

Chapter 6

Primary Sources and Digital Media Literacy

Carol LaVallee, Sarasota County Schools

Figure 1. *Diligenza di ritorno dalla luna*



Note. Flying machine returning from the moon. Dura, G. (1836). *Diligenza di ritorno dalla luna* [Lithograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013648240/>

Primary Sources and Digital Media Literacy

C3 Disciplinary Focus History	C3 Inquiry Focus Evaluating sources and using evidence	Content Topic Digital Media Literacy
<p>C3 Focus Indicators</p> <p>D1: Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources. (D1.5.9-12.)</p> <p>D2: Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts. (D2.His.1.9-12.)</p> <p>D3: Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection. (D3.1.9-12.)</p> <p>D4: Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary). (D4.3.9-12.)</p>		
<p>Grade Level 9-12</p>	<p>Resources Resources cited in this chapter.</p>	<p>Time Required Approx. 2-4 days</p>

Introduction

Electronic records pose the biggest challenge ever to recordkeeping in the Federal Government and elsewhere. How do we identify, manage, preserve, and provide on-going access to e-mail, word-processing documents, and other kinds of electronic records that are proliferating in formats, mushrooming in quantity, and vulnerable to quick deletion, media instability, and system obsolescence? There is no option to finding answers, however, because the alternative is irretrievable information, unverifiable documentation, diminished government accountability, and lost history.

—John W. Carlin, Archivist of the United States, 1998

Today's students can accumulate more information now than any other time in history. Students need the skills to weed through all this information and be able to challenge it. Students rely on digital media daily, making digital literacy an important tool for students to consider its validity (Lynch, 2017). Digital literacy and digital media literacy are very closely related. Literacy includes the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Digital media literacy includes the skills of reading and writing to determine reliability. "These skills are being able to access media and navigate digital networks; to *analyze* and *evaluate* media in a critical way based on certain *key concepts*; to *use* digital and media tools to make media and for school, work, and personal interest; and to *engage* with media to express oneself and participate in online and offline communities....This process of learning digital media literacy skills is *media education*" (MediaSmarts, 2018, n.p.). In this chapter, we are going to focus on digital media literacy as it relates to historical thinking skills, the skills used by historians to evaluate history.

Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) uses historical thinking skills to guide students to think historically. Students analyze a primary source, starting with the act of *sourcing* the document. This allows student to date the document and identify its creator. Students will also *contextualize*, that is, study other events happening during the time period the document was created thereby understanding the mood of the time period. *Corroborating* with other documents of the same time period will show students different perspectives. Looking at different perspectives will guide students into a deeper understanding of original documents. Finally, SHEG has students use close reading in which students will focus on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the document (Stanford History Education Group, n.d).

Digital media literacy is like historical thinking. Historical thinking "teaches students how to investigate historical questions by employing reading strategies such as sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading. Instead of memorizing historical facts,

students evaluate the trustworthiness of multiple perspectives on historical issues and learn to make historical claims backed by documentary evidence” (Stanford History Education Group, n.d, n.p). The similarities between [digital media literacy](#) and historical thinking included components such as critical thinking and visual literacy.

Teachers are at the forefront of the digital media intersection with history. It is important that they realize that they are not only teaching about the past but also about how to interpret it correctly. In the article “Teaching Fact vs. Fiction: When Seeing is No Longer Believing” for the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) website, Jennifer LaGarde and Darren Hudgins (2019) state the following:

- A 2016 study from the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) revealed (among other things) that nearly 82% of middle school students surveyed couldn’t identify sponsored from editorial content
- A 2019 study reported that people over 65 shared nearly seven times as many articles from fake news domains on Facebook
- According to the Pew Research Center [2018], roughly two-thirds of Americans report getting their news from social media. Pew also found that in addition to being the second-most-popular search engine in the world, Youtube is ALSO the most popular social media source for news. (This is really important, especially when we consider how many students today aspire to be YouTubers.)
- Given that fabricated information posted online travels six times more quickly than its factual counterparts, according to a 2018 MIT study, it’s very likely that many people never even encountered later, more well-rounded versions of the original stories.

Michael Danielson, a ninth-grade teacher in Seattle, has his students report “media literacy moments” at the start of each day (Fay, 2019, n.p.). As students are bombarded with digital messages, Mr. Danielson has his students apply the following five core concepts about media:

1. All media messages are “constructed.”
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.
5. Most media are organized to gain profit and/or power. (Center for Media Literacy, n.d., n.p.)

The importance of what is real and what is not may hinder the very existence of American democracy. Teachers today have a responsibility, and they are an important factor in the future of our country:

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise

of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons. (NEA Representative Assembly, 1975, n.p.)

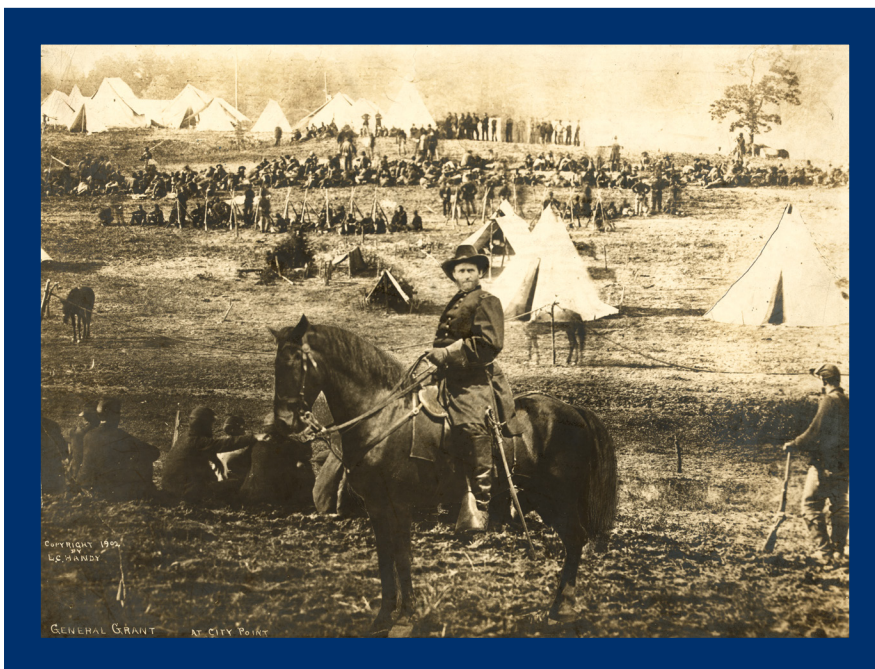
We must show students how to analyze and interpret information online. Using digital media literacy skills, when looking at primary sources, is a reliable way to teach students how to interpret digital information like primary and secondary sources.

“The founding fathers of the United States gathered handwritten correspondence and printed newspapers to acquire the information they needed” (Sperry & Sperry, 2019, p. 35). The First Amendment allows citizens to question what is happening around them. Today’s students need to continue this belief by practicing digital media literacy skills. Digital media literacy will support students during the current digital age and beyond. “Words in news media and political discourse have a considerable power in shaping people’s beliefs and opinions. As a result, their truthfulness is often compromised to maximize impact” (Choi et al., 2017, p. 2931). It is imperative that teachers help students to navigate through all the information, and misinformation, they find online. Students need guidance to determine what is reliable, especially history students who analyze and research the past. “Librarians can see that students have many misconceptions about digital information” (Addy, 2020, p. 2).

Primary Sources Can Be Misleading

A student may sometimes have trouble determining if a primary source is accurate or not. This may be because of their confusion with first- and second-hand accounts, which are not always trustworthy. For example, secondary accounts may be biased, for they are the perspective of the author. The first item that should be talked about in the history classroom is the difference between primary and secondary sources. By making this the initial lesson, students will be able to use this knowledge when learning about history.

Figure 2. *General Grant at City Point, 1902*



Note. Handy, L. C. (ca. 1902). *General Grant at City Point* [Composite Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007681056/>

While this lesson needs to be somewhat complex when analyzing history in the classroom, it can be as simple as asking students a historical thinking question like, “When was the document created?” Teaching students to examine sources, look for accuracy, and learn how to question what is not understood, may lead them to challenge the reliability of what they see online. Even though so many sources are now digitized, students need to realize that today’s technology gives them the opportunity to analyze a source as if it were sitting on the desk in front of them. For example, during a unit on the Civil War, a teacher might be interested in teaching students to examine the photo of General Grant at City Point, found in the Library of Congress’s primary sources available online. Looking at the photo online, students have the capability to zoom in and out to discover elements they may not see. Students can determine that the photograph is a fraud by using SHEG’s historical thinking skills or the Library of Congress’s *Teacher’s Guide for Analyzing Photographs and Prints*. Teachers can ask students to observe, reflect, and question what they see in front of them to help them determine the authenticity of the photo.

Step 1

Give each student in the class a copy of the photograph *General Grant at City Point* and a blank copy of the [Primary Source Analysis Tool for Students](#). Provide each student with a magnifying glass, if possible. The Analysis Tool for Students can be printed for students to write on, or students can type on their digital devices, on the form online, and then download

and print or email it to their teacher.

Step 2: Observe

Select what questions you want to use from the *Observe* column of the [Teacher's Guide for Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#). When the discussion starts, other questions may arise that you want to add. Again, please note that depending on the level of students and the discussion that takes place, this one step could take one class period. Notice that many of the questions are similar, but the teacher should choose the question(s) that they feel fit their students. Remember that developing learners are going to need more step-by-step instructions, making sure they have an example to follow. The opposite may be true for intermediate/advanced learners; they may be able to come up with more in-depth answers regarding the primary source.

- Developing Learners:
 - Describe what you see. What do you notice first? What people and objects are shown?
- Developing Learners and/or Intermediate/Advanced Learners:
 - 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?

Step 3: Reflect

Select what questions you want to use from the *Reflect* column of the [Teacher's Guide for Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#). When the discussion starts, other questions may arise that you want to add. Again, please note that depending on the level of students and the discussion that takes place, this one step could take one class period. Students may want to ask more than what one photograph can answer.

- Developing Learners:
 - Why do you think this image was made?
 - What's happening in the image?
 - Why do you think this image was made?
 - What's happening in the image?

- Developing Learners and/or Intermediate/Advanced Learners:
 - 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?

Step 4: Question

Select what questions you want to use from the *Question* column of the *Teacher's Guide for Analyzing Photographs & Prints*. When the discussion starts, other questions may arise that you want to add. Again, please note that depending on the level of students and the discussion that takes place, this one step could take one class period. Using the questions that the students come up with, the teacher may want students to have the students research to discover more information.

- Developing Learners: What do you wonder about...? (Who? What? When? Where? Why?)
- Developing Learners and/or Intermediate/Advanced: What questions do you still have?


Step 5: Further Investigation

At the bottom of the *Teacher's Guide for Analyzing Photographs & Prints* teachers can help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers. Again, please note that depending on the level of students and the discussion that takes place, this one step could take one class period. This investigation could lead to assessments created by the students.

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

Figure 3. Library of Congress’s Teacher’s Guide for Analyzing Photographs and Prints

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

Have students 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 image.

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? · What’s missing from this image? · If someone made this today, what would be different? · What would be the same?

QUESTION

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
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

Note. From Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>

After students have analyzed the photo of General Grant at City Point, teachers can bring in other sources to corroborate it. Using suggestions from “Solving a Civil War Photography Mystery,” an article from the Library of Congress’s Prints & Photographs Division, teachers can have students compare the photo of Grant at City Point with a photo of Grant’s horses. Next, have students compare the photo with Grant at his Cold Harbor, VA, headquarters. The goal of this activity is to show students that the original photo of General Grant at City Point has been doctored, not with today’s technological advances, but with technology from the 1800s.

When you look closely at the photograph, you can see small scratch marks around Grant’s head, and around the horse’s body. These marks suggest that the photograph was made by combining different images. It’s actually a composite or montage photograph. Long before the advent of Photoshop, people figured out how to manipulate images and make invented scenes look real. They exposed negatives multiple times, sandwiched two negatives together, or pasted parts of different pictures together and photographed the result. This montage is skillfully done and hard to detect unless you look twice (Blackwell, 2008, n.p.).

Finish the corroboration of photos by bringing in the photo of Major General Alexander McDowell McCook, photographed in July of 1864, and the photo of Confederate prisoners captured at the battle of Fisher’s Hill, VA. With the [detailed description of this fraud](#) and with

guidance from the teacher, students should be able to tie all these photos together, realizing that the original photo is a fake. This activity should be done at the beginning of the year to help students realize that this type of manipulation is nothing new. Sometimes students think that their generation is the only one fooled.

This activity gives students an idea of how corroborating other sources will help determine the reliability of a primary or secondary source. Providing more than one primary source from the same time period will show different perspectives, allowing students to make a detailed account of what is happening. This is something very important in this era of online questionable information. Students need to be equipped with tools that will encourage them to find their own conclusions in today's digital age. According to Hangen (2015) in "Historical Digital Literacy, One Classroom at a Time," "historical digital literacy cannot be achieved by adopting technology for its own sake but only in the service of the larger goal of helping students think historically in rapidly changing times" (p. 1203).

Another interesting story of altered primary sources that a teacher may want to use in the classroom is that of Civil War photographer Alexander Gardner. This again shows the history of doctored photos, using the ideas of sensationalism.

Like other Civil War photographers, Alexander Gardner sometimes tried to communicate both pathos and patriotism with his photographs, reminding his audience of the tragedy of war without forgetting the superiority of his side's cause. Sometimes, the most effective means of elevating one's cause while demeaning the other was to create a scene—by posing bodies—and then draft a dramatic narrative to accompany the picture. (Library of Congress, n.d.-a)

Figure 4. *Dead Confederate Soldier in Devil's Den*



Note. O'Sullivan, T. H. (1863). *Gettysburg, Pa. Dead Confederate soldier in Devil's Den* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018666313/>

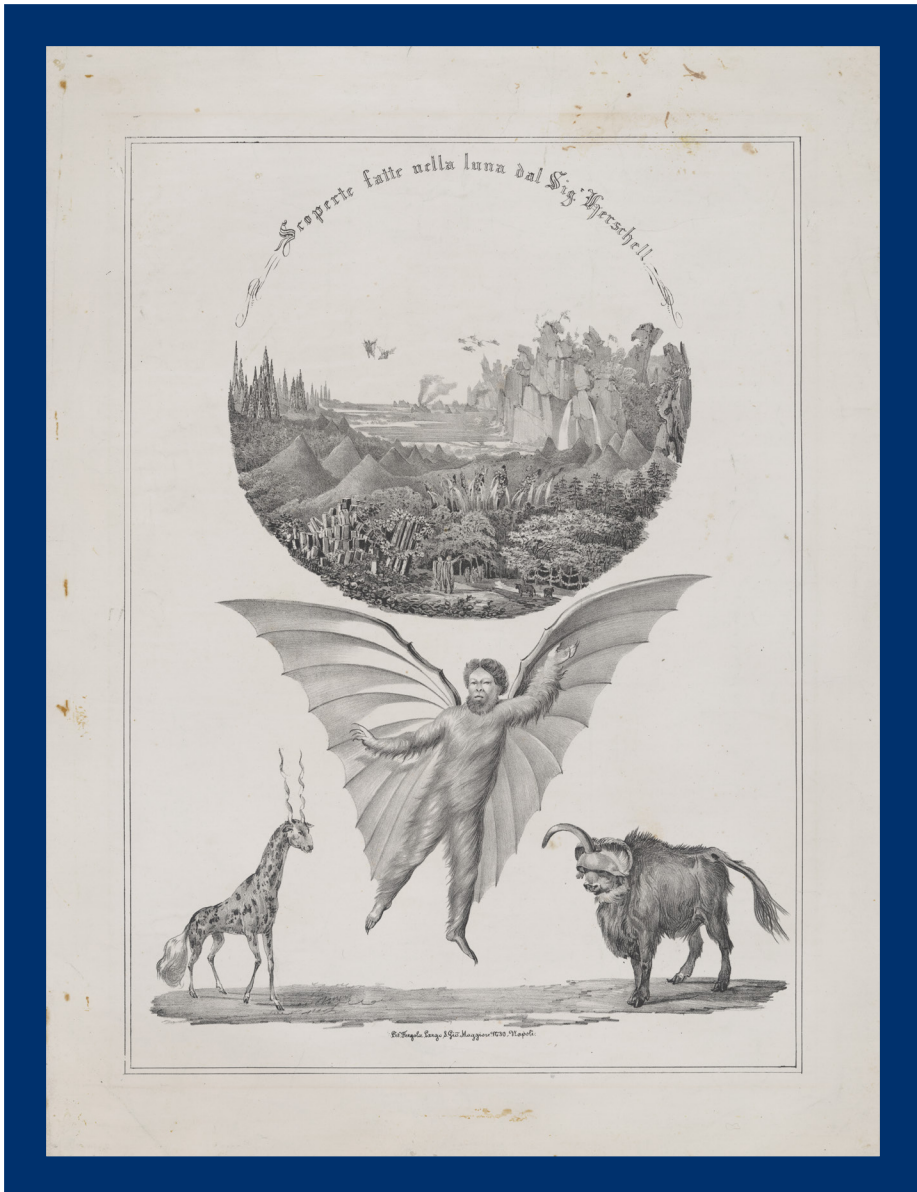
Teachers can show students the different angles of Gardner's photographs along with its narrative, "[The Case of the Moved Body](#)," to help determine how the photos are similar, yet different. Students can also study the reasoning behind Gardner's motives by using the surrounding history of what was happening during the Civil War. At the end of the essay, there is an analysis of Gardner by historian William Frassanito. It points out what students may or may not have been able to determine by analyzing the photos, such as props, rifles, and dead bodies that were moved to make the photographs more powerful for their audience. This analysis will help students understand that it is very important to ask the questions: "Who was the intended audience of Gardner's photos?" and "What was Gardner's intended message?" Teachers could use this story either before, during, or after teaching their students about the Gardner photos.

Yellow Journalism is Alive and Well

Newspapers are a wonderful source to let students see the perspective of the times. In the past, citizens discovered what was going on in their community and outward through written and printed information. Today, it is very different; however, the ideas are the same. *Yellow journalism*, the sensationalism and exaggeration of a news story, could be seen as the opposite of historical thinking: "False and distorted news material isn't exactly a new thing. It's been

a part of media history long before social media, since the invention of the printing press” (Center for Information Technology and Society, n.d., n.p.). Instead of using historical thinking skills to find the truth, yellow journalists would take these ideas and exaggerate them to the public. Some believe that this is how William Randolph Hearst and his rival Joseph Pulitzer used the ideas of sensationalism to help spark a nation into war in 1898; however, historians have debunked this idea (Kennedy, 2019).

Figure 5. *Scoperte fatte nella luna dal Sigr. Herschell* [Discoveries made on the moon by Mr. Herschell]



Note. Fergola, S. (1835–1849). *Scoperte fatte nella luna dal Sigr. Herschell* [Lithograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012646034/>

Yellow journalism, as defined by the United States' Office of the Historian (n.d.), is "a style of newspaper reporting that emphasized sensationalism over facts" (n.p.). One of the earliest accounts of yellow journalism can be found in the *New York Sun* in 1835 (Zielinski, 2015). The newspaper published a six-part series of articles titled "Great Astronomical Discoveries Lately Made" that it alleged had been written by a traveling companion of the English astronomer Sir John Herschel. The series described what Herschel and his colleagues claimed they saw on the moon through their telescopes (Figure 5):

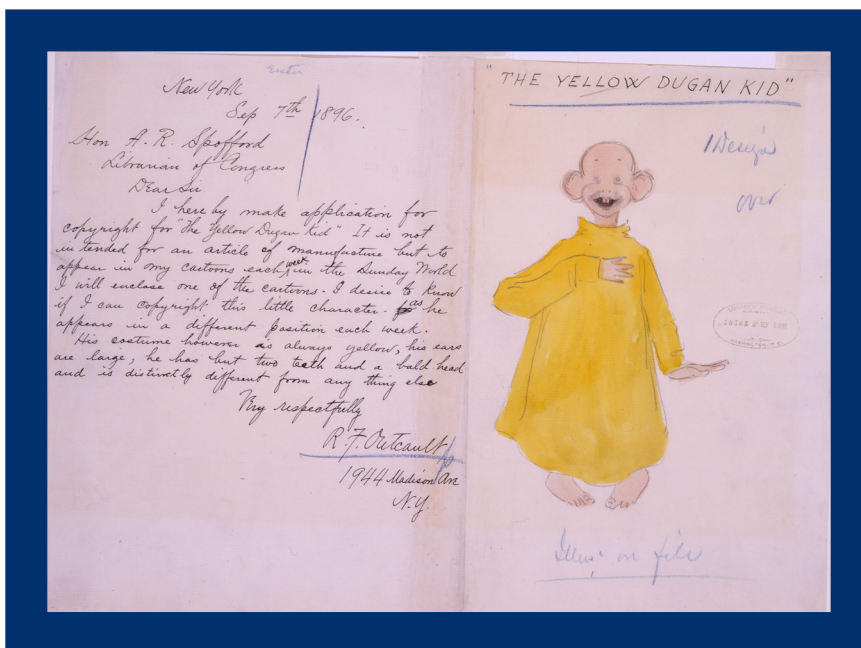
We could then perceive that they possessed wings of great expansion, and were similar in structure to this of the bat, being a semi-transparent membrane expanded in curvilinear divisions by means of straight radii, united at the back by the dorsal integuments...for those of the creatures whom we saw bathing in the water, spread them instantly to their full width, waved them as ducks do their to shake off the water, and then as instantly closed them again in a compact form...spread their wings, and were lost in the dark confines of the canvass.... We scientifically denominated them as *Vespertilio-homo*, or man-bat; and they are doubtless innocent and happy creatures...several new specimens of animals, all of which were horned and of a white or grey color, and the remains of three ancient triangular temples which had long been in ruins. (p. 42)

Legend has it that these observations, later known as the Great Moon Hoax, increased the sales of the *New York Sun* (Falk, 1972).

Newspapers can not only deceive their readers; they can sway them too. During the Spanish American War, two major newspapers used sensationalism to increase their sales. Richard Olson, research professor of psychology at the University of New Orleans, gave a lecture in 1995 regarding "The Yellow Kid." According to Olson, in 1894, Joseph Pulitzer, who owned the newspaper called *The New York World*, hired a popular freelancer R. F. Outcault to "illustrate a new color supplement." In one of his comic strips, Outcault introduced a "kid named Mickey Dugan...one of several Irish-Slum street children" (The Ohio State University, 1995; see Figure 6).

Pulitzer, according to Olson, experimented by using different colors on Dugan's message-bearing nightshirts to see what had the most visual impact. The big ugly, bare-footed kid with the bald head, big ears and two teeth stood out in yellow. The single panel grew to a full page of color. The Yellow Kid moved from a role player into prominence and became a sensation with newspaper readers (The Ohio State University, 1995, n.p.).

Figure 6. *The Yellow Dugan Kid*, 1896



Note. Outcault, R. F. (1896). *The Yellow Dugan Kid* [Drawing]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2016683809/>

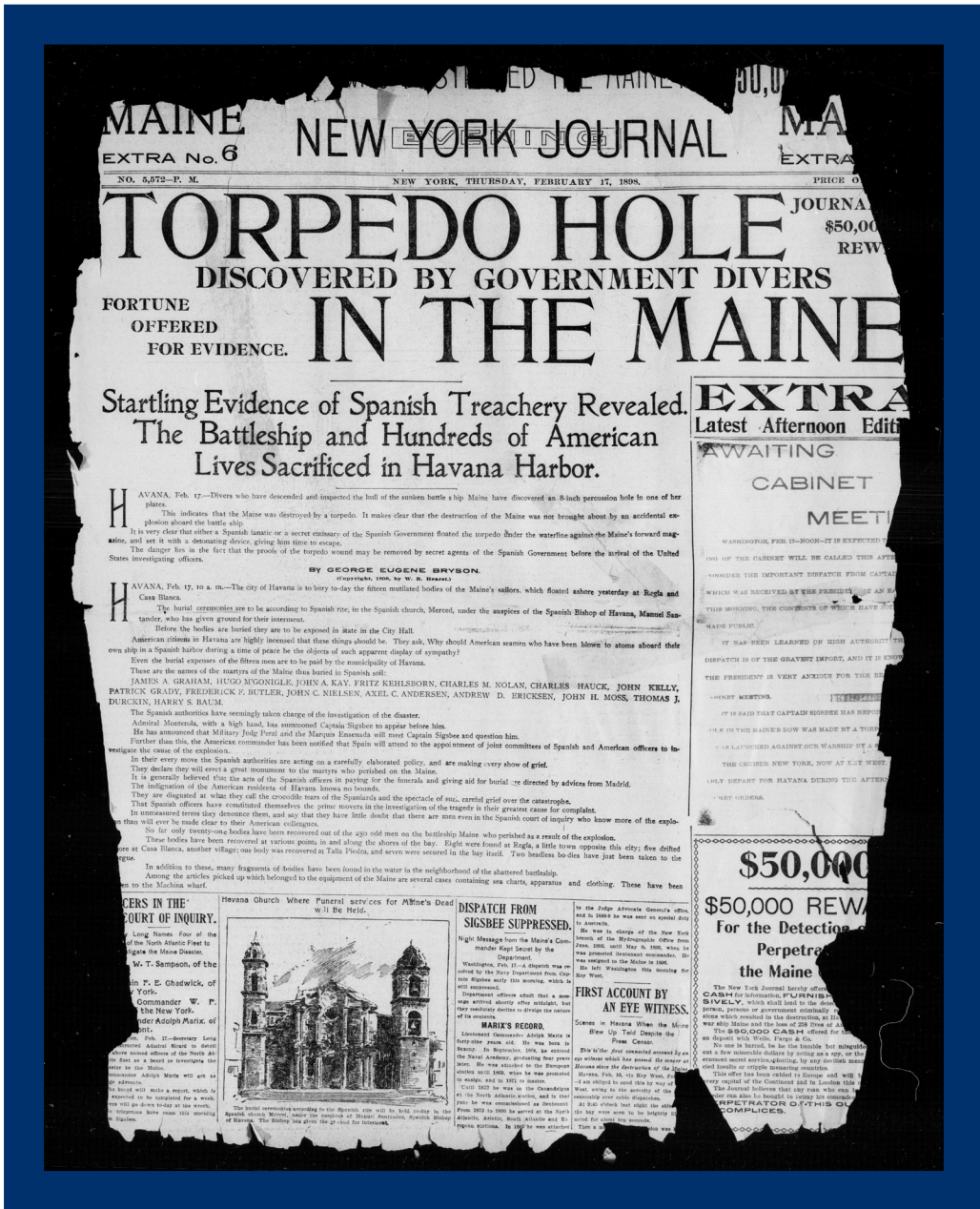
William Randolph Hearst, owner of the competing newspaper, lured Outcault to his *New York Journal*, and his popular comics increased sales of the *Journal*. In response, Pulitzer hired another artist to continue the Yellow Kid comics. "The Yellow Kid is given credit as being the first comic with enough star status to sell newspapers and merchandise beyond anyone's dream" (The Ohio State University, 1995, n.p.).

During this time, Cuba was fighting for independence from Spain. The United States had economic ties to Cuba, and U.S. public opinion was sympathetic to the Cuban cause. In February 1898, the U.S. battleship, the USS Maine, which had been sent to Cuba to protect U.S. citizens there, exploded and sank in Havana Harbor. The Pulitzer and Hearst newspapers sensationalized the explosion and blamed Spain for destroying the battleship (see Figure 7).

The papers, in a circulation war, featured sensational coverage and attention-grabbing photographs of events in Cuba. Although the cause of the explosion of the USS Maine was unknown, for example, New York newspapers blamed Spain. Historians once held that biased coverage of the war, often referred to as yellow journalism, was a cause of the war. Today, however, historians find less evidence for that claim. (Library of Congress, n.d.-e)

The United States declared war on Spain in April 1898. In December, both countries signed the Treaty of Paris, in which Spain lost control of Cuba and other islands.

Figure 7. "Torpedo Hole Discovered by Government Divers in the Maine"



Note. Torpedo Hole Discovered by Government Divers in the Maine. (1898, February 17). *New York Journal, Maine Extra*. Chroniling America, Library of Congress.

Figure 8. Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool

The form is titled "PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL" in large, bold, black letters at the top left. To the right of the title is a "NAME:" label above a rectangular input box. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with the words "OBSERVE", "REFLECT", and "QUESTION" arranged around a central point. Below the title and name box, the form is divided into three vertical columns. The first column is headed "OBSERVE", the second "REFLECT", and the third "QUESTION". Each column contains several horizontal dotted lines for writing. Below these columns, there are two sections: "FURTHER INVESTIGATION:" and "ADDITIONAL NOTES:", each followed by a large white rectangular area for writing. At the bottom left, there is a logo for the "LIBRARY OF CONGRESS" and the text "LOC.gov/teachers".

Note. From Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>

The Library of Congress’s primary source set, *The Spanish-American War: The United States Becomes a World Power*, contains many different types of sources. Using the Library’s [primary source analysis tools](#) (Figure 8), which can be used with music, newspapers, political cartoons, etc., students can study the Spanish American War and its effects on the nation. Combining this primary source set with these early newspaper accounts can show students how to investigate and find a historical narrative that cites the differences between fact and fiction. Unlike the information received in 1898, the internet bombards students with news articles. The yellow journalism of the past has changed drastically into what many today call *fake news*, news designed to manipulate people’s perceptions of real facts (Center for Information Technology and Society, n.d.). The goals behind teaching students how to synthesize what they read and see online will help them in all aspects of their lives when it comes to deciphering the truth. It is imperative that students learn how to think critically so they can make decisions about their future. “Through gained experience in reflective process, students take ownership of their own historical thinking and procedures.... Students must apply what they learn, in their everyday lives, for a country to prosper” (Waring et al., 2019, p. 22).

How to Help Students: Inquiry Tools

Historical thinking skills can support students who are analyzing sources, since some are hard to decipher. As seen earlier, the Library of Congress has many tools to help to guide students in understanding and comprehending the sources in front of them by asking them to question what they see. Another good analysis tool was created by Dr. Scott Waring of the University of Central Florida. He devised a plan to help students think critically when studying primary sources. Using Waring's [SOURCES Framework](#), students of history will be able to understand discrepancies found in some primary and secondary sources, leading students to a viable conclusion about history: "The SOURCES framework gives students an opportunity to dig deeper and to help allow them to utilize a variety of primary sources to construct their own narratives and understandings about the past" (Waring et al., 2018, p. 275).

Starting with an essential question, students are guided through each stage of the framework.

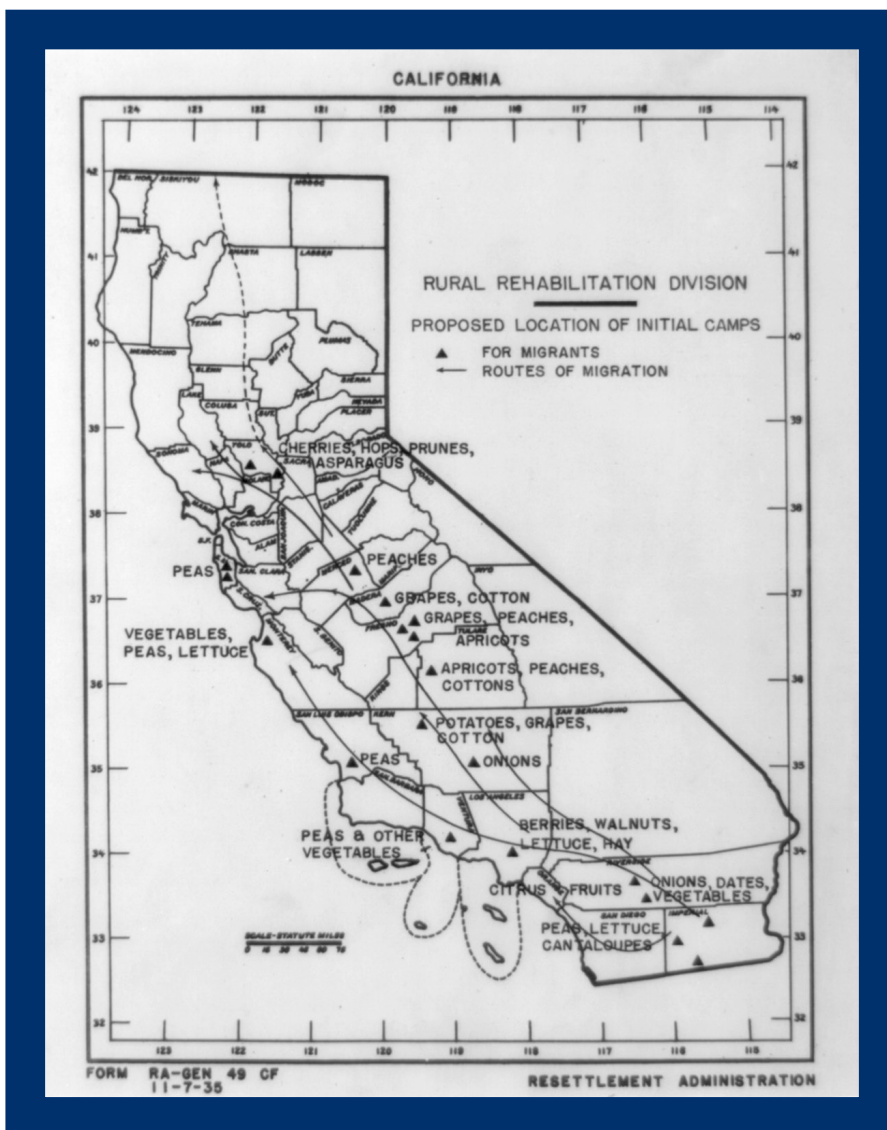
1. Scrutinize the Fundamental Source: Where does the source originate? Who wrote it? When was it written? What events could have influenced this source? What are your impressions of this source? Is it reliable? Why or why not?
2. Organize Thoughts: What else do you need to know to fully understand the source? What other sources do you wish you had? What additional content do you need to know?
3. Understand the Context: What is happening at the time when the source was constructed? Where is the location for the origin of the source? What is happening there at the time of construction? Put the source in its proper context.
4. Read Between the Lines: What inferences about the source can you make that are not evident? Was there a specific reason for why the source was created that was not explicitly stated? Might the real audience have been someone other than the one stated?
5. Corroborate and Refute: Look at other sources about the topic. How are they similar? How are they different? Do they show agreement with the *fundamental source*?
6. Establish a Plausible Narrative: Using all the evidence from the sources you examined, what are your thoughts about the *essential question*? What have you learned **up** to this point in time? Create a narrative or story about what you know, based on the evidence. Remember to cite your sources.
7. Summarize final thoughts: What questions do you still have? What else do you want to know? Do you still need additional sources to more fully answer the *essential question*?

When using the SOURCES framework to analyze sources, students have the opportunity to interact directly with sources that tell the story, such as *General Grant at City Point* and Gardner's Civil War photographs. In discovering these sources through analysis tools, students will understand why corroboration is so imperative when learning about history.

Hodgin and Kahne (2018) suggest using three educational approaches when teaching students how to interpret information. First, they feel that students must develop the skills to tell what is accurate. Second, metacognition is necessary to become aware of one's biases to develop and cultivate a commitment to accuracy, and third, students need many opportunities to practice these skills and metacognitive thinking to form habits that can be applied to different types of contexts (Hodgin & Kahne, 2018).

Digital media literacy should focus on information found online that students may need when researching. Effective reading of printed text is important; however, this skill also needs to transfer to the reading of images, video, and sound recordings (Bell, 2017). As we saw earlier, digital sources that relate to one another will help build a narrative of history. The Library of Congress has primary source sets that bring together many different types of sources that fit into a topic narrative. When looking at the primary source set called *The Dust Bowl*, teachers and students can discover the stories of Americans in the Great Plains region during the Great Depression (Figure 9). The teacher's guide that accompanies each set gives the reader a glimpse into the time period. This set talks about how hard these times were, causing many to move west through the plain states to California. This background assists readers when they attempt to analyze the sources in the set. Teachers can use one source, many sources, or all sources to help validate the chronicle of the Dust Bowl.

Figure 9. Map of California, ca. 1935

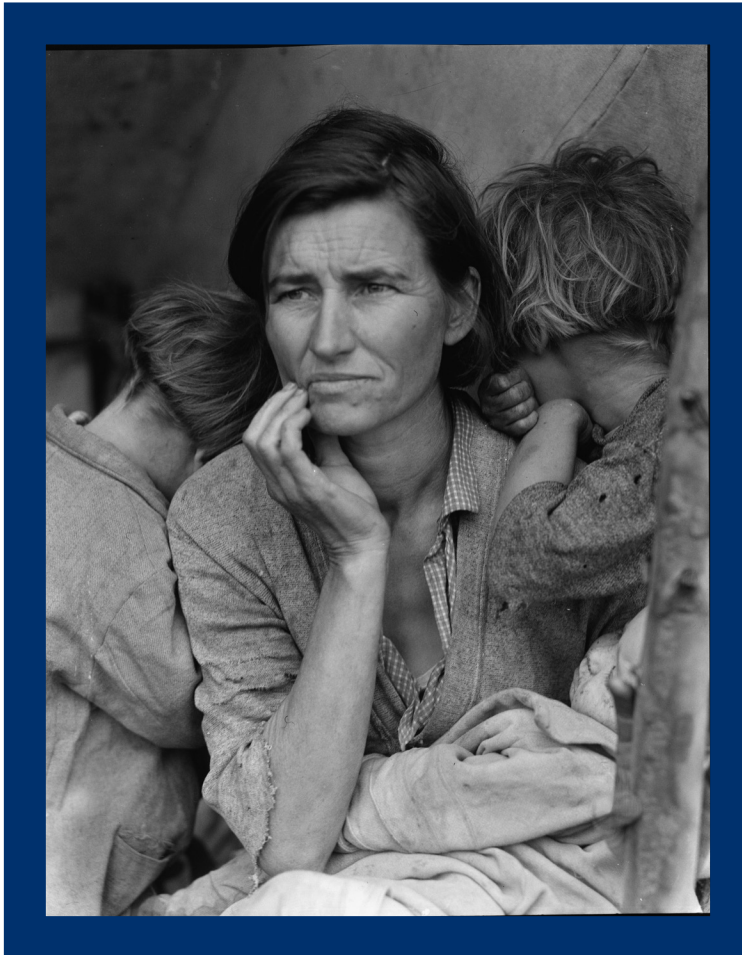


Note. Rural Rehabilitation Division. (ca. 1935). [Map of California by the Rural Rehabilitation Division showing areas where different crops are grown, proposed location of initial camps for migrants, and routes of migration]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002723443/>

Remembering that each source has its own story, the teacher can choose one or more sources to continue their digital media literacy primary sources lesson. The photograph *Migrant Mother*, taken by Dorothea Lange in 1936, shows the impoverished pea pickers of Nipomo, California (Figure 10). This one photograph of a 32-year-old mother of seven children takes the viewer back to the time of the Dust Bowl. Students can analyze this photo using the SOURCES Framework, or teachers can have students analyze this photo using the Library of Congress's guide, *Analyzing Photographs and Prints*, to quickly get an idea of the woman's plight. Cheryl Lederle, an Educational Resources Specialist at the Library

of Congress, suggests in her blog post “Information Literacy: How Do a Photographer’s Intention and Context Shape the Photograph?” that students scroll to the bottom and examine the set of four lesser-known images that Lange took of the mother and child.

Figure 10. *Destitute pea pickers in California, 1936*



Note. Lange, D. (1936). *Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017762891/>

Instead of bringing in other photographs analyzed before, teachers may want to show their students two articles about Lange’s *Migrant Mother* and the photograph itself. Found on the American Memory website titled “American Women” (also part of the Library of Congress), students are able to discover a deeper meaning to the photo. In the excerpt below, Lange describes meeting the mother for the first time:

I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not remember how I explained my presence or my camera to her, but I do remember she asked me no questions. I made five exposures, working closer and closer from the same direction. I did not ask her name or her history. She

told me her age, that she was thirty-two. She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and birds that the children killed. She had just sold the tires from her car to buy food. There she sat in that lean-to tent with her children huddled around her and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it. (Lange, 1960, n.p.)

From the same article, we are able to discover the thoughts in the mind of the mother: Whatever the woman, Florence Owens Thompson, thought of Lange's actions at the time, she came to regret that Lange ever made the photographs, which she felt permanently colored her with a "Grapes of Wrath" stereotype. Thompson, a Native American from Oklahoma, had already lived in California for a decade when Lange photographed her. The immediate popularity of the images in the press did nothing to alleviate the financial distress that had spurred the family to seek seasonal agricultural work. Contrary to the despairing immobility the famous image seems to embody, however, Thompson was an active participant in farm labor struggles in the 1930s, occasionally serving as an organizer. Her daughter later commented, 'She was a very strong woman. She was a leader. I think that's one of the reasons she resented the photo—because it didn't show her in that light.' (Library of Congress, n.d.-c)

Through these two excerpts students can see that there is a much bigger story to this photograph. This may help students understand the mindset of both the photographer and the person being photographed.

Using another article by James Estrin from the *New York Times*, "Unraveling the Mysteries of Dorothea Lange's 'Migrant Mother,'" students will discover that the photo was altered by Lange herself:

It is easy to tell whether a print of "Migrant Mother" was made before 1939, because that year Ms. Lange had an assistant retouch the negative and remove Ms. Thompson's thumb from the bottom right corner, much to the chagrin of Roy Stryker, her boss at the Farm Security Administration. While that was a fairly common practice at the time, Mr. Stryker thought it compromised the authenticity not just of the photo but also of his whole F.S.A. documentary project, Ms. Meister said. But Ms. Lange considered the thumb to be such a glaring defect that she apparently didn't have a second thought about removing it. In the print from the Library of Congress below, the thumb is still in the image's lower right corner. (Estrin, 2018, n.p.)

For the NYT reader, the paper itself even altered the photo:

Even *The New York Times* altered the image, including once where "the children had been removed, and the dingy interior of the tent made to appear as wisps of

clouds in a bright sky,” Ms. Meister wrote. The paper also ran a heavily retouched print on July 26, 1936, shown above, that heightened the contrast between the mother and the background, “minimizing the presence of Thompson’s offending thumb.” (Estrin, 2018, n.p.)

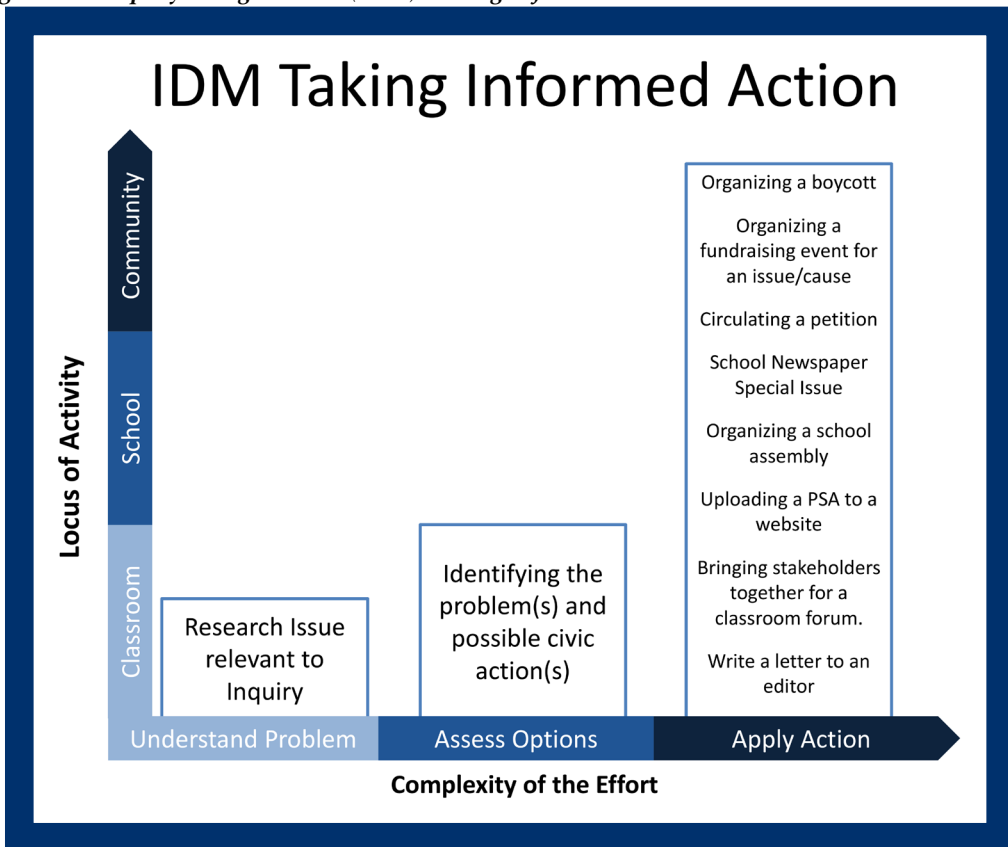
All these alterations of the primary sources shown in this chapter may confuse some of the history students. Some may ask why the need to alter an image is so important. Have students come up with their own questions about what they have learned, reminding them to look at the circumstances of the time period. Then, have them answer their questions through research, not only using the sources that were discussed, but other reliable sources they can find to corroborate the question and answer. It is necessary that students understand how to use digital media literacy in a reliable way.

C3 Framework Inquiry Design Model

As seen above, there are many resources that can help teachers explain why digital media literacy is so important. Online mass media can be confusing and overwhelming. Lessons written using the C3 Framework offer the opportunity for students to bring in many sources about a topic and come up with trustworthy conclusions. The C3 Framework is different, for it goes further than most inquiry lessons and leads to a civic action. This type of inquiry may be new for students and teachers. Michelle Herczog (2014) mentions in her article “Implementing the C3 Framework: What is our Task as Social Studies Leaders?” that

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, like a number of other initiatives, calls upon social studies teachers to reexamine their instructional practices to enhance the rigor of the social studies disciplines and build critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills of students to become engaged citizens.

Figure 11. *Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Taking Informed Action*



Note. From C3 Teachers.

It is important that teachers realize that this type of framework is essential in today’s environment with fact checking and the truth. In the C3 Framework’s Inquiry Design Model (IDM), students take informed action that encourages community learning. Students take on an issue (i.e., the compelling question) and complete in-depth research to identify the problems and possible civic actions (Figure 11). Using what students have discovered in the inquiry, they will come up with a solution that can be implemented through taking action in the community. This IDM model teaches students to go above and beyond what is learned in classrooms and will bring students and teachers into community engagement which will be shown more later in this chapter.

The C3 Framework’s Dimensions give teachers the support they need to create inquiry which will lead to civics in action. Dr. Steve Masyada from the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship at the Lou Frey Institute explains that inquiry “helps students identify ‘real’ questions...works with any age group...provides students more freedom while learning... [and] encourages collaboration among students” (personal communication, 2018). These are just a few constructive examples of how inquiry can help students understand an issue with more emphasis placed on their ideas. Below are the C3 Framework Dimensions summarized by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 2012:

- **Dimension 1. Developing Questions and Planning Investigations**
Summary: Students will develop questions as they investigate societal issues, trends, and events.
- **Dimension 2. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools**
Summary: Students will analyze societal issues, trends, and events by applying concepts and tools from civics, economics, geography, and history.
- **Dimension 3. Gathering, Evaluating, and Using Evidence**
Summary: Students will work toward conclusions about societal issues, trends, and events by collecting evidence and evaluating its usefulness in developing causal explanations.
- **Dimension 4. Working Collaboratively and Communicating Conclusions**
Summary: Students will draw on knowledge and skills to work individually and collaboratively to conclude their investigations into societal issues, trends, and events.

Notice that students are the ones doing the inquiry in each dimension. The C3 Framework is a real-world approach to students discovering the solution, very similar to historical thinking with sources. The students are given the evidence to help answer a compelling question and decide the most viable answer, not a correct answer.

[Figure 12](#) includes some examples from each C3 Dimension focusing on the ideas previously discussed in this chapter.

Figure 12.

C3 Framework Organization			
Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts	Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence	Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	Civics	Gathering and Evaluating Sources	Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions
	Economics		
	Geography	Developing Claims and Using Evidence	Taking Informed Action
	History		
Framework Ideas			
Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Dimension 4
Can a democracy succeed when citizens can't trust each other?	Civics Analyze government bills	News articles about social media/fact checking, such as "Trump signs executive order targeting Twitter after fact- checking row"	Group discussion
Should citizens rely on the internet for news?	Economics Interpret the cost of misinformation	News article about fake news, such as "Fake News: How a Partying Macedonian Teen Earns Thousands Publishing Lies"	Writing prompts
Is seeing always believing?	Geography List the states with the most fake new outlets, including print and online	Government statute <i>47 U.S. Code § 230. Protection for private blocking and screening of offensive material</i>	Fake News/Fact check assessment
	History Discover the reasoning of the start of fake news	Video: <i>After Truth: Disinformation and the Cost of Fake News</i>	Socratic Seminar
		Video: <i>After Truth: Disinformation and the Cost of Fake News</i>	Create informative poster
		Photos of <i>General Grant at City Point</i>	Create informative website
		Photos of <i>Dead Confederate soldier in Devil's Den</i>	Letter to the editor
		<i>New York Times</i> article "Unraveling the Mysteries of Dorothea Lange's 'Migrant Mother'"	Letter to congress
		Video: "Yellow Journalism and Fake News Joseph Pulitzer: Voice of the People"	Personal Blog
			Nonviolent protest
			Careers in Social Media or Government

Taking Informed Action

Digital media literacy is so important today: “A 2016 study from the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) revealed (among other things), that nearly 82% of middle school students surveyed couldn’t identify sponsored from editorial content” (LaGarde & Hudgins, 2019 n.p.). Middle and high school students need to try and make informed decisions when they become adults. Being informed citizens can help improve the false narratives. Whenever they can, teachers need to have current event discussions. Starting with something as simple as Danielson’s “media literacy moments” (Fay, 2019, n.p.), mentioned at the beginning of this chapter:

1. All media messages are “constructed.”
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.
5. Most media are organized to gain profit and/or power. (Center for Media Literacy, n.d., n.p.)

These five core concepts can easily be used when talking about primary and secondary documents. Using information like this, teachers can encourage students to learn how to question the world around them, making sure the truth is told. Students can pass their learning along in real-life scenarios.

These real-life scenarios can be played out by allowing students to teach others about digital content that is seen every day. Depending on the age of the students, they can take some sort of civic action at their school, such as conducting surveys about students’ knowledge on analyzing digital content. Using what they have learned about analyzing primary and secondary sources, students can make it their responsibility to educate the public or their peers about false narratives. [DigCitCommit](#) has partnered with Common Sense Education, ITSE, and Facebook to teach students digital citizenship, the responsible and appropriate behavior to use when online: “Digital citizenship is a critical skill for students of today and our leaders of tomorrow” (DigCitCommitt, 2021, n.p.). Students can create their own website on how to fact check. They can write letters to newspapers and Congress members about inconsistency of truths and falsehoods online. Students can participate in non-violent protests supporting transparency in the news. Finally, older students could intern at a media or government office. “Our job as digital citizens requires more than just being informed. We must also be vigilant about verifying information before posting it online” (Snelling, 2021, n.p.).

[The C3 Teachers College Career & Civic Life](#) website has many inquiries for teachers regarding historical thinking in the social studies classroom. The C3 Framework Inquiry “How Will I Make a Change?” is a helpful tool for teachers when teaching about creating a change in society. Teachers can teach inquiry all year, but students will not make a difference unless

they take action.

Teachers, now more than ever, need to show students how to decipher primary and secondary sources, especially online. Teachers need to continue to take responsibility, showing their students how to read between the lines, examining the environment around them. The United States needs educated citizens who can make a rational decision using strong evidence. These citizens will be teaching their children the difference between fact and fiction. Primary and secondary source inquiry brings life skills to history students. They should be able to use the deductive reasoning they learned through historical thinking inquiry well beyond their history classes.

References

- Addy, J. (2020). The art of the real: Fact checking as information literacy instruction. *Reference Services Review*, 48(1) 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-09-2019-0067>
- Barritt, L. (1898). *The big type war of the yellow kids*. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/95508199/>
- BBC News (2020, May 29). *Trump signs executive order targeting Twitter after fact-checking row*. BBC News. www.bbc.com/news/amp/technology-52843986
- Blackwell, K. (2008). *Solving a Civil War photograph mystery*. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/solving-a-civil-war-photograph-mystery/
- C3 Teachers. (n.d.). *Inquiries*. C3 Teachers College Career & Civics Life. <http://www.c3teachers.org/inquiries/>
- C3 Teachers. (n.d.). *IDM taking informed action chart*. C3 Teachers College Career & Civics Life. <http://www.c3teachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/IDM-Taking-Informed-Action-chart.pdf>
- Carlin, J. C. (2018, June 13). *Archivist of the U.S. announces actions on electronic records*. National Archives. www.archives.gov/press/press-releases/1998/nr98-148.html
- Center for Information Technology and Society. (n.d.). *A brief history of fake news*. <https://www.cits.ucsb.edu/fake-news/brief-history>
- Center for Media Literacy. (n.d.). *Five key questions form foundation for media inquiry*. <https://www.medialit.org/reading-room/five-key-questions-form-foundation-media-inquiry>
- Choi, E., Choi, Y., Jang, J. Y., Rashkin, H., & Volkova, S. (2017). Truth of varying shades: Analyzing language in fake news and political fact-checking. *Proceedings of the 2017 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, 2931–2937.
- The Council of Chief State School Officers. (2012). *Vision for the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Inquiry in Social Studies State Standards*. files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED542755.pdf
- DigCitCommit. (n.d.). *Exploring resources*. DigCitCommit. <https://digcitcommit.org/>
- Estrin, J. (2018, November 28). *Unraveling the mysteries of Dorothea Lange’s “Migrant Mother.”* *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2018/11/28/lens/dorothea-lange-migrant-mother.html
- Falk, D. V. (1972, December). Thomas Low Nichols, Poe, and the “Balloon Hoax.” *The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore*, V(2), 48–49. www.eapoe.org/pstudies/ps1970/p1972207.htm
- Fay, L. (2019, April 17). *“Media literacy is literacy”: Here’s how educators and lawmakers are working to set students up for success online*. LA School Report. <https://www.laschoolreport.com/media-literacy-is-literacy-heres-how-educators-and-lawmakers-are-working-to-set-students-up-for-success-online/>
- Florida Council for History Education. (n.d.). *Teacher resources*. <http://www.flche.net/teacher-resources.html>
- Gardner, A., and Frassanito, W. (n.d.). *The case of the moved body*. The Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/does-the-camera-ever-lie/the-case-of-the-moved-body/

- Hangen, T. (2015, March). Historical digital literacy, one classroom at a time. *Journal of American History*, 101(4), 1192–1203. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jav062>
- HBO. (2020, March 3). *After Truth: Disinformation and the cost of fake news: official site*. Home Box Office, Inc. <https://www.hbomax.com/feature/urn:hbo:feature:GXk7d3QVhOzC3wwEAAAle>
- Herczog, M. (2014, May 8). *Implementing the C3 Framework: What is our task as social studies leaders?* National Council for the Social Studies. www.socialstudies.org/c3/implementingforleaders
- Hodgin, E., & Kahne, J. (2018). Misinformation in the information age: What teachers can do to support students. *Social Education*, 82(4), 208–211, 214. <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/82/4/misinformation-information-age-what-teachers-can-do-support-students>
- Jefferson, T. (1786, January 28). *Thomas Jefferson to James Currie, January 28, 1786* [Manuscript/Mixed Material]. www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib001765
- Kennedy, L. (2019, August 21). *Did yellow journalism fuel the outbreak of the Spanish-American war?* The History Channel. <https://www.history.com/news/spanish-american-war-yellow-journalism-hearst-pulitzer>
- LaGarde, J., & Hudgins, D. (2019, June 19). *Teaching fact vs. fiction when seeing is no longer believing*. International Society for Technology in Education. <https://www.iste.org/explore/digital-and-media-literacy/Teaching%20fact%20vs.%20fiction%20when%20seeing%20is%20no%20longer%20believing>
- Lederle, C. (2017). *Information literacy: how do a photographer's intention and context shape the photograph?* Teaching with the Library of Congress. blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2017/05/information-literacy-how-do-a-photographers-intention-and-context-shape-the-photograph/
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-a). *The case of the moved body*. Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/does-the-camera-ever-lie/the-case-of-the-moved-body/>
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-b). *The Dust Bowl. Primary source set. Teacher resources*. Program Teachers. www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/dust-bowl-migration/
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-c). *Exploring contexts: Migrant Mother*. American Women. <https://guides.loc.gov/american-women-prints-photographs/understanding-pictorial-collections/contexts>
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-d). *Map of California by the Rural Rehabilitation Division showing areas where different crops are grown, proposed location of initial camps for migrants, and routes of migration* [Photo, Print, Drawing]. www.loc.gov/item/2002723443
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-e). *The Spanish-American War: The United States becomes a world power*. Primary Source Set. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/spanish-american-war-the-united-states-becomes-a-world-power/>
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-f). *Teacher's guides and analysis tool*. Program Teachers. www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html
- Library of Congress. (n.d.-g). *The Yellow Dugan Kid* [Photo, Print, Drawing]. www.loc.gov/item/2016683809/
- Locke, R. (1970, January 01). *The Moon Hoax*. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/TheGreatMoonHoaxOf18351859/page/n5/mode/2up>

- Lynch, M. (2017, December 30). *Digital literacy is the most important lifelong learning tool*. The Tech Advocate. www.thetechadvocate.org/digital-literacy-important-lifelong-learning-tool/
- MediaSmarts. (n.d.). *Defining digital media literacy*. <https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/general-information/digital-media-literacy-fundamentals/defining-digital-media-literacyNEA>
- Representative Assembly. (1975). *Code of ethics for educators*. <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/code-ethics-educators>
- Office of the Historian. (n.d.). *U.S. Diplomacy and Yellow Journalism, 1895–1898*. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/yellow-journalism>
- The Ohio State University. (1995). *History of comics begins with Yellow Kid*. Retrieved November 6, 2021, from <https://news.osu.edu/history-of-comics-begins-with-yellow-kid/>.
- PBS Learning Media. (n.d.). *Yellow journalism and fake news: Joseph Pulitzer: Voice of the people*. www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/amjp19-ela-ss-yellow/yellow-journalism-and-fake-news-joseph-pulitzer-voice-of-the-people/
- Pew Research Center. (2019, June 12). *Demographics of social media users and adoption in the United States*. Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/
- Snelling, J. (2021, May 14). *Top 10 sites to help students check their facts*. ISTE. <https://www.iste.org/explore/Digital-and-media-literacy/Top-10-sites-to-help-students-check-their-facts>
- Sperry, C., & Sperry, S. (2020). Checking the facts: Media literacy and democracy. *Social Education*, 84(1), 35–38. <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/84/1/checking-facts-media-literacy-and-democracy>
- Stanford History Education Group. (n.d.) sheg.stanford.edu/
- United States Government. (n.d.). *47 U.S. Code § 230 - Protection for Private Blocking and Screening of Offensive Material*. Legal Information Institute www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/47/230 [June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title II, § 230, as added Pub. L. 104–104, title V, § 509, Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 137; amended Pub. L. 105–277, div. C, title XIV, § 1404(a), Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681–739; Pub. L. 115–164, § 4(a), Apr. 11, 2018, 132 Stat. 1254.]
- Waring, S. (n.d.). *SOURCES Framework for Teaching with Primary and Secondary Sources*. Teaching with sources. <https://www.teachingwithsources.com/>
- Waring, S. M., LaVallee, C., & Purdin, T. (2018). The power of agentic women and SOURCES. *Social Studies Research and Practice*, 13(2), 270–278. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-01-2018-0005>
- Waring, S. M., LaVallee, C., & Purdin, T. (2019). Civil liberties, the Bill of Rights, and SOURCES: Engaging students in the past in order to prepare citizens of the future. In J. Hubbard (Ed.), *Extending the Ground of Public Confidence: Teaching Civil Liberties in K-16 Social Studies Education* (pp.3–32). Information Age Publishing.
- Zielinski, S. (2015, July 2). *The Great Moon Hoax was simply a sign of its time*. Smithsonian Magazine. www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/great-moon-hoax-was-simply-sign-its-time-180955761/