Executive Summary

Using Primary Sources in the Classroom is an interactive presentation that shows social studies teachers how to help their students read and use primary sources. The presentation moves through a series of concrete and practical skills that teachers can use to teach students to read, comprehend, contextualize, and employ primary sources toward understanding the past. Along the way, the presentation models effective teaching methods, teaches a broad swath of twentieth-century American history content, encourages teachers to use primary sources, and shows teachers how to find useful and relevant primary sources for their classrooms.

Outline

Part I: Close Reading of Historical Sources (8:00-9:45 a.m.)
  - Sourcing, language analysis (main idea, repetition, syntax), formal analysis

Part II: Contexts and Significances (10:00-11:30 a.m.)
  - Contextualization (demographics, culture), corroboration
  - Judging significance

Part III: Using Sources in Argumentation (1:00-2:30 p.m.)
  - The nature of knowledge about the past
  - Teaching with sources
  - Student use of sources to identify and support argumentative positions in writing

Part IV: Finding Primary Sources (2:45-4:00 p.m.)
  - Conventional places: textbook, source readers, online
  - Unconventional places: students’ minds, home, neighborhood, local institutions

About the Presenter

Keith A. Erekson is an award-winning historian, teacher, and teacher educator. He grew up outside of Baltimore, Maryland, and earned a Ph.D. in U.S. History from Indiana University. Presently, he is an assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at El Paso where he directs the Center for History Teaching & Learning. He is currently writing a book about popular interest in Abraham Lincoln.
Standards Engaged in this Presentation

Student Skills with Primary Sources

Part I: Close Reading of Historical Sources
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.21.D (US Government), §118.2.c.23.E (Economics) - analyze and evaluate the validity of information from primary and secondary sources for bias, propaganda, point of view, and frame of reference
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.11.B (US Government) - analyze and evaluate the process of electing the President of the United States

Part II: Contexts and Significances
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.24.C (US since Reconstruction) - explain and apply different methods that historians use to interpret the past, including the use of primary and secondary sources, points of view, frames of reference, and historical context
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.8.B (US since Reconstruction) - pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns shown on maps
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.24.E (US since Reconstruction) - evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author

Part III: Using Sources in Argumentation
TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.1 (US since Reconstruction) - Students use critical-thinking skills to explain and apply different methods that historians use to interpret the past, including points of view and historical context
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.24.D (US since Reconstruction) - use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple sources of evidence
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.24.G (US since Reconstruction) - support a point of view on a social studies issue or event
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.18.A (US Government) - evaluate a political policy or decision in the United States that was a result of changes in American culture
TEKS 1998 §118.2.c.23.D (Economics) - explain a point of view on an economic issue
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.2.C (US Government) - analyze debates and compromises necessary to reach political decisions using historical documents
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.9.F (US Government) - analyze selected issues raised by judicial activism and judicial restraint
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.18.C (US Government) - describe an example of a government policy that has affected a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.21.C (US Government) - explain a point of view on a government issue

Part IV: Finding Primary Sources
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.24.A (US since Reconstruction) - locate and use primary sources
TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.2 (US since Reconstruction) -museums, historical sites, presidential libraries, and local and state preservation societies
Types of Primary Sources

Architecture and Buildings
   TEKS 1998 §113.33.c.20.A-B (World History)

Cartoons

Census Data
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.8.B (US since Reconstruction)

Letters
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.2 (US since Reconstruction)
   TEKS 1998 §113.33.b.2 (World History)
   TEKS 1998 §113.35.b.2 (US Government)

Material Culture

Music
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.2 (US since Reconstruction)
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.20.A-C (US since Reconstruction)
   TEKS 1998 §113.33.b.2 (World History)
   TEKS 1998 §113.33.b.20.B-C (World History)

Newspapers

Photographs
   TEKS 1998 §113.34.b.2 (World Geography)
   TEKS 1998 §113.34.c.21.B (World Geography)

Posters, Propaganda, and Campaign Advertising
   TEKS 1998 §113.35.b.21.D (US Government)
   TEKS 1998 §113.36.c.10.A (Psychology)
   TEKS 1998 §113.37.c.8.C (Sociology)
   TEKS 1998 §113.37.c.10.B (Sociology)

Speeches
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.2 (US since Reconstruction)
   TEKS 1998 §113.33.b.2 (World History)
   TEKS 1998 §113.35.b.2 (US Government)

Treaties
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.3.D (US since Reconstruction)
Specific Primary Sources

Constitution of the United States.

King, Martin Luther Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.2 (US since Reconstruction)

Rock and Roll Music.
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.20.A (US since Reconstruction)

Wilson, Woodrow. “Fourteen Points.”
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.3.D (US since Reconstruction)

Historical Content

Native Americans
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.2.A (US since Reconstruction) - political issues such as Indian policies

World War I, Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and the Treaty of Versailles
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.1 (US since Reconstruction) - major wars
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.3.B (US since Reconstruction) - identify the reasons for U.S. involvement in World War I
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.3.D (US since Reconstruction) - analyze major issues raised by U.S. involvement in World War I, Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and the Treaty of Versailles
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.15.B (US since Reconstruction) - explain the impact of significant international events such as World War I and World War II on changes in the role of the federal government

The Scopes Trial and the 1920s
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.5.B (US since Reconstruction) - analyze the impact of significant individuals such as Clarence Darrow, William Jennings Bryan

Prohibition
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.5.A (US since Reconstruction) - Prohibition
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.1 (US since Reconstruction) - political, economic, and social events and issues related to industrialization and urbanization

The Depression, Poverty, the New Deal, Social Security, and the Federal Government
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.6.H (US since Reconstruction) - identify the origins of major domestic and foreign policy issues currently facing the United States
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.13.C (US since Reconstruction) - analyze the effects of the Great Depression on the U.S. economy and government
   TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.13.D (US since Reconstruction) - evaluate the effectiveness of New Deal measures in ending the Great Depression
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.13.E (US since Reconstruction) - analyze how . . . Social Security continue[s] to affect the lives of U.S. citizens
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.15.A (US since Reconstruction) - evaluate the impact of New Deal legislation on the historical roles of state and federal governments
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.3.A (US Government) - give examples of the processes used by individuals, political parties, interest groups, or the media to affect public policy
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.3.B (US Government) - analyze the impact of political changes brought about by individuals, political parties, interest groups, or the media, past and present
TEKS 1998 §113.35.c.6 (US Government) - understands the roles played by local, state, and national governments in both the public and private sectors
TEKS 1998 §118.2.b.1 (Economics) - impact of . . . the federal government, economic ideas from important philosophers and historic documents

Civil Rights
TEKS 1998 §113.32.b.1 (US since Reconstruction) - reform movements including civil rights
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.7 (US since Reconstruction) - The student understands the impact of the American civil rights movement

The Sixties
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.20.C (US since Reconstruction) - identify examples of American art, music, and literature that transcend American culture and convey universal themes

The Vietnam War
TEKS 1998 §113.32.c.6.E (US since Reconstruction) - analyze the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam and describe their domestic and international effects

American Presidency, 1960-2000

Primary Sources Collections Referenced
The Avalon Project (http://avalon.law.yale.edu)
Census Bureau Home Page (http://www.census.gov/)
Historical Thinking Matters (www.historicalthinkingmatters.org)
The Living Room Candidate (http://www.livingroomcandidate.org)
Prohibition Party Cartoons (http://prohibition.osu.edu/pro_party/default.cfm)
Sears Catalog Archive (http://www.searsarchives.com/)
Social Security Online (http://www.socialsecurity.gov/history/)
Teaching Social Studies in El Paso (www.utep.edu/teachingsocialstudies)
Select Bibliography


________. “Hope, Humor, and Obama Online: Helping Students Do History on the First Day of Class.” Published online by the UTEP Center for History Teaching & Learning, 2009 (www.utep.edu/cht).


Stone, Chris. “‘My Beliefs are in My Song’: Engaging Black Politics through Popular Music.” OAH Magazine of History 20, no. 5 (October 2006): 28-32.