

Understanding History Through Images

Type of Teacher Tool: Whole Class, Small Group, or Individual Student activity

Targeted Grade Level(s): K-4, 5-8, 9-12

Targeted Curriculum Areas: Social Studies, History, Fine Arts, Visual Arts

Learning Objectives:

The learner will:

1. research a specific historic event, person, or time period.
2. demonstrate his/her knowledge of the topic and perspective on the topic through the medium of photography and/or another visual art form.
3. reflect on how understanding of history can be changed based on how and by whom it is presented.

National Standards:

Featured National Standards (History):

Grades 5-12: Historical Thinking Standards

2. Historical Comprehension

C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.

F. Appreciate historical perspectives--(a) describing the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded--the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding “present-mindedness,” judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

4. Historical Research Capabilities

A. Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

B. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers,

and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

Resources/Materials Needed:

1. The Educate.Today video and related videos where this Teacher Tool was found
2. Access to computer, printer, photo paper, photo album or notebook, glue or paint and/or drawing materials.

Teacher Instructions:

1. In the video(s) associated with this activity, students will hear directly from someone describing their involvement in an historic event or time period or a historian discussing an historic event or time period. For the purpose of this activity, have each student choose a specific topic, event, or person discussed in the video and research more about it through photographic images, paintings, or drawings.
2. As students research images related to the event, person, or time period in their video(s), they should try to find a variety of images related to that topic. Images could be photographs, drawings, paintings, etc.
3. Students should choose at least 10 images representing the aspects of the event, person, or time period that most speak to them. Pictures should represent a variety of aspects related to the topic. These can be put in a photo album, pasted on another type of notebook, or included in a digital format/presentation.
4. Students could also choose to make one or more of their chosen ten images to be a drawing or painting of their own creation that reflects their knowledge of, and response to, the topic, person, or event they are studying.
5. For each of the final images, students should write or type a short description of what is in the photo, the approximate date and location (if known), and why they choose that picture. If they have chosen to draw or paint an image themselves, they should describe what they have chosen to depict, the approximate date and location represented, and why they choose to draw/paint that image.
6. Have students share and discuss their chosen images with each other, family, and any other audience of your/their choosing.
7. Have students write a reflection on how the selection of images changed or influenced their perception of the event, person, or time period they were studying and how images might be used to influence other people's understanding of, and attitude toward, history.

Assessment/Evaluation Options

1. Evaluation of the chosen images on their appropriateness for the topic studied.
2. Evaluation of student reasoning about why they chose the images they did.
3. Individual student reflection and/or class discussion on how the activity affected their understanding of different ways that historic information is presented and how the power and unique features of images might affect the history that people learn, how they learn it, and what they take from it.