

Dear Social Studies supervisor,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about [history.org](https://www.history.org). Launched in Fall 2024, [history.org](https://www.history.org) is a free, K-12 resource dedicated to empowering teachers with top-tier educational assets that spark curiosity in history and civics and cultivate an engaged citizenry. [history.org](https://www.history.org) is a project of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and includes contributions from a large and growing number of museums and civic organizations nationwide. The project is steered by a committee of leading history, civics, and education organizations including Colonial Williamsburg, iCivics, George Washington's Mount Vernon, the National Constitution Center, and William & Mary.

[history.org](https://www.history.org) offers teachers carefully curated collections based on the topics most commonly taught in K-12 U.S. history and civics classes. Leveled grade band collections consist of short videos, primary sources with analysis questions and learning supports, and primary-source based mini lessons.

Our principles for designing collections include:

- **Thoughtful curation:** Primary sources have been contributed by leading history museums and civic organizations.
- **Teacher expertise:** K-12 social studies teachers were involved in the creation of all instructional resources.
- **Historian review:** All content in the collections has been vetted and reviewed by historians from the Organization of American Historians.
- **Research-informed:** The design team surveyed and interviewed over 1,000 current K-12 social studies teachers representing communities nationwide to guide the design of content and the site features.
- **Multiple perspectives:** Collections include videos and primary sources that showcase diverse experiences and illuminate differing perspectives of the past.
- **"Object-based" inquiries:** To increase student engagement, [history.org](https://www.history.org)'s resources emphasize object-based inquiry and center student observations and connection making—cornerstones of museum education made ready-to-deploy in classrooms.
- **Age- and grade-appropriateness:** Each collection is aligned to the learning demands of specific grade bands with attention to what is appropriate, feasible, and needed for those students.

- **Meet varied students needs:** Resources include support for literacy, including student-friendly definitions of vocabulary words, transcripts of videos and documents, and closed captioning.
- **Teacher choice:** Teachers know what will work for their curriculum, standards, and learners. [history.org](https://www.history.org) collections offer vetted options and allow teachers to make the final selection for their classrooms. Everything is editable to allow maximum flexibility.

We invite you to learn more about [history.org](https://www.history.org) by visiting the site and reviewing the Frequently Asked Questions below. At present, we are in a beta phase and accounts are open to a limited number of educators. If you'd like access to the beta site, please [contact us](#). We anticipate opening to the general public in Fall 2025. Though content is limited at the moment, we are working towards a complete U.S. history and civics-focused library of 500 short videos and more than 2,000 primary sources. These will be released on a rolling basis between September 2025 and July 2027. If you have specific questions that you cannot find the answers to on the next page or on the website, don't hesitate to [reach out](#) to our team.

Thank you,

Mia Nagawieki

The Royce R. and Kathryn M. Baker Vice President for Education Strategy and Civic Engagement

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Frequently Asked Questions for Social Studies School and District Administrators

For all FAQs and more information about history.org, please see history.org's [About](#) page.

Who is history.org for?

[history.org](#) is a tool created for K-12 teachers of history, civics, and social studies and those who help them.

What kinds of teaching materials does history.org have for K-12 classrooms?

[history.org](#) offers:

- Primary sources, including documents, maps, artifacts, artwork and images, and audio and video footage.
- Primary source analysis questions that drive understanding, empathy, and meaning making.
- Short 2- to 3-minute animated videos about key ideas, events, people, and concepts from K-12 social studies, U.S. history, and civics.
- Scaffolded comprehension questions that can check for student understanding or spark discussion of each video.
- Additional accessibility supports, including vocabulary words, closed captioning, and transcripts.
- Mini lessons composed of videos and primary sources that provide ready-to-go learning experiences.
- All discussion questions and mini lessons are available in editable formats.

Is history.org aligned to my state standards?

The topics covered on history.org emerged as the result of analysis of multiple states' social studies learning standards and review by experienced social studies teachers from diverse communities. If you cannot find a topic you are required to teach in the [history.org](#) content for your grade band, we recommend looking in the grade-band above or below.

What primary sources does history.org offer and where do they come from?

[history.org](#)'s primary sources include documents, images, maps, artifacts, and more. History museums and civic education organizations contribute primary sources from their collections.

What pedagogical approaches are used in the history.org materials?

[history.org](#)'s resources are informed by museum education pedagogies, like object-based inquiry and visual thinking, with the goal of making those tools feasible and accessible in the classroom. Pedagogical approaches include:

- **Telling stories:** The short videos engage students in the past by foregrounding stories of people, places, and events. Primary sources have also been carefully selected to tell our nation's complex and heterogeneous history.

- **Analyzing primary sources:** [history.org](https://www.history.org) uses a consistent approach to questioning, observing, and interpreting primary sources. Based on the [National Archives' Document Analysis progression](#), [history.org](https://www.history.org) aims not just to engage students in analysis of each individual primary source, but to support students in developing an approach to primary source analysis that they can replicate independently.
- **Using Visual Thinking Strategies:** [history.org](https://www.history.org)'s primary source analysis questions and mini lessons deploy visual thinking questions to encourage student observation and use of evidence.
- **Fostering student inquiry:** [history.org](https://www.history.org)'s primary source analysis questions and mini lessons make students active participants in their learning, inviting them to ask and seek answers to questions that interest them and to make connections to what they already know.
- **Practicing historical thinking skills:** [history.org](https://www.history.org) primary source analysis questions and mini lessons provide opportunities for students to engage in the [National Council for History Education's Historical Habits of Mind](#) in order to develop historical thinking skills that build understanding of the contemporary world and create a foundation for active citizenship.
- **Embracing tensions and complexities:** Teaching a complete history of the United States involves acknowledging our nation's triumphs and tragedies. [history.org](https://www.history.org) provides teachers with multifaceted resources that support them in surfacing and navigating the tensions inherent in the stories of our past.