

# Using Visual Primary Sources in the Social Studies Classroom

Michael Hutchison, Lincoln High School  
Vincennes, Indiana  
[mhutch@charter.net](mailto:mhutch@charter.net)

## Topics covered in the presentation:

1. What are visual primary sources?
2. Advantages of using visual sources in the classroom
3. Disadvantages and hurdles in using visual sources
4. Tips for using visual sources with students
5. Sample lessons developed by the presenter
6. Suggested online resources for using visual sources

An electronic version of this handout is available at  
[www.socialstudies.com/pdf/usingvisualprimarysources.pdf](http://www.socialstudies.com/pdf/usingvisualprimarysources.pdf)

**Sample lessons developed by the presenter**

# **Document-Based Activities on the 1950s**

## **Using Primary Sources and the Internet**

Michael Hutchison, Writer

Kerry Gordonson, Editor  
Bill Williams, Editor  
Dr. Aaron Willis, Project Coordinator  
Amanda Harter, Editorial Assistant

Social Studies School Service  
10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802  
Culver City, CA 90232  
<http://socialstudies.com>  
[access@socialstudies.com](mailto:access@socialstudies.com)  
(800) 421-4246

All the Web addresses in this book can be found on our Web site:

<http://www.socialstudies.com/uslinks.html>

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10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802  
Culver City, CA 90232  
United States of America

(310) 839-2436  
(800) 421-4246

Fax: (800) 944-5432  
Fax: (310) 839-2249

<http://socialstudies.com>  
[access@socialstudies.com](mailto:access@socialstudies.com)

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## Social Conformity in the 1950s Teacher Page

### Overview:

The 1950s was an era in which parents, government, schools, and society in general sought conformity. While many tried to live up to the ideal of the “All-American Boy” or “All-American Girl,” others spoke out against conformity. Some of these nonconformists sought to show their individuality through rock-and-roll music. Others, such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, sought to change the cookie-cutter image of literature.

However, producers of popular television and movies made sure that the typical “All-American family” was the main image that was portrayed in the top programs and films of the era.

### Objectives:

Students will:

- analyze a source which demonstrates the “conformity” expected of the American family during the period
- make conclusions about the source and its validity
- speculate about the actual lifestyle of the “typical” 1950s American family

### Web Sites Used in this Lesson:

Students will view the “ephemeral film” called *A Date With Your Family*, located at <http://www.archive.org/movies/details-db.php?collection=prelinger&collectionid=10468>.

Plan in advance to make sure that your computer(s) can play the video clip. In general, Real Player or Windows Media Player should handle the clip easily. You should also make sure that students can hear the dialogue. A transcript of the narration is included in the appendix to this book; you may want to hand it out to students before they view the film.

### Strategies:

Introduce this lesson by discussing the evolution of the role of the family in American society; for example, by looking at how the family today is portrayed in situation comedies or television dramas. Ask students if there is an “ideal” family, and if so, what sort of behavior would be expected of each member of the family.

Distribute the worksheets to students and allot sufficient time for them to complete the questions. (Note: running time for the film clip is approximately ten minutes. Students may need to view the clip more than once in order to effectively answer all the questions.)

Student answers will vary, but in most instances will average 3–5 sentences. Some answers may range as much as one page.

Wrap-Up:

When students have completed the question sheets, lead a discussion about whether portrayals of the “typical” American family of the 1950s in films like *A Date With Your Family* were attempts to manipulate the social mores of the era, or were perceived by filmmakers to be a realistic view of families of the time.

Extension Activity:

Ask students to view similar films at the Prelinger archives (<http://www.archive.org/details/prelinger/>) and to note instances where the films promote social conformity. Have the class debate whether such films have value as tools for “socialization,” or if they cause more harm than good.

## Social Conformity Student Worksheet

### Introduction:

During the 1950s, film and television producers made conscious attempts to portray an “ideal” American family in which mothers stayed at home and did housework, fathers went to work every day to make a living, and children went to school, came home and did their chores and homework, respected their parents, and never got into trouble. One such portrayal of the “ideal family” appears in the film you will view in this lesson. The film was intended to be “educational,” and was shown to many teenagers in school in the 1950s.

### Directions:

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:

<http://www.socialstudies.com/uslinks.html>

### ***A Date With Your Family (1950)***

<http://www.archive.org/movies/details-db.php?collection=prelinger&collectionid=10468>

Watch the film, then answer the following questions.

1. According to the narrator, what is the “important date” the boy and girl seen in the beginning of the video are looking forward to?
2. How do “Brother” and “Daughter” spend their time in the period prior to “Father” coming home for dinner? In what ways do their activities reinforce gender stereotypes? Give examples to support your answer.
3. In the video, how do the children show respect to their parents? Give at least three examples.



4. List at least three “don’ts” the narrator mentions during the film:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How are each of the family members dressed? Do you think the clothing styles of the children and their parents reinforce the message of the film and the values it’s trying to promote? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Do you feel the film accurately depicts the American family of the period? Explain your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Which advice given in the film do you agree with? Which advice do you disagree with? Give at least three examples and explain why you agree or disagree with them.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Do you think this film has any educational value, or is it just a form of “propaganda” designed to keep 1950s children in line? Explain your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. The film is quite “dated,” and you probably found parts of it to be unintentionally funny. What do you think 1950s teenagers would have thought of the film? How effective do you think the film was at shaping the way 1950s teens behaved towards their families?

# Civil War

## *Analyzing Visual Primary Sources*

Michael Hutchison, Writer

Dr. Aaron Willis, Project Editor  
Kerry Gordonson, Editor  
Christina Trejo, Editorial Assistant  
Shoshana Muhammad, Editorial Assistant

Social Studies School Service  
10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802  
Culver City, CA 90232

<http://socialstudies.com>  
[access@socialstudies.com](mailto:access@socialstudies.com)  
(800) 421-4246

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Culver City, CA 90232  
United States of America

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## **Introduction**

Primary sources are the building blocks of history. Using these sources to introduce students to historical periods offers students the opportunity to become historians themselves—to analyze the evidence, form hypotheses, and learn how to support arguments based on evidence. They learn what it means to interpret the past in ways that provide meaning for the present. Textual primary sources can often be difficult for students to engage with because they are often couched in unfamiliar language from a different historical era. Visual primary sources can prove more appealing and accessible to students, and they also involve different types of “reading” skills.

### **How to Use This Product**

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to walk students through the process of primary source interpretation. Slides help to focus students’ attention and train them how to “read” visual primary sources. Targeted questions and enlarged insets from images help to train students to see deeper into the historical record, to uncover evidence that, though plainly before their eyes, is not always obvious at first glance.

The posters provide visual reinforcement for the images analyzed in the presentation. Use them before or after the PowerPoint® analysis for either pre- or post-reading activities. In addition, we have provided extra images on each disc so that once the students are trained in the skills of analyzing visual primary sources they can further hone their skills. You can print them out and distribute as handouts for in-class or independent study, or you can import the images into PowerPoint® for students to analyze individually or with the class as a whole.

### **Let Us Know What You Think**

At Social Studies School Service, we always strive to provide the best supplemental curriculum materials at a superior value. If you have feedback that could help us improve this product, requests for other titles in this series, or stories of how it has helped your students, please let us know. You can e-mail us at [access@socialstudies.com](mailto:access@socialstudies.com).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis  
Chief Education Officer  
Social Studies School Service

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# Gettysburg

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- Major engagements fought at Seminary Ridge, Little Round Top
- “Pickett’s Charge”
- Casualties for both sides were extreme
- Turning point for the Union in the war

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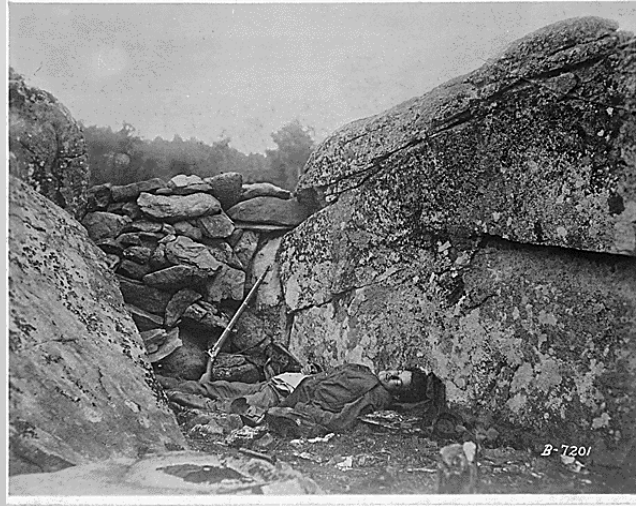
By the summer of 1863, the Confederates were searching for a decisive victory in the North that would force Lincoln and the Union to negotiate a settlement which would recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation. The Battle of Gettysburg actually began more by accident, with the Confederates in search of footwear. Hearing that a supply of shoes existed in Gettysburg, a force under Confederate General A.P. Hill marched there.

The next three days were among the most bloody of the war. Several times Confederate forces sought to gain a foothold in the town, only to be repelled by Union forces. Battle sites such as Seminary Ridge, Cemetery Ridge, and Little Round Top became as well known to both sides as the two armies slugged it out.

The culminating attack came on the third day of the battle when Lee ordered General George Pickett to attack the center of the Union line, believing that a frontal assault would cause the Union center to collapse. Union artillery decimated Pickett’s forces, however, and the Confederates were forced to retreat.

Losses were extreme for both North and South: combined, both sides lost nearly 30 percent of their strength, with the Union losing more than 23,000 men and the Confederacy more than 28,000. The Union could easily make up the manpower they lost by enlistments and draft, while the Confederates could not. Most historians agree that while the war dragged on for nearly another two years, the Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point of the war, and after the loss in Pennsylvania, the South’s defeat was just a matter of time.

# Gettysburg



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Give students approximately one minute to view the poster, then proceed to the following slides.

## Selected online visual primary source materials

### **The War**

PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/thewar/>.

The companion site to the 2007 Ken Burns film on World War II includes many visual primary sources, including a comprehensive “media gallery” including still photos and digital film clips of subjects and events covered in the comprehensive series. Most photos and clips come from the National Archives and Library of Congress. In addition to the galleries, a “favorites” feature allows the user to “bookmark” and “share” images and media clips, as well as print them. This would be extremely helpful to teachers wanting to develop a repository of media clips and images to use in the classroom, or to share with students for multimedia projects.

In addition, there is substantial primary source text information regarding World War II which is located on site. The site also provides a large amount of information as to the development of the film.

### **The Civil War**

PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/>.

The companion site for the 2002 re-release of the Ken Burns film includes a comprehensive “image browser”, which allows the user to see more than 200 photos, most with added details identifying the subject of the picture, as well as related information regarding the battle or the event. In addition, the site allows images to be placed into a “mixer” which allows the user to create a “movie” including archival footage, photos, and music. The completed “movie” can be e-mailed.

In addition, there is substantial primary source text information regarding the Civil War which is located on-site. The site also provides a large amount of information as to the development of the film.

### **Ad\*Access**

Duke University’s Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/>.

Ad\*Access includes a large number of historical advertisements for study and research. Most of the advertisements are from the period 1911-1955, and include topics such as beauty and hygiene, transportation, radio, television, and World War II. A searchable database allows the user to find specific related advertisements by product name or historical period. Materials available online can be downloaded and printed in resolutions up to 150 dpi.



## **History Uncovered: Presidential Libraries**

C-SPAN

<http://www.c-span.org/presidentiallibraries/>

This website corresponds with the current series on Presidential Libraries airing at this time on the C-SPAN network. The series and website gives a first-person view of the modern presidency from the men who held the office and those who served around them. Join us as C-SPAN presents *Presidential Libraries: History Uncovered* — the product of an unprecedented, yearlong search in cooperation with the National Archives for rare and unseen recordings from all 12 (from Herbert Hoover to Bill Clinton) of the nation's presidential libraries. This continually growing web site houses hundreds of newly discovered films, audio, and video recordings and serves as the companion piece to C-SPAN's television and radio series.

The website provides audio and video clips of archival footage from each of the presidential libraries, as well as Real Media versions of the full installments of each film of the series. (Note: viewers using the new beta version of Real Player can download and save video clips and full videos. Check <http://www.real.com> for more information about the beta.)

## **Images of American Political History**

[http://teachpol.tcnj.edu/amer\\_pol\\_hist/](http://teachpol.tcnj.edu/amer_pol_hist/)

This site includes more than 500 public domain images of American political history, and can be browsed by topics including maps of growth, politics, and elections, documents relating to the Civil Rights, religious tolerance, and suffrage movements, US Presidents, and US Federal buildings, including the US Capitol. Creation of the website was supported by a Robert H. Michel Civic Education grant from the Dirksen Congressional Center.

## **World War II Poster Collection**

Government and Geographic Information and Data Services Department at Northwestern University Library

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govinfo/collections/wwii-posters/>

The collection is a comprehensive set of more than 300 posters from various Federal agencies during the years 1941-1947. The posters were intended to be displayed in libraries, schools, factories, and other locations. Topics included encouraging women in the workplace, rationing, and warning against leaking critical defense secrets are included in the poster list. Some of the posters are directed at school children encouraging them to buy war stamps for bonds. Other posters are from the 1943 Army "Newsmag" series, which included graphics and news stories about Allied victories to help boost troop morale. The site includes a robust search feature to assist teachers in finding specific topics and posters.

## **National Parks System “Edisonia” Pages**

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/edis/edisonia.htm>

The NPS “Edisonia” page (relates to anything regarding Thomas Edison) has an interesting selection of some of the first motion pictures created by the inventor in his “Black Maria” studio. Kinetoscope films include “The Kiss”, “Blacksmith Scene” (men hammering a piece of metal and passing around a beer), “Serpentine Dance”, “Edison at Work in His Chemistry Lab”, and “Sandow the Strongman”. The site also has a link to the Library of Congress Edison film and sound recording page (<http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edhome.html>).

## **American Memory**

From the Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

American Memory provides free and open access through the Internet to written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music that document the American experience. It is a digital record of American history and creativity. These materials, from the collections of the Library of Congress and other institutions, chronicle historical events, people, places, and ideas that continue to shape America, serving the public as a resource for education and lifelong learning.

American Memory is a gateway to the Library of Congress’s resources of digitized American historical materials. Comprising more than 9 million items that document U.S. history and culture, American Memory is organized into more than 100 thematic collections based on their original format, their subject matter, or who first created, assembled, or donated them to the Library.

The original formats include manuscripts, prints, photographs, posters, maps, sound recordings, motion pictures, books, pamphlets, and sheet music. Each online collection is accompanied by a set of explanatory features designed to make the materials easy to find, use, and understand. Collections may be browsed individually, searched individually (including full-text searching for many written items), or searched across multiple collections.

### **The Learning Page (Especially for Teachers)**

From the Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/>

The Learning Page is designed to help educators use the American Memory Collections to teach history and culture. It offers tips and tricks, definitions and rationale for using primary sources, activities, discussions, lesson plans and suggestions for using the collections in classroom curriculum. Included on the site are teacher “activities” regarding using primary sources, student “workshops”, a large number of teacher-developed lesson plans, as well as student-friendly primary source collections.

In addition, a series of transcripts of various online chats featuring then-Learning Page coordinator Leni Donlan are available on the site. Leni hosted chats on various subjects from 2002-2005 via TAPPED IN (<http://www.tappedin.org>), and the transcripts can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/community/chat/chattranscripts.html>.

### **Smithsonian Source**

From the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies

<http://smithsoniansource.org/>

Smithsonian Source is the product of a collaboration of several groups of teachers using collections housed at the Smithsonian as well as other historical sites. Available onsite are DBQs, lesson plans, primary source materials, and video material on various subjects, including Westward Movement, Civil Rights, Transportation, Colonial America, Invention, and Native American History. Various “Teaching With Primary Source” activities are also available, including artifact and document analysis, graphic organizers, four corners/jigsaw, and compare and contrast are also online. Teachers can search for resources, and a “My Collection” feature allow the teacher to story primary source resources for later use.

### **Literary in the History Classroom California History-Social Science Project: Primary Sources on the Web**

From the University of California, Irvine

<http://sun3.lib.uci.edu/jariel/LiteracyHistoryClassroomNov03.htm>

This web resource includes several links for various resources for historical research, website identification and verification, general history resources, US History resources, World History resources, and California state resources.

## **Pictures of World War II**

From the National Archives and Records Administration

<http://www.archives.gov/research/ww2/photos/>

The pictures described in this list are from the holdings of the Still Picture Branch (NNSP) of the National Archives and Records Administration. Most are from the records of the Army Signal Corps in Record Group (RG) 111, the Department of the Navy in RG 80, the Coast Guard in RG 26, the Marine Corps in RG 127, and the Office of War Information in RG 208. Others were selected from the records of 12 additional agencies. Most World War II Air Force photographs are not in the National Archives. Pictures are listed by subject and campaign. Original captions are in quotation marks. Photographers, artists, locations, and dates, when known, are also included. This information is followed by identification numbers in italics.

Subject areas included in the list are political and military leaders, aviation, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, the Holocaust, Navy and Naval Battles, Battle of Britain, and several other topics.

## **The Triangle Factory Fire**

From the Cornell University Industrial and Labor Relations School

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

This web exhibit presents original documents and secondary sources on the Triangle Fire, held by the Cornell University Library. They are housed in the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Cornell University Library's Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections also contributed to the exhibit. The bulk of the primary sources were drawn from the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Archives which, along with the records of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, form the basis for the archives of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE!) which reside at Cornell.

The site includes original documents, photographs, and oral histories of survivors and others involved in the tragedy as well as the following investigation.

## **The Valley of the Shadow**

From the Virginia Center for Digital History

<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/>

The Valley of the Shadow is a digital archive of primary sources that document the lives of people in Augusta County, Virginia, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania, during the era of the American Civil War. Here you may explore thousands of original documents that allow you to see what life was like during the Civil War for the men and women of Augusta and Franklin. The Valley of the Shadow is different than many other history websites. It is more like a library than a single book. There is no "one" story in the Valley Project. Rather, what you'll find are thousands of letters and diaries, census and government records, newspapers and speeches, all of which record different aspects of daily life in these two counties at the time of the Civil War.

## **The Spanish American War in Motion Pictures**

From the Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/sawhtml/sawhome.htm>

This presentation features 68 motion pictures produced between 1898 and 1901 of the Spanish-American War and the subsequent Philippine Revolution. The Spanish-American War was the first U.S. war in which the motion picture camera played a role. These films were made by the Edison Manufacturing Company and the American Mutoscope & Biograph Company and consist of actualities filmed in the U.S., Cuba, and the Philippines, showing troops, ships, notable figures, and parades, as well as reenactments of battles and other war-time events. The Special Presentation feature of the exhibit presents the motion pictures in chronological order together with brief essays that provide a historical context for their filming.

## **Picturing Modern America 1880-1920**

<http://www.edc.org/CCT/PMA/>

Picturing Modern America (PMA) contains interactive exercises designed to deepen students' understanding of common topics in the study of modern American from 1880-1920; build students' skills in analyzing primary sources, especially visual sources, and generate questions that students can pursue by searching American Memory and other sources.

## Online articles relating to using visual primary sources

**(Note: The following listing of related articles can give the teacher additional insight into analyzing, evaluating, and using visual primary sources in the classroom.)**

Comparing Visual With Textual Primary Sources

([http://www.historians.org/tl/LessonPlans/ca/Sorensen/Essays/Comparing\\_Visual\\_with\\_Textual\\_Primary\\_Sources.htm](http://www.historians.org/tl/LessonPlans/ca/Sorensen/Essays/Comparing_Visual_with_Textual_Primary_Sources.htm))

Evaluating Primary Source material (Lafayette College Libraries)

(<http://ww2.lafayette.edu/~library/guides/primarysources/evaluating.html>)

Bowdoin College “How to Read A Primary Source”

(<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/WritingGuides/primaries.htm>)

The Learning Page (Library of Congress) Analyzing Primary Sources page

(<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/psources/analyze.html>)

“The Historian’s Sources” Lesson Overview page (Learning Page, Library of Congress)

(<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/psources/pshome.html>)

Fostering Historical Thinking With Digitized Primary Sources

([http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/261085/fostering\\_historical\\_thinking\\_with\\_digitized\\_primary\\_sources/](http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/261085/fostering_historical_thinking_with_digitized_primary_sources/))

University of North Carolina (Pembroke) “Reading A Primary Source” page

(Fostering Historical Thinking With Digitized Primary Sources)

(<http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/hst300q3.htm>)