



Ohio Standards

Connections:

Social Studies Skills
and Methods

Benchmark A:

Evaluate the reliability
and credibility of
sources.

9th Grade

Indicator 3: Analyze
the reliability of
sources for: a.

Accurate use of facts;

b. Adequate support
of statements; c. Date
of publication

10th Grade

1. Determine the
credibility of sources
by considering the
following: a. The
qualifications and
reputation of the

writer; b. Agreement
with other credible
sources; c.

Recognition of
stereotypes; d.

Accuracy and
consistency of sources;

e. The circumstances
in which the author
prepared the source.

Research Roadmap

9th & 10th Grade Lesson Two

Research is the foundation of History Day projects. In this lesson students will understand the difference between primary and secondary sources, understand how to decide if a source is reliable or not, begin to develop a research plan and identify institutions to conduct research.

Estimated Duration:

One to two class periods

Commentary: This second lesson in a series of four can be used to establish the importance of historical research and help students understand local community resources available to them.

Pre-Assessment:

Ask the students to pull out their textbooks. Ask the students to find at least two pieces of information about the creation of the textbook.

Scoring Guidelines:

Information that students can find:

- Copyright or publication date
- Author(s) or editor(s)
- The publisher
- Sources used to create the book
- Publication location

This information can help students determine reliability or credibility of a source. How? If a particular group or organization publishes a source the information can provide clues about its intended audience or bias. For example: A pamphlet published in 1900 on the adverse effects of voting on woman may be confusing until you discover it



was printed by an anti-suffrage society. It can also help students detect the bias of the authors or publishers. We assume that textbooks are reliable. Why?

- Ask students to brainstorm the components of a reliable source.

If students do not bring up these points in discussion, go over each one. This information will also be important in creation of an annotated bibliography.

Post-Assessment:

Source Scenarios

Scoring Guidelines:

Question	Points	Criteria
1	1	Correctly identifies author
2	1	Correctly identifies creation date(s)
3	1	Correctly identifies where it was created
4	1	Correctly identifies the intended audience
5	1	Provides reasonable explanation about author's expertise
6	1	Provides reasonable explanation about the author's bias
7	1	Provides accurate events happening at the time the source was written/published
8	1	Correctly identifies the source as primary or secondary
9	1	Identifies the author's main point..
10	1	Provides a reasonable explanation for use in a History Day project

Instructional Procedures:

Activity 1- Primary vs. Secondary



Primary Sources: Were created by someone at the time of an event or witnessed the event.

Secondary Sources: Were created after the event, using primary sources or other secondary sources.

- Use any primary source or the Western Union Telegraph message sent from Orville Wright to his father in Ohio or the Fall Out Kit and either display it on the overhead screen or hand out copies of it to students and then use a book from the library or text book as a secondary source.
- Tell the students that each of these sources give you information about the first sustained flight by the Wright Brothers.
- Ask the students to describe what is similar and what is different about these two sources.
- Some points to draw out:

One was written at the time. It was written at the time of the event.

One was written years after it happened by someone who did not witness the event.

- Define primary and secondary source for the students.

The federal government only releases the US Census rolls 75 years after the data was collected. In 2005, the 1930 Census rolls were released. For more information on the census go to <http://www.census.gov>

Activity 2- You are the topic!

This activity will help students think about the different types of sources that could be used in research.

Examples include: diaries, yearbooks, scrapbooks, photo albums, newspaper articles, report cards, interviews with people who know the student, birth certificate, items that belong to the student, census information (if the student happened to live more than 75 years ago), government records, court records, etc.

Start a class list of the types of primary sources. Allow students to add to the list as they conduct their research.

- Tell the students that a historian is going to write a biography about their lives.
- Ask the students to think about what sources the historian would be able to use to put together their biographies if he or she was not around to tell his or her life story.
- Give the class time (5 minutes) to write down their ideas.
- Have the students share ideas and ask them to determine if the source is primary or secondary.



With the advent of the internet, there is a ton of information that students can tap into, but not all of it is trustworthy. In the same vein, sources at the library or archives can be biased or geared toward a particular audience and have to be interpreted based on those factors. A letter written home from a Civil War soldier may have lots of information on food or camp life and nothing about battle. This doesn't indicate that the soldier never saw action; he simply didn't share the details with his loved ones. Some sources are more objective. A birth certificate communicates specific as an official record. An editorial in a newspaper is an opinion influenced by various factors. This activity will help students recognize some guidelines to help them think about sources. Who made the source? When? Why? Who was the intended audience?

- Show students the "Types of Sources" sheet.
- Explain: Each source was created by an author or authors to serve a purpose. That author may have certain opinions or biases.
- Look back over the responses the students gave about the sources they would use to tell the story of their own lives. Why were each of these sources created?
- Look at the "Types of Sources" sheet. Why would someone create these sources?
- To help differentiate between a reliable and an un-reliable source, discuss guidelines for scrutinizing a source:
 - Was it published by a university press?

Is the author a professor or other professional expert in his or her field?

Did the person writing the account actually witness the event?

Are sources properly cited?

Does the author have a bias? Does he or she belong to a certain group (religious, political, etc) that affects the way he or she feels about the subject?

- Spend some time talking about evaluating Internet sources. Anyone can post material on the Internet, so any research done online needs extra scrutiny. Like other sources, it's important to know the creator. Never use a website where the source of information is unidentifiable.
- Discuss some of the Internet Dos and Don'ts

Looking up book or other reviews can help determine the reliability of published sources. Look at more than one review!

Internet Research Don'ts



DON'T cite Wikipedia. It can be used to get basic information, but there are a lot of gaps in the information it provides and anyone can change the content.

DON'T do all your research online. A bibliography filled with web addresses is not balanced.

DON't trust information on a website where there is no evidence of the author

Internet Research Dos

DO trust websites sponsored by the Ohio Historical Society, National History Day, the Library of Congress, Smithsonian, or other nationally recognized research institution.

DO trust Universities (ending in .edu)

DO use online databases to search for journal articles (INFOhio) or through library catalogs

- Divide students into groups
- Hand out the Source Scenarios, one per group
- Have students come up with a plan for deciding whether the source is reliable or not and answer the questions.
- After 5-10 minutes, have each group share their findings. Allow some time for discussion
- This activity can also be run as a writing activity or by having the class brainstorm together.

Activity 4: Making a Research Plan

History Day research may seem very daunting at the beginning. Every community has local research institutions and libraries that would be more than happy to assist young student researchers. Check with your librarian or media specialists on policies about inter-library loans.

Check the OAHSM Directory of Organizations online to find a research institution in your area:

<http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/oahsm/directory/>

- Tell students about the different types of places they can go to do research:
 - University Libraries
 - Public Libraries (especially if they have rare book rooms or



Local Historical Societies

Archives

Museums

- Ask the students to name places in and around the community where they can do research.
- Hand out the “Research Strategy Worksheet” and have students work in their groups or individually to complete.
- Remind students that primary sources can often be found in the back of, or in the bibliography of secondary sources.
- Assign a due date for the collection of at least five sources. One should be primary.

Extension

Have the students use one of their sources for their projects and write a short paragraph explaining why the source is reliable. Students should include information about: author and his or her bias and/or credentials; publication information; whether or not the source is primary or secondary and why; and what makes the source useful in the creation of their History Day projects.

Homework Options and Home Connections

Research Strategy Worksheet

Identify at least 5 sources (at least 1 primary)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts

9th & 10th Grade:

Research

3. Determine the accuracy of sources and the credibility of the author by analyzing the sources’ validity (e.g., authority, accuracy, objectivity, publication date and coverage, etc.).

Materials and Resources:

For teachers

Wright Brothers Telegram or other primary

For students

Research Strategy Worksheet, Source Scenarios



For students Research Strategy Worksheet, Source Scenarios

Key Vocabulary

Primary Source
Secondary Source

General Tips

The Internet can be a powerful tool for deciphering the reliability or bias of sources. Searches can be done on authors to help determine his or her bias. A good rule of thumb: get a second opinion. If one website says an author has one political leaning, make sure to receive confirmation. Tools like Amazon can be helpful for book reviews, but make sure to double-check that information.

Working with your schools media specialist can help identify destinations locally, regionally or online for the students to conduct research. National History Day and National History Day in Ohio list reliable internet resources for finding primary sources on their websites:

www.nhd.org

www.ohiohistory.org/historyday

Attachments

Western Union Telegraph from Orville Wright
Fall Out Kit
Types of Sources
Source Scenarios
Source Scenarios- Teachers Key
Research Strategy Worksheet