

Focus on Critical Thinking & Research Skills

PBS Teachers Staff
<www.pbs.org/teachers>



PBS TeachersSM

The following PBS resources are designed to provide opportunities for the enhancement of research and critical thinking skills through project-based activities and online experiences. These important skills often taught in traditional library settings may also be incorporated into the daily lessons of learning environments without a centralized media program.

Using Primary Source Documents and Artifacts in Research

African American Lives: Analyzing the Evidence Lesson

<www.pbs.org/wnet/aalives/2006/educators_lesson1.html>

Resource Type: Lesson Plan
Grade Range: 6–8

Develop strategies for investigating history through the examination of artifacts and primary source documents. Explore documents online, then “curate” a photograph, document, or artifact relevant to personal or family history.

African American Lives 2: Analyzing the Evidence Interactive

<www.pbs.org/wnet/aalives/evidence/index.html>

Resource Type: Online Activity
Grade Range: 6–12

Discover evidence that provides understanding of the lives, legacies, and stories of African American slaves and freedmen by analyzing primary source documents in this online interactive.

African American Lives 2: Gift to the Future

<www.pbs.org/wnet/aalives/teachers/gift1.html>

Resource Type: Lesson Plan
Grade Range: 6–8

Consider the conditions and circumstances that contribute to successful preservation of documents and artifacts over time. Examine surviving documents and artifacts from the past, hypothesize about why these items have survived or been preserved, and design a project to preserve the events and culture of today for future generations.

Andrew Jackson: Good, Evil & the Presidency: WebQuests

<www.pbs.org/kcet/andrewjackson/edu/webquests.html>

Resource Type: Online Activities
Grade Range: 6–8, 9–12

Explore the central role that Andrew Jackson played in controversial issues of his time and consider his contributions to this country. In the middle school lesson, students collaborate to curate a museum exhibit about his presidency. In the high school lesson, students work together to develop an argument about whether Jackson’s portrait should be on the \$20 bill.

The Civil War: Civil War Letters

<www.pbs.org/civilwar/classroom/lesson_letters.html>

Resource Type: Lesson Plan
Grade Range: 9–12

Investigate the role of letters as primary source documents in historical research. Role-play Civil War letter writers from all walks of life to explore critical events and the roles ordinary citizens, both male and female, played in making history.

History Detectives: Mayme Clayton's Collection

www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/educators/unit4.html

Resource Type: Video

Grade Range: 6–12

Examine items from the largest collection of books, documents, films, music, photographs, and memorabilia on African American history and culture. Watch the collector's son describe how she came to gather this academically significant collection.

History Detectives: Primary Sources

www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/educators/class_sources.html

Resource Type: Lesson Plan

Grade Range: 6–12

Distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and acquire and apply investigative skills to locate them. Collect, study, and use primary sources to research issues related to the treatment of Native Americans in U.S. history.

Thematic Teaching: Primary Sources & Contemporary U.S. History

www.pbs.org/teachers/thismonth/primarysources/index1.html

Resource Type: Offline Activities

Grade Range: 3–12

Examine primary sources and conduct research on the Vietnam War, civil rights, the space race, the war in Iraq, advances in technology, U.S. Presidents, and other topics and events in recent U.S. history.

The War: Search & Explore

www.pbs.org/thewar/edu_search_explore.htm

Resource Type: Online Activities

Grade Range: 9–12

Explore a comprehensive database of World War II information, including hundreds of photographs, primary source documents, clips of historical footage, interviews, home movies, and newsreels. Search by "Themes & Topics" or use the "Media Gallery" interface.

Enhancing Critical Thinking and Research Skills

Animalia: Research and Inquiry Activities

pbskids.org/animalia/parents_and_teachers/activities/research/index.html

Resource Type: Offline Activities

Grade Range: 1–4

Encourage students to practice research skills with four activities that require students to investigate theories, interview relatives, explore websites, practice observation skills, gather information, and record findings. In addition to the research skills, these activities provide students with an opportunity to learn more about animals and family heritage.

Antiques Roadshow: Exploring Material Culture

www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/teachers_intheclassroom.html

Resource Type: Offline Activities

Grade Range: 6–8

Develop critical thinking skills in examining objects and artifacts for authentication and appraisal. Learn how appraisers verify provenance of items through historical context and other clues.

Arthur: Binky's Facts and Opinions

pbskids.org/arthur/games/factsopinions

Resource Type: Online

Educational Game

Grade Range: K–4

Decide if Francine and Buster are saying facts or opinions in this interactive game. Answer five correctly and then watch a video clip from the PBS KIDS series Arthur to look for more facts and opinions.

Arthur: Cat Facts

pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/activities/acts/cat_facts.html

Resource Type: Offline Activity

Grade Range: 1–2

Visit a local library to practice basic research skills. Develop a list of questions about cats, find the answers in a variety of source materials, and create a Cat Facts mini-book.

Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular: Listening

www.pbs.org/eliewiesel/teaching/activity1.html

Resource Type: Offline Activity

Grade Range: 9–12

Practice reading effectively and carefully to comprehend written text in the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Learn about the Holocaust by making keen observations, questioning the text, making associations, and listening to the words of the author.

NOW: Making Informed Decisions and Critical Thinking

www.pbs.org/now/classroom/lessonplan-07.html

Resource Types: Offline Activity

Grade Range: 6–12

Develop critical thinking skills, form educated opinions, and make informed decisions through analysis of a variety of information sources. Examine guidelines for selecting reliable resources and using them to gather accurate information.

NOW: Persuasive Writing

www.pbs.org/now/classroom/lessonplan-04.html

Resource Type: Offline Activity

Grade Range: 9–12

Recognize reputable information sources, and use them to form and support opinions. Take a position on an issue and defend your opinion in writing.

Wonders of the African World: Lost Cities of the South

www.pbs.org/wonders/Classrm/lesson6.htm

Resource Type: Lesson Plan

Grade Range: 6–12

Develop Internet searching skills to find information about South Africa and Zimbabwe. Practice basic Internet browser navigation to find information, and explore the pros and cons of various search engines for locating valid information.