



ACTIVITY

HISTORY DETECTIVES: RESEARCHING FOUND FILMS

Social Studies, Grades 7–12

OBJECTIVE

The TAMI video library provides easy access to thousands of moving images related to the state of Texas. Many of these films were discovered through TAMI's Texas Film Round-Up, a campaign encouraging Texans to contribute digital copies of their own films and videos to the archive. Since many of these films and videos were untouched for decades, the original details of the production and context are often unknown. In this activity, students choose from a list of TAMI films and embark on an in-depth research project to determine as much information as possible about the materials. This activity targets TEKS in Social Studies Grades 7 through 8, United States History Studies Since 1877, and Social Studies Research Methods.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Hook – Media Discussion

As a class, discuss film and video as a source of historical information using the TAMI video library and the TAMI Guide to Moving Image Genres, <https://texasarchive.org/guide-to-moving-image>. The end result of the conversation should be an understanding of the different types of film and video that exist outside of Hollywood feature films and nationally-produced television. Suggested discussion questions:

- What kind of moving images do we encounter on a day-to-day basis?
- What moving images have you (the student) seen in the last two days?
- What information can moving images give us?
- What kind of information might be unique to archival films such as those found in the Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI) online library? (An explanation of what “archival film” is might be required.)
- How are moving images important documents of history and how do they differ from other mediums of historical documents such as historical photographs, documents, artifacts, etc.?

Activity

In this activity, students will be acting as “history detectives” to describe films from the TAMI video library that currently have little to no associated information. The assignment can be done individually or in groups. Have the class choose films from the posted list of TAMI Mystery Films, <https://texasarchive.org/taxonomy/term/117403> for the project. You may also want to search the archive for a film from your community that may have some information, but could



ACTIVITY

use a more thorough description. Feel free to contact TAMI at info@texasarchive.org for more specific suggestions of films from your area that may need descriptions. It is also suggested that students complete the TAMI Scavenger Hunt, <https://texasarchive.org/node/78897> either at home or at school to acquaint themselves with the TAMI video library and the features of the site.

Once they have chosen films to work with, have students brainstorm about how to research their film. Students are going to attempt to identify locations, dates, participants, subject, and the films relationship to Texas history as specifically as possible. For example, the website may tell them that a newsreel is from an event in 1962 in Dallas. They will need to determine the date and month, the site of the event, who participated, and why this event might be relevant to Texas history.

Students should be encouraged to use the resources available to them through the school and public library systems. They may even wish to submit research questions to archives or libraries that might have more information. (If students submit research questions to outside sources they will probably need more time to complete the assignment.) One resource students might find helpful is the “Portal to Texas History” website, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>, which contains many archival photos relating to Texas history.

Once general instruction has been given, students can complete the assignment at home or over a few class periods. The final project will include:

- A completed Watching for Clues Worksheet (see Worksheets). This should be completed when first watching the film and used to direct the group’s research.
- A short paper describing their research process, the information they have learned, and how they learned it. Students should also elaborate on what kind of information they used and where they obtained it. Students ultimately may not find much detail on the film, but this is their opportunity to explain their process. Again, they are working to discover exact dates, locations, participants, events and their relationship to Texas history.
- A completed Catalog Your Film Worksheet (see Worksheets) where students will outline the information they found about their video.
- Optional: A presentation to the class showing the film and describing their research process and the information they discovered.



ACTIVITY

After the Assignment

The class can submit their papers to TAMI at info@texasarchive.org or by mailing them to TAMI. TAMI will review the information and incorporate it into the video library and include you class on a list of TAMI contributors.

RESOURCES

TAMI Video Library

<https://texasarchive.org/videos>

TAMI Guide to Moving Image Genres

<https://texasarchive.org/guide-to-moving-image>

TAMI Scavenger Hunt

<https://texasarchive.org/node/78897>

Mystery Films List

<https://texasarchive.org/taxonomy/term/117403>

WORKSHEETS

Watching for Clues and Catalog Your Film Worksheets

<https://texasarchive.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Worksheet%20-%20History%20Detectives%20-%20Grades%207%20to%2012.pdf>

TEKS

Social Studies Grade 7

19A Explain how the diversity of Texas is reflected in a variety of cultural activities, celebrations, and performances.

21A Differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software; databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas.

21B Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalization and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.

22C Transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate.

22D Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.



ACTIVITY

Social Studies Grade 8

29A - Differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software; databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about the United States.

29B - Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalization and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.

30C - Transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate.

30D - Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

United States History Studies Since 1877

24A - Use primary and secondary sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions

29B - Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalization and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions

29D - Use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple sources of evidence.

30A - Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

Social Studies Research Methods

2A - Collect information from a variety of sources (primary, secondary, written, and oral) using techniques such as questionnaires, interviews and library research.

2D - Use current technology such as library topic catalogues, networks, on-line information systems, academic journals, primary sources on the Internet, email interviews and video interviews to collect information about a selected topic.

2H - Describe the results of the research process.