



ETV Resources for Educators

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**Analyzing Primary Sources Using Knowitall and the  
Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool**

# Why Analyze Primary Sources?

- Allows students to think like a historian
- Develop critical thinking skills
- 2019 SC Social Studies Standards
  - Evidence Skill
    - “Identify, source, and utilize different forms of evidence, including primary and secondary sources, used in an inquiry based study of history”

# Knowitall

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# History of SC Slide Collection

Primary Sources

Divided by  
Topics

Images of SC  
History

## The History of South Carolina Slide Collection

[www.knowitall.org/series/history-south-carolina-slide-collection](http://www.knowitall.org/series/history-south-carolina-slide-collection)



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# Primary Source Analysis Tool

Graphic Organizer

Encourages Critical Thinking

Suited for any type of primary source

## TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.**

### OBSERVE

**Ask students to identify and note details.**

Sample Questions:

What do you notice first? • Find something small but interesting. • What do you notice that you didn't expect? • What do you notice that you can't explain? • What do you notice that you didn't earlier?

### REFLECT

**Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.**

Where do you think this came from? • Why do you think somebody made this? • What do you think was happening when this was made? • Who do you think was the audience for this item? • What tool was used to create this? • Why do you think this item is so important? • If somebody made this today, what would be different? • What can you learn from examining this?

### QUESTION

**Invite students to ask questions that lead to more observations and reflections.**

What do you wonder about...  
who? • what? • when? • where? • why? • how?

### FURTHER INVESTIGATION

**Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.**

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

#### A few follow-up activity ideas:

#### Beginning

*Have students compare two related primary source items.*

#### Intermediate

*Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.*

#### Advanced

*Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

**LIBRARY** | [loc.gov/teachers](http://loc.gov/teachers)

[www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/  
resources/Analyzing Primary Sources.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf)



# Analyzing Photographs and Prints Tool

Graphic Organizer

Encourages Critical Thinking

Suited for photographs and prints specifically

## TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

### OBSERVE

Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see. • What do you notice first? • What people and objects are shown? • How are they arranged? • What is the physical setting? • What, if any, words do you see? • What other details can you see?

### REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Why do you think this image was made? • What's happening in the image? • When do you think it was made? • Who do you think was the audience for this image? • What tools were used to create this? • What can you learn from examining this image? • If someone made this today, what would be different? • What would be the same?

### QUESTION

Invite students to ask questions that lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...  
who? • what? • when? • where? • why? • how?

### FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

#### Beginning

Write a caption for the image.

#### Intermediate

Select an image. Predict what will happen one minute after the scene shown in the image. One hour after? Explain the reasoning behind your predictions.

#### Advanced

Have students expand or alter textbook or other printed explanations of history based on images they study.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS | [loc.gov/teachers](http://loc.gov/teachers)

[www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing Photographs and Prints.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing%20Photographs%20and%20Prints.pdf)



# How to Use the Primary Source Tool

Choose an image  
from Knowitall

Select  
“Photographs and  
Prints” as source

Complete the  
graphic organizer

Students use the  
“?” icon for  
prompts

Email responses  
to teacher

 Print  Subscribe  Share/Save  Give Feedback

## PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

Use this tool to record your responses to a primary source.

If you need guidance, use the sample questions. Feel free to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.



Select format of your primary source

Any Format 

OBSERVE 	REFLECT 	QUESTION 
Record responses here	Record responses here	Record responses here

## FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Record responses here

[www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/)







# etv education

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