

TITLE: Interpreting Primary Sources	AUTHOR: Diane Harding, ACPS Public Schools
SUBJECT & GRADE LEVEL Social Studies: US History 1865 to Present, GRADE 7	TIME ALOTTED: 60 minutes
Overview/Rationale: In order to develop skill in interpreting primary sources and using them to support a thesis, students need multiple opportunities for guided and independent practice. When students practice these skills using previously taught material, the teacher allows the students to focus on developing the skills within the context of familiar content. In this specific lesson, students will be able use primary sources in conjunction with their knowledge of US immigration from 1877-early 1900's to support an opinion about the quality of life of immigrants.	

Guiding Question(s):

- What does looking closely at a primary source reveal?
- How can you bring what you already know to bear in helping you interpret a primary source?
- How can you support a conclusion using specific evidence from a primary source?
- Was the quality of an immigrant's life improved when he/she moved to the U.S. in the first decades of the Twentieth Century?

Learning Objectives (SWBAT – Students Will Be Able to)

- Students will be able to make an inference (translation/reading/interpretation) about a primary source by referencing specific details within the source and by pulling in background knowledge.
- Students will be able to use primary sources as evidence to support a conclusion.
- Students will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the causes of the rise in US immigration and its affects on life in the US in the late 19 and early 20th century. They will also be able to explain how the Progressive Movement impacted immigrants.

Relevance:

OAH Historical Skills Taught:

- Historical Analysis and Interpretation

Virginia SOL

USII.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to
a) analyze and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history from 1865 to the present;

Assessment Tool(s) – Students will create a screencast in which they interpret 2 primary sources and use them to draw a conclusion about an essential question. This screencast will be evaluated based on the included rubric.

Materials/Resources

- Question Frame
- Primary Sources from DocTeach (<http://docsteach.org/>)
- DocTeach Activity: Focusing on Details: Compare and Contrast—Interpreting Primary Sources <http://docsteach.org/activities/7106/detail>
- Screencast Rubric
- Jing; Screencast.com account (create a class account)
- Jing Instructions
- Sample student product: <http://screencast.com/t/cBKewSqcO>

Modifications (to meet needs of diverse learners)

Support:

- Have the whole-class walk through the Question Frame activity before students create their screencasts. or...
- Have students work with a partner to share the “answers” on their Question Frame handout before they create their individual screencasts.

Extension: Ask students to create their own, similar DocsTeach activity, choosing an **essential question** and **two primary sources** that relate to that question.

Instructional Bibliography

Primary Sources

Photograph of Immigrants Walking With Luggage on Ellis Island
Records of the Public Health Service: Department of the Treasury.
Public Health Service.
DocsTeach.org, Archival Research Catalog (ARC) ID: 595659

Demonstration of Protest and Mourning for Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of March 25, 1911
4/5/1911
General Records of the Department of Labor
DocsTeach.org, Archival Research Catalog (ARC) ID: 5730933

Website

DocsTeach.org

Instructional Procedures/Process

Before beginning this activity, you should have covered SOL USII.4 with your students.

USII.4 Reshaping the Nation and the Emergence of Modern America: 1877 to the Early 1900s

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how life changed after the Civil War by

- a) identifying the reasons for westward expansion, including its impact on American Indians;
- b) explaining the reasons for the increase in immigration, growth of cities, new inventions, and challenges arising from this expansion;
- c) describing racial segregation, the rise of “Jim Crow,” and other constraints faced by African Americans and other groups in the post-Reconstruction South;
- d) explaining the impact of new inventions, the rise of big business, the growth of industry, and life on American farms;
- e) describing the impact of the Progressive Movement on child labor, working conditions, the rise of organized labor, women’s suffrage, and the temperance movement.

Lesson Process:

1. Drawing Inferences:

- a. Talk to students about how we use inference in our lives to draw conclusion. Explain that inference involves putting together what we “see” or “hear” with our past experiences.
- b. Use a picture or a video of a stormy sky as your example. Ask students the following **guiding questions**:
 - i. What **details** did you notice about this picture or video? (fast moving, dark clouds, rumble of thunder, tree limbs that are bent over, flag whipping in the breeze)
 - ii. What do your **past experiences** tell you about what is happening and what will happen next? (rain, a tornado, flooding)

- iii. What **conclusions** can you draw? (You should get inside, to a safe place.)
 - c. Ask students to come up with other examples of **using details and background knowledge to draw a conclusion**.
- 2. **Drawing Inferences from Primary Sources:**
 - a. Hand out the Question Frame handout.
 - b. Show students a Primary Source from DocTeach that relates to immigration.
 - c. Use the same guiding questions as those above to fill in the **example** row of the Question Frame.
 - d. Have students “think, pair, share” about their responses to the primary source.
- 3. **Completing the Question Frame**
 - a. Have students complete the “Interpreting Primary Sources” activity in DocsTeach (<http://docsteach.org/activities/7106/detail>)
 - b. They should use the Question Frame handout to capture their observations.
 - c. See the **Modifications: Support** section of this Lesson Plan for additional ideas about how to support learners.
- 4. **Discuss the screencasting rubric with students.**
- 5. **Creating the screencast.** (See sample student final product. <http://screencast.com/t/cBKewSqcO>)
 - a. Using Jing, have students interpret the primary sources in the DocTeach “Interpreting Primary Sources” activity.
 - b. Student should use their Question Frame handout to guide them as they “talk through” their analysis.
 - c. Pair students up to give each other feedback about their screencasts. Students should refer specifically to the rubric in giving each other feedback.
 - d. Allow students to re-record their screencast, making improvements based on their own observations and their partner’s feedback.
 - e. Students can “turn in” their screencasts by uploading them to Screencast.com and then pasting the url into an email to their teacher or into a shared Word document.

Closure

Survey students about the conclusion they came to in regards to the essential question: Was the quality of an immigrant's life improved when he/she moved to the U.S. in the first decades of the Twentieth Century?

Discussion Questions:

- Does your answer to the essential question depend on what county the immigrants were emigrating from? ...on what ethnic group they belonged to? ...on other factors?
- What was the most compelling factor that helped you draw your conclusion?