

QUESTIONING PRIMARY SOURCES

Guiding Question:

What drove Americans westward during the 19th century?

PART I

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS REVIEW

INQUIRY STEP: CONNECT

1. In small groups, view one primary source from a collection of primary sources related to the guiding question above.
2. Repeat the introductory “Mystery Photo” analysis process using [Thinking about Primary Sources](#) or a [Teacher’s Guide and Analysis Tool](#) specific to the type of media (film, sound file, photo, etc.)

BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS

INQUIRY STEP: WONDER

1. Tape the primary source to the center of a large sheet of chart paper.
2. What do you already know about the topic under study? Using a large yellow post-it note, write what you already know and post each group member’s notes around the outside edge of the chart paper.
3. What does your group wonder about your primary source and how it relates to the guiding question? Rules:
 - a. Ask as many questions as you can.
 - b. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions.
 - c. Write down every question exactly as it is stated.
 - d. Change any statement into a question.

4. Write all questions on a blue post-it note and post the questions to the chart paper around the primary source.
5. Attach the chart paper to the wall.
6. Walk around the room and view and discuss the primary sources, notes, and questions of other groups.

IMPROVING QUESTIONS

INQUIRY STEP: WONDER

1. Return your group's primary source to your workspace.
2. Categorize each question as closed- or open-ended.
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type of question.
4. Change all closed questions to open-ended questions and cover each with a replacement post-it note.

PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

INQUIRY STEP: WONDER

1. Choose your three most important questions (based on the guiding question).
2. Why did you choose these three as the most important?

PART II

RESEARCHING QUESTIONS

INQUIRY STEP: INVESTIGATE

1. Discuss which Library of Congress collections and which outside sources will most effectively answer your questions.
2. Begin collecting information to answer your questions. You may use the Annotated Resource Set template or another tool of your choice to store your information.
3. At the end of your research time, discuss which information is most relevant and why.
4. As a group, select the resources that best answer your questions or add important context to your primary source.

QR CODE ACTIVITY

INQUIRY STEP: CONSTRUCT

1. [Create a QR code](#) for each selected source (website, document, etc.).
2. Print each QR code, cut it out, and tape it to the primary source.

QR CODE REFLECTION

INQUIRY STEP: REFLECT

1. Share QR code sources with another group.
2. How do your selections of primary and secondary sources build contextual knowledge or answer questions about your original primary source?
3. Given what you have learned, how would you revise your questions?