

Welcome to the Local History Activity Guide.

Based on the learning modules of our online course, *Creating Local Linkages*, the Local History Activity Guide includes models for public programs in libraries, especially those public libraries with special collections holdings. These program models and resources are intended to introduce library patrons (such as researchers, local neighborhood groups, or students of all ages) to the complexities of local history, and to items held in local public library collections which document this history.

The program models and resources in the Local History Activity Guide are designed to be easily adaptable to the needs of librarians, their libraries, and their communities. Most activities in this guide include ideas for modification. As we design and publish this guide, we know many libraries are closed in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic; any of the ideas or resources can be adapted to develop virtual programs encouraging explorations in local history using online databases.

We hope these program models and resources will be useful to you and your community.

Sincerely,
The Creating Local Linkages Project Team

1. What is Local History?

How can our library resources help us learn about the history of the place in which we live?

For this program, you'll host an open house for your Special Collections and/or digital repositories to show patrons what local history resources are available in your library.

This program can be conducted in person, or you could host a virtual tour (this could be done via a variety of video and/or social media platforms--just be sure to consult the internet guidelines for your library system).

If you are short on space, time, or personnel for an interactive tour, consider creating a set of reference handouts for patrons. The handouts can be designed to:

- answer popular or common local history questions;
- guide patrons to interesting, underused sources in your local history collection.

See the Activity Resource Sheets below for a series of charts that focus on four different local history research topics: Events, Communities, Families, and Locations. These charts are meant to be customizable and can be edited to reflect and include the sources in your local collection and could be adapted for specific collections as a guide for researchers.

What is Local History? Activity Resource Sheet

Events

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
<p>Crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Epidemics - Natural disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the community respond, who were the leaders, what institutions were created? • What places played important roles in the event, either from the impact or as a place for people to respond? 	<p>Newspapers Maps Census Government records Letters & diaries Digital collections Photographs</p>
<p>War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil War - WWI - WWII - Korean War - Vietnam War - Gulf War - Afghanistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who went to war? How did their families fare? What did women do in the war effort? Who did not participate or resisted service? Why did the community respond in varying ways? How did the population and environment change during and after the war? • What ties with military or service organizations were maintained once active duty ended? What use was made of veterans' benefits? 	<p>Newspapers Census schedules Memorials Veterans Organization and cemetery records Military service records Pension records Letters & diaries Ephemera such as posters/recruitment materials</p>
<p>Nineteenth Amendment (Women's Suffrage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was for suffrage? Who was against it, and how did they express their displeasure? • Was the local fight fought on the same grounds as the national battle? Was the leadership local or from outside the community? • Did new voters change local politics? 	<p>Newspapers Memorials Letters & diaries</p>

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Financial Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did your town ever suffer a serious economic downturn? What happened, and how was it reversed (if it was)? • Have there ever been any major failures—of businesses or banks—that affected your town? What were the repercussions? 	Newspapers Letters & diaries Business records

Communities

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
A company or business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the company founded? Why was it founded? How and by who? Did it draw on local resources, communications, or transportation connections? How has the company evolved? How has it responded to competitors and sought out markets? • Who worked for the company? Did this change over time? What impact did it have on the community? Did it try to train, educate or even control workers? Did it provide opportunities to minorities? Was there a union and how did that impact operations and working conditions? • How did business leaders work with community leaders? What trade associations did the company belong to? When did it join and what was its role? 	Printed histories Office/firm/company records Annual reports Legal records Accounting records Marketing and advertising City directories Census of manufactures Court records Credit reporting agencies Newspapers

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
<p>Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Religious</i> - <i>Children's groups</i> - <i>Voluntary membership organizations</i> - <i>Cultural institutions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the organization founded? Who led and who joined? What were its main goals/mission statement? How has the leadership, membership, or goals changed over time? How does it tell its own story or mark important milestones? • How does the organization make decisions? How does it spend money and distribute power? How has the organization responded to economic, social, or political changes in its community or neighborhood? • What traditions or public displays does the organization sponsor? When did they start and why? Have these changed over time? How has the organization interacted with other groups and the community as a whole? 	<p>Official documents Fundraising brochures Records of pastoral acts Official Reports to denominations Publications Building records Letters & diaries Photographs</p>
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Public, private and parochial schools</i> - <i>Preschools, colleges</i> - <i>Trade and business schools</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did formal education appear in your community? In what ways has it grown and changed? Who was responsible for founding schools or changing them? How was educational policy determined? • Who taught and for how long? What was their role in the community? How did roles and expectations of teachers change over time? • What was the mission of institutions? What was the preferred form of learning? What was the preferred form of discipline? When were buildings constructed, remodeled, or destroyed? How did this change over time? • Who attended different institutions? Did attendance vary at different times of the year? How and why did attendance patterns change? Did all groups experience the same curriculum, discipline, access, or treatment? 	<p>Published catalogs and handbooks Organization publications Institutional reports Textbooks Yearbooks and ephemera Newspapers Maps Buildings Photographs Census Letters & diaries Meeting minutes</p>
<p>Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did most people in your town do for work fifty, one hundred, or one hundred and fifty years ago? • Why did their work change or stay the same? 	<p>Census Newspapers City directories Letters & diaries</p>

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which Native American tribes lived in your area? What happened to them? ● When and why did different ethnic and racial groups arrive in your community? What institutions did they establish? How did the community respond to their arrival? What public displays have they established? ● Was slavery ever legal in your town? When? How many enslaved people lived in the area, and what kind of work did they do? Why did the law change when it did? Who were the enslaved people who lived in your town? Who benefitted from their labor? Were there abolition or antislavery activities in your area? What happened after emancipation or manumission? ● Where have different groups chosen to settle or been forced to live? Is there a history of redlining in your area? 	Census Newspapers City directories Letters & diaries
Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What were the most common crimes fifty, one hundred, and one hundred fifty years ago? How were they handled? Who were the police? Who were criminals? ● How did patterns of crime compare with national norms? Are there any famous cases that patrons regularly ask about? 	Court records Newspapers Police Records Local Government records Prison records Buildings Photographs
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What political issues and movements have arisen in the community? How and why have they aroused, divided, or united individuals, neighborhoods, or groups within the community? What have been the patterns of participation and preference in elections? How have defeated individuals and groups relate to the community? 	Census Houses Maps Letters & diaries Ephemera such as campaign materials

Families

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Family structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where did the family live? Did they move? If related families lived in the same neighborhood or community, what was the nature of their interaction with one another? Did elderly persons live in their own homes, with their children, in retirement communities, or in old-age homes? Did family members who had moved away return to the family home for visits or extended residence? ● Who was considered to be a member of the family? If friends, boarders, or servants lived with the family, who were they, why were they there, what was expected of them, and how were they treated? 	Census Cemeteries Houses Maps Letters & diaries
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How many children were part of the family? Was the birth of children evenly spaced, planned, or unexpected? Where were children born? What role, if any, did family members or outsiders—friends, neighbors, professionals—play in birth, adoption, and childcare? What were the family’s attitudes and experiences with adoption, foster care, institutionalization? ● What level of schooling did family members achieve? What schools did children attend, and how did they get there? Did they serve apprenticeships, undergo special training in the military, or obtain other types of education? If they went to college, how did they finance it and what did they study? What clubs and activities did children participate in? 	Census Photographs Newspaper Organization records Military records Letters & diaries School yearbooks
Family events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How has the family’s diet and clothing changed over the years? How did changing technology affect the family; that is, when and how did such things as piped water and fuel, electricity, telephones, automobiles, radios, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, televisions, microwave ovens, computers, cell phones, and so forth? ● What kind of family celebrations and reunions were held? What holidays and special occasions were observed, and how? In what kinds of social activities did the family engage? 	Photographs Recipe books Newspapers Letters & diaries

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Family activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did members of the family earn a living? ● What was the nature and extent of military service by family members? ● To what extent were family members involved in community affairs, charitable activities, reform movements, or local government? How and why did they or did they not participate? How, if at all, did they benefit from being socially or politically active? How and why did the pattern of participation change from generation to generation? 	Census Newspapers Organization records Letters & diaries
Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who married? How did courtship happen and at what age? Who divorced, when, for what reasons, with what consequences? Did these practices change across generations? If so, why? ● What ceremonies, rituals (including gifts and honeymoons) accompanied marriage? 	Newspaper marriage announcements Legal records Letters & diaries
Sickness & death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who cared for sick, aged, orphaned, disabled, or dependent family members? ● Where, if anyplace, were family members buried? ● What were the family's practices in the event of a death? Who inherited what? 	Cemeteries Legal records Organization records Letters & diaries

Locations

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Residences/Property history research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When was the building built? What were its dimensions and floorplan? Did the building have porches or balconies? Were bathrooms an original feature, a later addition, or missing? Did the building have fireplaces, indoor plumbing, electricity, air conditioning or other features? ● What was its architectural style? How did it relate to others in the community? Did it ever undergo substantial remodeling or expansion? When and why? ● How was sleeping, living, and working space arranged? How was the house or apartment decorated, furnished, and equipped? How was property around the building used? What is the history of other structures on the property? ● Who lived in the building: owner or tenants? Did owners and tenants have conflicts? Was it used for any purposes other than housing? When and how did ownership of the property change? 	Maps Town plans Newspapers Photographs City directories Plat map Surveyor's note Deeds Tax records Building permits Court records Letters & diaries
Public places - <i>Post offices</i> - <i>Official buildings</i> - <i>Cultural institutions</i> - <i>Commercial structures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What were the most significant development projects in your town? When was it planned & when completed? Who financed it? Who designed it? What is its style? What makes it unique? ● What is the development's relation to surroundings: physical geography, transportation, zoning laws? How does it fit into a community plan? Was it contested? Does it say anything about a particular person or group? ● How do passers-by interact with it? How does it manage people or influence behavior? Has this changed over time? How does it relate to the community? Has the community around it changed? Has the site reflected these changes? 	Maps Photographs Plans Newspapers Letters & diaries Ephemera such as postcards

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Monuments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When was it constructed? Who financed it? Who designed it? What is its style? What materials were used? How does it compare to other monuments? ● What does the monument say about a particular person or group? Are there inscriptions on the monument? How was it dedicated? Are there traditions or celebrations associated with it since? ● What site was chosen and why? How does this fit within the community? How do people access or interact with it? Has this changed over time? 	<p>Maps Photographs Plans Newspapers</p> <p>Organizational records Speeches and dedications Ephemera such as postcards</p>
Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is the neighborhood defined? Was it built up over time or developed as one project? What are its boundaries, and what distinguishes it from adjacent areas? What have been the important institutions in the neighborhood (public spaces, churches, commerce, hospitals, prisons, and so forth) and what is their role in the neighborhood? How has the neighborhood changed over time? ● Who has lived in the neighborhood? What family or other ties linked various households? What groups (ethnic, religious, occupational, or social) and economic classes have been represented over time? Has one dominant group been replaced by another? Have various groups clashed? What caused people to move in and out of the neighborhood? ● What special traditions were developed in the neighborhood to promote a sense of community? 	<p>Census Maps Newspapers Buildings Letters & diaries Neighborhood newsletters Original planning documents</p>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When did paved roads, telephones, electricity, streetlights, water, trash collection and disposal arrive? Who received access? ● Where did residents go to work, shop, obtain services, worship, and seek entertainment or recreation? How did they travel? How easy or difficult was it to move beyond the neighborhood? 	<p>Maps Town plan Government records Letters & diaries Newspapers</p>

TOPICS	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there flora and fauna that used to grow in your town that is now gone? Does the area now have any common flora and fauna that has arrived more recently? ● How has the atmosphere, air and water quality, climate, terrain, and presence or absence of natural resources changed over time? How have these factors influenced this allocation of space and the design of buildings? How have they affected family, neighborhood, and community life? 	<p>Maps Town plan Photographs Letters & diaries Local organization records</p>

What Has Happened Here?

What do we know about the place in which we live?

For this program, you'll develop and facilitate a local history scavenger hunt.

This program can be modified to be completed as an individual activity, a group activity, or as field trip activity for students. Because your goal is for participants to learn more about their community and not just to simply complete the scavenger hunt, you may want to consider making this an ongoing activity.

The resources of your library such as Special Collections and digital repositories/databases will be excellent for this activity. If patrons cannot come to the library to complete this activity, you will want to consider ways they can take part remotely using only digital resources.

The questions for the scavenger hunt come from Rebecca Onion's article, "What Happened Here?" (see Activity Resource Sheet). Feel free to add your own questions; you can even crowdsource questions specific to your community from patrons.

What Has Happened Here? Activity Resource Sheet

Every community has a different history and will therefore have different topics of local interest and sources associated with those topics. You can adapt this set of questions to fit your local area and to assist your patrons as they begin their research.

Pre-Contact/Contact/Settlement

- Which Native American tribes lived in your area? What happened to them?
- Why was your town settled?

Work & Labor

- What did most people in your town do for work 50/100/150 years ago?
- What's the history of labor in your town? Of union presence? Were there ever any notable strikes?

Infrastructure/Maps/Transportation

- What forms of transportation served your town that are now gone?
- What were the most significant development projects to take place in your town? When did they happen? Were they contested?

Economic Development

- Was your community founded to support a particular industry, e.g., logging, mining, manufacturing, fishing? How have those industries affected the history of your community? Has the local economy changed over time, and if so, how?

- Have there ever been any major failures—of businesses or banks—that affected your town? What were the repercussions?
- Did your town ever suffer a serious economic downturn? What happened, and how was it reversed (if it was)?

Environment/Weather/Natural Disasters

- Are there flora and fauna that used to grow in your town that are now gone? Conversely, does the area now have any common flora and fauna that weren't around 50 years ago?
- Were there ever any major natural disasters in your town? What happened?

Slavery

- Was slavery ever legal in your town? Was slavery a factor in the history and economy of your community? When? If it was, how many enslaved people lived in the area, and what kind of work did they do? Who benefited from their labor?
- Upon manumission, what happened to the formerly enslaved people? How did the economy and the community change? Why did the law change when it did?

Women's Suffrage

- When did women get the right to vote in your town? What's the history of women's political participation in town governance?

Collaborative Community Research Inquiry

Activity adapted from School Reform Initiative, "Inquiry Circles: A Protocol for Professional Inquiry."
<https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/inquiry-circles-a-protocol-for-professional-inquiry/>.

Genealogy is a step toward local history research, as people in the past comprise both family trees and communities. What do we know about our family members in the past? Where did they live? How did they live? This program encourages patrons to bring their family stories to the library and begin crafting historical questions to guide their research.

****Note: This is an active program; you should have at least two participants so that you successfully facilitate the program. It may be too time-intensive to conduct this thinking protocol 1-on-1 with a patron.***

Writing What We Remember

- Give program participants an opportunity to write about the family member(s) and the family story(ies) that brought them to the program--but remind them this is an informal exercise; it shouldn't feel like they're in school. Encourage participants to review their writing and choose components that they might want to focus on in more depth.
- When participants have completed their writing, invite them to sit face-to-face with another participant to begin the next step of the program.

Sharing What We Remember

- In this step, participants begin the collaborative part of the program by sharing their stories. In their pairs, they'll take turns sharing & taking notes
 - the teller tells
 - the listener listens for a story: what key words, phrases, themes, and ideas are emerging as the story is told?
 - switch roles

- After each participant has shared, encourage them to review their notes on the story told to them.

Retelling What We Remember

- Each pair of participants introduce each other and retells the story they heard
- The owner of the original story may add and/or clarify what their partner has shared
- Other participants may ask clarifying questions; these questions should reinforce what works about the original story and center the original storyteller.

Developing Questions

- Each participant completes a Storytelling Summary Sheet for their partner based on the storytelling process and the questions that emerged during the retelling portion. Completed summary sheets are given to the owner of the original story.
- Participants should take some time to review and reflect on both their family story as well as what is on their summary sheet. Encourage them to think about the following:
 - What really matters to you?
 - What do you want to learn more about?
- This reflection may lead to a research question; if so, participants should write this on the back of their summary sheet. Remind participants that this is the question that begins their research, but may go through several revisions once their research begins.
- Based on the questions developed in this activity, you may suggest available library resources that can assist participants in beginning their research.

Storytelling Summary Sheet

<p>What were the most compelling features of the story?</p>	
<p>What was the most quotable line that came out of this storytelling?</p>	
<p>What was the most significant moment in the storytelling for you as a listener?</p>	
<p>Did a particularly intriguing idea emerge during the telling of this story? If yes, please describe what you learned about it.</p>	

What three core themes stood out for you in the story you heard?	
What possible research questions did you hear in the story?	

2. Digital Local History Sources

How can we use digital repositories to locate history sources?

For many researchers, local history work is that which is done in the community – at their local libraries and in their attics and basements. Local history is a way to engage community members with collections, strengthen ties between your institution and the community, and meet community members where they are most passionate—their local/family stories. However, to answer research questions about local history requires you to turn your attention to the collections of state and national repositories which can supplement or extend the material available locally.

For this program, you will have participants complete a digital scavenger hunt to find the following four items:

- A recipe for ice cream from 1915
- A map of your town (or vicinity) from the 19th century
- A film clip depicting a historical event from your town or state
- A newspaper published in your town or nearby community in the 19th century

See the Activity Resource Sheet for suggestions of digital repositories to search.

If your library does not have the technology to support digital research, consider modifying this activity to be a physical scavenger hunt within your space, teaching patrons how to use finding aids and catalogs to locate primary sources within your own collection.

Digital Local History Activity Resources Sheet

How search works:

- [How Google Search Works](#) (Video time = 3:14)
- [Lab 99, “Limitations of Search Engines”](#) (Estimated Read Time = 5 minutes)
- Dan Russell, [“What was that word again? Effective searching with old terms”](#) (Estimated Reading Time = 10 minutes)

National Repositories

- [American Memory Collection](#) (Library of Congress) With the American Memory Collection, the Library of Congress has created access to over 100 primary source collections, with more than 7 million digital items available online. These collections contain a wealth of information: from photographs and drawings, to oral histories, maps, and sound recordings. There are several ways to locate content within these collections.
- [National Archives and Records Administration](#) (NARA) houses the nation’s archival material, including immigration, military, and census records, maps, films, photographs and more. Only a small portion of these records are available online, but the website may help you to locate material to view in person at one of seventeen [Research Facilities](#).
- [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA) Combining the resources of libraries, archives, museums and other cultural heritage institutions, DPLA is a great resource for digitized documents, images, maps, and other material. Unlike the Library of Congress American Memory Collection or the National Archives and Records Administration, DPLA does not house extensive primary or secondary source collections. Instead, DPLA makes it possible to search across the digitized resources of a [growing list of repositories](#) across the United States.
- [Internet Archive](#) The Internet Archive is a digital library that preserves digital copies of analog sources as well as born-digital sources like websites, software programs, audio recordings, videos, images and more. These collections include digitized archival material contributed by libraries and archives around the world.

- [Smithsonian Collections](#) and the [Smithsonian Open Access](#) collections - a search portal which you can explore the collections of every Smithsonian Museum and collection. The Open Access collections are free to download, share, and reuse.
- [Umbra Search African American History](#). This search tool brings together material related to African American history from more than 1000 US libraries, archives, and museums. It aims to make this material more accessible and to make it easier to draw connections between sources. The sources included in Umbra Search are not always readily identifiable as related to African American history in the collections from which they come. The metadata that describes them often does not identify race and lacks references to historical topics. Staff at Umbra Search have modified and enhanced metadata and added keywords so that materials are included in broad searches for common topics, including the Black Arts Movement, Civil Rights, Diaspora, Politics and Government, Music and Theater, and more.

State Collections and Additional Sources:

- [Library of Congress- Portals to State History](#)– includes links to state and regional digital archives. Created in 2013, this list does not include all the state level collections now available.
- [National History Day](#) affiliates have [compiled local/state level information](#) on historic sites, libraries and museums
- State library collections range widely in scale and scope, and are organized and described in a variety of ways, but the general approaches to search outlined for the national repositories will help you identify primary sources relevant to your local history.
- [Chronicling America](#) (Library of Congress) a searchable database of U.S. newspapers that provides access to historic newspapers and some digitized newspaper pages.
- [Sanborn Maps](#) (Library of Congress and other state level archives) designed to assist fire insurance agents, these detailed maps include information on the shape and size of cities between 1867 and the present.
- [Hathi Trust Digital Library](#) – a library of digitized texts collected from a variety of sources, including Google, Microsoft, and university libraries. Some of the material is still in copyright and only available to users from specific institutions; most is publically available, and can accessed through full-text search.
- [Regional National Archives Research Centers](#) – locate one near you

- **Archive Grid** (OCLC WorldCat) a searchable database of records describing primary source collections held in archives, libraries, museums and historical societies. The database does contain digitized material, but can be used to help you identify local institutions that hold primary source material that might be relevant to your research.
- **Teaching History – National Resources** – collects links for different national resources for history content (from US Coast Guard and National Institutes of Health, to Federal Highway Administration and the Architect of the Capitol). Each page has some framing text and points visitors to content on the site.

Identifying Online Material You Can Use

How do you determine whether the material you find online is under copyright or is in the public domain and is free to use?

In this activity you will assess whether three online sources are under copyright or in the public domain and freely available for use. In order to determine whether the content is in the public domain, use the following questions and the flow chart on the Activity Resource Sheet to guide your assessment:

1. Is the work published?
2. Has the copyright expired?
3. Was the work published without a copyright notice?
4. Has the copyright been renewed?
5. Has the copyright owner placed the material in the public domain?
6. Is this type of work protected by copyright?
7. Do you have to agree to terms of use when you access the material? Do those terms of use restrict you from publishing the material?

Finally, answer the question: Can this material be used freely without permission or attribution?

You may pick any three items from your library's digital collection. If you have questions about copyright, an excellent resource from Cornell University is <https://copyright.cornell.edu/publicdomain>. There are also a number of helpful charts and tools from Stanford University Libraries: <https://fairuse.stanford.edu/charts-and-tools/>.

3. Collaborative/Thematic Primary Source Analysis

What can we learn about history in our community using primary sources?

This activity has a great deal of flexibility built in to accommodate the items in your collection, as well as community interests.

- **Framing:** You might frame this activity around a heritage month (e.g., Hispanic Heritage Month, Women’s History Month), or to commemorate a well-known event or tradition in your community (a parade or the opening of an important local institution). Using the framework of your choosing, you can pull a set of primary sources that participants can analyze and discuss.
- **Source types:** You may choose to pull documents across a variety of source types, or you may choose to pull multiple documents of the same source type; this might be determined by either the sources available in your collection, or you might want to introduce participants to a new source type (e.g., most researchers in your library tend to use newspapers, but you’d like to introduce them to ledgers, oral histories, or maps in your collection).

The sources you decide to use for this program will determine which analysis sheets you’ll use. See the activity sheets that follow.

Analyzing Advertisements

Context: What are the contemporary circumstances of the advertisement's creation?	
<p>-Who produced the advertisement?</p> <p>-Where was the advertisement produced?</p> <p>-When was the advertisement produced?</p> <p>-Who is the intended audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose cultural values are articulated or reflected? • Who is excluded from this audience? Why? <p>-How does the advertisement reflect, reinforce, or challenge contemporary ideas?</p>	
Function: What is the advertisement trying to do?	
<p>-What good, service, idea, or institution is promoted in the advertisement?</p> <p>-What is the overt message of the advertisement?</p> <p>-What is the covert message of the advertisement?</p> <p>-What medium (television, print, radio, web) is the advertisement in?</p> <p>-How might the readership/listenership be described (total numbers, demographics)?</p>	
Strategy: How is the message communicated?	
<p>-How is the good, service, idea, or institution promoted in the advertisement?</p> <p>-What objects, scenes, and people are featured in the advertisement?</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Does the advertisement use famous people, places, or events?-How are the elements of the advertisement arranged?-How does the organization of the advertisement lead the audience through its argument?-How does the style of the advertisement align with contemporary cultural trends?-How are images used to work with rhetorical appeals (appeals to reason, emotion)?-What tone does the advertisement's text use to reach the audience (technical, informal, authoritative)?	
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Adapted from Daniel Pope, "Making Sense of Advertisements," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/intro.html>, June 2003.

Analyzing Film

Documentary	
<p>What additional sources can be used to determine the accuracy of these reconstructions?</p> <p>Is the documentary a primary source, or is a secondary source?</p>	
Feature Film	
<p><i>Note: In films “based on” or “inspired” by real stories, events might be reordered to fit a dramatic narrative.</i></p> <p>How might this reshape understanding of the historical event?</p> <p>What kind of research was conducted?</p> <p>What is the message of the film? Does it tell us something about the time it was made or the time it was set? Both?</p> <p>How does the purpose of the film affect its utility as a primary source?</p>	
News	
<p>Where is the news information coming from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is (are) the source(s) of information? <p>What point of view is presented?</p> <p>What local values and concerns are reflected from the news footage?</p> <p>Which are absent?</p>	
Personal Footage	
<p>How representative are home movies of everyday lives?</p>	

Whose stories are being told? Whose aren't? Why might this be the case?	
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How might footage of personal, family, community events be useful as historical sources?	
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adapted from Tom Gunning, "Making Sense of Films," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/film/>, February 2002.

Analyzing Letters and Diaries

<i>Considering Materiality (If you have access to the original letters or diaries):</i> Thinking about the tangible components of letters and diaries	
<p>-Who is the primary creator of this letter or diary?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose cultural perspective do they represent? • What biases might they have? <p><i>-For letters:</i> To whom is the letter written? What is the relationship between the letter writer and the recipient?</p> <p>-What were their intentions?</p> <p>-Who saved the diary or collected the letters? Why?</p> <p>-Is this the only volume of the diary or the only set of letters?</p> <p>-Might there be other volumes or sets located elsewhere?</p> <p>-What is the time period covered by the diary(ies) or letter(s)?</p> <p>-How is time distinguished in each letter or diary entry?</p>	
<i>Considering Portrayals:</i> Thinking about the ways in which letter writers and diarists write about events, relationships, and themselves	
<p>-Which events are written about?</p> <p>-Which events are ignored?</p> <p>-How does the letter writer or diarist use formal language/informal language in their descriptions of people, places, events, or feelings?</p> <p><i>-For letters:</i> How might the letter writer's relationship with the recipient affect what is written?</p>	

Considering Corroboration: Thinking about questions of time and position

-How does the letter writer or diarist understand that the events they are describing are part of larger historical developments?

-Do they understand their own time as an era or turning point?

- If so how?
- If not, what might this suggest about the letter writer or diarist's sense of their position in history?

Does the letter or diary speculate about the future?

What sources can you use to confirm events mentioned in the letters or diary entries?

adapted from Steven Stowe, "Making Sense of Letters and Diaries," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/letters/>, July 2002.

Analyzing Maps

D-Date	<p>When was the map created?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering this question allows you place the map within its appropriate historical and chronological context 	
O-Orientation	<p>What are the principal directions on the map? How are they displayed?</p>	
G-Grid	<p>What kind of grid system is used?</p>	
S-Scale	<p>Is there a scale present? If so, what is it?</p>	
T-Title	<p>What is the name of the map?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may seem to be a very easy question to answer; however, by focusing on the title of the map, you are considering what is being communicated by the map. <p>Where was the map created? Who is the intended audience of the map? When was the map created?</p>	
A-Author	<p>Who created the map—an individual? An organizational entity?</p>	
I-Index	<p>Are both an alphabetical listing of places and a grid present on the map?</p>	
L-Legend	<p>Is there a legend present that explains the symbols present on the map?</p>	
S-Sources	<p>What sources are used to create the map?</p> <p>Identifying the sources allow you to examine and assess the validity of the map as a source.</p>	

adapted from David Stephens, "Making Sense of Maps," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/maps/>, February 2002.

Analyzing Monuments

Monument history	
<p>When was the idea of the monument first conceived?</p> <p>What does the monument commemorate?</p> <p>Who sponsored or advocated for the creation of the monument? Why?</p> <p>What do we know about this person/these people/this organization?</p> <p>How was the monument funded?</p> <p>When was the monument dedicated?</p>	
Monument design and materials	
<p>How was the design of the monument selected?</p> <p>Was the final monument design adapted? How and why?</p> <p>What historical narrative is communicated by the monument's design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is included in this narrative? • Who is excluded from this narrative? <p>What is the function of the narrative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who might be helped by this narrative? • Who might be hurt by this narrative? <p>What is the monument made of?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any special significance in the selection of materials for the monument? 	
Monument site	

<p>Where is the monument located? (absolute location)</p> <p>How does the monument fit in with surrounding spaces? (relative location)</p> <p>Has the monument site changed—has the monument been moved?</p>	
Monument inscriptions	
<p>What words or symbols are inscribed on the monument?</p> <p>What message or narrative is told or supported by these inscriptions?</p>	
Monument connections	
<p>At the time of its dedication, how did the monument relate to:</p> <p>-The immediate, local community?</p> <p>-Other monuments?</p> <p>-Society at large?</p>	
Monument afterlife	
<p>How has the monument been used since its dedication?</p> <p>Has the monument been continually used in the same fashion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not, how has the community's use of the monument been adapted? <p>Is the monument viewed as a local landmark?</p>	

adapted from Gerald A. Danzer, *Public Places: Exploring Their History. Nearby History.* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1987), 5-14.0

Analyzing Music

Analyzing Music as a Document	
<p>-Who created the music?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lyricist(s)? Composer(s)? ● Publisher? <p>-Who are the musicians involved?</p> <p>-When was the music created?</p> <p>-What is the music's structure?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lyrically? ● Musically? ● Relation of words and music (e.g., repeating tune with new words, the "hook")? <p>-What instruments were used?</p>	
Analyzing the Primary Contexts of Music: those that would have been most important to people at the time of the music's creation, and might have shaped it	
<p>-When and where was the music originally published or performed?</p> <p>-In what style(s) or genre(s) can the music be placed?</p> <p>-Who published or performed it?</p> <p>-Why was the music created?</p> <p>-Why was it published or performed?</p> <p>-If published or recorded, what technology(ies) were used? (i.e, cylinders or records; CD or mp3; cassettes or sheet music)</p>	

Analyzing the Secondary Contexts of Music:

those emerging after the song's creation that might help in understanding its significance

-Did the music take on a life of its own?

- Are there other notable performances or recordings of this music?
- Did the music's meaning change over time?
- Does the music come to represent or define place or identity? Does this change over time?

-What have people said and written about the song?

-How was the song described by its creators and early performers?

-How have audiences responded to or interpreted the song?

adapted from Ronald Walters and John Spitzer, "Making Sense of American Popular Song," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/Songs/>, June 2003.

Analyzing Numbers

How reliable are the numbers?

Determining the reliability of numbers is essential. It's common to assume that numbers are objective, but as with any other source, they were collected within and are a reflection of a specific context. It is essential to ask questions about the operating assumptions and biases grounding the collection and dissemination of these numbers, and to account for them throughout your work.

-When was this data collected?

-How was this data collected?

- What alternate methods for data collection might have been used?

-Who collected this data?

- What was their process of collection?
- What forms of data were not collected? Why?

-What was the purpose of this data collection?

- What other sources might be available to assist in fully understanding this data? and/or the process by which this data was collected?

What questions can we ask of these numbers?

Once you have determined the reliability of the numbers, you can review them to consider the kinds of historical questions they can (and cannot) help you answer.

Note-the following questions are examples:

How many people have lived here over time?

How have the number of homes shifted across a geographic area?

How do we account for transient workers in the local area who might be missing from a census record?

<p>What might be the relationship between the local population and the local climate?</p> <p>What might be the relationship between the membership of a place of worship and the community surrounding it?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Which are the best ways to organize and read the numbers to answer our questions?</i></p> <p>As you identify patterns and visualize the numbers, remember the operating assumptions and biases that informed the initial collection and dissemination of these numbers.</p>	
<p>How might the purpose and process of collecting these numbers impact the patterns you are identifying?</p> <p>How will you note this impact?</p>	

adapted from Gary Kornblith, "Making Sense of Numbers," History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/numbers/>, July 2002.

Analyzing Oral Histories

Who Is Talking?	
<p>Who is the narrator?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the narrator’s relationship to the events under discussion? ● What stake might the narrator have in presenting their particular version of events? ● What effect might the narrator’s social identity and position have on the interview? ● Does the narrator have a prior relationship with the interviewer? ● How does the narrator present themselves in the interview? ● What influences—personal, cultural, social—might shape the way the narrator expresses himself or herself? <p>What sort of character does the narrator become in the interview?</p>	
<p>Who is the interviewer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What background and interests does the interviewer bring to the topic of the interview? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How might this affect the interview? ● How do the interviewer’s questions shape the story told? Has the interviewer prepared for the interview? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How adept is the interviewer in getting the narrator to tell their story in their own way? ● Does the interviewer have a prior relationship with the narrator? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How might this affect the interview? ● What effect might the interviewer’s social identity and position have on the interviewee, and hence the interview? <p>How might the dynamic between narrator and interviewer effect what is said in the interview?</p>	
<p>What Are They Talking About?</p>	
<p>In which languages is the interview conducted?</p> <p>In which languages is the interview presented?</p> <p>How has the narrator structured the interview?</p> <p>What’s the plot of the story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does this tell us about the way the narrator thinks about his or her experience? <p>What does the narrator avoid or sidestep? What topics does the narrator especially warm to, or speak about with interest, enthusiasm, or conviction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What might this tell us? <p>Are there times when the narrator doesn’t seem to answer the question posed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What might be the reason for this? <p>Are there significant factual errors in the narrative?</p> <p>Is it internally consistent?</p>	

How might you account for errors and inconsistencies?	
Why Are They Talking?	
For what purpose has this interview been conducted? How might the purpose have shaped the content, perspective, and tone of the interview?	
<p>What Are the Circumstances of the Interview?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What technologies are used to record the interview? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What shortcomings might those technologies have? ● Has the interview been edited or altered? ● What effect might the location of the interview have had on what was said in the interview? ● If anyone other than the interviewer and interviewee were present, what effect might the presence of this other person have had on the interview? ● Do you know the mental and physical health of the narrator and interviewer? <p>What effect might these have had on the interview?</p>	

adapted from Linda Shopes, "Making Sense of Oral History," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>, February 2002.

Analyzing Photographs

The “of”: What is shown in the photograph	
<p>What type of photograph is it? (portrait, landscape, architecture, etc.)</p> <p>Who created the photograph?</p> <p>What do you see?</p> <p>How are people/objects displayed?</p> <p>What is missing?</p>	
The “about”: The subject matter and circumstances	
<p>When was the photograph taken?</p> <p>In what historical context can you place the photograph?</p>	
Abstract Elements: Visual expression techniques	
<p>Why was the photograph taken?</p> <p>How was the photograph taken?</p> <p>From what perspective (or angle) is the subject photographed?</p> <p>What is included and excluded by this perspective (or angle)?</p> <p>Who is the intended audience?</p> <p>How might the identity of the intended audience impact the way the photo was received?</p>	

adapted from Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffrey Mifflin, “ ‘Mind and Sight’: Visual Literacy and the Archivist,” in *American Archival Studies*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 73-97; and James Curtis, “Making Sense of Documentary Photography,” *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/Photos/>, June 2003.