



Civil War Sesquicentennial Project

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LESSON PLAN FOR PRIMARY SOURCES: VISUAL DOCUMENTS

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.) To define primary sources.
- 2.) To define secondary sources.
- 3.) To identify types of primary sources.
- 4.) To distinguish a visual document's trustworthiness.
- 5.) To determine when a visual document was created.
- 6.) To create one's own visual documents.
- 7.) To compare and contrast a primary source with a secondary source concerning a specific event in United States history.
- 8.) To explain the importance of primary sources in the study of history.

MATERIALS AND TIME NEEDED:

- 1.) Visit <http://visions.indstate.edu/visions/partners/civilwar/civilwar.html> and locate a visual document such as a photograph, film, painting, drawing, etc.
- 2.) It is highly recommended to give students at least part of a class period to look through the site to select a visual document. This could also be a homework assignment.

QUESTIONS:

- 1.) If the image is of a person, why is the person posed in the position he or she is in?
- 2.) What is the subject of the image?
- 3.) When was the visual image created?
- 4.) What was the point of view of the creator of the visual document?
- 5.) What was the original intent of the creator of the visual document?
- 6.) In what condition is the visual document?
- 7.) Has the visual document been enhanced digitally?

- 8.) If the image is of an event, why was the image created?
- 9.) Take a close look at the image. Is it a close-up? What is its depth of field? What is the focal point of the image?
- 10.) Is this image a reliable document?
- 11.) Are there other images of the person, building and/or site that have been taken in other years? What kind of progression do these visual documents illustrate?

ACTIVITIES:

- 1.) Have the class select a current event (this can be something happening at school, in the community or at the state, national or international level) and have the students visually document it. This may be a video, a photograph, a painting, a drawing, etc.

- 2.) Compare and contrast the visual documents used in the assassination and death of President Abraham Lincoln and President John F. Kennedy. Did the use of video help or hinder finding the murderer of Kennedy? If you could have interviewed witnesses right at the site of both assassinations, what kind of information would you have received?