LESSON PLAN

UNDERSTANDING AND USING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES
Post-Secondary

OBJECTIVE
According to the Library of Congress, “primary sources provide a window into the past—unfiltered access to the record of artistic, social, scientific and political thought and achievement during the specific period under study, produced by people who lived during that period” (Library of Congress). Primary sources can also “bring people into close contact with unique, often profoundly personal, documents and objects” that give them a better sense of the past, as well as a closer connection to it. Students practicing primary source analysis learn to think like historians, constructing theories supported by facts.

Using primary and secondary source audiovisual material, students will analyze and compare varied Texas and U.S. history topics of the 19th and 20th century, and develop analytical and critical thinking and viewing skills, identifying the strengths and limitations of varied historical resources. This lesson highlights the contributions of significant individuals, including U.S. Representative Barbara Jordan, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, Mary Kay Ash, and the infamous outlaws Bonnie and Clyde. It also highlights important topics such as the Texas Alamo, the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, the King Ranch, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Students will better understand important historical topics and the differences between secondary and primary sources in this lesson.

PROCESS
Prior Knowledge
Students should have knowledge of the following areas to successfully take part in this activity:

- The following activity assumes students know that history is multifaceted and based on facts and available records.
- Students should know that records are used to explain the past and can differ with one another.
- Students should be able to give a few examples of historical sources.
- Students should be able to look at their classroom textbooks’ indexes or work cited pages to identify the different resources used in the textbook.
- Students should be somewhat aware of the differences between a primary and secondary source.
LESSON PLAN

Hook

Play this short film for your students.

“Primary and Secondary Sources”
by Rob Redman
https://www.texasarchive.org/2014_03977

After watching the short film, give each student a note card. Instruct them to draw a T chart on it and write “primary sources” on the left and “secondary sources” on the right. Next, have students anonymously list 3-4 examples of each type of source. Collect their notes and review their comprehension. See if any gave examples that were not mentioned in the video. Read aloud the students’ responses and discuss the basic differences between primary and secondary source examples.

On another note card, have students write down their own definitions of a primary and secondary source. Collect them and assess students’ comprehension. As a class, discuss the differences between the two definitions.

As a class, write the best comprehensive definitions of primary and secondary sources on the board; be sure to include examples from students’ prior examples. Students should now have a basic understanding of the two sources at this point.

Lesson

approx. 90 - 120 minutes

As a preview for the lesson, have students think about how videos and film can also be primary or secondary sources. Ask students to give some examples of film sources.

Divide students into small groups (3-4 students per group). Assign groups a topic (listed below). As a group, students will research and analyze their topic(s) using a variety of assigned primary and secondary source film and video from texasarchive.org.

Group Topics:

- The Alamo
- U.S. Representative Barbara Jordan
- Bonnie & Clyde
- The Galveston Hurricane of 1900
- The King Ranch
- President JFK’s Assassination
LESSON PLAN

- President Lyndon Baines Johnson
- Mary Kay Ash

Depending on your classroom set up, students may rotate around the room to various stations researching topics using their textbooks and classroom computers. Or you can have them do their research in the classroom using their textbooks first, and then you can take them all to the computer lab to work on the primary and secondary film viewing portion.

Have students start by researching their topics using their textbooks (secondary source) to become familiar with the basic knowledge of the event or person. Have students use the worksheet (see Worksheet) as a group to record their 10 facts. Make 4-5 copies of the worksheet’s page 2, the film charts, for groups when using the computer for research. Have students refer to the primary and secondary source guide as they analyze the films. They will answer the following questions about their topic’s sources:

- Why would a historian question the evidence or claims presented in this video?
- What evidence presented in this video can be used to support the claims of the creator or subject of the video?
- Do the videos try to present the creator or subject as average or exceptional? Why?
- What is the context of this video? Why would the films’ creators choose to create this particular video at this particular time?
- What other information might be needed to determine the accuracy of the video?

Make sure students address these questions when they “report out” as a group and present their topics.

After students have completed their worksheet, researched their topic using the textbook or encyclopedia, viewed the primary and secondary source films assigned to them, and recorded their observations and thoughts, they can now “report out” as a group what they learned. This will be a short classroom presentation in which all members will participate.

Groups will present their historical person or event to the class. This should be a short (less than 10-minute presentation) for each group. They will discuss what they learned about the topic from the primary and secondary sources, and will comment on what was most different about the primary and secondary sources. Make sure students expand on what the book says
LESSON PLAN

about their topic based upon the different sources. Have them play short scenes of a primary and a secondary source to the class to demonstrate their differences.

Independent Practice
After students have presented their topics to the class, have them take out some notebook paper and record a daily journal entry (their own primary source). Have students write down the date and time at the top of their paper. Then have them describe themselves at this moment. They are documenting their own histories today. Have them address what their interests are, their goals for the future, and their favorite things. Tell them that you will seal these up at the end of class and reopen them at the end of the year. They will get to read about their goals, hobbies, and interests from this specific moment and reflect upon how they changed. This is a personal, fun way to get students to record their own histories, creating primary sources of their own that they can reflect upon later in the year. Follow up: When they read these at the end of the year, you could have them analyze their personal histories (primary source) and create a secondary source synopsis of their primary source personal history.

Extended Learning
Now that students understand their topics thoroughly, have them create their own encyclopedia or textbook entries for that topic. Have students write a 1-page description explaining their topic, combining what they learned and observed from both the primary and secondary source material. Have students correctly cite where they learned a particular fact in their paper (work cited page). Collect these accounts to read and assess student’s understanding of primary and secondary sources and their topics as an individual grade.
Videos

The Alamo

The David Ayala Collection, no. 7 – The Alamo (1970s)
https://texasarchive.org/2009_01617

The Porter Click Family, no. 5 – San Antonio Sightseeing (1970s)
https://texasarchive.org/2010_03937

Texas in Review – The Alamo (1958)
https://texasarchive.org/2012_00211

Martyrs of the Alamo (1915)
https://texasarchive.org/2014_00414

Freedom Highway (1956)
Play the scene with Tex Ritter singing about the Alamo
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01905

Our Texas Heritage (1963)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01906

U.S. Representative Barbara Jordan

Barbara Jordan at the National Women's Conference of 1977
https://texasarchive.org/2014_00417
LESSON PLAN

Barbara Jordan Delivers the Democratic National Convention Keynote Address (1976)
https://texasarchive.org/2014_03974

The KHOU-TV Collection – News Clips, September 23, 1972 (play the Jordan speech)
https://texasarchive.org/2012_01554

Dr. Freeman Reflects on His Relationship with Barbara Jordan (1972)
Oral History (2012)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_00005

Bonnie and Clyde

Bonnie and Clyde Death Scene (1934)
https://texasarchive.org/2014_03976

The Texas Experience – Waylon Jennings Presents Bonnie & Clyde (1986)
https://texasarchive.org/2011_02112

Hugh V. Jamieson Interview at KERA
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00481

The Retribution of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker (1934)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01894
LESSON PLAN

The Galveston Hurricane of 1900

Galveston Hurricane of 1900 – Panorama of East Galveston
https://texasarchive.org/2006_00114

Galveston Hurricane of 1900 - Panorama of Wreckage of Water Front
https://texasarchive.org/2006_00117

Galveston Hurricane of 1900 – Searching Ruins on Broadway, Galveston, for Dead Bodies
https://texasarchive.org/2006_00112

The Storm (2013)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01921

Caroline Schaper Harris’s Recollections of the 1900 Storm (1986)
https://texasarchive.org/2014_03978

The King Ranch

A.M. Harper, King Ranch
https://texasarchive.org/2009_02542

John Connally Presented Texas Racing Association Award (1968)
https://texasarchive.org/2009_01472
LESSON PLAN

The Texas Experience - Waylon Jennings Presents the King Ranch (1986)
https://texasarchive.org/2011_02109

Vaquero (2003)
https://texasarchive.org/2009_03275

Our Texas Heritage (1963)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01906

The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

Special Release: President Assassinated (1963)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01504

Governor Connally Speaks about President Kennedy's Assassination, Part II (1965)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_02687

JFK Assassination Witness Linda Willis in Dealey Plaza
https://texasarchive.org/2010_02553

Cactus Pryor Interviews J. Frank Dobie (1963)
https://texasarchive.org/2010_03799
Interview with Professor Pennebaker about the Effects of the JFK Assassination on Dallas (1991)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_04528

President Lyndon Baines Johnson

Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 8, 1964
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00040

Remarks Upon Signing the Civil Rights Act, April 11, 1968
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00049

The President – 1966
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00058

The Texas Experience – Barbara Jordan Presents Lyndon Baines Johnson
https://texasarchive.org/2011_02116

The Rancher (2012)
https://texasarchive.org/2012_03825

Mary Kay Ash

Mary Kay Cosmetics - Capture the Vision (1981)
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00144
LESSON PLAN

Mary Kay - All Your Tomorrows (1980)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_00629

Mary Kay - It’s a Way of Life (1977)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_00628

KOSA-TV - Mary McDowell: Mary Kay Sales Director (1978)
https://texasarchive.org/2013_01465

WORKSHEET

Worksheet - Understanding and Using Primary and Secondary Resources - Post-Secondary

RESOURCES

The Texas State Historical Commission’s Timeline of Texas History

Redman, Rob. Primary vs. Secondary Sources
https://www.texasarchive.org/2014_03977

Library of Congress. Primary Source Analysis Tool
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/

Library of Congress. Using Primary Sources
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/