
Historiography: Learning the Skills and Processes of an Historian

This section focuses on the skills of an historian. Youth will learn how to set up their research process, analyze and interpret historical sources, and construct their own sound historical arguments. The activity “Establishing a Structured History Research Process” will guide you through much of the project. It’s advised that many of the activities suggested in this section happen after your group has already collected an assortment of primary and secondary sources through archival research (page 67) and oral history interviews (page 81). Youth should also be familiar with field journal writing (page 96).

HISTORIOGRAPHY I

Establishing a Structured Research Process

Estimated Time: Depending on your time frame, this process can last between two weeks and three months.

The research process is an organic one that is often times frustrating to both the youth historians and the educator. Researching is vital to the final outcome of the project and requires a great deal of time to complete effectively. Be aware of time constraints as you develop your research expectations.

Suggested Materials:

- We highly recommend that you develop a system of organization to keep track of incoming sources such as articles, photographs, transcripts, books, field journals, etc. One recommendation is to make each youth historian responsible for his or her own file folder or box to store his or her findings
- A bulletin board divided by youth topics allows for a visual means of displaying and sharing new sources
- Field journals should be used extensively throughout the research process as a place for youth to regularly reflect on the information they are discovering
- A chalkboard or paper chart within the research center is also helpful for note taking during group discussions and research planning

Vocabulary:

research question: An open-ended, non-judgmental, succinct question worth pursuing in a historical inquiry. Compellingly stated, research questions promote in-depth investigation and critical thinking, and allow for multiple views and responses.

The entire research project hinges on developing an appropriate research question or thesis. A good research question is not too broad and not too narrow. There should also be known sources that are available to answer the research question.

focus question: Subsidiary focus questions provide structure and daily focus for youth historians during the research process. Focus questions dig deeper into the main research question in order to analyze, synthesize, and extend understanding of the topic.

hypothesis: A theory or set of assumptions about why or how events unfolded based on analysis and evaluation of available evidence, the best of which are primary sources and a strong historical contextual knowledge. “History,” remarked philosopher Etienne Gibson, “is the only laboratory we have in which to test the consequences of thought.”¹

¹ National Standards for United States History

Throughout the research process adult guidance is imperative. Students are heavily dependent upon personalized adult feedback. By asking questions and engaging in complex discussions with students one on one and in whole group discussions, adults can help students develop manageable research questions, foster critical thinking and analysis, and encourage youth to view their research in a larger context. This aids youth in perceiving relationships between events in history and motivations behind people's actions. Youth historians engage in active discussions with one another regarding their research findings. Regular group debriefings during this research phase provide a forum for this sharing to happen.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH PROCEDURE

1. **Educator sets a broad research theme.**
2. **Youth conduct background research on the broad theme.** Refer to the Providing Context section, page 13.
3. **Youth decide upon individual topics within the broader research theme.** Topics chosen should interest youth and be relevant to the broad research theme.
4. **Youth develop a research question.** Youth may use the Developing your Research Question worksheet to generate this important question. For some youth, the process of considering source availability and viability of the research question can take several research sessions. Educators should be very involved at this point in order to determine the potential success of the research question.
5. **Youth develop subsidiary focus questions.** These questions will structure youth historians' search for historical evidence in order to answer their larger research question. Focus questions may be constructed daily, as information is uncovered and the historical context begins to unfold. Refer to the Generating Focus Questions worksheets on pages 41-43.
6. **Youth take copious notes in their field journals.** As youth are finding answers to their focus questions and gathering historical evidence, they should write regularly in their journals to reflect on their findings and note patterns in their research. See page 96 for more information about Field Journals. Youth may use a source log (refer to pages 44-45) to record their findings. As this is a recursive project, youth will return to these logs again and again. Logs will aid them in their ultimate understanding of their topic and will support their culminating project.
7. **Educators evaluate youth progress.** At this point, if youth are not able to find sources such as historical documents or oral history subjects, it may be necessary to abandon the research question and begin again at step #2. Youth historians complete Research Reports (page 35) at researching midpoints to begin to organize their findings into a cohesive "story" and to address what is missing from that story. Educators use these reports to assess progress.

EXAMPLE

Latinos during World War II

Latinas in the Shipyards

What was working life like for Latinas during World War II?

What jobs did women in the shipyards do? How much were they paid? Who were they? How old were they? How many of them were there? When did women stop working in the shipyards?

One youth historian in the Oakland LHP was on the brink of abandoning his research question about Latinos who served in the war, when he met a person who knew a Latino man in the Merchant Marines. The youth historian interviewed him and completed his research.

Mid-Project Research Reports

We asked our youth historians to gather all of their research together into a mid-point research report. When information is being gathered through oral history interviews, library and museum searches, local field trips, and from primary and secondary sources, it's a good idea to ask youth periodically to organize their facts into a written report. This also allows educators to assess youths' progress along the way.

Estimated time: Two hours per report

We assigned research reports as homework assignments.

Procedure:

1. Ask youth to gather all of their findings and address the following in a two-page report:

- an introduction to the research topic (who, what, when, where)
- the historical context of the topic (what else is happening locally, nationally, globally)
- the main ideas and activities of the topic with explanations using historical sources
- the people involved (quote or summarize information gleaned during interviews)
- present-day significance (why should we care today?)
- identify gaps that exist in the research and suggest next steps in the research process
- site research using footnotes

2. Educators review reports with youth and discuss findings, overall progress, and next research steps. Use the following rubric to assess their reports.

Research Report Rubric

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTION

Criteria	5 <i>Highly Skilled</i>	4 <i>Moderately Skilled</i>	3 <i>Skilled</i>	2 <i>Poorly Skilled</i>	1 <i>Unskilled</i>
Writer has developed a research question that is open-ended, non-judgmental, compelling and succinct					
Writer has included all current research findings that are relevant to the research question and the project theme					
Writer includes a variety of sources including both primary and secondary					
Writer provides historical context in which research topic unfolds and connects to larger issues					
Writer has sourced with in-text citations, corroborated and contextualized primary sources*					
Writer includes multiple perspectives or view points. Writer makes use of new research findings and oral history interviews					
Writer discusses any present-day significance					
Writer reveals “messiness of reality” - the unwillingness of events to be neatly categorized when cause and effect are considered; offers instead an analysis across categories (such as political effects having religious causes)					
Writer provides conclusion consistent with arguments and analysis that have been developed					
Writer reflects on relevancy of research question’s meaning to herself or himself					

* *Sourcing a primary source answers who created it and what the creator’s biases were; corroborating involves examining multiple sources; and contextualizing means placing events in a particular moment. Information about in-text citations can be found on page 104.*

HISTORIOGRAPHY 2

Developing History Research Questions

One of the most difficult tasks for our youth historians was to generate their main research question and their subsidiary focus questions. This activity was not a formal part of our project, but we feel it should have been. It is meant to provide a guided introduction to forming these important questions. From this foundation, youth will be able to begin developing their own focus questions as the research process develops.

Estimated Time: Two to four 60-minute sessions

Suggested Materials:

- Developing your Research Question worksheet, page 39
- Generating Focus Questions worksheet, page 41
- A range of primary and secondary source materials that have been previously collected during background research

Vocabulary:

research question: An open-ended question or set of questions worth pursuing in a historical inquiry. Compellingly stated, research questions promote in-depth investigation and critical thinking, and allow for multiple views and responses.

focus question: Subsidiary focus questions provide structure and daily focus for youth historians during the research process. Focus questions dig deeper into the main research question in order to analyze, synthesize, and extend understandings of the topic.

Procedure:

1. Youth historians identify a more specific topic within the broader, educator-chosen theme.

Within the broader theme of “Latinos during World War II,” youth historians selected these topics: Latinas in the shipyards, Latinos who served in the war, Latino social life, and the bracero program.

2. Over the next few sessions, ask youth historians to complete the Developing your Research Question worksheet (page 39). It may take several sessions to arrive at a question that can be supported with adequate historic sources. At the end of this stage, youth should have a working research question. Adult assistance is critical at this point.

When youth have identified their research question, they can next generate focus questions. These questions are narrower and guide youth historian's daily research. For example, youth can identify where they need to search or who they need to talk to based on focus questions they have for that session.

3. Using the Generating Focus Questions I worksheet (page 41), practice creating subsidiary focus questions.

4. The Generating Focus Questions II (page 43) is another exercise that can be used as a supplement or independently. Ask youth to review primary and secondary source materials, using the Generating Focus Questions II worksheet. This activity asks youth to review a source and then ask them to think about the questions that the source answers about their research topic.

This is not an easy assignment for youth, but when they understand that all sources answer questions, they will realize that they are the askers of those questions. They have only to begin thus: They express their understanding of a particular source or section of a source in a one sentence summary, then rephrase that sentence as a question. The resulting answer(s) then invites another question or several. The resulting questions and their answers lead the youth spiraling further into the source, deepening and enriching understanding beyond initial supposition.

5. As a means of recording focus questions and sources consulted, youth may use the more open Source Log I or the more structured approach of Source Log II (pages 44-45). Source Log I can be used for any source as a note-taking chart. Source Log II is task-oriented, asking youth to seek out sources that are related to a specific focus question and consider their significance.

Developing Your Research Question *Sample*

Respond to the following set of items in order to generate a working research question.

1. What is the theme of your research?

The Latino experience in Oakland during in World War II

2. What particular aspect of the subject are you researching?

Latino social life during the war

3. Formulate an open-ended question about the aspect of the subject you are researching. (Remember that open-ended questions are non-judgmental, succinct, compelling and invite multiple answers and in-depth investigation.)

How did Latinos spend their free time in the 1940s?

4. Brainstorm possible sources for an in-depth investigation of your open-ended research question.

Oral history interviews

Photographs from interview subjects

Historic Spanish language newspapers

5. Identify possible locations for sources on your brainstorm list.

Neighborhood walk

Senior centers

Pre-arranged interviews with elders

Library

Historical Society

Local history monuments

Generating Focus Questions I Sample

Fill in questions below that dig deeper into your research question. Use additional sheets or your field journal as you research.

My Research Question:

How did Latinos spend their free time in the 1940s?

Who founded Sweet's ballroom _____?

Who performed at Sweet's ballroom _____?

What kinds of activities took place at Sweet's ballroom _____?

_____?

Where did Latinos go for fun _____?

_____?

When did they have time off from work _____?

_____?

How many people went to Sweet's? How popular was it _____?

_____?

How much did it cost to get in to Sweet's ballroom _____?

was the average hourly wage _____?

Why did people go there in the '40s _____?

_____?

How long did the ballroom stay in business _____?

_____?

Generating Focus Questions I

Fill in questions below that dig deeper into your research question. Use additional sheets or your field journal as you research.

My Research Question:
--

Who _____
_____?

What _____
_____?

Where _____
_____?

When _____
_____?

How many _____
_____?

How much _____
_____?

Why _____
_____?

How _____
_____?

Generating Focus Questions II

Create more focus questions using this worksheet. As you preview sources consider the questions that are being answered by the document.

Source Consulted	Section/Chapter & Page #s	What question(s) does this text answer about my research topic?

Source Log I

For each source that you consult, write these notes into your field journal for future reference.

Source consulted	Section/chapter& page numbers	Notes

Source Log II

This log can be used throughout the research process. Use this general format as many times as necessary. Be sure to save these completed forms so you can return to your notes later in the process.

1. Research Question:

2. Focus Question:

3. Source #1 (title, page number):

Source information:

Source #2 (title, page number):

Source information:

Source #3 (title, page number):

Source information:

4. Analysis / What I learned:

5. New focus questions to investigate:

6. New sources to investigate:

HISTORIOGRAPHY 3

Working in a History Research Team

When collaboration rather than competition drives the learning process it is possible to cover more material in depth, and youth historians learn from each other through respect and shared responsibility. Creativity and inventiveness also play key roles in interrogating primary sources and constructing strong historical narratives. Working in research teams, youth historians actively inspire each other's unique talents and individual learning styles necessary to increase the volume of real people's voices from the past.



YOUTH HISTORIANS DEBRIEF ABOUT THEIR RESEARCH FINDINGS.

Your group may function as one research team, as youth did in the Latino History Project which involved six to eight youth historians who worked together to research individual topics. If you are a large group, you may wish to divide into smaller research group clusters.

Vocabulary:

debriefing: A conversation in which researchers share information, experiences, impressions, and questions raised by a particular piece of fieldwork. Researchers often debrief with other researchers who shared the same experience or as a report to others who were not present.

Procedure:

1. If you are creating clusters of research teams, invite youth historians to first identify their own skills, talents, and interests. Then ask them to select their own teams with participant strengths guiding their choices.

For example, some youth may be more interested in conducting oral history interviews, some may prefer archival research, and some may be good organizers. It's a good idea to have many varied interests and abilities in one group.

2. Set aside time for teams in their beginning meetings to build a sense of community.

This was extremely important to Oakland Latino History Project youth since they did not previously know one another. Morning doughnuts, peer interviews, and decoration of the "research center" helped to bring this diverse group together.

3. You may decide that your group should develop a "team contract" or a document that each team member creates to agree on how they will work together.

Team contracts may include the following items:

- Description of the project each team will undertake
- List of products each team will provide as evidence of project completion (i.e., posters, writings, images, etc.)
- Criteria for success (i.e., consulting a certain number of secondary sources, interrogation of certain number of primary sources, investigating diverse sources, participating in field trips, interviewing real people)
- Description of what youth will and will not do in order to ensure team accountability and equitable camaraderie (i.e., one person does not dominate the team and people do not laugh at others' ideas)

Suggested Formats for Team Researching

Brainstorming Sessions:

Team members generate lots of ideas on a specific subject in a nonjudgmental climate

During brainstorming, establish a nonjudgmental environment by agreeing: 1) no idea is too silly or wrong to be put forward, and 2) no comments or discussion about the ideas will happen until the brainstorming session ends

A team member suggests a question or topic and everyone calls out ideas in response it

Another team member records the ideas for all to see

Discussion Rounds:

After the brainstorming session, go around the table so that every team member contributes to the topic. Discussion rounds serve multiple purposes for research teams:

They prove to the team that not everyone may hold the same view about a topic

They encourage less talkative members to speak up

They prevent the more verbally aggressive members from taking over the discussion

Constructive Feedback Rounds:

These series of three rounds bring constructive closure that enable each team member to share information about how the team is functioning and make specific suggestions for improvement. This type of activity can occur at various points during the research process.

“What I Like Round” invites each member to say what she or he especially liked about how the team is functioning

“What I Did Not Like Round” is often more challenging but equally important and permits student historians to address if the team is functioning effectively

“Suggestions for Changes Round” engages each member in the task of actively building a better teamwork environment

How to Evaluate Student Participation in Team Researching

Research teams do history when they actively engage with historical sources, especially primary sources to bring historical content ideas, issues, and questions to the present surface for inquiry and understanding. Evaluation of that work demands one rubric. Evaluation of their research team process demands a different rubric.

Rubric for research team process includes a team contract with the following items:

- Description of the project each team undertakes
- List of products each team will provide as evidence of project completion
- Each team's criteria for success (i.e., consulting a certain number of secondary sources, interrogation of a certain number of primary sources, investigating diverse sources, participating in field trips, interviewing real people)

Educator-created ground rules for appropriate team behavior and shared responsibility:

- Rules for how the team will work together and description of what educators think working together well looks like
- Agreement about how educators will deal with team members socializing with each other instead of being on task
- Protocol in place and consistently practiced for problem solving

Written record of team meetings documenting team decisions and work assignments coming out of research sessions.

Self and peer assessment for teamwork and participation.

HISTORIOGRAPHY 4

Looking for Bias, Perspective, Interpretation, and Process

Youth historians need to be aware of multiple perspectives for several reasons. One, when they place themselves in the position of others in different circumstances and explain what things look like from those other people's positions, they tell a story incorporating the views of multiple characters. Youth historians need to understand that the meaning of a story or history changes, depending upon which participant's viewpoint is placed at the center of that story. Two, when they understand that it is difficult to understand others' assumptions and values without superimposing their own they are entering into what historian Sam Wineburg calls participating "actively in the fabrication of meaning . . . As eavesdroppers on conversations between others, historians must try to understand both the authors' intentions and the audiences' reactions, all the while gauging their own reactions to this exchange." (Historical Thinking, page 70)

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

Suggested Materials: Research documents

Vocabulary:

bias: A preference or an inclination, especially one that inhibits impartial judgment.

perspective: A viewpoint.

interpretation: The act of interpreting, deciphering, or telling.

process (in a history research context): Ways in which people experience events.

Procedure:

Discuss the vocabulary terms (bias, perspective, interpretation, process). Use a historical event in your research as an example. Select one document from the group's research findings and distribute copies of it to each member of the group.

During the Latino History Project, we used the Zoot Suit Riots as an example. We discussed the biases that may have existed and therefore, the perspectives that people may have had of the riots. We wanted to discover how the event was interpreted, so we decided it was necessary to analyze newspaper clippings and a transcript of an interview with an Oakland zoot suiter.

2. Ask youth to silently read the document(s).
3. Using the Looking for Bias, Perspective, Interpretation and Process worksheet, facilitate a group discussion that responds to the questions on the worksheet.
4. Ask youth to examine other documents that pertain to their research topic by using the worksheet questions as a study guide. Youth can write their findings in their journals.

The identification and critical evaluation of history sources for bias is an important element of any research process and should continue throughout the project.

5. As a wrap-up, discuss or assign this journal topic: After analyzing documents for their credibility, how has your understanding of "history" changed? Reflect on your research process thus far. What steps will you take to ensure that your own research is unbiased?

Bias, Perspective and Interpretation

The concepts of bias, perspective and interpretation are inter-related. A biased view will often leave out information as a consequence of that bias. Perspective then means that one does not take into account certain types of information because of the bias in the evidence. Interpretation can be deficient because of the lack of evidence resulting from the combination of bias and perspective of the documents. Thus, crosschecking, for instance, can be difficult when little evidence is found in the documents that are the basis of the available interpretative texts. Historical reconstruction is made more difficult when bias influences perspective in the documents that are used for interpretation.

Bias can be of several types, not just racial, for instance, with corresponding consequences for perspective and interpretation. For the World War II era, for example, bias might mean an emphasis on the military aspect of the war with little attention to the “home front.” Perspective here then means a lot of research, and therefore text, devoted to battles, generals, weaponry, strategy, and the like, with scant attention to what was going on back “home.” Interpretation then emphasizes the importance of a particular battle (invasion at Normandy), or a specific military figure (Patton), or a type of weapon or technology (radar). This is different than emphasizing the production of war material of the two competing sides (the ways in which Germany could not compete with the United States), which would lead to an emphasis on the ability of the United States to use its human resources (women, Rosie the Riveter, for example) as a decisive element of the war: soldiers cannot fight efficiently without the availability of weapons, ammunition, food, and clothing. In one interpretation, the bias looks to the significance of the battlefield; in the second interpretation the bias looks to the significance of the factory in wartime. Each bias leads to a perspective, a perspective that influences the type of documents to be sought by the historian.

Process

Process refers to ways in which people experience events. Age and gender, for instance, can be important to how people think about themselves in the midst of historical change. A male of fifteen years of age in 1938 and his experiences during the World War II era will spur the obvious question: What did you do during the war (i.e., did you serve in the military?). A married female of forty years of age, with children, in 1938 and her experiences during the World War II era will spur most likely a completely different set of questions, as opposed to a female of fifteen years of age in 1938. The concept of process in history is important to the research process, and it is especially important in the development of interview questions appropriate to the human subject of the interview. Understanding process will often influence the creation of documents. For example, now it is a common research procedure in the understanding of the impact of war to examine the drawings of children caught in the midst of conflict. Unfortunately, we have virtually no evidence of the colorings of children in the United States during World War II, and children’s literature was a very underdeveloped genre at that time, which might have provided an insight into process (coming of age stories) for adolescent children in the 1940s.

Looking for Bias, Perspective, Interpretation & Process Worksheet

Questions for Analyzing Primary Sources

Adapted from the Library of Congress

Process

1. Who created the source and why? How do you think it was created: spur of the moment act, routine transaction, or a thoughtful, deliberate process?
2. What is the author's intent in creating this document? What is its purpose? Did the author produce the document for personal use, for one or more persons, or for a large audience? Was the document meant to be public or private?
3. Was the information recorded during the event, immediately after the event, or after some lapse of time? How large a lapse of time?

Bias, Perspective, Interpretation

4. Did the author have firsthand knowledge of the event or did the author report what others saw and heard?
5. Was the author a neutral party or did the author have opinions or interests that might have influenced what was recorded? Did the author wish to inform or persuade others? Did the author have reasons to be honest or dishonest?
6. What does this document tell us about the social and political climate of the particular period when it was produced?

Cross-checking

7. How does this document support and/or conflict with what you've read in other sources? Was this document addressed in other sources, such as a textbook? If not, why do you think it wasn't included?
8. Briefly explain your response to this document. How do the issues addressed in this document relate to our current social/political environment?
9. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document.

Sample Texts about the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943

The following statement was issued by Ed. Duran Ayres, of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, and was considered key to the Sleepy Lagoon case.

“The biological basis,” said Mr. Ayres, “is the main basis to work from ...When the Spaniards conquered Mexico they found an organized society composed of many tribes of Indians ruled over by the Aztecs who were given over to human sacrifice. Historians record that as many as 30,000 Indians were sacrificed ... in one day, their bodies ...opened by stone knives and their hearts torn out. ... This total disregard for human life has always been universal throughout the Americas among the Indian population, which of course is well known to everyone. ... This Mexican element ... knows and feels ... a desire to use a knife or some lethal weapon. ... His desire is to kill or at least let blood...”

The following excerpt is from the Los Angeles Examiner, June 10, 1943 news story, “Police Must Clean Up L.A. Hoodlumism.”

“Riotous disturbances of the past week in Los Angeles by zoot suit hoodlums have inflicted a deep and humiliating wound on the reputation of the city. Los Angeles has been disgraced, and it is up to Los Angeles to move with the utmost speed and firmness to retrieve its character as a peaceful and orderly community... The record already reveals killings, stabbings, and cases of innocent women having been molested by zoot suit gangsters. ...”

HISTORIOGRAPHY 5

Learning from Photographs and Editorial Cartoons

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Suggested Materials:

- Five to seven photographs or editorial cartoons from the research time period and place as a transparency, slide, small print or large poster
- Projection equipment (slide or overhead projector) and screen
- Chart paper
- Gloves (if handling original historic photographs)



YOUTH HISTORIANS EXAMINE PHOTOGRAPHS USING THE PHOTOGRAPHY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET.

Locating historic photographs and editorial cartoons

Period photographs and cartoons can be extracted from books, period magazines and newspapers, and from the personal collection of your interview subjects. If your group is having difficulty locating these types of images for your research topic, contact your local historical society, museum, library or archive. It may be possible for your group to make an appointment to see photographs and cartoons in their collection or search their archive. (Refer to Archive Research 3: At the History Museum, Historical Society, or Library, page 75)

Procedure for examining photographs:

1. Begin this group activity with a discussion about the use of cameras and photographs today. People take photographs to record events (both common and extraordinary) to document a place, to remember a person, etc.

2. Using an overhead projector, a slide projector, or a poster, begin a group analysis of several historic photographs from the research time period and place. Focus questions for youth are:

What do you see? Describe the people, objects or activities in detail.

What is the setting? Describe what the place is like. What evidence in the photograph gives you that impression? (What clues do you see?)

When was this photograph taken? What evidence supports your thinking? (What clues do you see that help to identify the time period?)

3. Ask youth to share the strategies they used to examine and find clues in the photographs. Together create a list of these strategies for all to see. Refer to this list throughout the research phase.
4. Pass out additional photographs (on transparencies or posters) to a team of youth or individuals. Give each person a **Photography Analysis Worksheet**. Ask youth to analyze these new photographs using the worksheet. The worksheet will guide future investigations of photographs received from interview subjects.
5. With the photograph visible to all, teams report on their findings and the evidence in the photographs that support their analysis. Ask youth historians to add the following to their journals: 1) what new information and 2) what new questions do you have about the period, the place, the people?

Adaptation:

Before youth begin exploring historic photographs, ask them to bring in a more contemporary photograph from home. Youth should not bring in photographs of themselves. Randomly distribute photographs to each person. Ask youth to think like historians to investigate the photograph. Look for clues that explain 1) the setting, 2) the people – their expressions, poses, gestures, and clothing, 3) their activities, 4) the time period.

When youth have had a chance to explore the photographs, connect them with their photograph's owner. Allow time for youth to express their own discoveries and then for the owners to explain what is actually happening in the photograph and when it happened. Ask youth to share the strategies they used to examine and find clues in the photographs. Together create a list of these hints for all to see.

Explain to youth that often there is not a person to help historians identify photographs. Discuss what the next research steps might be if the owner of the photograph was not alive. What next steps could be taken to identify the photographs?

Procedure for examining editorial cartoons:

1. Begin this group activity with a discussion about the use of editorial cartoons today. As in the past, editorial cartoons can be found in newspapers and magazines. Artists often create these cartoons in order to comment in a satirical way about a current event or political or cultural figures.

2. Using an overhead projector, a slide projector, or a poster, begin a group analysis of several editorial cartoons relevant to your research time period and place. Focus questions for youth are:

What do you see? Describe the objects or people you see in the cartoon. Identify any symbols in the cartoon. Identify the cartoon's caption or title. What else is written? List adjectives that describe the emotions in the cartoon.

What's going on? Describe any action that takes place. What evidence supports your thinking?

What's the cartoon's message? What evidence in the cartoon supports your thinking? Who (what special interest groups) would agree or disagree with the message?

3. Repeat steps 3 – 5 in the procedure for examining historical photographs using the **Cartoon Analysis Worksheet**.

Refer to the page 143 in the Appendix for tips on cataloguing in-coming historical materials.

Photography Analysis Worksheet

Note: Not every question will work with every photograph. Answer the questions that you think apply to the photograph.

1. What do you see happening in the photograph?

2. Look more closely at the photograph and describe the people, objects or activities in the chart below. Suggestion: you can divide the photograph into parts and examine one part at a time.

<i>People</i>	Description
---------------	-------------

Look at their

facial expressions

poses

gestures

clothing

Activities

(What are people doing?)

Objects

3. What is the setting of the photograph? Where are the people? What is the place like?

Photography Analysis Worksheet (continued)

4. What do you see here that you would not see today? (Look at what people are doing or wearing as well as the objects or setting in the picture.)

5. List three things that the photograph tells you about the historical period.

1)

2)

3)

6. What do you see in the photograph that makes you say that?

7. Why do you think the photograph was taken?

8. Who do you think was the intended audience?

Photography Analysis Worksheet (continued)

9. Identify two kinds of newspaper stories that might include this photograph.

Story #1

Story #2

What could the photograph add to each story?

Story #1

Story #2

10. What does the photograph tell you about the historical period that a written newspaper story or journal account could not say as well?

11. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

12. Where could you find answers to them?

Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

Note: Not every question will work with every cartoon. Answer the questions that you think apply to the cartoon.

	Visuals	Words (not all cartoons have words)
STEP ONE	1. List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.	1. Identify the cartoon caption and/or title. 2. Locate three words or phrases used by the cartoonist to identify objects or people within the cartoon. 3. Record any important dates or numbers that appear in the cartoon.
STEP TWO	2. Which of the objects on your list are symbols? 3. What do you think each symbol means?	4. Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why do you think so? 5. List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.
STEP THREE	A. Describe the action that takes place in the cartoon. B. Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols. C. Explain the message of the cartoon. D. What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?	

Designed and developed by the staff of the Education Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

HISTORIOGRAPHY 6

Learning from Artifacts

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

Suggested Materials:

- Artifacts

This type of activity is especially relevant if the research team has already collected artifacts during the project or may be studying artifacts during a group visit to a local museum or historical society.

Vocabulary:

artifact: A historical object, work of art, or manufactured article that includes evidence about a culture at specific moments in history: its customs, preferences, styles, special occasions, work, and play. Its creator had a point of view and an intended audience. Examples of artifacts include photographs, articles of clothing, tools, household items, visual artwork, music recordings, and furniture.

If this activity is conducted at a historic site or museum, choose an area of the museum where youth can sit quietly and near several artifacts that are pertinent to the study. If the activity will take place in the classroom or research center and there are pertinent artifacts to examine, spread them out over a table or two.

Procedure:

1. Ask youth to choose one artifact that interests them. More than one youth historian can work on the same object. Ask the group to spend time carefully sketching the artifacts in their journals. This will help youth to focus on the object and to re-discover it in a more intimate way.
2. Use the **Artifact Study Worksheet** to guide youth through an investigation of the artifact.
3. Share findings and hypotheses with the whole group. This discussion is important not only for piecing together historic facts, but also for developing a collaborative research team and generating new strategies and research paths. Ask youth to reflect in their journals on the following topic: How has this study added to our understanding of the research topic? What new questions does it bring to bear?

What Do Objects Tell Us?

Written by the Education Staff at The New-York Historical Society. Reprinted from The N-YHS Objects Tell Stories curriculum guide for teachers.

Most objects, such as furniture, tools and household items, are made for a specific use. They may be decorative as well as functional. They show how people in different time periods solved the same problems and met the same needs based on what materials were available, what was considered aesthetically pleasing and what technology existed. For example, people over time have used a variety of objects to supply light in their homes and on the streets – everything from oils lamps, to gaslights and later electric bulbs. An object can also tell something about the individual or family who owned it. A set of engraved silver dishes suggests that the owner was a person of wealth, while an undecorated set made of wood or clay would suggest that its owner was of more limited means. Decorative symbols found on items can also indicate such diverse information as the owner's religious beliefs, morals, political views and social status.

One of the most fundamental steps in studying objects is to look at the object's physical characteristics. What is the object made of? Were the materials common and readily available or rare and expensive? What does this say about the monetary value of the object? Was the object something that most people could afford to own? If the object were considered rare and expensive at the time it was made and used, would it still be considered so today?

By careful study you can see whether or not something was handmade or machine-made. Is the object homemade or factory made? A homespun cloth rag doll, for example, tells a very different story than a store-bought porcelain doll. Does its manufacture tell you anything about the technology of the period in which the object was made? If an object, such as a plate or spoon, has been carved, painted or decorated in any way, does it seem like the object was made to be used or is purely decorative?

Sometimes when we study an object from the past we find that it is not always complete; it may be missing a piece or be damaged in some way. If damaged, could this be simply because it is old and has deteriorated over time or is it worn from use? Does the object show signs of having been kept and used even after it was damaged? If so, does this tell you anything? What, for example, does a well-worn piece of clothing that shows it has been repaired often tell you? Does it mean that the person who owned it was poor? What if it was an expensive piece of clothing? Could it have been saved because it had sentimental value?

Based on its physical characteristics, who might have used the object? Is it child-sized? Is it something that would have been used by a man or a woman or both? How do you know? If it is gender specific, does the object hold the same significance today? Is this object still used today, or has it become unfashionable and obsolete? If it is still used, does it look the same or has its form changed over time? Has another object replaced its function in modern society, as for example, cars have replaced horse-drawn wagons?

The objects in the Luce Center also include works of art. Paintings, such as portraits, landscapes, sculpture, and genre paintings (scenes of everyday life), often give us a window into the past by showing people or scenes that existed. These forms of art can show what people and places looked like, what types of clothing were in fashion, and what kinds of objects were used during a period in history. For example, in Asher B. Durand's painting *The Peddler Displaying His Wares* (1836), we are invited into the home of a middle-class family of the period. We see how the family members are dressed, noting that the children are dressed in the same style as the adults. We note the construction of the home, with the exposed beams, the large fireplace and the sparse yet elegant furnishings. Hung on the fireplace is a bellows, and on the mantelpiece we see candlesticks and a pitcher. By looking at this painting we get a picture of the details of everyday life for families of this type in the early nineteenth century.

However, paintings are not always realistic, and are not always painted from life. Sometimes they show a scene from literature or mythology or an historical event not contemporary to the artist's time. While not representative of the reality of the period in which the artist is painting, these paintings in themselves often reflect something about the artist's time and personal viewpoints. For example, Thomas Cole's *The Course of the Empire*, a series of five paintings done between 1834 and 1836, shows the same imaginary place as it changes over the course of time. At the time Cole was painting, westward expansion was underway, eastern cities were booming and Americans were in the process of exploring the great virgin wilderness that constituted most of the country. The series, often interpreted as an allegory, was a warning of the possible dangers to the American nation as it continued to develop and grow, destroying nature in the process.

Artifact Study Worksheet

Title of artifact: _____

Add more questions to the “Develop questions” box as you study the object. You may not be able to answer all of them by looking. In step four, identify other research strategies to learn more about the artifact.

1. Develop questions	2. Develop hypotheses	3. What do you see that makes you say that?	4. Identify other research strategies to learn more about the artifact
Materials: What is the artifact made out of? What is its physical condition?			
Function: How was the object used?			
Owner: Who might have owned it? Who might have used it?			
Significance: Was it special or common? What might it have symbolized to the owner or community?			

HISTORIOGRAPHY 7

Creative Summaries

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

Suggested Materials:

- Passage of written information such as a chapter in a book, an interview transcript, youth field notes, a newspaper article, etc.
- Highlighters, art supplies
- Chart paper
- Tape recorder and blank tape (for radio broadcasts)

This project has been well received by youth in the Latino History Project. In the beginning of the background research phase, student historians felt overwhelmed by the amount of dense and dry information they had to read and understand. This activity breaks large texts into smaller chunks that pairs of students read, summarize, and present to the whole group. The presentations are important since this is how information in the passage is shared. We've found that opportunities to think creatively, to express personal views, and to learn cooperatively are essential to a teen research project.

Vocabulary:

summary: A shortened, condensed, and concise version of a larger body of writing.

synthesize: To bring together different pieces of information in order to try to create a whole picture.

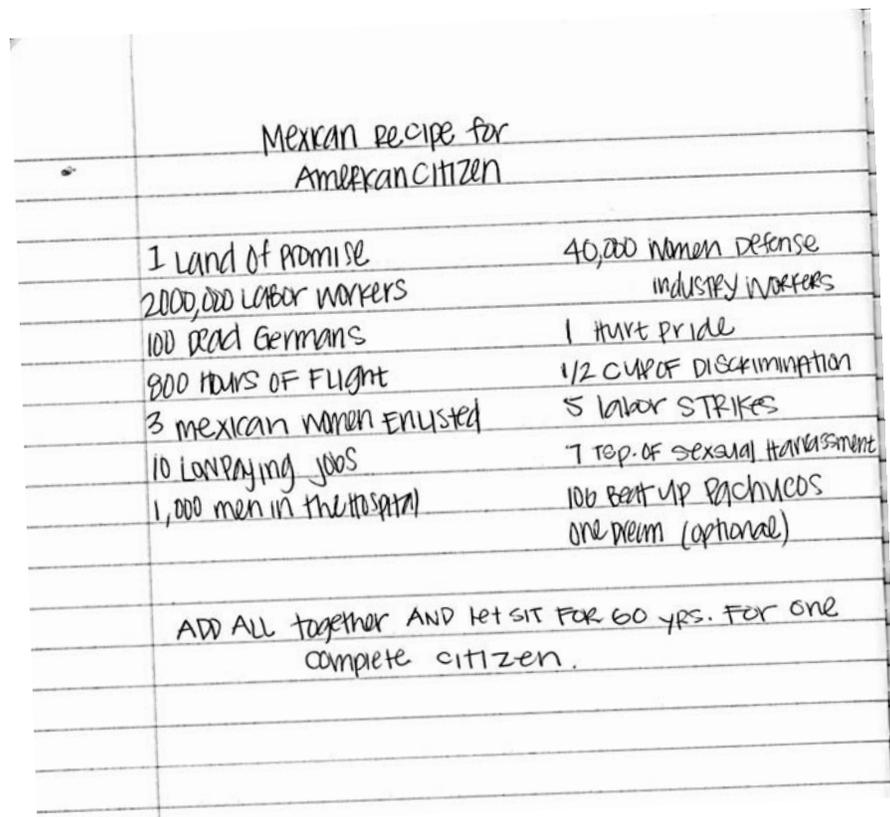
Procedures:

1. Facilitate a brainstorming session with youth about the many ways that information can be interpreted or told. Some examples of forms of interpretation are radio or TV news broadcast, poster, poem, newspaper article, song, and skit. This activity may be repeated during the project and youth can refer to this list.
2. Ask youth to read short segments of a pre-selected passage and highlight information that they feel is historically or personally relevant.
3. Choose a format to present the summary and gems and create visuals for the presentation.
4. Each small group presents their summaries to the rest of the group.
5. As a whole group, review the content of the passage. What new information was presented? What questions have arisen? Fill in any new information on your timeline. Refer to Historiography 4: Bias, Perspectives, Interpretation and Process for a deeper review of the perspectives and possible biases present in the passage.

Summarizing Information and Finding Gems in Written Texts

Look for and highlight the following:

1. Passages that give information about your topic or the topics of other team members. Look for the sections that have concrete descriptions of work life, living conditions, societal conditions, organizations, social life or the community as a whole.
2. Factual details such as dates, places and names. The specifics of people's experiences will help to make a story come alive and feel personal.
3. Powerful quotes. Sometimes a person will say a single strong phrase that sums up their perspective on something in an especially powerful way. One person said, "You lead by doing, not by talking, people forget that." Another person said, "Eating is a hard habit to give up." Look for exact quotes that have drama and sum up a person's experiences.



ONE GROUP PREPARED THIS "RECIPE" IN RESPONSE TO AN ARTICLE THEY READ.

