



Goal

Students will be introduced to a variety of primary sources for historical research available at the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.

Outcomes

- Students will be introduced to a variety of primary and secondary source material on the early days in Jackson Hole available at the museum including letters, journals, newspaper articles, books, photographs, oral histories, and artifacts.
- Students will examine old photographs, letters, journals, newspapers articles and artifacts depending on availability.
- Students will describe the way of life that existed in Jackson Hole during a specific time period by examining old photographs from the museum collection.

Resource Materials at the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum

Vertical Files

These files include a wealth of newspaper and magazine articles and other information on Jackson Hole history. Topics include cattle and dude ranching, farming, early settlements, schools, rodeo, cowboys, clothing and numerous others.

Photograph Collection

This collection of over 15,000 cataloged images of early days in Jackson Hole documents communities, cattle and dude ranching, climbing, skiing, the elk herd, life in Jackson Hole, and more.

Artifact Collections

The museum has numerous items from the early days of Jackson Hole including spurs, saddles, cattle ranching gear, children's games and toys, dude ranch furniture, old newspaper printing equipment, blacksmith tools, gold mining artifacts, and many others.



Activity #1

Primary Sources

CLASSROOM INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Location

- 6th Grade Classroom or Museum Classroom

Approximate Time for Activity

- 40-50 minutes

Materials Supplied by Museum

Selection of written primary sources and a few secondary sources including:

- letters
- journals and journal entries
- handmade maps
- sketches
- books
- other appropriate materials
- copies to leave behind for students to examine

Materials Provided by Teacher

- table to display

Note

If possible, select a specific time period such as the Homestead Period or specific topic such as ranching to serve as the focus for all three activities. This will provide coherence for the students, and the information learned in one activity can be referred in the following activities.

If this is not possible due to materials available in the collection, the materials can be selected randomly with regard to topics and historic periods. In either case, try to select material that students can relate to and tell interesting stories in some way.

We need to decide if any artifacts can leave the museum to go to the classroom or if we need to have the class come to the museum and have artifacts spread out in our classroom.

Introduction to Project

The purpose of activity one is to explore written primary and secondary source materials and to listen to excerpts from oral history tapes or videos. Artifacts and photographs will be studied in activities two and three.

Preparation

- 1) In advance, ask teacher to provide a table or desks put together so that materials can be available for the students to examine.
- 2) Collect a variety of written primary sources and a few secondary sources including letters, newspaper articles, books, journal entries, hand-done maps, sketches, and other types of materials available to take for this activity. Make copies of them if originals cannot be taken to the classroom.

- 3) Select one or more short sequences from an oral history audio tape for students to hear and a short section of a video tape/dvd of an interview if available.
- 4) This unit could be used by the teacher as follow-up and review of historic source material for the students or could be presented as an introduction to source material before the topic has been presented to students for the first time by the teacher. Consult with the teacher to find out what, if anything, has already been done with the students.

Activity

- 1) Briefly discuss the definition of source material, including primary and secondary material. Explain that over the three units students will have the opportunity to examine a variety of source materials from the JHHS collection.
- 2) Explain that in today's activity, you will be sharing written material and oral histories. Have students brainstorm types of written materials that might be used in historical research.
- 3) Read selections from a few letters, journal entries, and newspaper articles, books and other printed material including primary and secondary sources.
 - Talk about the differences between them.
 - Discuss the advantages of using primary sources when constructing an accurate information base.
- 4) Introduce the concept of oral and video histories as primary source material and how they are done.
 - The questions asked by the interviewer determine what information is obtained.
 - Oral histories may be done by giving the old-timer a time period or event and have him or her just talk about that, unguided by questions.
 - Discuss how each method would have different results.
- 5) Activity (This can be eliminated if time is too short.)
 - Pick an event that everyone in the class participated in last week. Have students write three or four sentences about the event describing specified details, such as weather, sequence, who was there, etc. Have a few students share and

- Discuss the unreliability of eyewitness reports at an accident or disaster and what the possible causes of that might be (emotional involvement, differences in people's observation skills and methods, etc.)
 - Discuss the following ideas:
 - Memories can be inaccurate due to many reasons including how far back in the past the memories go; how people tend to remember different kinds of things with varying degrees of detail (dates, emotional experiences, family-related, work-related); and others.
 - Information in different people's interviews from a particular time period can be conflicting. When this happens, what could the historian do to find out the accurate information such as dates, sequence of events, and other facts?
 - What are the ramifications of these ideas in terms of oral histories?
- 6) Explain the value of audio and video histories to record personal experiences of people who have lived in Jackson Hole.
- Play a few minutes of an oral history tape in which the old-timer tells a funny or especially interesting story about life in Jackson Hole.
 - Show a short section from a video interview.
 - Discuss the differences between the two media and what each can provide to a researcher. How do these media resources compare with the written resources? How would it be useful in research to use all of these resources when looking for information?

Closing

- 1) Review the types of primary and secondary sources students have seen.
- 2) (If possible) Tell the students you are leaving copies of the written materials and audio and video tapes for students to look at when they have time available.
- 3) Give students a preview of the next activity.



Activity #2

Primary Sources-Artifacts

Location

- 6th Grade Classroom or Museum Classroom

Approximate Time for Activity

- 40-50 minutes

Materials Supplied by Museum

- One artifact (if possible) whose identity and function is not readily apparent.
- 10-15 artifacts (or photos of artifacts if this is not possible).
- Gloves for students for handling artifacts if needed

Materials Supplied by Teacher

- One sheet of paper per student for writing
- Pencils or pens
- Table or other place to set artifacts or photos of artifacts

Assistants Needed

Preparation

- 1) Call teacher to get maximum number of students in class. Explain that you may need a table or some kind of surface on which to display some artifacts.
- 2) Select artifacts (if possible) or photos of artifacts from the collection.
 - Select one artifact whose function is not readily apparent. This will be used in the introductory activity and shown to students as a group.

- The rest of the artifacts should consist of those that can be identified or speculated on by examination. Students will work in groups of three or four depending on class size and time available for activity, and each group will work with one artifact. Take a few extras for those groups who finish before others.
- If artifacts cannot be handled, ask teacher to provide a place to display them during the visit so that students can easily observe them without touching.

Artifacts (cont.)/ Activity 1

Each student will have a pencil or pen and paper.

- 1) Discuss with students:
 - What is an artifact?
 - Why are artifacts valuable in the study of history?
 - What advantages or disadvantages does studying an artifact have over studying a written description or oral description of an item?

- 2) Show the group an artifact whose function is not readily apparent.
 - Explain that when historians handle artifacts, they use gloves to protect the object from dirt and oil found on hands.
 - Explain that the purpose of this activity is to have them figure out what the artifact is and what it is used for, but you do not want them to guess out loud right away, so that you demonstrate the process of examining the object in detail. If they think they already know, have them write down the answer on their paper.
 - Explain that identifying an artifact or figuring out what an artifact is used for is like detective work: you look for clues and find out as much about the item as possible before you draw a conclusion.
 - Explain that it is important in the identification process not to jump to conclusions too quickly and look carefully and think. Encourage the students to question each other's observations and conclusions if they see something that doesn't make sense or is contradictory evidence.
 - Lead them to look at different qualities and elements by asking pertinent questions:
 - What type of material is it made of?
 - Is it fragile or sturdy?
 - Are there sharp or blunt edges?
 - Is it heavy or light?
 - Are there places that show more wear than other places?
 - Ask as many other questions about the specific object as are appropriate to help them understand that the more information they collect before drawing a conclusion, the more likely they are to identify the object and its function correctly.

- Give the students a few minutes to think about the data, decide what the object is and/or what is its function, and write their answer on their papers.
- Have students share their answers.
- Give students the information about the artifact, including any additional background or facts that they did not discover.

Artifacts (cont.)/ Activity 2

- 1) Ask teacher to divide students into groups of three or four (depends on class size and time available for this activity). Each group will have an artifact to identify and to determine its function. Each group should find a place where they can work. If artifacts cannot be handled, set them out for each group in a place where they can be easily examined without touching. Hand out gloves if needed.
- 2) Tell students how much time they have to do the work and draw conclusions. By the end of this time period, each group should have the identification and function of the object written down (briefly) and have selected a spokesperson to explain their object to the class in three sentences.
- 3) When a group is finished, they must check the accuracy of their information with the JHHS staff. If they are right, they can look at another artifact or see what else they can learn about the first one. If incorrect, they keep working with teacher's help.
- 4) While students work, JHHS staff and teacher go from group to group to help and see how they are doing in asking good questions to draw conclusions.
- 5) Class reconvenes, and spokespersons explain what they discovered about their artifacts.

Closing

- 1) Give students a preview of the next visit.



Activity #3

Primary Sources- Photographs

Location

- Sixth Grade classroom or Museum classroom

Approximate Time for Activity

- 40-50 minutes

Materials Supplied by Museum:

- Copies of photos for students to use in their research

Materials Provided by Teacher

- Paper for each student for note-taking
- Pencils or pens

Assistants Needed

- None

Note

This third activity uses photos as a primary source for research.

Purpose of Activity

The purpose of this activity is to have students act as researchers who are trying to determine the way of life that existed in Jackson Hole during a certain time period by closely examining photographs from that time period. Students will work in groups of three, and in each group will work on a specific topic such as land, home, work, school, transportation, play, clothing, or other topics.

Preparation

- 1) Ask the teacher to divide students into working groups of three before the first session.
- 2) It would be ideal to have a longer block of time for this activity. Ask the teacher if there is a longer class period available on block schedule that you could use.
- 3) If you only have 40-50 minutes and think this is too much for that period, do the activity with the entire class, topic by topic (i.e. work, homes,...) with you leading the process. If you decide on this method, make enough copies of each photo so that students can look at them together in pairs while you are talking about them.
- 4) If you are tying Activities 1-3 together with the same theme such as the Homesteading Period, select the photos to match the theme. Otherwise pick a time period that is well-represented in the museum's photo collection.
- 5) Before the classroom visit, determine how many groups you will

have and select the list of categories for students to study: the environment (including landforms, vegetation, weather, water, etc.); homes; making a living; transportation; school; entertainment and play; ranching; obtaining food; etc.

- 6) In each category, select a collection of several photographs that will provide as much information as possible for the groups. The photos will be the only resource that students have to determine what life was like, so include photos that tell stories as well as those that provide specific information and details.
- 7) If available, have a few magnifying glasses available in case students need to look at a small detail.
- 8) Make copies of the photos and divide them into categories to hand out to each group.

Activity

- 1) Brief introduction to photography as a primary source of historical information:
 - Discuss how photographs can provide information about a time period, place, or event.
 - Explain that most photography in the early 1900s was black and white. Discuss how the presence or absence of color in a photo affects what the viewer might learn. If the viewer wants to know what season it is without color what clues might they find in a photo of the landscape that could distinguish the difference between summer and fall?
 - Discuss the idea that cameras were not common as they are today, and how that could affect the types of photographs taken.
- 2) Explain the scenario:
 - Students will be researchers who have been asked to determine how people lived in Jackson Hole in the Homestead Period (or whatever other period you have selected). There are no other sources available to provide information other than the photographs, so students will have to study the photos carefully, looking for any clues they can find to tell the story of the time period.
- 3) Explain the process:
 - Each group will have a different topic and receive a selection of photos on a particular topic. By careful examination of the

- Groups may organize themselves in whatever way they think will work best to come up with their story. Ideas:
 - Each person examines 2 or 3 photos individually, then the group compares the individual information to see if any is conflicting. If so, look at several photos as a group and try to figure out what the answer is. Then the group puts together the summary.
 - The group sorts the photos into categories and examines each category together to come up with the information about their topic.
 - The group creates another way to go about the process.
 - The group must also decide how to do the presentation to the class: it can be done by one person or each person can tell a part of it. When students present their information, they should use the photos as visual aids for other students to see.
 - Note taking can be very helpful in remembering what information they want to share.
 - Magnifying glasses are available if someone needs to examine a tiny detail.
 - The challenge in this project is the limited time period, so advise students to quickly organize themselves into the most efficient process.
- 4) Students examine photographs to find out as much information as possible about their topic.
- 5) Each group presents their discoveries to the class.
- 6) Brief discussion:
- Was it possible to obtain a lot of information from the photographs?
 - Was it difficult or easy to figure out what was going on in the photograph?
 - Would it have helped you to have background information on the historical period when you were interpreting the photographs?
 - Can you get enough information from photos alone to draw

Closing for Unit

- 1) Briefly summarize the different sources that students examined during this unit and explain that there are other types of primary and secondary sources available for historical research.

- 2) Ask them for their input on the various resources:
 - If you had only one source of information available to put together the history of a certain place, event, or historical time period, which would you choose?
 - Which sources did you enjoy working with the most?
 - Which sources provided the most accurate information in your opinion?
 - Is it important or not to use a variety of sources when putting together the history of a certain place, event or historical time period?
 - Did you make any personal discoveries while you were working on these activities?