

Lesson 4: Historical Research

Overview

In this lesson, students learn about the skills and methods that historians use in order to help them prepare their own research for their History Experience project. In this PowerPoint driven lesson, students participate in a focus discussion to review primary and secondary sources. Then, students learn about the practice of historical research using the example of Walter Lord's research into the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912. Next, in a small-group activity, students examine a source related to the *Titanic*, determining what it is, why it was created, what information it provides, and what other sources might be helpful in expanding that information. Finally, students present their source in a gallery-walk activity that simulates a historical museum.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources.
- Recognize methods for historical research, including places where students may go to locate sources (e.g., museums, libraries, and historic sites).
- Examine and present examples of historical sources used in research.
- Organize and plan research strategies for their projects.

Standards

California's Common Core State Standards

SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on *grade 8 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.8.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.8.5

Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

WHST.6-8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

WHST.6-8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources (primary and secondary), using search terms effectively....

WHST.6-8.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Preparation and Materials

PowerPoint Teacher Guide — PDF File.

You will need to print this out as it includes the instructions for the lesson.

PowerPoint: Historical Research — Download PowerPoint.

Since the lesson is driven by a PowerPoint slide show, you will need a computer, projector, and screen to show the slide show.

Handout 4A: What is This? — 1 per student.

Handout 4B: Titanic Sources — 1 for each group member. Each group will be about one-seventh of the class in size.

Supplies: Poster boards, markers, and other art materials.

Procedure

- A. Focus Discussion
- B. Background Information on Historic Research
- C. Small-Group Activity: What Is This?
- D. Gallery Walk: The *Titanic* Museum
- E. Debriefing

History Experience Planner

This lesson provides students methods for historical research, including where to locate sources. This will help students organize and plan research strategies for their projects. In addition, students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as more information is analyzed.

Have students review pages 10-13. Assign students **Log 4: Research Question** and have them create a research plan on page 12 for their project as homework.