

Analyzing Your Source

Grade Levels: 6-8

Overview:

Analyzing sources is key to the research process. Whether it is a primary or secondary source, understanding particular factors of the source allows the researcher to utilize the source in its entirety; as an understanding of context, evaluation of usefulness, clarity about the person that created the source, and to lead the researcher to additional sources. **This lesson will help students learn to break down a source into various components and evaluate it for effectiveness and application.**

Key Concepts:

1. **Purpose of the Document:** What is the intended use of this document? What is the message and how does the author want the reader to respond?
2. **Connection to Historical Context:** How does the source convey context regarding the woman's life and situation? How were primary sources utilized to create this secondary source?
3. **Connection to Community/Place:** Considering the woman's place/impact in her specific community, how did she interact and add to or alter the story of her community/region/New Mexico? What is the evidence in the examined source?

Objectives:

This lesson supports Inquiry Standards, particularly in distinguishing primary and secondary sources in relation to historical events and evaluation of that source for relevance and intended use.

Objective 1: Utilize the **SOAPSTone** format of source evaluation. Students will apply this to their previous research presentation, connecting the research to the author of the original web page entry.

Objective 2: Determine the difference between a primary and secondary source. Students will understand the significance and usefulness of primary sources when creating a secondary source.

Objective 3: Correctly cite primary and secondary sources, including images.

Length of time for lesson:

THREE (60-90 minute) class periods depending on length of time spent in class and whether or not homework is assigned.

Materials:


Computers

New Mexico Historic Women Marker Program website <https://www.nmhistoricwomen.org/>

Previous lesson's student research

SOAPSTone analysis handout

Handouts:

- SOAPSTone analysis handout:  SOAPSTone - Source Analysis Templates.pdf

Activities:

1. Prior to the lesson, print SOAPSTone handouts for each student. You may also make this PDF available electronically, such as through an LMS.
2. Discuss the difference between primary and secondary sources. Ask students to identify if their research web pages are primary or secondary sources. Discuss how secondary sources depend upon primary sources. Review the Application PDF and links to primary source documents that are on the pages of the women they researched. Using one of the primary source examples, discuss why it is an example of a primary source. (*This could also be an entire separate lesson taught during a previous class period if students have not learned about primary and secondary sources before. Otherwise, use this as a review.)
3. Pass out the handouts and project the SOAPSTone PDF for students to view.
4. Go over each section of SOAPSTone, explaining and eliciting questions from the students as you go. Create an example using the New Mexico Historic Women Marker Program website, so students can experience a specific application.
5. Using computers, students access the webpage about the woman they researched.
6. Provide the PDF to students to copy the template for their own document. This may also be completed in writing by filling out the printed handout.
7. Assist students as they review their webpage and apply each component of SOAPSTone by completing each category on the chart.
8. Students turn in their completed SOAPSTone for evaluation.

Adaptations/Extensions:

- Students can take this one step further and apply SOAPSTone to one of the linked primary or secondary sources that appears on the web page resource list for the woman they researched.

- Discuss the variety of authors that students have for their web pages. Who is qualified to write these, and why? Do you think others could contribute to this website?
- Why is it important to understand the perspective in which any author writes? What influences an author's perspective?
- Students can write a closing evaluation paragraph, summarizing their findings from the SOAPStone and giving their opinion about the effectiveness and usefulness of the source.

Evaluation:

1. **Evaluate students on their understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources.** This may be through an exit ticket, or informally through a verbal check-in for understanding.
2. **Completed SOAPStone** work is checked for completion and understanding of each component in the analysis.

Exit Ticket/Discussion Questions:

- How are sources different, and how does each source serve a purpose?
- Is it important that an author of a source has credibility, or experience, in order to be an "expert" or for the information to be valid?
- What did you learn about sources and how to select a variety for future research to be more complete and encompassing of multiple ideas and perspectives?

NM PED Educational Standards:**Grade 6:**

Inquiry 23: Construct Compelling and Supporting Questions. 6.1

Inquiry 24: Gather and Evaluate Sources. 6.8

Inquiry 25: Develop Claims. 6.9

Grade 7:

Inquiry 24: Gather and Evaluate Sources. 7.4

Inquiry 24: Gather and Evaluate Sources. 7.6

Grade 8:

Inquiry 24: Gather and Evaluate Sources. 8.4

Inquiry 24: Gather and Evaluate Sources. 8.6

Inquiry 25: Develop Claims. 8.12

- *NM PED Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Scorecard criteria may be applied and met through Representation, Portrayal, Critical Consciousness, and Teacher Support.*