Subject Areas: Social Studies

Grade Level: 6 – 12 (ages 11-18)

Time: At least one 45-minute class period; time outside of class as necessary

Lesson Objective:
Students will be better able to analyze a primary source.

Common Core State Standards¹:
Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12:
Standard 4. Analyze how a primary source is structured and how portions of it
contribute to the whole.

Writing Standards for Grades 6-12 in English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social
Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:
Standard 5. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and
secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of
the information.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing:
Standard 1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or
texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Overview:
Primary sources can be used in countless ways in the classroom. For example, they stimulate
interest in a new area of study as part of an anticipatory set, reinforce concepts being taught in
a lesson and they can be used at the close of a lesson for review and to assess understanding.
Use the Primary Source Analysis template with virtually any lesson involving primary sources:
Webspiration Classroom™ Starter>Starter Docs>Social Studies>Primary Source
Analysis.
Preparation:

- This lesson requires Internet access and the Webspiration Classroom software application published by Inspiration Software, Inc. It can be accessed by visiting [http://www.webspirationclassroom.com](http://www.webspirationclassroom.com).
- Students need access to primary sources that relate to the curriculum. Make paper copies available or provide links in the template to the resources online. There are many high-quality sources on the Internet, such as American Memory at the Library of Congress [http://memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov).

Lesson:

1. Explain that students will be analyzing primary sources: original works from the time period being studied. Review the *Primary Source Analysis* template so they understand the assignment.

2. Point out that the template is based on a series of worksheets developed by the Education Staff at the National Archives and Records Administration. The original worksheets are available online and may provide some additional information if there are questions about the different categories of information: [http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets).

3. Open the example file ([Webspiration Classroom Starter-Examples-Social Studies>Primary Source Analysis Example](file:///C:/Users/Rick.Reynolds/Webspiration%20Classroom%20Starter/Examples/Social%20Studies/Primary%20Source%20Analysis%20Example)) and talk the students through the example so they know what is expected.

4. Have students examine the document(s) and complete the diagram.
5. Students can obtain feedback on their analysis from the teacher and their peers using the collaboration tools. Documents can be shared with others using the **Collaborate Tab**. The **Comment Tab** can be used to comment on the document, or the **Chat Tab** can be used, if it is turned on at your school, to discuss ideas in real time.

6. Lead a class discussion about the students’ findings. Be sure to include a discussion of what may have been biased in the documents. What other perspectives might there have been on the topics?

**Adaptations / Extensions:**
- Students can write an essay about the primary source. They can download their projects to Inspiration® or a word processor, or transfer it to a Google Doc.

- Students can make presentations to the class about the primary source they analyzed using either the **Diagram** or **Outline View**.

- Primary source analysis can be used in any content area, not just social studies.