

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

### *Lesson Title – Real Life Primary Sources from Stanley Harris*

Grade - 5

Length of class period – Two 45 minute periods

Inquiry – What is a primary document and where can one be found?

Objectives – Students will recognize primary sources related to their everyday lives.

Students will recognize the importance of primary source documents and how they can be used to learn about the past and present.

Materials – Mind Walk Activity worksheet

Primary source worksheet

Pencil

Student provided primary documents

Activities

DAY 1

Teacher will:

Distribute copies of the Mind Walk Activity worksheet.

Review the question “What are primary sources?”

Walk students through the Mind Walk Activity

Ask probing questions to enhance the discussion of primary documents

Introduce the question, “How can a historical record be both huge and limited?”

Students will:

Review Mind Walk Activity worksheet with teacher

Sharing knowledge of primary source documents

Fill out the worksheet

Homework: Bring in a primary document that will tell the class something about them

DAY 2

Teacher will:

Review the Mind walk activity

Distribute the Primary Source worksheet

Instruct students to imagine that they are historians living 100 years from now. As they view three peer’s primary documents, they want to figure out what that document might tell them about each person.

Monitor Student work

Lead a discussion about what they found. Ask them again to think about how historical documents can be both huge and limited.

Students will:

- Review Mind Walk Activity worksheet with teacher
- Set up their primary document for other students to view
- View three primary documents and determine what they might learn about a person based on the document.
- Participate in a class discussion about what was discovered during the activity
- Answer the question “How are historical documents both huge and limited?”

Assessment:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge by a review and discussion of the “Mind Walk” activity worksheet.
- Teacher will probe with questions about primary sources brought in by students (questions will vary).
- Class discussion
- Teacher will observe and document.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- analyze data in order to see persons and events in their historical context, understand causal factors and appreciate changeover time;
- examine current concepts, issues, events and themes from historical perspectives and identify principle conflicting ideas between competing narratives or interpretations of historical events; and
- distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
- describe relationships between historical subject matter and other subjects they study, current issues and personal concerns.

## **Mind Walk Activity**

### **How can the historical record be both huge and limited?**

To find out about the limitations of the historical record, do the following activity:

Think about (“**mind walk**” through) all of your activities during the past 24-48 hours. List as many of these activities as you can remember.

For each activity on your list, write down what evidence, if any, your activities might have left behind. To help you think of traces that might be left behind, review:

### **Historical Evidence in your Daily Life**

1. Did you create any records of your activities ( a diary, notes to yourself, a letter to a friend or relative, an email message, a telephone message)?
2. Would traces of your activities appear in records someone else created (a friend’s diary, notes, or calendar entry; a letter or email from a friend or relative)?
3. Would traces of your activities appear in school records? In the school or local newspaper (did you do something special)? In the town records (did you perform in a play or contest)?
4. Would anyone be able to offer testimony or oral history about your activities (who and why)?
5. Other aspects of this historical record are not records at all, but may still offer evidence about our lives. Traces you left behind in your daily activities might include some of the following pieces of evidence.
  - the trash you have thrown away
  - material objects you use in your every day lives (money, stamps, computers)
  - objects in the place you live (especially in you own bedroom)
  - items in your locker at school

Review your entire list and what you wrote about evidence your activities left behind. Then answer these questions.

6. Which of your daily activities were most likely to leave trace evidence behind?

7. What, if any, of that evidence might be preserved for the future?

8. What might be left out of an historical record of your activities? Why?

9. What would a future historian be able to tell about your life and your society based on evidence of your daily activities that might be preserved for the future?

Now think about a more public event currently happening ( a court case, election, public controversy, a debate), and answer these questions:

10. What kinds of evidence might this event leave behind?

11. Who records information about this event?

12. For what purpose are different records of this event made?

**13. Based on this activity, write one sentence that describes how the historical record can be huge and limited at the same time.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Primary Sources

Who: \_\_\_\_\_ What: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things this primary source might tell you about the person?

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Who: \_\_\_\_\_ What: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things this primary source might tell you about the person?

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Who: \_\_\_\_\_ What: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things this primary source might tell you about the person?

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