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Introduction (cont.)

Research

“The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present” (Thelen 1989). For many students, history is nothing more than a collection of dates and unconnected events. In an effort to make history relevant, many teachers create scenarios to help students understand historical time periods. In addition, teachers must provide evidence with which students can create their own interpretations of history. Primary sources are essential in providing this evidence.

“People leave behind both direct and indirect evidence of their ideas; these expressions of their perspectives form the basis for historical interpretations” (Levstik & Barton 2005, p. 171). The only way to know what happened in the past is to study the *evidence* from that historical time period. Historians use the term *primary source* to refer to this kind of evidence. Primary sources provide links to the past and consist of texts, sound recordings, photographs, and artifacts. The National Archives notes that primary sources are “created by those who participated in or witnessed the events of the past and tell us something that even the best-written article or book cannot convey.” Behind every document is a story, and historians use primary sources to piece together that story.

Mark Krug, a professor of Education in History and Social Studies at the University of Chicago, once said, “The historian and the detective have much in common” (1967). Detectives listen to testimonies, uncover evidence, and explore motives to expose the truth. Detectives rarely solve a case with just one piece of evidence. For example, they do not interview only one person at the crime scene. They want to hear the accounts from *all* possible witnesses because some of these accounts will differ, depending on the witnesses.

Historians treat history in the same manner. Since they cannot interview the dead, they look at the evidence that the deceased left behind. Historians interpret this evidence and often disagree with one another on the interpretations.

Historical understanding is achieved through interpretation (Cohen 1994; Novick 1988). In other words, to understand history, scholars must interpret the evidence which they find. Levstik and Barton say “the desire to avoid controversy leads to one of the most serious weaknesses in the discussion of history—the refusal to admit that all history is interpreted” (2005, p. 11). Written history is an interpretation of an event by the person who wrote it—be it the historian or the creator of the primary source. “No historical account is complete” because the person who recorded the account was selective in his or her use of the facts and details (Levstik & Barton 2005, p. 7). All recorded history has some form of bias. The recorder of the account has personal motives and a distinct viewpoint. Therefore, it takes more than just one account to verify the truth. Even then, the truth is not certain.

In today’s world, it is unwise to accept one reporter’s account of an event as the “gospel truth.” If the news reporter was not there when the event happened, he or she can give only a secondary account of the event by relying on information from sources at the scene.

Similarly, one should not rely on a textbook to tell us exactly what happened, why it happened, and who was involved. Nor can one rely on only one primary source for the complete facts. Historians need more than one piece of evidence to understand an event from the past, so they search for other primary sources that either corroborate or conflict with the evidence they have.

Communication Then and Now

Standard/Objective

Students will know the ways people communicate with each other now and long ago, and the technological developments that facilitated communication.

➤ Connecting to the Document

- Ask students if they have ever received a letter in the mail. Let students share.
- Ask students to suggest other ways to communicate or talk to one another (other than talking face-to-face or writing letters). List these ideas on the board. Suggestions might include phone or e-mail.
- Write some text messages on the board. Ask students to figure out what they mean. (Examples: *I heart u. I c u. R u ok?*)

➤ Leading Questions

- Which of these methods of communication is older? How can you tell?
- Which method of communication is more fun? Why?

➤ Graphic Organizer Extension

Draw a T-chart on the board. At the top on one side, place a piece of stationery with writing on it (or a written letter), and at the top of the other side, write a text message like *I heart u*. Underneath each side of the T-chart, have students come up to the board and write words or draw pictures that describe what they like about each type of communication.

Vocabulary

- **letter**—printed messages sent through the mail
- **text message**—a short message typed on a computer or phone
- **post office**—a governmental office that receives and delivers mail
- **correspond**—to communicate with someone through written text
- **wireless**—a way to communicate that uses cell phone frequencies rather than wires

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

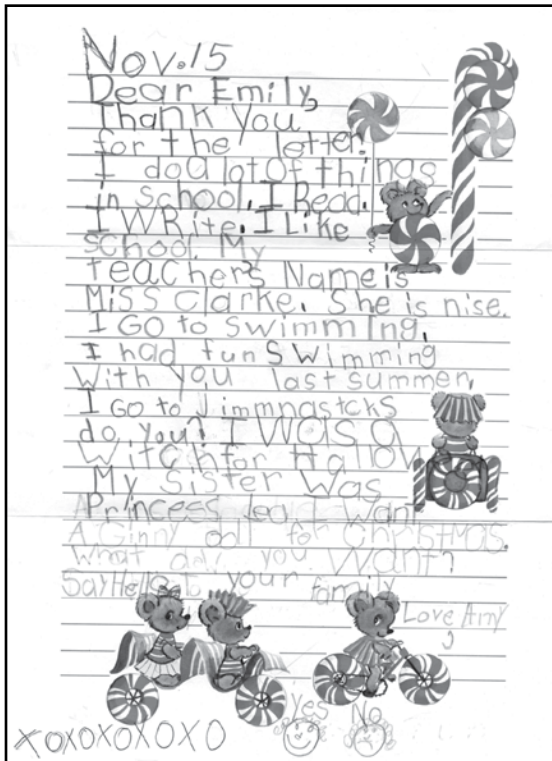
Letters have been a form of communication for hundreds of years. Most people have received a letter from a friend or a letter containing important information. Historically, letters have been transported by horseback, ship, train, airplane, truck, and hand-delivered by mail carriers. In the late 1990s, wireless handheld devices that could transmit messages through the Internet were introduced. People can use these devices to communicate instantly with each other through e-mail and text messages. Communicating through an electronic device is different from communicating through a handwritten letter. Some people send many text messages each day, but they write very few letters. Text messages are shorter than a typical letter, and the receiver gets them almost instantly. Individuals may prefer one or the other, but there are occasions for both.

Name _____

Communication Then and Now

Directions: Look at the pictures and answer the questions below.

Then



Source: Emily Smith

Now



Source: Tatjana Strelkova/Shutterstock, Inc.

1. What does the text message say?

2. What would you say in a text message?

3. What do you like about the letter?

QUESTIONS

Document-Based Question Task

DAY 1

1. Activate students' knowledge about their communities with this review. Students will be filling in a graphic organizer. Students in grades 2–3 should record information in their own graphic organizers as you model, on the board, how to fill it in. Students in grades K–1 can just participate in the one you model for them.
2. Draw a circle on the board or on a large sheet of paper. Ask students what they have been studying about this week. They should say “my community.” Write *My Community* in the center of the circle.
3. Ask students if they can tell you what they learned about their community. Lead students to conclude that they learned about communication, automobiles, classrooms, and restaurants. Draw four lines that branch away from the My Community circle and write *communication*, *automobiles*, *classrooms*, and *restaurants* at the end of these lines. Draw circles around these words.
4. Have students share what they learned about communication, automobiles, classrooms, and restaurants. Draw lines and write their ideas on the web. Leave the web up until the following day.

DAY 2

1. Begin by showing all of the primary source images, two at a time, to students. Start with the two images that show communication, automobiles, etc.
2. Students will be writing about their communities. The writing task is different for the two age groups. Write the following questions on the board:
 - Grades K–1 students will use this sentence stem: The most important thing I know about my community is . . .
 - Grades 2–3 students will write a paragraph to address this task: Name at least three ways your community has changed.
3. Have students draw pictures to go along with their answers. Remind students to think about the graphic organizer from the previous day and to think about the pictures they just viewed as they write and draw.

The Boston Massacre

Standard/Objective

Students will understand the events that contributed to the outbreak of the American Revolution and the earliest armed conflict of the Revolutionary War.

Analyzing the Primary Source

Make a copy of the image from the CD and cut it in half vertically. Give one half of the image to part of the class and the other half to the other part of your class. Let them analyze their parts of the image and list all the things they notice on a sheet of paper or on the board. Then, place the image together and talk about what the students wrote. Share the background information and ask the following questions.

Questions to ask:

- What is going on in this picture?
- Who do you think will win? Why?
- What clues tell you the time of day this event takes place?
- What is propaganda?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

British troops had been permanently stationed in the colonies since the French lost control of Canada in the French and Indian War. Supposedly the troops were there to defend the colonists against American Indian threats, but it was clear that the troops were there to maintain English power over the hostile colonists. Resentment toward the soldiers was very strong, especially in Boston.

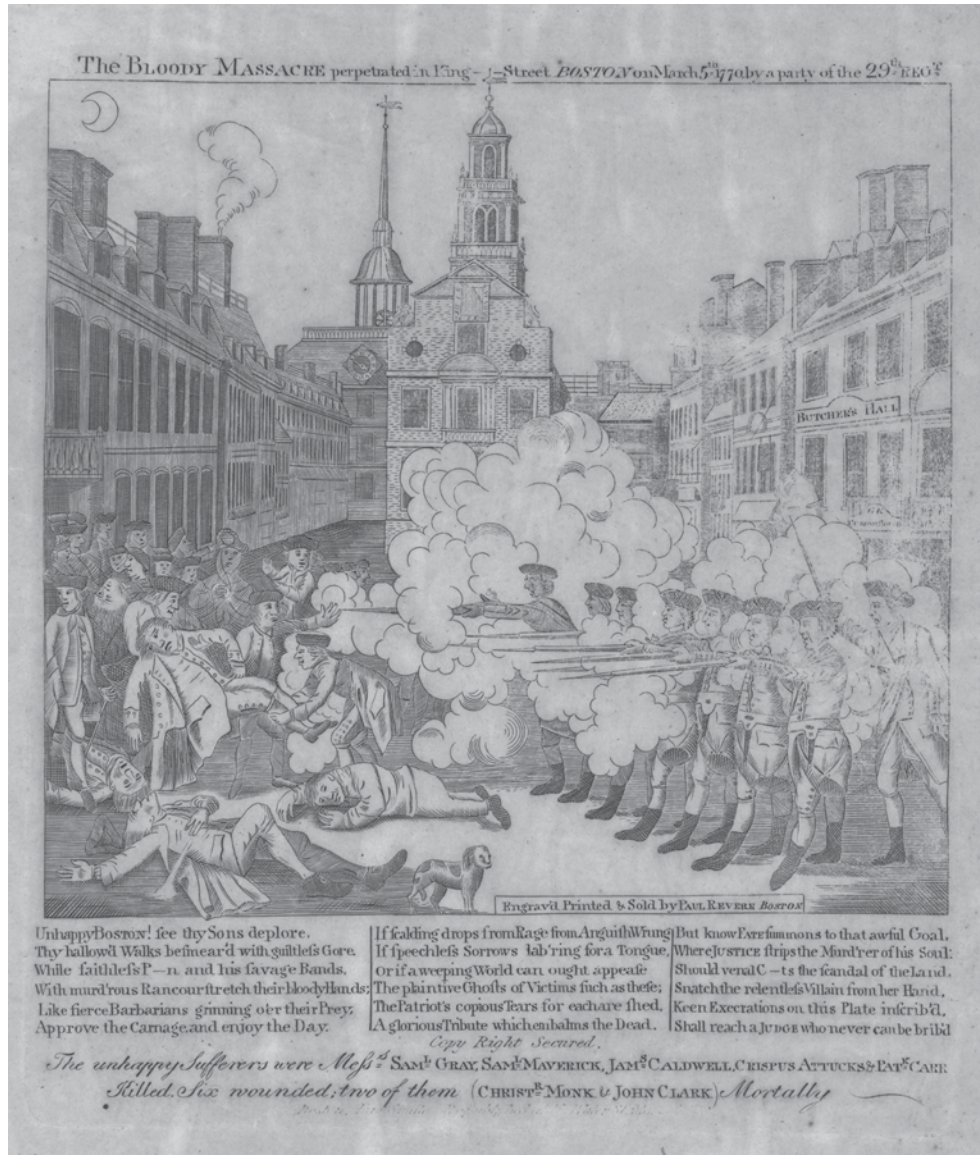
On the eve of March 5, 1770, a group of men and boys began taunting a single sentry outside the customs house in Boston. About seven British soldiers came to his assistance. The crowd grew to as many as 50 and became unruly. Sticks and clubs appeared and were thrown along with snowballs. The soldiers were told to load their weapons. Reports say that the captain told his men to not fire, but that the crowd began taunting them to fire. At this point one soldier was knocked to the ground, and from this position aimed and fired. His fellow soldiers did the same in a scattered fashion. Three colonists died immediately, including the now famous Crispus Attucks.

The Patriots used the incident to their full advantage. Paul Revere completed an engraving of the incident within three weeks. His print shows the British firing on the crowd as an officer gives the order.

Name _____

The Boston Massacre

Directions: Answer the following questions about this primary source on a separate sheet of paper. Remember to use complete sentences.



Source: The Library of Congress

QUESTIONS

1. Why would this woodcut be called the Boston Massacre?
2. Seeing this for the first time, which side would you choose and why?
3. Why would this woodcut be used as propaganda?

Document-Based Question Task

Historical Context

In the early American colonial days a small argument over political rights turned into a revolutionary war for independence from England. What caused such outrage that colonists would take up arms to fight for a new democracy? It was the British who levied taxes in a power struggle that pushed the colonists too far. "Taxation without representation" became the rallying cry against Britain. Being "patriotic" became the theme for resisting oppressive British rule. Convincing the colonists to fight for freedom was a tough challenge. Not only did each colony want to maintain their own power, but each had developed its own culture with different priorities. Despite the differences, leaders and citizens alike agreed to fight for liberty.

Directions: Using the documents and your knowledge of early American history, complete the task below.

DBQ TASK

Write a well-organized essay describing how the colonial Patriots convinced other colonists to support the idea of independence from Great Britain.

In the essay, remember to:

- Tell about the actions of the Patriots that persuaded others to follow them before the Declaration of Independence was written.
- Include a topic sentence, introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Give details to support your ideas.
- Use information from the documents to support your argument.

U-boat Sinks *Lusitania*

Standard/Objective

Students will understand how the home front influenced and was influenced by U.S. involvement in World War I.

Analyzing the Primary Source

This is a drawing from *Punch* magazine. It portrays the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Below the image is a notice for the *Lusitania's* return voyage. Have students examine the drawing and discuss the number of life boats and the ship's position. Discuss how quickly such a ship could sink when hit with a torpedo in the right location. Have students read and discuss the notice issued by the German government.

Questions to ask:

- Would you have traveled on this ship after reading the warning?
- What breach of warfare did the Germans commit by sinking this ship?
- Why were U-boats an effective new invention of this war?
- At what group of people was this warning targeted?
- What was the German motive for issuing this warning?
- Did the captain act irresponsibly in saying the trip was safe?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

U-boats were assigned the role of enforcing naval blockades to cut off enemy trade routes, mainly between Great Britain and the United States. These German submarines targeted merchant convoys and sunk these ships before they could reach their destinations.

The *Lusitania* was a luxury liner owned by the Cunard Steamship Company in Great Britain. It had been sailing for nine years when it was torpedoed by a German U-20 submarine on May 7, 1915. The huge ship sunk in just 18 minutes, killing 1,198 of the people on board, including 100 children. When it was reported that 126 citizens of the United States had died, Americans were furious about this act of war against civilians.

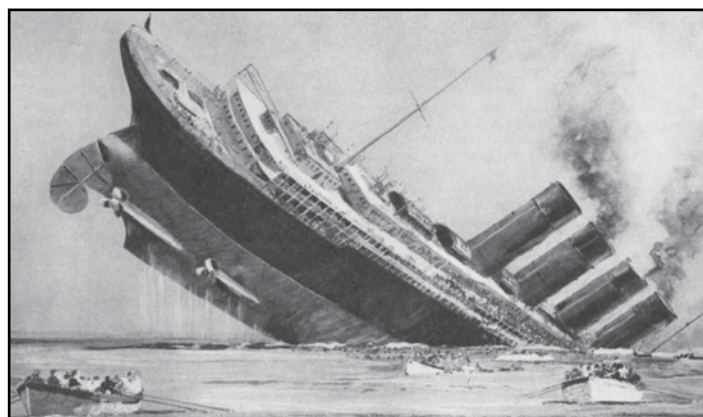
The German torpedo hit under the ship's bridge and it is believed that a second torpedo hit the starboard bow. The order was quickly issued to abandon ship, but panic ensued when the ship tilted to the side, causing the lifeboats to hang too far out over the water for passengers to board them. On the other side of the ship, the lifeboats were hung on the ship's bolts, and that made them hard to lower. Of the *Lusitania's* 48 lifeboats, only six made it safely into the water with passengers.

President Wilson issued a stern statement to the German government affirming the right of Americans to travel on merchant ships, calling for Germans to abandon submarine warfare against commercial ships, condemning the attack as illegal and cruel, denying that the luxury liner carried any munition. The German government promised to stop targeting merchant and passenger vessels with surprise attacks. But the memories of the *Lusitania* remained and festered. Two years later, America declared war on Germany.

Name _____

U-boat Sinks *Lusitania*

Directions: Use the image, document, and background information below to answer the questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.



Source: Jupiterimages Corporation

NOTICE!

TRAVELERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travelers sailing in the war zone on the ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,
Washington, D.C. April 22, 1915

Background Information: The drawing above depicts the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915. It was featured in *Punch* magazine. The advertisement for this voyage included a notice (or warning) from the German Embassy in Washington. However, the *Lusitania's* captain successfully allayed fears by telling tourists that his ship was too fast for U-boat attacks, and so the ship departed from New York on May 1, 1915.

QUESTIONS

1. Did the notice included in the advertisement give the German navy the right to sink a ship containing passengers including women and children? Explain your answer.
2. Why did the sinking of the *Lusitania* make Americans want to declare war against Germany?
3. How did this incident remind the world of the *Titanic*? How was it similar? How was it different?

Document-Based Question Task

Historical Context

The Industrial Revolution and the age of steel led to cities that were quickly changing into communication and transportation portals. Technology was making companies richer, but thousands of people who moved from the farm to the cities could not find shelter or jobs. A new nationalism arose as European countries vied for new territories. France, Britain, and Germany all increased the strength of their military by adding new weapons and building stronger ships. When the war finally began, artillery and infantry units performed the same duties as before, but new technologies soon took center stage in all aspects of the war—from the sea, to the trenches, to the skies. New ways to communicate and new ways to kill made this war the first “modern war.”

Directions: Using the documents and your knowledge of World War I, write a well-organized essay using the prompt below. The essay must include an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.

DBQ TASK

Even though some soldiers rode horseback in artillery units, supplies were delivered by wagons pulled by horses, and some messages arrived by carrier pigeons, why do you think World War I is still called the first modern war?

To get a score of 4 out of 4:

- Address all key issues of the assigned task.
- Incorporate specific details that prove an understanding and knowledge of this topic.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the key issues through accurate analysis of at least three of the primary source documents.
- Include information from the primary source documents in your essay.
- Draw on relevant outside information to support your argument.
- Express ideas clearly, including an introduction that is more than a restatement of the Historical Context provided above.
- Present an effective, persuasive conclusion that summarizes what you have proven in the essay.