

Exploring Rural Kentucky Through Documentary Art: Supplementary Resource Set 2 | Documenting Local History Using Primary Sources - For the Teacher -

OVERVIEW

Through the lens of the Creelsboro Documentary Project in Russell County, Kentucky, students learn the importance of using primary sources to document the lives of everyday people. Use this short video - [Using Primary Sources](#) - as a springboard for developing student skills in writing and conducting research projects that are not solely Internet-based. Also use this resource set to complement social studies courses that emphasize state, national, or world history, or human geography.

TEACHING TIPS AND ACTIVITIES

The documentary – [Creelsboro and the Cumberland: A Living History](#) – and the shorter video [Using Primary Sources](#) can be used to complement social studies courses that emphasize state, national, or world history, or human geography.

Using the lens of this one archaeological mitigation, we see the vital importance of primary sources in documenting not only historic events or famous people, but also in documenting the lives of everyday people. This video provides the opportunity to explore compelling questions such as:

- Why is it important to use primary sources when documenting the past?
- Why does it matter to document the lives of everyday people?
- What is the balance between progress and preservation?
- How do people transform the places in which they live?
- How do we share information about local history and cultural heritage?

This resource set also can be used as a springboard for

- **reading and writing** activities, such as research and writing projects that develop students' skills in conducting research that is not solely Internet-based.
- **social studies** activities, such as researching local community history using photographs, historic documents, cemeteries, or in-person interviews.
- **visual and media art** activities, such as analyzing and interpreting meaning an artistic work, critiquing the artist's style, intent and success, exploring how perspective influences perception of subject matter, and creating and presenting students' own documentary art linked to their community's history.

Suggested Activities – Reading and Writing, Social Studies, Visual and Media Art

1. Use the interactive lesson [Straight to the Source: Primary and Secondary Sources](#).
2. Invite a local historian, librarian, Main Street manager, or other individual who is knowledgeable about using primary sources in historic research and/or about the history and cultural heritage of your county or community to visit your classroom. Ask them to emphasize the use of (and differences between) primary and secondary sources.

Before they come, engage your students in learning what they can about your county or community and about the use of primary and secondary sources in research so that they can create a list of questions (NOTE: Activity 1 will give students a deeper understanding of primary and secondary sources). Send the questions to your visitor in advance so that they have time to prepare. Allow the students to ask their questions (and follow-up questions!) of the visitor. This gives them experience in conducting an interview.

After the visit, ask students to reflect - in writing - about what they have learned from the experience and what additional questions they have.

3. You can find ready-made student activities [here](#). You can adapt these activities to use with Activity 4.
4. Lead students in a discussion using one or more of the compelling questions listed above and several of the Discussion Questions. Be sure to include at least Discussion Question 1 and Discussion Question 10.

Ask students what primary sources they could use to collect information to document the history of your county or community.

As a class, determine what themes or topics should be included (see Activity 4 - Project Possibilities for Students or Teams, below). Students may work alone or in teams to collect information using one of the primary sources described in the [Using Primary Sources](#) video. Some students will have access to smart phones or other devices on which to take photographs and record interviews, and others will not. You can address this inequity by having students work in teams or by allowing students to choose a research method that does not require the use of a device.

Because each project will be different, discuss criteria for evaluating the work of each student/team. What information must they collect? How should the information they collect be shared with the class?

Tell students that their presentation must include identification of the primary source(s) they used in their research as well as any secondary sources. Remind them that they may not rely solely on secondary sources or Internet research.

If you plan to combine student work into an exhibit, media work, community heritage book, or public presentation, determine in advance the format you will use and the audience you will target.

After students share their individual or team projects with the class, determine how to share the information with the community. Does the idea you decided on before embarking on your research still seem feasible, or do you see a better way to share your findings?

5. Select one of the compelling questions provided or one(s) that you and your class develop together. Divide students into teams to develop supporting questions for one of the topics below. Ask them to research the topics, and share their conclusions through a multimedia presentation:
 - The history of Creelsboro.
 - The history of your local community.
 - Road construction in your county or community.
 - Preservation efforts in your county or community.
 - The documentation of changing cultural landscapes.
 - The importance of primary sources.

Activity 4 Project Possibilities for Students or Teams

Listed below are suggested photographic documentation, oral history, archival, and artifactual projects.

- Photographic documentation of homes, buildings or structures accompanied by information about the past and present use of the homes, buildings, or structures.
 - Research to discover what is significant about the home, building, or structure, such as its use, its style, the period in which it was built, changes over time, former or current occupants, unusual features or features that represent the community. Write a brief summary.
 - Take a series of photographs from different angles and viewpoints. Include close-up photographs. Remember the purpose of documentary photography is to represent the home, building, or structure accurately.
- Oral histories conducted with family members, community members, or school personnel. See the Additional Resources list below for tips on conducting oral history interviews. If video or audio recording is not possible, students can take notes of the interview.
- Archival research. This should include a trip to the local library and a meeting with a librarian or library assistant. Students can create a summary of the resources found and a description of items of interest from the resources. It could also include photographs of documents, etc.
- Historic photographs of family or community life, along with a description of the subject of the photograph.

- Family history or community history books. These might be found at the local library, historical organization, or family collections. Students could summarize the contents.
- An overview of a cemetery. This could include information about the location, size, and historic periods represented. It can also include photographs and a list of names, dates, and features of select tombstones or memorials (NOTE: do not allow students to make rubbings of the gravestones, as rubbings contribute to stone deterioration).
- Artifacts that have been passed down in a family or community. This could be the actual artifact or a photograph of it, with information about the significance and history of the artifact.
- Previous collections of photographs, oral histories, architectural surveys, etc. Students could summarize the contents of the collections.

STANDARDS

Reading and Writing Standards - Composition

1. Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
2. Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.
3. View literacy experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary and transformational.
4. Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.
6. Collaborate with others to create new meaning.
7. Utilize digital resources to learn and share with others.
8. Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.
9. Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.
10. Develop a literacy identity that promotes lifelong learning.

Guiding Principles for Composition	
Text Types and Purposes C11-12.1	Students will compose arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
Text Types and Purposes C11-12.2	Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.
Production and Distribution C11-12.4	Students will use digital resources to create and publish products as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
Research to Build & Present Knowledge C11-12.5	Students will conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating

	understanding of the subject under investigation.
Research to Build & Present Knowledge C11-12.6	Students will gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source and integrate the information for the purposes of analysis, reflection and research while avoiding plagiarism.
Range of Writing C11-12.7	Students will compose routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a variety of tasks, purposes and audiences.

Social Studies Standards

HS.WH.I.Q.1 Generate compelling questions to frame thinking, inquiry and/or understanding of key concepts in history.

HS.WH.I.Q.2 Generate supporting questions to develop knowledge, understanding and/or thinking relative to key concepts in history framed by compelling questions.

Visual and Media Art Standards (for projects, productions, and presentations)

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic technique and work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Record and Preserve Your Family Stories: For Educators | Circle of Stories](#)

In this activity, students will learn the basics of and importance of recording their own family history. Students will learn about the right questions that will provide insight to their family stories, and will research, collect and share stories that will bring them closer to their heritage while possibly spawning a lifelong interest in genealogy. *Circle of Stories* uses documentary film, photography, artwork, and music to honor and explore Native American storytelling.

Conducting Oral History Interviews

[A checklist for oral history interviews](#)

GOING DEEPER: RESOURCES FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

Kentucky Oral History Commission Resources

Searchable database of Kentucky oral histories at the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries

Digital Public Library of America - Primary Source Sets (includes educator guides for classroom use)

National Register of Historic Places

Library of Congress Digital Collections