

Rethinking the US History Survey

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Multi-Tiered Assessment Strategies

Checks for understanding

- **Informational questions** that call for factual information.
- **Diagnostic questions** to determine what students know and don't yet grasp.
- **Provocations**, questions that pose a challenge, for example, by asking students how they might explain a phenomenon or why they have reached a particular conclusion or how they would convince someone of a particular position.
- **Role-playing questions** that ask what one might do in a particular context or position.
- **Summary questions** that call on students to recapitulate or encapsulate an idea or argument.
- **Generalization questions** that seek to identify broad conclusions that might be drawn from a case study or an experiment.

Short Essay

Prompts that ask students to

- Debunk historical myths
- Address a what if question
- Refute an argument
- Render a historical judgment
- Evaluate and analyze a piece of evidence
- Connect past to present

New Ways to Organize, Visualize, Analyze, and Present Data

- Ngrams
- Infographics
- Knowledge and concept mapping
- Geovisualization
- Event and causal factor charting

Project-Based Assessment

Digital story, infographic, oral history or interview, policy brief, podcast

Team-Based Assessment

Annotated text, collaborative website, virtual encyclopedia, visual or audio tour, virtual museum

Valuable Websites, Apps, Simulations, and Visualizations for History Teaching

American Panorama

<http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/>

Clio

<https://www.theclio.com/web/>

Digital History	https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/
Historiography	http://histography.io/
History Matters	http://historymatters.gmu.edu/
Immigration Explorer	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html
Nuke Map	http://nuclearsecrecy.com/nukemap/
73 Years of Lynching	https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/10/us/map-of-73-years-of-lynching.html
The Atlantic Slave Trade in 2 Minutes	http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html
The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database	http://www.slavevoyages.org/
Visualizing US History Through Post Offices	https://vimeo.com/27376376
Five Digital History Projects That Dazzled Us in 2015	http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2015/12/18/five_digital_history_projects_that_dazzled_us_in_2015.html
US History to and since 1865	Through the Civil War: https://sites.google.com/site/mintz315a/home
	From Reconstruction to the Present: https://sites.google.com/site/mintz315b/home

Active Learning in the History Classroom

The most effective way to learn history is to do history. In this class, you will be an investigator, analyst, and detective.

American Icons

The history of the symbols of American nationhood, freedom, and landscape.

Forecasting the Future

How did our ancestors imagine the future?

Historical Debates

Take part in history's biggest controversies.

Historical Facts: False and Strange but True

Truth sometimes is stranger than fiction, and at times what we think is true isn't.

Historical Judgments

Wrestle with the troubling moral dilemmas of evaluating past decisions.

History as It Happened

Eyewitness accounts of key historical events.

History Happened Here

The historic landmarks that lurk all around us.

History in the Headlines

How advocates use history to advance their causes.

History Through Sight and Sound

Use art, music, and photography to provide fresh insights into U.S. history.

Hollywood versus History

Examine how feature films represent the past.

How Do We Know What We Know?

Discover how we know what we think we know.

My History is American History

How family history illuminates the country's history.

Reading Maps

See what maps can tell us. Includes geospatial literacy, geo-visualization, trend analysis, the politics of maps, and expanding geographical knowledge.

What If...

How history might have turned out differently.

History Through...

Fashion, food, gravestones. names, political cartoons, toys, and other unconventional sources.

Advertisements: Ads are much more than mere mechanisms for selling products. They also provide insights into the growth of a consumer economy and American society's shifting conceptions of masculinity and femininity and its changing attitudes toward sex and sexuality. Advertising played a crucial role in the transformation of the American economy from one in which most goods were produced and sold locally to one dominated by brand names and products distributed nationally.

Architecture: Houses do not simply provide shelter. They offer valuable clues into the nature of the values that people held in the past and to the way that household members interacted. Between the early colonial period and the Civil War, American architecture underwent far-reaching changes--transformations that tell us a great deal about shifting ideas about privacy and refinement.

Art: Historical art works of art are not simply "illustrations" or "replications" of historical events or settings; rather, these works actively shape meanings, values, and attitudes and construct and deconstruct cultural myths.

Cemeteries: Graveyards provide a great deal of useful information about peoples' lives in the past and the evolution of cultural ideas about death. Why did early Americans call places for the dead "burying grounds" or "graveyards"—not "cemeteries"? Why did they treat graveyards as meadows, not as sacred or spooky places? How common was death in early America and who was most likely to die prematurely? How and why has the iconography of tombstones change over time? What was life expectancy in the past and how did this differ among women and men. Graveyards can help answer these questions.

Fashion: Clothing is not simply a bodily covering or an adornment. Clothing can signify an occupation or a status. It is often associated with particular age ranges. Fashion is also a form of communication. Fashion can emphasize or deemphasize status and rank. It can accentuate or minimize sexual differences. Fashion can also give outward expression to deeply held values.

Film: Popular films are cultural artifacts that contain messages about class, ethnicity, and gender; sociological documents that record the look and mood of a period; and psychological texts that speak to social anxieties and tensions. Films are also power educators, that express political ideas and moral values, construct cultural myths, and shape our view of history.

Food: Every region, ethnic group, and era has its own distinctive cuisine, which provides insights into its values and tastes. The history of food also provides insights into the intermixture of cultures and shifts in food production and distribution.

Hair: Hair is among humans' most malleable characteristics and can be styled in extraordinarily diverse ways. Think Afro, Beehive, Bob, Bouffant, Caesar, Cornrows, Crewcut, Dreadlocks, Ducktail, Grunge, Mohawk, Mullet, Pageboy, or Pixie. It can be blow dried, braided, colored, cropped, curled, feathered, gelled, knotted, layered, parted, and straightened. It can be worn short, long, or in between, and disheveled, geometric, shaggy, slicked back, spiked upward, or tousled. It can also be greased, highlighted, permed, powdered, sprayed or treated with gel, mousse, ointments or pomade. The forehead can be covered with bangs or left exposed. Humans are the only animals that dye, flatten plait, shave, or weave their hair. They are also the only animals to wear wigs or hair pieces or extensions. Hair is much more than a filament growing out of skin follicles. Hair carries important symbolic, cultural, and even political significance. Hair is associated with status, breeding, and identity. Whole lifestyles are symbolized by hair: Hippies, Punk, Rastafari, or Skinhead.

Holidays: Not timeless traditions, certain holidays, including Halloween and Christmas, arose at a particular time and took distinct forms in different eras. Explore when trick-or-treating appeared or Santa Claus appeared

Language: Each generation coins its own distinctive words. The 1920s brought "attaboy," "bootleg," and "skedaddle." World War II brought us "swell" and "gung ho." The 1960s popularized "cool," "groovy," and "psychedelic." The 1970s and 1980s brought "slacker" and "grunge." As conditions of life shift, so does the vocabulary. Some new words are technology driven, like "networking" or "selfie." Some result from shifts in demography, like "blended family," which arose as rates of divorce and remarriage became increasingly common.

Names: Naming practices offer a window into how values and tastes have shifted over time. Fewer parents today name a first-born child for a father or mother. Fathers' influence on children's names appears to have waned, with many fathers ceding the choice of a first name to the mother in exchange for using his last name. Today's parents appear to spend more time musing over a child's name than parents in the past. The most striking trend in recent years has been a heightened emphasis on individuality, originality, and adventurousness in names.

Popular Music: Today, Americans use music to pass time, to relax, to set a mood, and, in religious services, to express spiritual beliefs. In the past, music served other functions. Immigrant groups passed down traditions through song. Work songs helped laborers to cope with the hardship of their tasks and synchronize their movements. Many social movements created a repertoire of protest songs. American popular music is the product of a mixture of diverse elements, including Native American, African, English, Scottish and Irish, German, Latin American, and Hawaiian musical cultures. Technology, economics, shifting tastes, and cross-cultural contact and borrowings all shaped American popular music.

Photography: Photographs are not simply mirrors of reality. They are documents that need to be read and interpreted. A photograph is a selective recording and interpretation of a visual scene. Understanding the degree of photographic manipulation is necessary to evaluate any particular image.

Political Cartoons: Political cartoons use caricature, symbols, humor, ridicule, and exaggeration to make arguments and comment on political events.

Propaganda Posters: Throughout the twentieth century, posters were intended to rouse the nation's spirit and convey a sense of common purpose. They promoted patriotism, productivity, and sacrifice. Some demonized the enemy, appealing to hatred and bigotry. Propaganda posters use visual symbols and such techniques as sentimentality and appeals to patriotism, fear, duty, and sacrifice to whip up public emotions.

Statistics: History provides an ideal vehicle for teaching statistics. History not only provides a wealth of concrete problems to solve, but often accessible and manageable data sets that can be used to address these problems.