



Introduction to Primary Sources

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AMERICA'S FORT™

INTRODUCTION: Have students write down everything they did yesterday, from lunchtime until they went to bed, answering the questions on the accompanying sheet to help them organize their thoughts. Limit the time students have to complete the task (seven minutes or less).

ACTIVITY:

Collect the sheets. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Redistribute the sheets as “primary sources” to each group.

2. Provide each group with an assignment sheet (Groups A-E). Using their primary sources, each group tries to identify activities and items related to their area of study (transportation, popular entertainments, etc.).

3. After about seven minutes, redistribute the primary sources again, so each group has the opportunity to examine new sources.

4. After another seven minutes, ask each group to share what they learned about their area of study by examining the documents.

DISCUSSION

1. What were some of the challenges/frustrations students faced when working with the documents (might include illegible handwriting, not enough specifics)?

2. Now that students know how the documents were going to be used, how would they have completed them differently?

3. Discuss the intended audience for documents and how we as historians often use documents in ways never intended or imagined by their creators.



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Use this sheet to write down everything you did yesterday from the time you ate lunch until the time you went to bed. You will have seven minutes.

Lunch: What did you eat for lunch? Where?

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Afternoon Activities/Work -What did you do during the afternoon?

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Travel- Did you travel from one place to another? How? Where?

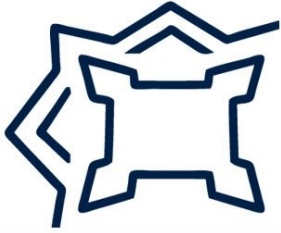
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Supper/ Dinner- What did you eat for supper? Where? With whom?

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Evening Activities- What did you do during the evening?

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Historians in Group A

It is the year 2115. You are historians researching the first decades of the 21st century. You have come across the accompanying primary sources from the year 2015 that you hope will help you in your current study. You are researching popular entertainments of the first decades of the 21st century (2001-2020). What can you learn from the sources provided?

Movies- Did your subject watch any movies? Where? How?

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Television- Did your subject watch any TV shows? How? What did they watch them on?

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Music- Did your subject listen to any music? How?

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Internet-Did your subject use the internet to do anything? What device(s) did they use?

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Video Games- Did your subject play any video games? What games and on what platforms?

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Other- What other forms of entertainment did your subject use?

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Historians in Group B

It is the year 2115. You are historians researching the first decades of the 21st century. You have come across the accompanying primary sources from the year 2015 that you hope will help you in your current study. You are researching the diet and “foodways” of the first decades of the 21st century (2001-2020). What can you learn from the sources provided?

Meals—Did your subject mention specific meals (lunch, supper, snack)?

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Foods—What types of foods did your subject mention?

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Venues—Where did your subject eat and with whom?

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Brand Names—Did your subject mention brand names (either restaurant chains or food product brands)?

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Other—What other items related to foodways did your subject mention?

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Historians in Group C

It is the year 2115. You are historians researching the first decades of the 21st century. You have come across the accompanying primary sources from the year 2015 that you hope will help you in your current study. You are researching modes of transportation of the first decades of the 21st century (2001-2020). What can you learn from the sources provided?

Travel—Did your subject mention moving from place to place?

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Modes—What types of travel (walking, driving, etc.) did your subject mention?

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Propulsion—What type of energy was used to move around?

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Brand Names—Did your subject mention any brand names?

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Other—What other items related to transportation did your subject mention?

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Historians in Group D

It is the year 2115. You are historians researching the first decades of the 21st century. You have come across the accompanying primary sources from the year 2015 that you hope will help you in your current study. You are researching lifestyles of the first decades of the 21st century (2001-2020). What can you learn from the sources provided?

Travel—Did your subject mention moving from place to place?

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Entertainment—Did your subject mention things he/she did for entertainment?

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Foodways—Did your subject mention consuming food? If so, was there a social aspect to it? Was it at home or outside the home?

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Consumer Goods—Did your subject mention using or purchasing any consumer goods?

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Other—What other items related to lifestyles did your subject mention?

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Historians in Group E

It is the year 2115. You are historians researching the first decades of the 21st century. You have come across the accompanying primary sources from the year 2015 that you hope will help you in your current study. You are researching jobs and vocations of the first decades of the 21st century (2001-2020). What can you learn from the sources provided?

Jobs—Did your subject mention any specific jobs he/she did?

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Other Jobs—Can you make any inferences about jobs that exist based on your subject's notes?

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Economy—Did your subject mention any exchange of services for money?

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Professions—Did your subject mention any specific professions?

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Other—What other items related to vocations did your subject mention?

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