



Historical Society of Pennsylvania

“Preserving American Freedom”

Guide to Primary Source Planning

HSP provides a few simple steps to help better prepare a class for success with primary sources.

- Clearly state the goals and objectives of the primary source lesson.
- Demonstrate and explain the interactive features of the “Preserving American Freedom” website highlighting the original document, the transcription, and the annotations.
- If necessary edit the document(s) to suit the needs of your students or lesson.
- Develop a chart on the board, whiteboard, or overhead highlighting vocabulary words, new phrases, and names within the document(s).
- Discuss the basic questions students should contemplate while reading; who is the author / audience reading the document, when was the document written?
- Highlight the specifics of the document that are pertinent to your lesson or curriculum objectives.
- Generate or use HSP’s, essential questions to initiate and further class discussion.
- Provide adequate reading time for the students to best understand the document(s) (Long Silence, to sustain silent reading).
- In order to facilitate the class discussion be prepared to lead the initial primary source lessons, guide the students through the process of reading the document(s), how to take their notes include (vocabulary words, significant names/events/organizations), and what your gradual and long term expectations are concerning the use of primary sources.