

Chapter 1

Perspectives of the Primary Source Creator, Selector, and Learner

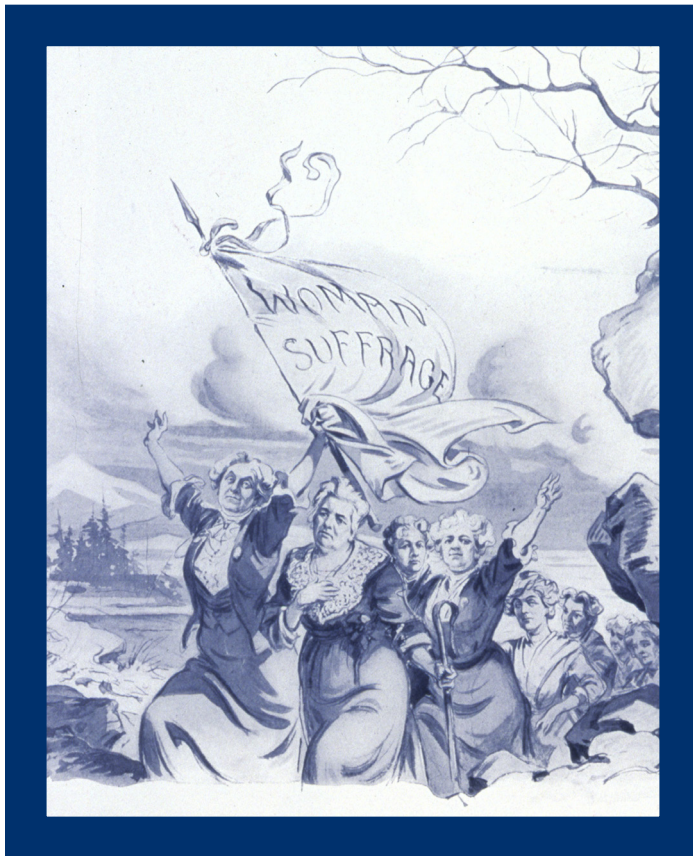
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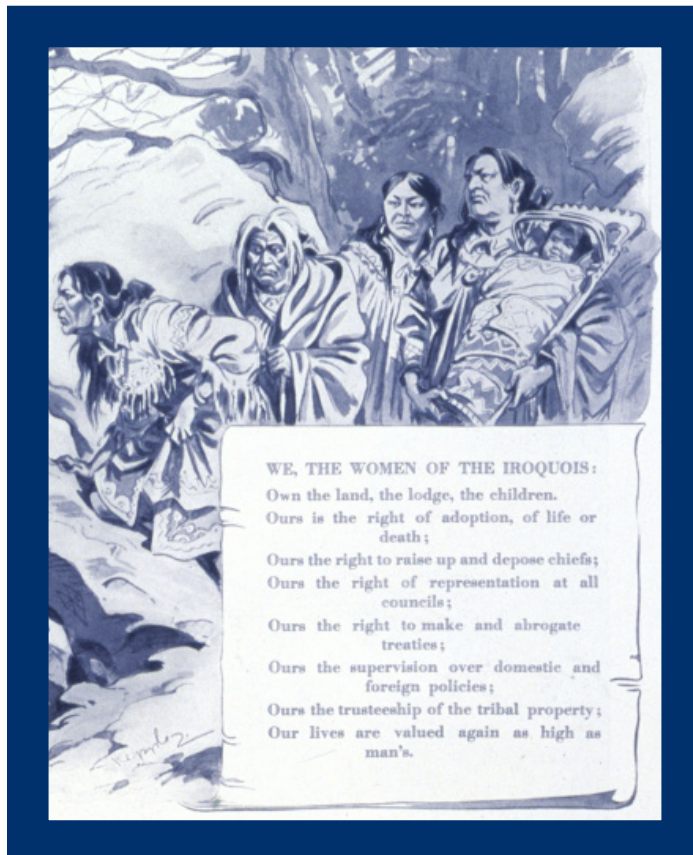
Before reading this chapter, take a couple of minutes yourself to analyze the image in Figure 1. What do you see? What is this image portraying? What in the image makes you believe that is what is being portrayed? What questions does this image generate? What caption would you give this image? (See [Appendix A](#) for possible responses.)

Figure 1. *Woman Suffrage Illustration.*



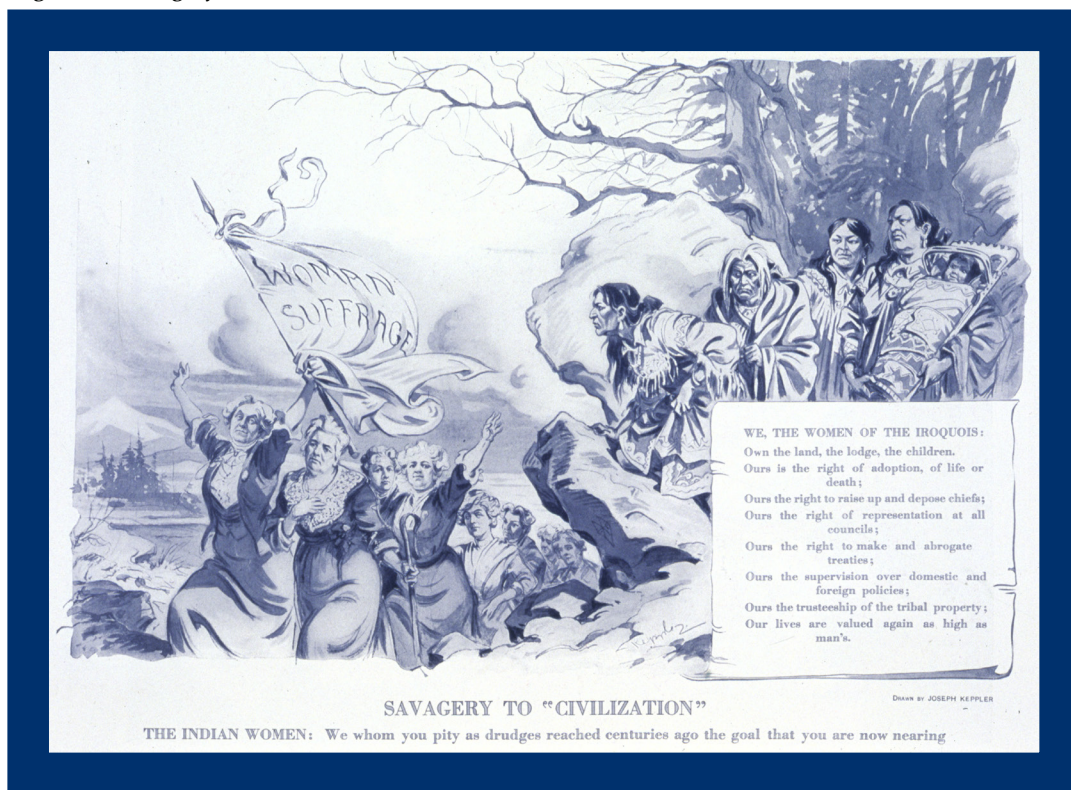
Now, look at the image in Figure 2. What do you see? What is this image portraying? What in the image makes you believe that is what is being portrayed? What does the text imply? What questions does this image generate? What caption would you give this image?

Figure 2. *We, the Women of the Iroquois*



You have now analyzed two images, using the types of analysis techniques recommended by the Library of Congress. Now, look at Figure 3. You will notice that it provides a new lens for the story being told in the previous images. How does this new information change your perspective after seeing the images in their full context?

Figure 3. *Savagery to “Civilization”*



Note. Keppler, U. J. (1914). *Savagery to “civilization”* [Print]. Library of Congress.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/97505624/>

In this chapter, we provide a sampling of some of the various lenses people use while working with sources. In order to do this, we explore perspective analysis across social studies disciplines and the different conceptualization perspectives taken, such as creator, selector, and learner (See [Appendix B](#) for Key Term Definitions).

Perspectives of Primary Source Analysis

Inquiry consists of exploration through the analysis of sources to answer questions (NCSS, 2013). An understanding of perspectives is an important aspect of the exploration process. Perspective taking is complex. It can be as simple as one’s point of view, such as Abraham Lincoln’s and Stephen Douglas’ views on the extension of enslavement (see [Lincoln-Douglas Debates](#)) during the Antebellum era. On the other hand, it may be much more nuanced as it may represent a disciplinary perspective. For example, historical perspective taking “refers to the ability to understand how people in the past viewed their world at various times and in various places to explain why they did what they did” (Huijgen et al., 2016, p. 110),

while geographic perspectives, economic perspectives, and civic perspectives all represent alternative lenses in which to view subject matter. What is often less discussed are the underlying, and sometimes subconscious, perspectives that the creator, selector, and learner bring to the primary (or secondary) source analysis. This latter point, including potential issues within the questions asked (and not asked) in Figures 5-8 that center Whiteness, will be discussed below in the “Conceptualizing Perspective Taking” section. It should be noted that the authors have chosen to capitalize “White” and “Whiteness” because the power associated with these concepts is a critical component when analyzing any source. The authors believe capitalizing these words, just as “Black,” “Brown,” and “Indigenous” are capitalized, unmask the vagueness of “White” and reminds us that there are always power dynamics at play (Painter, 2020).


In the activity you completed at the beginning of the chapter, you approached and engaged with the source from a unique perspective influenced by many variables, such as past experience, as well as the knowledge and information provided. You also likely brought in a specific disciplinary perspective to the analysis, regardless of whether you were aware of it. For many, that may have been a historical perspective. On the other hand, if you are a geographer, it may have been a geographic one. If you are teaching an economics course, that may be the perspective you are using. The same is true for a civics course. What we want you to be cognizant of is that, whether you realize it or not, you are always actively engaging in perspective taking.

Let us revisit [Savagery to “Civilization”](#) (Figure 3) again with greater intentionality and focus on perspective taking, particularly from the most commonly taught social studies disciplinary lenses. NCSS defines social studies as “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence...drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology” (1994, p. vii). This same multidisciplinary perspective frames the C3 Framework, so we wanted to demonstrate how to use disciplinary lenses in particular when examining a single source. For this illustration, we have chosen to focus on the four common disciplines within the social studies: geography, history, economics, and civics.

This time, when we engage with the source, we will use the Library of Congress’ [Teacher’s Guide for Analyzing Primary Sources](#) that has students “observe, reflect, and question” (Figure 4). When observing, students are asked to closely examine and note details of the source without making inferences. When reflecting, they are encouraged to generate and test a hypothesis about a source. Lastly, they are invited to ask questions of the source that will likely lead to more observations and more reflections. This is an iterative process that allows students to move in and out of any of these categories at any time. Students can complete this analysis through either a downloadable copy or an interactive copy of the [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#). Depending on the type of source the students are examining, the guiding questions provided in the Library of Congress [Teacher’s Guides](#) will vary.

Figure 4. The Library of Congress “Teacher’s Guide for Analyzing Primary Sources”

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

REFLECT

QUESTION

Have students 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 now that you didn't earlier?

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 important? · If someone made this today, what would be different? · What can you learn from examining this?

Have students ask questions to 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 OF CONGRESS | loc.gov/teachers

Note. This teacher’s guide shows teachers the types of questions that would be included in each of the three categories.

Perspective Analysis Across Social Studies Disciplines

Oftentimes when having students analyze primary sources, the default method for analyzing appears to be using a historical lens (Jennings & Ekiss, 2016). Therefore, we are providing and discussing additional example discipline-specific questions that lead students through the “observe, reflect, and question” model. Figures 5-8 show discipline-specific questions that could be asked of *Savagery to “Civilization.”* We pulled college, career, and civic readiness indicators from Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) to guide us in the creation of the questions. After reading this section, go back to the introductory activity and determine which disciplinary lens you used for your own analysis.

Figure 5. *Geographic Lens Questions*

Geographic Lens Questions Dimension 2: Human-Environment Interaction	
Secondary D2.Geo.6.9-12. Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.	
Observe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do the humans on the left interact with the physical environment? 2. How do the humans on the right interact with the physical environment? 3. What references are there to physical geography or human-environmental interaction in the text?
Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What can you infer about the impact on human-environmental interactions from the people on the left compared to the people on the right? 2. What does the title imply about the differences in human-environmental interaction between the people on the left compared to the people on the right?
Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you wonder about each group’s sense of place in this image? 2. What questions do you have about the human settlement spatial aspects of this image?

Note. These are questions to help students analyze the primary source from a geographic disciplinary perspective.

You will notice that Figures 5 and 6 differ in the focus of their questions even though they are investigating the same image. The geography analysis questions (Figure 5) have a spatial focus while the historical lens questions (Figure 6) are more focused on time and sequence. As a result, using this image for these two analysis sets will lead to quite different conclusions. For example, while analyzing through a geographic lens, students will likely focus their analysis on how the people in the image impact and are impacted by their physical environment. In contrast, while analyzing from a historical lens, the student discussion may evolve into White women’s social roles during this time period and contrasting White women’s rights in the United States of America and Iroquois women’s rights in the Iroquois nation.

Students with a geographic lens will likely share that they see trees, mountains, rocks, and clouds, while students observing with a historical lens will notice the women in the picture and how they might be responding/interacting. A historical lens might also cause students to recognize the women’s suffrage movement and the history of colonization, and they might draw the conclusion that these White women are attempting to colonize the Indigenous territory. They may also consider how White Supremacy is depicted here with White women fighting for suffrage while not even considering that other cultures may be more progressive

than them. Additionally, students may consider the historical interactions between colonizers and Indigenous people that might impact what is happening in the moment being depicted.

Later, students can apply a geographic lens and consider how walking up a mountain or hill may send a message in the same way that having Indigenous women on the right of the rock also does. Students should consider how the geography of the image impacts its interpretation, but also potentially sheds light on the author’s purpose or perspective. Then, as they shift towards a historical perspective, students will consider how societal roles were different for the two groups of women. For example, when reflecting on the image students may note the marginalized societal role White women hold as they seek the right to vote when the Iroquois text makes it clear that the Iroquois women already have leadership roles in their society. It is important to note here that students may be employing various lenses iteratively. Teachers should remain cognizant of what students are doing and pose questions that forge those various analyses.

Figure 6. Historical Lens Questions

Historical Lens Questions Dimension 2: Perspectives	
Secondary D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.	
Observe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do the White women’s actions on the left differ from the Iroquois women’s actions? 2. How does the Iroquois women’s text differ from the actions of the White women on the left?
Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From the image and the Iroquois women’s text, what can you infer is the Iroquois women’s perspectives of the White women on the left? 2. What do you think influences the perspectives of the two groups?
Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you wonder about factors that influenced women’s perspectives during this historical period?

Note. These are questions to help students analyze the primary source from a historical disciplinary perspective.

In Figure 7, the same image (*Savagery to “Civilization”*) is analyzed using an economic lens. This time, rather than spatial or time and sequence aspects, students are analyzing the image for relationships of various economic concepts, such as incentives, choices, and costs and benefits. As a result, the focus of student thinking will likely be on the economic aspects of decisions being made by the U.S. and Iroquois women.

In this particular image, students may choose to focus on the content of the poem discussing the Iroquois because it provides a way to compare and contrast as it shares

realities for Iroquois women while the title claims that these are realities White women do not have. Students will likely notice that the Iroquois women had the right to own property, make treaties, raise up and dispose of chiefs, and enact domestic and foreign policies. Students may comment that they recognize that Iroquois women have more economic freedom than White women do because they are treated equally to men.

Figure 7. Economic Lens Questions

Economic Lens Questions Dimension 2: Economic Decision-Making	
Secondary D2.Eco.1.9-12. Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.	
Observe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are the choices being made differently between the two groups? 2. What words relating to cost and benefit do you notice in the image? 3. What words relating to cost and benefit do you notice in the text? 4. What other economic concepts do you see addressed in the image?
Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the incentive for what the Iroquois women are doing and what might be the costs? 2. What is the incentive for what the White women on the left are doing and what might be the costs?
Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you wonder about the economy for both groups of women?

Note. These are questions to help students analyze the primary source from an economic disciplinary perspective.

The civic lens analysis questions (Figure 8) provide a fourth way of inquiry for students. This time, students focus on rights and roles in a civic society. Studying from this lens, students may be focusing on public policy issues and comparing and contrasting women’s suffrage perspectives between the U.S. nation (i.e., White women’s fight for suffrage while women of Color are left out) and the Iroquois nation.

Students and teachers may notice some overlap between these various lenses. This is the power of the social studies. The questions from various lenses almost always cross over into others, which has the power to deepen student understanding. Students may consider that while the White women are often perceived as progressive in the fight for suffrage, the Iroquois were more progressive and, in fact, were already afforded the agency in their society that the White women sought in their own society. Additionally, students may suggest a changing society in that the Iroquois may see the White folks as threatening their way of life because White people were not as progressive as they were.

Figure 8. Civic Lens Questions

Civic Lens Questions Dimension 2: Processes, Rules and Laws	
Secondary D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.	
Observe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the people doing in the image? 2. What words in the text relate to changing society, the common good, and protecting rights? 3. What other civics comments do you see addressed in the image?
Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the Iroquois women’s text have to do with the change the White women on the left seek to make? 2. To what extent does the image demonstrate a changing society, the common good, and protecting rights?
Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you wonder about women’s role in society at the time of the image?

Note. These are questions to help students analyze the primary source from a civic disciplinary perspective.

There is not one way to analyze a source. As one can see, analyzing *Savagery to “Civilization”* takes various forms and leads to multiple considerations within a single image, such as human and environmental interactions, public policy, differing nations’ view on the roles of women and women’s suffrage, and economic incentives for such roles and rights. While they are not mutually exclusive, by understanding different types of questions and concepts that can be used through differing disciplines, teachers may find it easier to combine the disciplines while teaching a topic. Juxtaposing these four disciplinary lenses can provide the investigator a richer and more nuanced understanding of events. As we discuss in the next section, though, there are still more layers of perspective to gain a greater critical and culturally responsive understanding of topics.

Conceptualizing Perspective Taking

While this brief exercise exposes the reader to one way to conceptualize perspective taking, that is, through four disciplines within the social studies, these are not the only variables educators should be mindful of in relation to perspective taking. As becomes obvious in the initial activity in which you analyzed three different iterations of *Savagery to “Civilization,”* when presented with additional or changing information of the event, perspectives change. Therefore, when compiling primary source sets for students, teachers must consider the perspective of the *creator* of the source, the perspective of the *selector* of the source, and the perspective of *students* or *learners* who will be engaging with the source. Understanding

these positionality perspectives serves many purposes. As a learner who is engaging with a source, having a greater awareness of a source’s perspective better positions the learner to make sense of the source and the potential unintentional consequences of learning about that source’s topic with the methods being used. In a broader sense, understanding the perspective of the source and its creator situates learners to understand the historical context, and helps them discern a broader, unspoken message. The learner can then actively seek out various perspectives of a single event, issue, or time in history so they can understand it more holistically. Simultaneously, by engaging in contextualizing and perspective taking simultaneously, students are less likely to engage in presentism (Seixas, 2017) and have a better, and arguably more accurate, analysis of the source.

Creator Perspectives

Primary sources are created by humans who often have a specific reason and purpose for creating the source, be it writing a document, taking a photo, creating an artistic piece, composing a song, etc. Therefore, in order to better understand the source, we must ask questions that specifically get at the perspective of the one who created the source. Doing so is enacting a historical thinking skill known as “sourcing” (Wineburg, 2001). The reader might find themselves asking questions like:

1. Who created this?
2. Why was it created?
3. When was it created?
4. Who was it created for?
5. What was happening at the time it was created?

Being cognizant of creator perspectives is critical not only in helping teachers make sense of the artifacts themselves, but also in positioning them to make better choices about which sources to use in their classrooms, as the author’s lens is likely going to influence students’ perspectives on a topic being investigated. For example, in the primary source used throughout this chapter (*Savagery to “Civilization”*) knowing some background information on the illustration’s author, Joseph Keppler, provides additional information in understanding his perspective in creating some of his subjects and the language he uses. Keppler was a White male cartoonist, an Indigenous advocate, and the son of the founder of the satirical publication, *Puck* (Harding, 2018). Knowing these creator details may help the selector and learner gain a greater understanding of the work. For example, in this instance, being aware of Keppler’s Indigenous advocacy and satirical background brings more context to the creator’s image caption and the Iroquois women in the illustration, as they observe the White women on the left. Likewise, it can help teachers more clearly to see how specific sources might have been included, or excluded, from a history textbook.

Selector Perspective

Research continues to show a long-standing preference for teaching color-evasiveness, what we would argue is also known as the perpetuation of a White, male-dominated perspective, in social studies classrooms (Gilbert, 2017). One way teachers can actively work against this is to be cognizant of the perspectives that are present and to amplify those who are either marginalized or altogether silenced. This means going beyond Lincoln and Douglas to understand the debate about the expansion of slavery in the 1850s to include counternarrative voices of people who were oppressed in the United States' institution of enslavement, or People of Color living "free" in a country where they were still not able to exercise a basic right of suffrage. Second, in order to facilitate critical student thinking, understanding which disciplinary lens and whose historical voice are being used is important. For example, in Figure 3, if an African American woman were in the image on the right staring at the White women marching for suffrage, this would allow exploration of another context of the women's suffrage movement. Analyzing the author Joseph Keppler's background from an Indigenous critical orientation (see the chapter "How Does an Indigenous Critical Orientation Change the Story?" for the critical orientation details), students can confront the power dynamics and lack of an Indigenous voice in the construction of his drawing. One can also analyze the image from a religious studies framework (see the chapter "How Does a Religious Lens Impact the Story?"). Using this lens, students could analyze how the use of religious symbols is embedded in cultures. Additionally, the selector may use Black Historical Consciousness, which explores Black people's humanity and dismantles the White, male-dominated perspective while calling on educators to use teaching methods that reconsider which sources should be selected and how they should be interpreted (King, 2020).

Arguably, and most importantly, if the selector (i.e., teacher) is choosing the questions that the learners will use in their analysis of understanding this perspective, the question wording needs to undergo critical analysis prior to sharing it with the learner. For example, in the analysis questions in Figures 5-8, each time a question refers to the women on the left, the words "White women" are used. Imagine if the authors had instead not included the word "White," which often happens when discussing women's suffrage during this time period. This would have the result (while possibly subconscious, nevertheless, problematic to the learning experience) of centering Whiteness (i.e., choosing the feelings and comforts of White people over Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, or BIPOC) in the women's suffrage movement over the voices and experiences of women of Color. Additionally, in the same analysis questions (Figures 5-8), imagine a similar scenario with "women" taken out of the phrase "Iroquois women." It could be argued that this is erasing their intersecting identities as Indigenous and women, which leads to the danger of the learner, consciously or subconsciously, treating the Indigenous women as an "other." These are a couple of examples, which unfortunately are often too easily made. Finally, when discussing questions chosen,

one must also consider the impact of questions left out by the selector. For example, none of the questions in Figures 5-8 asked students to analyze the illustration's use of wording in the title *Savagery to "Civilization."* Now, imagine if an Indigenous child is one of the learners in this exercise, what is that telling them about Indigenous women? Additionally, what is that telling the non-Indigenous student about Indigenous people when they haven't been told to unpack the author's choice of using the words "savagery" and "civilization" in the title? No matter the best intentions of teaching critical analytical skills through this activity, not addressing this title in analytical questions is likely to portray an offensive and White supremacist message to many and lead to conscious or subconscious stereotypes and White supremacist ideologies.

These questions, selected and not selected, show just a couple of the reasons that selector questions should include peer review, self-reflection, and possible revision so that the selector is cognizant of one's own inherent biases and the impact of these biases on the learner's perspectives. Ultimately, there is no absolute perspective. An important aspect is that students learn to see sources from different lenses rather than a lens that centers Whiteness, which unfortunately is too often the case.

Learner Perspective

Another important consideration is our students' perspectives, opinions, and beliefs. We must be aware that students approach and engage with sources with an individual perspective framed by their lived experiences. In a recent article on students' perceptions of museum content, researchers Burgard and Boucher (2016) found that students of different racial backgrounds experienced a historical site in completely different ways because of their own perspectives. As educators, we must be cognizant of the myriad of perspectives students bring to our classrooms, include sources that tell stories of people who look like them, and provide new ways of thinking about something in the past by challenging the dominant narrative (i.e., majority cultural practice). It is beneficial to intentionally seek out perspectives they have not already considered. This will also enable teachers to facilitate deeper thinking among students as they learn how to discern perspectives of sources and their creators.

In addition, we must help students understand that they, too, have a perspective, and that they approach every source from that lens, albeit subconsciously. Students must acknowledge their own perspective and how it shapes individual understanding before being able to begin to understand perspectives of people in the past. Oftentimes, as teachers, when we encounter a source, we think the perspective appears so glaringly obvious, and/or our thought process is so swift, we do not realize how we have already answered some of these questions for ourselves. However, this was a skill we were explicitly taught, and we have to teach our students to do the same.

Conclusion

Throughout this book, you will be confronted with new disciplinary perspectives and differing human lenses in which the same primary source can be analyzed. Be mindful of which one is being engaged. Challenge yourself on how you could take what has been created and analyze it from a different perspective. Reflect upon how that would change your understanding and the types of questions it would provoke. Additionally, authors in subsequent chapters will also have you consider notions of power and access when examining perspectives and sources. Many voices have traditionally been excluded in the social studies. Many terms have power connotations and influence one's perception of events (i.e., exploration vs. invasion, slavery vs. enslavement, internment vs. incarceration). Many primary sources about a group do not come from that group. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to analyzing sources.

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Appendix A

Possible Responses to Figures 1–3

Figure 1. Woman Suffrage Illustration

- What do you see?
 - people, (White) women, flag that says “woman suffrage,” trees, clouds, black and white, dresses, cane
- What is this image portraying?
 - A protest for woman suffrage, a parade
 - Fighting for suffrage will be an uphill battle
- What in the image makes you believe that is what is being portrayed?
 - There is a flag that says “woman suffrage.”
 - There are a lot of women.
 - It looks like they are in a line.
- What questions does this image generate?
 - Where does this take place?
 - When was this created?
 - Why was this made?
 - Did this really happen?
- What caption would you give this image?
 - Women march for the right to vote
 - Women demand voting rights

Figure 2. We, the women of the Iroquois

- What do you see?
 - women of the Iroquois, trees, rocks, sky, baby, black and white, it’s cold outside, a poem
- What is this image portraying? What in the image makes you believe that is what is being portrayed?
 - A day in the life of women of the Iroquois. I think this because of the title of the poem.
 - Strength of women of Iroquois. I think this because there are no men in the picture and women are talked about in the poem.
 - Curiosity. It looks like they are looking for something.
 - How Iroquois women are viewed in their culture. I think this because of what the poem says.

Appendix A (continued)

- What does the text imply?
 - The text suggests that women are valued in their culture. They have equal status to men.
- What questions does this image generate?
 - What are they looking at?
 - Are they scared?
 - Is this real?
- What caption would you give this image?
 - The Women of the Iroquois
 - We are powerful.
 - We are important.

Figure 3. *Savagery to “Civilization”*

- What do you see?
 - Iroquois women looking at the white women, White women, landscape/ geography, White women walking up a hill, the title and subtitle of the image
- What do you think is the message of the creator of this source?
 - That Iroquois women have had more rights in their culture than the White women have.
 - The United States and its founders have believed that Indigenous peoples are beneath them, and yet the women of the Iroquois have more rights than White women have.
- What questions do you have about this image?
 - Who made it? When? What was happening in the United States at the time?
 - Is it true that Iroquois women had more rights? Do they still?
 - How do the rights of White women in the United States compare to Iroquois women in the United States? Are they treated the same or different?
 - What event is this depicting? What is the relationship between the Iroquois women and White women at this time?

Appendix B

Key Term Definitions

Contextualizing: to place something in the situation and conditions in which it occurs.

Creator: the one who brings something into existence.

Investigator: one who is critically analyzing the source(s).

Learner: one who is engaging with the source.

Presentism: an uncritical adherence to present-day attitudes, especially the tendency to interpret past events in terms of modern values and concepts.

Selector: the one who chooses what sources will be used in the learning process and how they will be used.

Whiteness: the way that white people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups are compared (National Museum of African American History & Culture).