conflicting interest groups. Students spent time analyzing the cartoon and researching characters in the drawing to contextualize it in time and place. We followed this with analysis of additional images as well as newspaper articles: unemployed workers in New York City, a print of the assassination of President McKinley, an 1914 article from *The New York Times* about a bomb explosion on Lexington Ave., the 1917 front page of a Minnesota newspaper with stories on strikes occurring across the nation and events in Europe, an image of the "Soviet Ark" used to deport Russians, and a 1919 article from *The New York Times* entitled, *Senators Tell What Bolshevism in America Means*. Students summarized, contextualized and analyzed information gleaned from these primary sources and a secondary source, Immigration Timeline from the Library of Congress, to decide what lead to the Immigration Act of 1924.

The CCSS (ELA-History/Social Studies grades 9–10) require citing textual evidence in primary and secondary sources, determining central ideas, analyzing series of events, comparing point of view, and determining meanings of words and phrases used in texts, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science. The use of primary and secondary sources in this lesson met the appropriate Common Core standards.

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

My favorite feature is "Today in History". It works as a bell ringer, discussion starter, comparison to current events, or writing prompt. Teachers look for activity ideas and this is a resource I always suggest.

What advice do you have for teachers who have never tried teaching with primary sources?

Begin browsing resources especially for teachers to locate classroom materials and links on how to use primary sources. I also recommend the Teaching with the Library of Congress blog, which highlights many unique materials and strategies.