

# LEARNING EXPERIENCE PLAN

**Learning Experience Title:** How to Read a Primary Source

**Grade level:** 5th

**How does this lesson fit within a larger unit of study?** Through using a primary source, students will practice the following skills

**Timeframe:** 1-3 class periods. This activity is designed to suit your learning goals and the needs of your class. You can choose to do the complete lesson and use all the clues or select a few to use with your students based on time constraints and objectives. For differentiation, you can have small groups or pairs of students working together. You can format the analysis sheets that accompany the clues so that there are fewer questions or directions according to the needs of the students. In short, the documents (worksheets) can be formatted to the learning level in your classroom.

## Objectives

**CT State Social Studies Standards:**

- Dimension 1 Planning an Inquiry

*Inq 3-5.4 Students will determine the kinds of sources that will be useful to answer questions*

- Dimension 2 Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

*Inq 5.6 Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past*

- Dimension 3 Evaluating Sources Using Evidence

*Inq 3-5.5 Students will gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, structure and context to guide the selection*

- Dimension 4 Communicate Conclusions and Take Informed Action

*Inq 3-5.9 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources*

- **Lesson's Collaborative/Social Objectives:**

- Participate fully*
- Listen attentively*
- Express appreciation of others' ideas*
- Reflect on group interaction*
- Think constructively*
- Make group decisions*
- Respect and value different skills and opinions*
- Other:*

**Compelling Questions Engaged:**

How can we evaluate the reliability of a source based on the author's perspective and when and why it was produced?

**Supporting Questions:**

Are there similarities between historians who investigate a historical source and a detective who investigates a crime scene?

What tools can we flip from the detective's lens to the lens of a historian when investigating a primary source?

Can we assume that all historical sources are trustworthy?

Can sources be incomplete, biased, or inaccurate?

Finally, can the reliability of a historical source be affected by the circumstances under which it was created?

**Let's Get Started**

As we observe the painting, *Seven Miles to Farmington*, we need to consider four possible perspectives...that of the historian, the citizen, the economist, and the geographer. (In fact, we can apply these perspectives to any source we examine.)

For example, the historian might ask: What's the source? What can be observed?

Then the citizen might ask: Are there rules that need to be followed? Or what organizational structures are in place? Then, perhaps, who's in charge here?

The economist might ask: What goods and services are being provided? How are people using the resources? What kind of exchange is taking place? What human resources are involved? Is there demand?

Finally, the geographer might ask: Where's the location?

- **Lesson's Content Objectives:**

In this local, art history inquiry lesson, students use primary sources to uncover the mystery of the location setting for the painting, *Seven Miles to Farmington*.

After careful study of the painting from different perspectives, students can ascertain that there may be a detail in the setting that might be inaccurate.

Upon examining clues and gathering evidence from multiple sources, students will apply detective skills to work out a conclusion based on their inquiry.

Students will reveal their findings in a visual presentation.

Skills focus on evaluating sources and developing claims based on evidence to support these claims.

### Lesson Vocabulary

**Primary Source:** In the study of history, a primary source (original source or evidence) is an artifact, a document, diary, autobiography, recording, or image that was created at the time under study.

**Time and Place Rule:** This rule states the closer in time and place to a source and its creator were to an event in the past, the better the source will be.

**Bias Rule:** This rule states that every source is biased in some way. In other words, sources tell us only what the creator of the source thought happened or perhaps only what the creator wants us to think happened.

**Perspective:** The way something is seen, meaning “look through” or perceived

**Inference:** A conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning

**Draw a conclusion:** To make a judgment; settle an issue or make a determination

What landmarks are referenced? How do people interact with their environment? What about the role of movement? How does this movement affect the surrounding environment?

When we take on these roles, we gain insight into how to observe a situation, an event or a moment.

In short, as we study this idyllic scene of *Seven Miles to Farmington*, and carefully note the details of the painting, is there something in the picture that may not be accurate...that gives us pause...*Seven Miles to Farmington* is the title of the work...but then again, **is it?**

**Location. Location. Location. Details. Details. Details.**

### **Materials and Clues (primary and secondary sources)**

1. George H. Durries' *Seven Miles to Farmington* and image analysis worksheet
2. Labeled version of *Seven Miles to Farmington* and artifact analysis worksheet and <http://florencegriswoldmuseum.org/learn/see-change/>
3. 1853 Historical Map of New Haven and notes of Robert Thorson, Professor of Geology, UCT and map analysis worksheet
4. Assorted Maps of Farmington, CT
5. Series of images of East and West Rock, New Haven, CT
6. Newspaper Article. *New Haven Register*, Sunday, April 17, 1949. “New Haven’s Rocks, A Century Ago,” and written document analysis worksheet
7. Series of G. H. Durries’ winter landscapes
8. Hand lens for each student (if available)

### **\*Clues that may or may not be relevant to the investigation**

Newspaper Article. *Sunday Magazine*. Sunday, Sept. 27, 1953. “George Durrie and His Landscape Paintings, 100 Years Ago”

“New England”: *A Lithograph after the Painting*, by George H. Durrie. Published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, “The Home Forum,” 1953

George Durrie. Sketches from sketch book. New Haven Museum.

Article. “Wesleyan Author Mines Fascinating History of New Haven’s Distinctive Skyline.” *Hartford Courant*, August 25, 2013

G.H. Durries’ advertisement for prints of his in 1854

Piece of Trap rock...basalt...from East or West Rock

George H. Durrie. Pages from Diary. (1845-'46) New Haven Museum

Teachers review the primary source packet and guide to

|            |   | <p>become familiar with the material used in the lesson. This information can support student’s thinking as they examine the documents.</p> <p>These can be used at centers or made photocopies for pairs of students. Students can work in small groups as well. Movement through stations is ideal.</p>  |
|------------|---|--|
| Time       | Hook; Initiation; Building Inclusion  | Notes/Details  |
| ( minutes) | <p><i>How will you connect students to their prior learning or experiences?</i></p> <p>Invite the students to think like a detective; to hold the lens closely and apply the tools of a CSI investigation by using observation, knowledge and deduction to this painting. If they do, they can apply these same tools to evaluate any source like a real historian!</p>   |  |
| Time       | Activities/Strategies   | Notes/Details  |
| ( minutes) | <p><i>How will you have students interact with each other about the lesson content? How will students be engaged in inquiry and creativity? What assessment strategies will be employed?</i></p> <p><b>Procedure: Part 1</b></p> <p>Inform students that we know that photographs and pictures provide clues to how life was lived during a particular time period. Explain that pictures are wordless books. State that it’s the observer who supplies the narrative. *(Remember that this lesson is particularly satisfying to visual and kinesthetic learners as well as ELL students, who can view history in this personally meaningful way).</p> <p>Tell students that <i>In Seven Miles to Farmington</i>, George Henry Durrie invites us to interpret a winter scene depicting rural life in CT during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p>Explain that as students observe the idyllic scene, they will grasp, through keen observation, what life might have been like during this time period, in winter in rural CT.</p> <p>Explain to students how we know that historians use certain criteria to judge a source and draw their own conclusions. Therefore, historians think critically as they apply the <i>Time and Place Rule</i> and the <i>Bias Rule</i>. Explain both rules to students. (See vocabulary.) Tell students that as they learn to think critically, they too, can become part of the conversation; become engaged; collaborate; and look for an argument. Tell students as they process the scene, they will gather evidence, share their evidence and debate their findings and finally, draw their own conclusions based on the evidence they acquire.</p> <p>Tell students that as they gain knowledge, they will be able to identify a variety of sources that can be used to support their claims. In time, they will recognize the</p> | <p><b>Appendix: Primary Source Guide</b></p> <p>(Description of each material source or clue)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>George H. Durrie, “<i>Seven Miles to Farmington</i>”, ca. 1953. Few artists shaped the image of New England more than Durrie, whose CT landscapes were produced and distributed as prints by the firm of Currier and Ives beginning in 1850. The artist detailed observations of CT rural life.</li> <li>Labeled version of <i>Seven Miles to Farmington</i>. What’s wrong with this picture? One must pay particular attention to details including the signage. Where would one be if one was, in fact, seven miles from Farmington?</li> <li><a href="http://florencegriswoldmuseum.org/learn/see-change">http://florencegriswoldmuseum.org/learn/see-change</a></li> <li>1853 Map of New Haven George H. Durrie lived on Temple Street in downtown New Haven. According to Robert Thorson, Professor of Geology, UCT, his notes suggests that the painting was sketched or painted along the solid line of his draft notations. Can this solid line be located on the historical map? What geographical references are visible from this point?</li> <li>Scenes of East and West Rock, New Haven <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ithiel Town’s Bridge Near East Rock</i>, 1847</li> <li><i>East Rock, New Haven</i>, 1862</li> <li><i>View of Westville</i>, 1856</li> <li><i>Summer Landscape Near New Haven, View from</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol> |

advantages and limitations of said sources. Eventually, they will learn to locate sources of print or non-print information. As they use this information, they will begin to evaluate the data and make their own generalizations from the data with the goal of presenting their conclusions in a meaningful way.

**Procedure: Part II Activities**

First, display “Seven Miles to Farmington” on the overhead to the whole class...

Then, pose the questions:

What do you see?

What do you notice?

What are your senses telling you?

What’s happening?

Tell students they’re beginning to gather evidence.

(Remember that there are no judgments here as students process the scene.)

Tell students that if they can gather evidence through a detective lens, they can probably reenact what happened before they arrived on the scene. Elicit responses.

Then say, “What’s Wrong with the Painting”?

(When we flip a source and provide a contradiction, we invite students to focus deeper on the piece.)

Now tell students they are about to uncover a mystery based on a detail in the picture. Can they discover what’s wrong with the painting? Elicit responses. If some are excited to pursue an idea of their own, they can.

For others, they may need a more leading question...

After listening to their responses, pause and point out the almost too difficult to decipher sign on the tree in the right foreground and say, “Seven Miles to Farmington” and then ask whether this painting could have truly been painted seven miles from Farmington? Where would seven miles from Farmington be? What geographical references are obvious in the painting?

Hand each student a hand lens.

Tell students: Like detectives, can we believe everything we see when we arrive on the scene? Now use your powers of deduction to determine the likelihood of where the painting could actually have been painted. If you study the clues carefully, the mystery may reveal itself and you will crack the case.

East Haven, ca.1849

- West Rock, New Haven, 1857
  - East Rock, New Haven, 1857
  - Haying Near New Haven
6. Newspaper Article, *New Haven Register*, Sunday, April 17, 1949. “New Haven’s “Rocks” A Century Ago
7. Series of Durrie winter landscapes

**Miscellaneous Clues:**

George Henry Durrie. Pages from Diary. (1845-46) New Haven Museum

Newspaper Article, *Sunday Magazine*, Sunday, Sept. 27, 1953. “George Durrie and his landscape paintings, 100 years ago”

“New England”: *A Lithograph After the Painting*, by George H Durrie. Published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, “The home Forum,” 1953

George Durrie. Sketches from sketchbook. New Haven Museum

Article: “Wesleyan Author Mines Fascinating History of New Haven’s Distinctive Skyline.” *Hartford Courant*, August 25, 2013

Durrie advertisement for prints of his in 1854

Piece of Trap-rock...Basalt...from East or West Rock

**Assessment**

Observe how the students collect evidence, take notes, and share findings with their team members

Observe responses to “Take a Stand”

Listen to viewpoints in “Circle of Viewpoints” (Teacher can use a simple rubric to assess student responses...checklist of criteria...see below)

Review their answer to the question, “Was the setting for the painting, *Seven Miles to Farmington*, really seven miles from Farmington? Check student visuals to said question.

**Rubric for COV**

1. The student states his/her role in society
2. The student states the viewpoint of the character he or she represents
3. The student considers questions raised by others about his/her viewpoint
4. The student concludes with a viewpoint

(Like historians, after keen observation, students will generate questions and revise their questions as they dig deeper into the sources.)

Break students into pairs or small groups. Distribute the primary sources at classroom centers for students to move through strategically or photocopy a packet for each small group to share.

Students will seek information from the FGM website, and from the sources at the centers. As students examine these sources and dig deeper into the painting, they will begin to look for patterns and gather evidence for their claim. Students record what they observe on the analysis worksheets throughout the lesson.

Eventually, students will cite reasoning and begin to draw their own conclusions based on gathered evidence as to where they think the *Seven Miles to Farmington* was painted.

Like historians, students will compare their own interpretations... (Take a Stand\*)... with others and communicate their conclusions... (Circle of Viewpoints\*\*)... through informed action, (their choice).

#### **\*Take a Stand**

This is a great activity. Identify and label a space or wall in the classroom whereby students stand for those who strongly agree that the painting was painted seven miles from Farmington; another labeled wall indicates where students stand who strongly disagree that the painting was a setting seven miles from Farmington, and finally a wall for students to stand who are a little unsure about where they stand or very unsure of where they stand.

Have students debrief by sharing their reflections with the class. Afterwards, students can rethink their opinions and change walls before returning to the inquiry at hand. (Teachers can also distribute post-it notes to the students to post their view along a continuum that offers those four opinion choices.)

#### **\*\*Circle of Viewpoints**

Students select a viewpoint to explore and report that viewpoint through the lens of the viewer.

For example, an art collector; a naturalist from the New Haven area; a historian or an ordinary citizen might each have a different view or opinion about the painting and share their views with each other in their groups. This activity is valuable but often needs to be practiced!)

#### **Part 3: Wrap Up**

#### **Extension**

This art history lesson asks students to regard a primary source much like a detective trying to solve a mystery. This requires students to develop an eye for detail; taking field notes; improving memory recall; recovering from missteps or mistakes; making detailed observations; considering different points of view and applying logic.

The following website can be useful to improve these skills.

[www.stem-works.com](http://www.stem-works.com) Crime Investigation Activities: Double Dutch Brain Game and Change Blindness Game

#### **Resources**

<https://testing.florencegriswoldmuseum.org/learn/see-change/>

Hutson, Martha Young. *George Henry Durrie (1820-1863): American Winter Landscapist: Renowned Through Currier and Ives*, Santa Barbara Museum of Art and American Art Review Press, 1977c1977

New Haven Museum and Historical Society

New Haven Public Library (Local History Room)

National Archives and Records Administration...worksheets designed by the educational staff

<http://www.edteck.com>, Peter Pappas

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>After students have processed the scene, and looked at the evidence carefully, they will submit facts and details to answer the question, “What’s wrong with this picture?”</p> <p>They will analyze the evidence to determine what it says between the lines? They will interpret what their evidence suggests.</p> <p>More specifically, they will identify the information in the evidence that helps them to explain the answer to the question, “Was this scene painted seven miles from Farmington or... <b>somewhere else?</b></p> <p>Students will choose a way to present their findings. As they present their evidence, and summarize the facts, they have cracked the case and perhaps solved the mystery.</p> <p>*Students can present their findings in a way that reflects that learner. For example, it might be the paper trail they have established through looking at the clues; it might be an oral presentation of their findings; it could be a visual that compares and contrasts the different viewpoints or it might be a simple checklist from their hunch to their final conclusion. As informed citizens, students can think about how important it is to process a scene carefully before jumping to conclusions about it as they connect the analysis of this mid-19<sup>th</sup> c painting with viewing any primary source!</p> |  |
|--|---|--|

| Time        | Reflection Questions   | Notes/Details   |
|-------------|--|---|
| (5 minutes) | <p>Content: <i>What did we learn about using primary resources?</i></p> <p>Collaborative: <i>In what ways was your group successful today?</i></p> <p>Personal: <i>How did you contribute to the work of your group?</i></p> | <p>There are many ways to solicit responses to reflection questions: whole group share, partner share, or written responses as an “exit slip,” as examples.</p> |

| Time        | Appreciations  | Notes/Details |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| (2 minutes) | <p><i>Invite appreciations. “What did you notice about our work together today?”</i></p> |               |