

Primary Sources in the Classroom What to Use and When to Use It

Grade	Type of Source	Skill Development
K-1	<p><i>Artifacts:</i> old toys, household utensils, clothes, as well as natural objects such as birds' nests</p> <p><i>Photographs:</i> images of children, including those in other societies, and of nature</p>	Observation, inference, and visual literacy. It is not important that the primary sources you use be historical, although that can be fun and interesting.
2-3	<p><i>Artifacts:</i> old tools and sports equipment and more sophisticated natural objects, such as fossils</p> <p><i>Photographs:</i> older images, still of children, adding more historical images</p> <p><i>Text:</i> simple "personal voice" texts, such as diary entries</p>	Observation and reading skills. Text material should not depend on advanced reading skills. In order to introduce some interesting texts, you may need to help students read.
4-6	<p><i>Artifacts:</i> less familiar objects, such as navigating instruments and other specialized tools</p> <p><i>Photographs:</i> historical images connected to specific events or eras being studied</p> <p><i>Text:</i> oral histories, interviews, some official and scientific records, such as census reports and weather data</p>	Reading, examining, comparing skills. Historical content becomes more important. You will probably need to use photographs of artifacts from earlier periods rather than relying on physical objects you have access to. You can also use multiple sources, such as a photograph and an oral history on the same topic.
7-8	<p><i>Artifacts:</i> complex historical objects, such as costumes, sculpture, even entire archaeological digs</p> <p><i>Photographs and illustrations:</i> historical images connected to specific events or eras being studied including contemporary art and maps</p> <p><i>Text:</i> oral histories, interviews, speeches, government documents, some official and scientific records</p>	Reading, examining, comparing skills. Historical content continues to be important. Photographs of artifacts and archaeological finds will become increasingly useful. Use more multiple sources, such as an art portrait and a journal description on the same topic.



To share sources and ideas with other teachers and interested people, join the
Examining the Evidence facebook group.