Theme: Approaches to History

Overview

How can thinking like a historian be useful even if you're not looking to become a historian yourself? This course will show you how applying historical thinking skills can benefit you, no matter what you're looking to learn at SNHU. In this course, we'll show you the value of historical thinking across disciplines.

(Click icon for citation)

To start, we'll explore the ways in which historians typically approach understanding historical events in the eight learning blocks that make up Theme: Approaches to History. In order to understand how historians think, we'll first establish why historians look at historical events: they identify historically significant events of interest to them and choose a specific historical lens they will use to analyze those events. Next, we'll establish what historians do to analyze historical events: they develop and refine a research question to focus their analysis, develop search terms based on their research question, and locate primary and secondary sources to determine the context of their historical event.

Finally, we'll close Theme: Approaches to History by walking you through the process of drafting a writing plan. Even if they don't write a formal writing plan like you will be doing, all historians begin to write a historical event analysis with some kind of strategy in mind—a plan for finding information in primary and secondary sources that will help them answer their research questions and enhance their understanding of the topic at hand.

This approach is actually pretty similar to approaches used in different fields, if you think about it. In drafting a proposal for a business plan, an entrepreneur would identify a gap in the market for a new good or service, research what evidence could help make a case for this gap, and develop an argument to a potential investor in order to secure funding. This approach might also remind you of the scientific method used in the physical sciences in which a natural phenomenon is observed, investigated, and tested in order to draw a conclusion.

Although we're looking at history in this course, keep in mind that the skills you are refining here are also relevant in other, sometimes unexpected, fields of study at the university.

Course Outcomes

After completing this theme, you should be able to:

- Apply key approaches to studying history in addressing critical questions related to historical narratives and perspectives
- Select appropriate and relevant primary and secondary sources in investigating foundational historic events

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-1: The Rights of Immigrants

Over the centuries, millions of immigrants have journeyed to America. Most sought to fit into American society, yet most also sought to hold onto certain aspects of their native lands. The experience of different immigrant groups illustrates the difficulty of "fitting in" and attaining the full range of rights that the Constitution guarantees to all citizens, when one is perceived as somehow *different* from native-born Americans.

In this theme, we will look at the experiences of two different immigrant groups—the Irish and the Québécois, French-speaking immigrants from Quebec—who came to America in large numbers during the 19th century. Looking at the experiences of these two groups will help us learn how to begin to think like historians: to assess the historical significance of events, to place them in context, and to understand the different perspectives, or lenses, through which we can view these events. You will begin developing the historical thinking skills necessary to ask questions, investigate sources, and begin outlining your historical analysis essay, using these two immigrant groups as backdrops.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Be introduced to the core concept of this theme: the rights of immigrants
- Learn about the concept of historical significance
- Apply the concept of historical significance to your own experience

The Rights of Immigrants

The United States, as the saying goes, is a nation of immigrants. In 2014, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 13.3 percent of all Americans were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), while everyone else—including Native Americans—was descended from someone who, however long ago, came here from somewhere else.

That simple fact defines America as something different from most other countries: a place whose national identity is not rooted solely in geography or ethnicity but which comprises such shared values as democracy, liberty, opportunity, and upward mobility.

Ellis Island was the main entry facility for immigrants entering the United States between 1892 and 1954. (Click icon for citation)

But it is also a fact that America, as a nation, has not always embraced newcomers to its shores. For many immigrant groups, the path to acceptance—and the ability to exercise the full panoply of rights enjoyed by native-born Americans—has been a tortuous one.

There is a strong strain of nativism that runs through American culture and society. Especially in times of economic hardship, immigrants have been demonized for "taking American jobs"; at other times they have been victims of religious or racial/ethnic discrimination. The struggle of different immigrant groups to overcome these obstacles, and to be incorporated fully into American society and economic life, is a crucial element of the American story. (Schrag, 2010)

Immigrants came here from many countries, and they entered the country through many different ports. Perhaps the most famous gateway was Ellis Island in New York Harbor—the first federal immigration station, through which 12 million immigrants passed. Today, Ellis Island, as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, stands as a symbol of the American immigrant experience.

References

Kimball, A. (1997, March 31). Ways of Seeing History. Retrieved from pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/ways.htm

Schrag, P. (2010, September 13). The Unwanted: Immigration and Nativism in America. Retrieved from www.immigrationpolicy.org/perspectives/unwanted-immigration-and-nativism-america

U.S. Census Bureau (2014). *American FactFinder fact sheet: Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations*. Retrieved March 31, 2016 from factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_S0501&prodType=table

Historical Significance

Significance is one of the most important concepts in the study of history. Historical significance is closely related to the concept of **importance**, but it implies a higher standard: lots of events may seem important at the time they take place, but how many are historically significant? Historical significance can help us understand the experience of immigrant groups in the United States.

Historians generally rate historical significance by asking **four key questions**:

- How notable, or important, was the event at the time it occurred?
- Did the event affect a great many people?
- Were the consequences of the event extensive and enduring?
- Does the event symbolize or relate to broader historical trends? (Phillips, 2002)

To gain a better understanding of the concept of historical significance, watch the video below:

Video Transcript: Historical Significance

From the historian's standpoint, significance is a measure of whether an event or person is worth remembering, worth teaching about, and worth being the subject of historical research. Human history consists of every event that's ever happened, but only a few are remembered and taught about many years later. Those are the events with historical significance. Think about your own personal history. You've probably done a lot of different things today: eat lunch, worked out, drove to work, walked the dog. Maybe you've done something genuinely important, such as paying your

mortgage or calling your mother on her birthday. Thirty years from now, when you're writing your autobiography, would you write about any of the things you did today? If not, then those events are not historically significant moments in your life. An individual might be considered historically significant if he or she is connected in some way to a larger historical event or trend. John F. Kennedy, the great grandson of Irish immigrants, was a historically significant figure because of his close involvement in many momentous events: the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Space Race, and the American involvement in Vietnam, to name just a few. Other individuals may be considered more or less historically significant through their connection to historically significant events. Let's say your grandfather was an immigrant from Ireland who enlisted in the US army and fought in World War II. That fact alone lends him some degree of historical significance. He would be seen as a more historically significant figure if he had a direct impact on the course of events during the war, say, as a battlefield commander or as a participant in a major turning point in the war, such as the D-Day invasion. Similarly, if your great grandmother emigrated from Quebec at the turn of the last century, and then sang in a radio program broadcast by radio station KDKA in Pittsburgh, one of the first regularly scheduled radio stations in the nation, she would have had some measure of historical significance. She would be seen as a more significant figure if she had gone onto a career as a radio network personality in New York, say, or if she had become an official of AFTRA, the labor union for radio and later television performers. By this measure, most people can claim some measure of historical significance. The task of the historian, however, is to make a judgement about which events and people are significant enough to write about and to teach. Historians make those judgments after looking at evidence and considering events and individuals in light of the historical context. It's important to remember that historical significance is not an absolute. One group of people might consider an event or person to be historically significant while other groups may not. An event may be significant to people in one part of the world or one region of the country, but not to those who live elsewhere. But it remains the job of the historian to judge which events and individuals are so historically significant that they merit being written about and studied by future generations.

References

Kimball, A. (1997, March 31). "Ways of Seeing History." Retrieved from pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/ways.htm

Phillips, R. (2002). Historical Significance – The Forgotten "Key Element?" *Teaching History* (106) (March 2002) 14-19. Retrieved from search.proquest.com/openview/535c4fbce3194b0a79d80f3f6dea5f7f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=48308

Assimilation

The process by which immigrant communities, over time, integrate themselves into their host society is known as assimilation. In America, this process generally involves the gradual adoption of the English language, along with American culture and values, by the immigrant group. Full assimilation is said to occur when members of a particular group are indistinguishable from the rest of American society. (Brown and Bean, 2006)

Throughout American history, assimilation has generally been assumed to be the logical and desired end result for any immigrant group coming to America. This assumption is not universally shared, however, and some immigrant groups have resisted assimilation by holding on to their native language, food, and cultural practices. Other immigrants saw themselves as "birds of passage," coming to America to take advantage of the greater economic opportunities here but returning home after they'd earned enough money to live comfortably in their native lands.

Sociologists measure assimilation by the extent to which members of an immigrant group:

- Improve their socioeconomic status, making it comparable to national norms;
- Increase geographic mobility, moving beyond the ethnic enclaves in which many immigrants first settle;
- Adopt English as a second and, eventually, first language; and
- Intermarry—that is, marry people from outside their ethnic group or community. (Waters and Jiménez, 2005)

Barriers to Assimilation

The classic theory of assimilation holds that immigrants inevitably become more "Americanized" with the passage of time. But there are many barriers to assimilation that can delay or even prevent a group's full assimilation. (Brown and Bean, 2006)

Language is one of the primary barriers to assimilation. Immigrant groups whose members speak English may find it easier to assimilate than members of other groups, though this is not always the case.

Race may also block a group's assimilation into American society. The nation's tragic history of racial division has had a long-lasting impact on American society; the simple fact is that having a darker skin color undeniably marks a person as *different* from the majority of white Americans. For that reason alone, an English-speaking immigrant from Nigeria, for example, might find it harder to "blend in" than an English-speaking immigrant from Scotland.

Finally, *religion* has historically been a major barrier to assimilation. From the earliest colonial days, religious minorities have often faced prejudice and discrimination in America. From the anti-Catholic riots of the 19th century to the widespread anti-Semitism of the 20th century to the anti-Muslim sentiment of the post-9/11 era, religious prejudices have proven to be a powerful impediment to assimilation.

References

Brown, S. and Bean, F. (2006, October 1) Assimilation Models, Old and New: Explaining a Long-Term Process. Retrieved from www.migrationpolicy.org/article/assimilation-models-old-and-new-explaining-long-term-process

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Waters, M. and Jiménez, T. (2005). Assessing Immigrant Assimilation: New Empirical and Theoretical Challenges. *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (1): 105 - 125. DOI:10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100026

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-2: Historical Thinking

Studying history is not a matter of memorizing names and dates. Studying history is an effort to make sense of the past—to understand why certain events took place and to draw from that understanding larger conclusions about human society.

To do all that requires a particular mindset, a way of looking at the events of the past that allows us to see connections and causalities that may elude the casual observer. Thinking like a historian is a vital skill, and learning that skill is one of the central goals of this course. The skills you learn in this course will be useful both in completing your historical analysis essay and in your future studies at SNHU.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Be introduced to the concept of *historical lenses*
- Learn to look at historical events through different lenses

Thinking Like a Historian

For too many people, history is an unconnected list of names and dates—a litany of people and events that needs to be memorized but not necessarily understood.

Needless to say, that's not the way historians think about history. They know that history, in the most fundamental sense, is a *story*: a complex narrative with lots of moving, interdependent parts, all of which inform and instruct us about the past. And historical thinking is a way to think about the world that helps us understand not only the past, but the present. (Wineburg, 2010)

The first step toward thinking like a historian is to understand that there is no single, "right" way to look at history. Studying history is all about interpretation—how we try to make sense of events and individuals from the past. Different historians may have different interpretations of the same event, but neither one is necessarily right or wrong. What matters is how well each interpretation meshes with the historical evidence. (Cohen, 2011)

There are many different kinds of historical evidence: documents, artifacts, buildings, paintings or photographs, and oral histories, to name just a few. But it's also important to realize the many things that are *not* historical evidence: opinion, rumor, propaganda, and political rhetoric, among many others.

Thinking Historically

CHANGE

People at different points in time live by different laws, have access to different technologies, and are subject to different cultural norms and ideas.

CONTEXT

Background information helps you understand historical information and critically examine sources.

CAUSALITY

Since multiple factors are responsible for events, you can explore different explanations for why something happened.

CONTINGENCY

You need to think about not only the effects of events in the past, but also the potential outcomes of the present and in the future.

COMPLEXITY

There are no easy answers in historical thinking.

Example: Thinking Historically by Examining the Impact of Irish Immigration

The Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s led to an enormous movement of Irish immigrants to the United States. But what were the most important effects of this historical event?

One historian might argue that the vast influx of Irish immigrants was good for the American economy because it contributed to the rapid industrialization of the American North, providing a large pool of cheap factory labor in the major coastal cities where most of the immigrant Irish settled. Another historian might argue that Irish immigration, regardless of its effects on industrialization, had a destabilizing effect on American society because it led to urban overcrowding, public health problems caused by slum-like conditions, and social conflict arising from religious differences.

Neither interpretation is necessarily right or wrong. And it's entirely possible that both could be justified by the historical evidence, which in this case would include the number of industrial jobs created in Northern cities in the 1840s and 1850s; statistics on housing and infectious diseases; and contemporary accounts of anti-Catholic discrimination and violence.

References

Cohen, S. (2011) Teaching the Skill of Historical Interpretation. Retrieved from worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/8.2/cohen.html

Wineburg, S. (2010) *Thinking Like a Historian.* Retrieved from www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/historical_thinking/article.html

Historical Lenses

Different historians can develop different interpretations of the same event because they are looking at that event from different perspectives and emphasizing some pieces of historical evidence more than others.

The different perspectives from which historians approach the task of historical research are known as historical lenses. More generally, the study of historical methods, and of the techniques for researching and writing history, is known as historiography.

Historical lenses are often referred to as *categories* of history or *approaches* to history. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the way historians examine different aspects of history, however. (Endy, 2015) As you begin to think about what topic you would like to explore further for your historical analysis essay, you will want to consider through which historical lens (or lenses) you will examine the different aspects of the event.

Political history

political events, parties, elections, voters, and government actions

Social history

social structures and processes and, more generally, the conditions that prevail in an entire society at a particular point in history

Military history

military leaders, battles, and strategy

Economic history

economies or economic phenomena of the past

Religious history

religious ideas, movements, and institutions

Cultural history

culture and the arts at a particular moment in history

History of science

the development of science, scientific knowledge, and technology

These are only a few examples. Historical lenses can also represent certain theories of history, such as the *Great Man Theory*, which holds that history can be explained mainly by studying the actions and motivations of highly influential leaders or heroes, or *Marxism*, which argues that social class conflict and related economic forces determine historical outcomes. (Tosh, 1984)

Theories of history are sometimes referred to as *schools* of historiography. Some other notable schools of historiography include the *Annales School*, a theory of French history that emphasizes long-term social history and the use of social science methodology; *psychohistory*, which studies the psychological motivations behind historical events; and the *cyclical theory of history*, which holds that history can be defined in terms of repeating cycles of events.

Looking once more at the two different interpretations of Irish immigration to the U.S., it's clear that the first historian looked at the issue through the lens of economic history, while the second used the lens of social history.

Other lenses offer the possibility of still more interpretations: a political historian, for instance, might focus on the role that Irish immigration played in building the Democratic political machines in such cities as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. A religious historian, on the other hand, might study the influence of Irish Catholic immigrants on the rise of America's major Catholic universities, including Georgetown, Fordham, and the University of Notre Dame.

The point is that whatever approach you take to history—whatever lens you apply to any historical event—your choice will affect what you see and the conclusions that you draw from the historical evidence.

References

Endy, C. (2015) Glossary of Historical Terms. Retrieved from web.calstatela.edu/faculty/cendy/glossary.pdf

Tosh, J. (1984) *In Pursuit of History.* New York: Longman.

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-3: Research Questions

In this learning block, we are going to shift our focus away from the immigrant experience in America for the moment and begin to look at the historical research that you will be asked to undertake for your course assessment.

At the conclusion of Theme: Thinking About History, you will be required to submit a **historical event analysis**—a four- to six-page essay that analyzes a particular historical event. Before writing your essay, you will be required to submit a **writing plan**—a one- to two-page document that describes the event you have chosen to analyze, the resources you plan to use in your research, and the particular audience for your essay. You will be required to submit your writing plan at the conclusion of Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Begin choosing the research topic for your historical event analysis
- Learn how to ask a critical research question
- Better understand how historical thinking can be applied to parts of your life
- Practice developing research questions

Choosing a Research Topic

As you get ready to start your own historical research, you should know that the first step in any historical analysis is the most basic: choosing a topic to research. In this course, you will be required to submit your research topic for approval at the end of **Theme: Approaches to History, Learning Block 1-4**.

The topic must be an event in American history. You may choose a topic that is related to any of the case studies contained in this course, or you may choose your own topic, with the approval of your instructor.

Here are a few pointers to help you choose your topic:

1. **Pick a topic that interests you.** You're likely to do more research, and do it faster, when you're genuinely engaged by your topic.
2. **Pick a topic that is credible and relevant.** Avoid sensationalism; don't waste your time trying to research the history of alien abductions or Elvis sightings. And make sure your topic is historically relevant—that is, a topic that requires you to do real historical research, not just express your opinions.
3. **Narrow it down.** A topic that's too broad will require you to sift through too much information and make it hard for you to focus.
4. **Ask your instructor for ideas.** Your instructor can also help you decide what topics are credible and relevant and how to narrow down an overly broad topic.
5. **Make sure you can find the needed resources.** If your topic is too obscure or too narrow, you might have trouble finding enough relevant sources.

Sample Topics

The case studies in this course cover the following issues. Click on each tab to learn more about the topic, which will help you decide if it might be something you are interested in researching.

Irish Immigrant Experience

In Theme: Approaches to History, you will learn more about the struggle of immigrants to win equal rights in American society. Our first case study will look at the experience of Irish immigrants in the United States in the 19th century.

Between 1820 and 1860, more than one third of all immigrants to the United States came from Ireland. This wave of majority Catholic immigrants reached its peak during the failure of the potato crop, known as "the Great Hunger."

Many Irish immigrants were poor and uneducated, making them initially ill-equipped for the emerging industrial economy of America. These immigrants experienced religious discrimination and backlash against their presence in major industrial centers like New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.

Québécois Immigrant Experience

The second case study in Theme: Approaches to History explores the experience of Québécois immigrants in the northeastern United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

From the late 19th century until the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, close to one million French-speaking Canadians are estimated to have come to America is search of jobs. This event is sometimes referred to as the Quebec diaspora.

The rural areas of Quebec were overpopulated, and many families did not have sufficient land to continue farming. Despite their agrarian background, these French-speakers were primarily drawn to industrial jobs in New England, because they needed work so badly. Quebeckers became the primary source of labor in the textile and shoe factories in New England.

The Woman Suffrage Movement and the Nineteenth Amendment

In Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas, you will learn more about the extended fight to win equal rights for American women—at the ballot box, in the workplace, and in society at large. Our first case study looks at the woman suffrage movement (1850-1920) and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which guarantees women the right to vote.

The fight to secure the right to vote for American women was a long and bitter one. Rebuffed by Congress, which refused to include women in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments' guarantee of voting rights for freed slaves, and by the Supreme Court, which ruled in *Minor v. Happersett (1875)* that women did not have a constitutionally guaranteed right to vote, advocates for woman suffrage divided sharply over strategy and tactics. Some chose to fight for an amendment to the federal constitution, while others looked to win voting rights, one state at a time.

The two approaches merged in the aftermath of World War I. After more than a dozen states had granted women the right to vote in state and local elections, political pressure for a national amendment began to build. The fight for woman suffrage came to a successful conclusion in 1920, when the Nineteenth Amendment won ratification, and all American women finally gained full voting rights.

The Equal Rights Amendment

The second case study in Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas examines the extended national debate over the Equal Rights Amendment and its ultimate failure to win ratification.

In 1923, Alice Paul, a prominent feminist and advocate for women's rights, announced that she would propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would ensure the same rights to women and men. This seemingly simple proposition nonetheless engendered decades of controversy and heated debate, and it was not until 1972 that a version of Paul's Equal Rights Amendment was finally approved by Congress and sent to the states for ratification.

The debate over ratification played out at a time of tumultuous social change: women entered the workforce in record numbers, women's-rights advocates challenged centuries-old symbols of male privilege, and the Supreme Court, in *Roe v. Wade (1973)*, affirmed women's right to reproductive choice. While the path to ratification at first seemed clear, ERA opponents, led by conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, fought back. Their essential argument—that granting women equal rights would deprive them of important benefits, including workplace protections—was embraced by organized labor and by many working-class women.

As national support for the ERA began to flag, Congress extended the deadline for ratification by three years, but it was not enough. In 1982, the deadline ran out, with the ERA still three states shy of the 38 needed for ratification. The fight for equal rights had, at least for the time being, fallen short.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The first case study in Theme: Analyzing History looks at the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its impact on African-American political participation.

While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed overt discrimination in public accommodations and government services, it did not directly address the most fundamental denial of African-American rights: the concerted effort to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote.

President Lyndon Johnson's landslide election victory in 1964 emboldened him to seek voting-rights legislation, despite concerns that this would alienate conservative Southern Democrats whose support was needed to pass Johnson's Great Society social programs. Television coverage of the brutal police response to peaceful voting-rights protesters in the South—most notably, the attack on protesters at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama—galvanized public support for a bill.

Southern opposition in Congress was fierce: opponents waged a 24-day filibuster in the Senate, and Southerners in the House used every parliamentary tactic they could find to block the legislation. But it eventually passed and was signed into law on August 6, 1965, with both Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks in attendance.

The immediate impact of the Voting Rights Act was a dramatic surge in African-American political participation, with a commensurate increase in the number of African Americans elected to public office. In the longer term, the Voting Rights Act contributed to a historic realignment of the two political parties that has had a profound impact on American politics and society.

School Desegregation in Boston

The second case study in Theme: Analyzing History looks at the issue of school desegregation.

Securing equal educational opportunity was a central goal of the civil rights movement, which counted its first major victory in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). But translating legal victories

into better and more equal public schools proved to be a painfully difficult task.

In 1974, when federal judge W. Arthur Garrity ordered the Boston public schools to begin the forced busing of students to achieve racial desegregation, he triggered a wrenching and sometimes violent public controversy that exposed the racial and class divisions in Boston society. State police and National Guardsmen were called out to escort African-American students into the previously all-white high schools in Charlestown and South Boston, setting off a decades-long debate about the wisdom and efficacy of school busing.

The Cherokee "Trail of Tears"

In Theme: Thinking About History, you will learn more about the long struggle to win equal rights and equal economic opportunity for Native Americans. Our first case study looks at the forced relocation of tens of thousands of Cherokee and other Natives from the southeastern U.S. to Oklahoma in the late 1830s.

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the federal government to abrogate the land claims of many Native tribes in the southeastern U.S. Over the next decade the government removed more than 45,000 Natives to new reservations in Indian Territory, now known as Oklahoma.

The Cherokee were the last tribe to face removal. Under the Treaty of New Echota (1836), Cherokee who relocated willingly received payment for their land; about 2,000 took the government up on the offer. But more than 10,000 others refused, and beginning in 1838, U.S. troops led them on a brutal, year-long forced march to Oklahoma in which more than 4,000 died.

The Creation of Alaska Native Corporations

The second case study in Theme: Thinking About History examines the creation of Alaska Native corporations and their impact on the economic development of Alaska's Native population.

In 1968, oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's Arctic coast. To move this oil down to markets in the Lower 48 states, a consortium of oil companies proposed building the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, which would carry the oil from Prudhoe Bay to the port of Valdez.

The pipeline would need to traverse land whose ownership was in dispute: Native land claims, many of them dating back to Alaska's purchase in 1867, had to be settled before any pipe could be laid. That urgent economic necessity triggered one of the most innovative economic development efforts in American history.

To ensure that the pipeline would be built, Congress in 1971 passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which granted Natives $963 million and up to 44 million acres of federal land, in return for ending their claims on the land where the pipeline was to be built. To administer these grants, the law set up 12 regional corporations (a 13th was added later) and more than 200 local corporations, which would develop their land and run their own businesses for the benefit of their Native shareholders.

The express goal of the corporations was to improve the economic well-being of Alaska Natives, whose living conditions were arguably the worst of any Native group in the country. To date, the corporations' record has been mixed: some of the corporations have been highly successful, while others have performed poorly. But the use of corporations to foster Native economic development remains one of the nation's most innovative attempts to improve the lot of Native peoples.

Asking a Research Question

Once you have chosen a basic topic for your historical analysis, you will need to ask a question about what it is you want to research. A research question is more than an opinion—as the name implies, it requires a certain amount of research to answer.

How to ask a good question:

Immigrants arriving in the United States. (Click icon for citation)

1. **Conduct preliminary research:** You need to have a certain basis of knowledge about a historical topic before you ask a question about it. And a good way to frame your research question is to draw from facts about the historical event and base your question on historical premises and things you already know about the event. From there, you can prove the premises in your analysis—or attempt to disprove them.

   Your first stop as you conduct your preliminary research should be Shapiro Library. A good place to conduct initial research to choose a topic you are interested in, or to narrow down a topic you have in mind, is with an encyclopedia. Through the Shapiro Library, you have access to the Credo Reference encyclopedia. This is a great way to get started with your research, but Credo should ***not*** constitute your entire research for your essay.

2. **Explore the historical premise and make it explicit:** When asking a research question, don't assume the audience will take the next logical leap with you. State any assumptions that you might be including in your research.

3. **Break it down into further questions:** Yes, you are asking a research question, but it will consist of many questions that add to your argument.

Example of Forming a Research Question

Consider the following research question:

> *Did Irish immigration in the 1840s have a positive impact on the U.S. economy?*

This question is flawed in many different ways. To begin, it is overly broad: researching the impact of Irish immigration on the entire U.S. economy could take years. A somewhat better question might be:

> *Did Irish immigration in the 1840s have a positive impact on the economy of New York City?*

That narrows things down a bit, but it's still too vague. What does it mean to *have a positive impact* on the economy? Let's be more specific:

> *Did Irish immigration in the 1840s contribute to the growth of manufacturing industries in New York City?*

We're getting there, but there are still a few problems. For starters, we're making an assumption about the link between immigration and manufacturing; let's state that assumption, or historical premise, explicitly:

> *Did the availability of cheap labor, brought about by Irish immigration in the 1840s, contribute to the growth of manufacturing industries in New York City?*

A good research question also requires analyzing texts and thinking critically. Your question should have more than a simple "yes" or "no" answer. If your question can only be answered by a series of facts, then it is not critical enough.

Critical questions:

- Lead to more questions
- Require further analysis of text
- Provoke further discussion
- Moves you outside of your own frame of reference in order to understand issues on a larger scale
- Focus on the audience and the message (which you will learn more about later in this course)

The research question we developed above is still one that requires a simple, yes-or-no answer. We need a question that requires critical thinking—a question that can't be answered simply:

> *How did the availability of cheap labor, brought about by Irish immigration in the 1840s, affect the growth of manufacturing industries in New York City?*

This question leads to further questions, such as:

> *What industries might have benefited from the low-skilled Irish immigrant labor pool? How did employers' desire for cheap labor play off against prevailing anti-Catholic, anti-Irish attitudes?*

Video: Historical Thinking

As you consider the topic you would like to research and the question you would like to ask for your historical analysis essay, you are beginning to think like an historian. As you think critically and ask critical questions, you are developing skills that will be useful in this course as well as in your future studies.

Thinking historically will not only be important in this course, but it can also be applied to many other aspects of your life.

Video Transcript: Historical Thinking

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, the philosopher George Santayana wrote. Well, ok, maybe that's true, but what does that mean for you? Not repeating the mistakes of the past is really important if you're president of the US, or the chancellor of Germany, or a billionaire technology mogul. But most people aren't. Why is history important for them? History is important because it shows us a way of thinking, not only about the past, but about the world around us. Historical thinking means understanding that the world is complex and there are no simple answers, that events are interrelated, and changing one thing over here can lead to dozens of changes over there. That way of thinking will come in handy if you pursue a career in business consulting on organizational changes, or technology, designing products that solve problems. Historical thinking means knowing how to find or evaluate different sources of information, and draw conclusions based on sometimes conflicting evidence. That's a valuable skill to have for a lawyer, gathering evidence to defend a client, or a scientist, interpreting the results of an experiment. Historical thinking means understanding how to look at the world from more than one perspective, to try on different historical lenses and see how the picture can change when you adjust your frame of reference. This is important if you're a novelist or a movie director recounting multiple perspectives of the same event, or even a counselor mediating a family conflict. Historical thinking means knowing how to synthesize large amounts of complex information and present it in a cogent and compelling manner. And that's a pretty good job description for a journalist reporting on a breaking news event, or an investment strategist explaining a client's financial outlook. Long story short, studying history prepares us to make sense of what's complicated, to research what we don't know and to explain what we do know. It's not about learning names and dates. It's about learning how to think. And knowing how to think is something that will help you achieve your personal and professional goals.

Framing Research Questions

By now, you should have a general idea of what topic you would like to research. The next step will be to formulate a research question about your topic. Below are two sample topics. You will begin the process of conducting an historical event analysis by considering research questions for the sample topics below.

As you work on this exercise, keep in mind the aspects of a successful research question:

- It leads to more questions.
- It requires further analysis of text.
- It provokes further discussion.
- It moves you outside of your own frame of reference in order to understand issues on a larger scale.
- It focuses on the audience and the message (which you will learn more about later in this course).

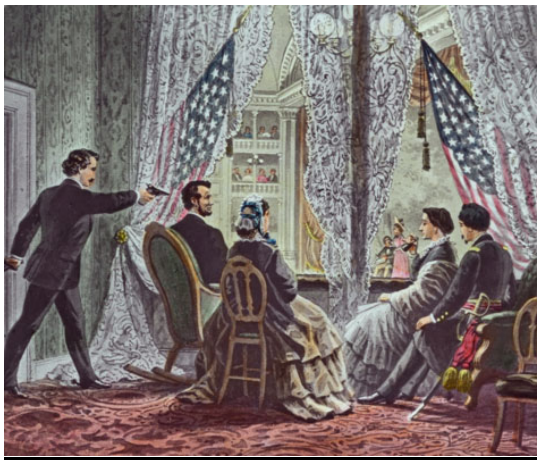
Read the summary of each sample topic carefully and consider what you would like to learn more about if you were going to write a paper on that topic.

Sample Topic #1: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

On April 14, 1865, five days after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox effectively ended the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was fatally shot as he and his wife were watching a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC.

Lincoln's assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and Confederate sympathizer. Booth headed a conspiracy that aimed to decapitate the Union government; Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward, the next two figures in the line of Presidential succession, were also marked for death that night, but both survived.

Lincoln's death had profound implications for post-Civil War America. In elevating to the Presidency Andrew Johnson, a poorly educated Southern populist Democrat who clashed repeatedly with Congressional Republicans over the course of Reconstruction, it set the stage for another century of political and legal conflicts over the civil rights of African Americans.



Depiction of John Wilkes Booth leaning forward to shoot President Abraham Lincoln as he watches Our American Cousin at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. (Click icon for citation)

Sample Topic #2: The Passage of Title IX

On June 23, 1972, President Richard M. Nixon signed into law a bill called the Education Amendments of 1972. One little-noticed section of that bill—called, in accordance with standard legislative terminology, Title IX (Nine)—addressed the issue of gender discrimination in higher education:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Although hardly anyone foresaw it at the time, those 37 words would trigger a revolution in women's athletics. The principal intent of Title IX's sponsors was to prohibit sex discrimination in programs and activities at any college or university that received federal funds, but the law's long-term effect has been to foster the explosive growth of women's sports.

Senator Birch Bayh exercises with Title IX athletes at Purdue University. (Click icon for citation)

Back in 1972, only about 300,000 girls played high-school and college sports; in 2010, more than three million did. The clear reason: Title IX and the dramatic expansion of college-level athletic opportunities that it brought about.

The law has created its share of controversy. Critics claim that, by requiring a proportional increase in the number of women's sports programs, the law has forced some schools to compensate by eliminating non-revenue producing men's programs, such as wrestling and swimming. Others argue that, as women's sports have "gone big time," more coaching positions have gone to men rather than to women.

What cannot be argued is that Title IX radically changed the nature of women's athletics in America.

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 1-4: The Irish Immigrant Experience

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Irish Americans make up the third largest "ancestry group" in the United States. As of 2014, roughly 33.1 million Americans claimed Irish ancestry—almost eight times the current population of the Republic of Ireland. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014)

This learning block uses the Irish immigrant experience as a way to develop historical thinking skills and further refine your approach to framing a research question.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Analyze how historical events change over time
- Develop narrower and more specific research questions
- Start the process of asking your research question for your historical essay

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Coming to America: The Irish

Most of the Irish who journeyed to America during the colonial era were Protestants from Ulster, the province (now known as Northern Ireland) that has remained a part of the United Kingdom. These *Scots-Irish* immigrants differed in many respects from immigrants from the other Irish provinces, who were mainly Catholic.

Scots-Irish immigrants in the 18th century were much like other British colonists: they were not well-to-do, but most were skilled and fairly well-educated, and of course, they were Protestant. For that reason, they had little difficulty assimilating into American society.

(Click icon for citation) ©

Philadelphia was the major port of entry for the Scots-Irish, but many eventually settled in the western territories as frontiersmen. (McCaffrey, 2004) President Andrew Jackson was the child of Scots-Irish immigrants, and many later Presidents claimed Scots-Irish ancestry.

Starting around 1820, however, the nature of Irish immigration to America changed dramatically, as unprecedented numbers of Catholics from rural Ireland began to make their way across the Atlantic. This video tells their story:

Video Transcript: Irish Immigration

While some Irish Catholics immigrated to America in the colonial era, the 19th century brought them in unprecedented numbers. From 1820, the beginning of a huge migration of Irish Catholics fleeing poverty and religious persecution, through 1860, more than a third of all immigrants to the US came from Ireland.

The wave or Irish Catholics reached its peak when a catastrophic failure of the potato crop beginning in 1845 precipitated years of famine that the Irish called the Great Hunger. During the decade of the 1840s, almost half of all immigrants to America were Irish. All told, an estimated total of 4.5 million Irish, the great majority of them Catholics, arrived in America between 1820 and 1930.

Unlike the early Scots Irish settlers, many of whom were skilled workers and fairly well-educated, most Irish Catholic immigrants were desperately poor and had little formal education. Coming from the most part from rural areas, they were unprepared for urban life and, at least initially, had few skills suitable for America's emerging industrial economy.

All of these factors marked the Irish immigrants as different from native-born Americans and subjected them to prejudice and discrimination. Much of the prejudice directed against the Irish was rooted in economic and social tensions. Like other immigrant groups before and since, the Irish competed with native-born Americans for jobs. Their poverty and lack of skill made them willing to work for low pay, which in turn drove down wages for all workers at the lower end of the economic spectrum.

A large measure of anti-Irish feeling was also based in religious prejudice. Since early colonial days, American society had featured a strong anti-Catholic streak. Most of the British colonies had been founded by dissenting Protestants of various denominations. And most of them enacted laws limiting the religious freedom and civil rights of Catholics. George Washington, as commanding general during the revolution, and later as president, strongly promoted religious tolerance for all denominations.

But anti-Catholic attitudes persisted and they came to the fore in the 1830s and 1840s, as large numbers of Irish and German Catholics entered the country. Anti-Catholicism plus nativist sentiment proved to be a volatile mixture. Protestant mobs burned St. Mary's church in New York in 1831 and the Ursuline Convent outside Boston in 1834 and the Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1844 left almost 20 people, both Protestants and Catholics, dead. And prominent Protestant clergymen, such as Lyman Beecher and Horace Bushnell, attacked the Catholic church as anti-American.

In the mid-1840s anti-immigrant groups began to organize at the local level under a variety of different names, including the Native American Party, the American Republican Party, and the Order of the Star Spangled Banner. Nativist supported candidates won city elections in New York and Philadelphia in 1844. Similar political groups soon formed in other states. Local party membership was to be kept secret and party members were told to say, "I know nothing" when asked about the party's activities. As a result, members came to be known as Know-Nothings. Know-Nothing candidates were victorious in several northeastern cities, including Boston and Philadelphia in early 1854. In the fall, Know-Nothings won control of the Governor's office and state legislature in Massachusetts. And in 1855, they elected a Know-Nothing mayor in Chicago. The movement organized itself as a national political party named the American Party in 1855. In 1856 it chose former president Millard Fillmore as its presidential nominee. By then, however, the Know-Nothing movement was already losing steam. The American Party soon fractured over the issue of slavery and by 1860 it had ceased to be a political force.

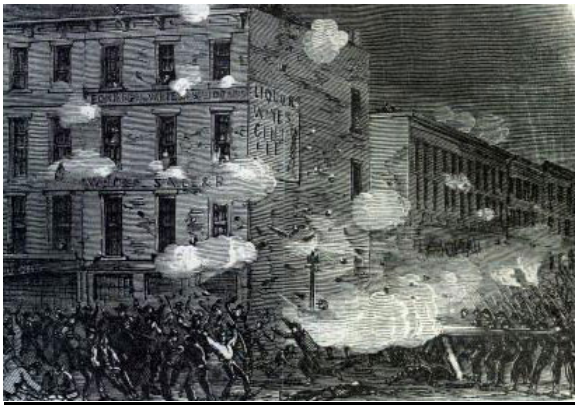
Still, anti-Catholic and nativist sentiment continued to exert a strong influence on American society. The Ku Klux Klan led a resurgence of anti-Catholic feeling in the 1920s, and it was not until 1960 that an Irish Catholic, John F. Kennedy, would win the presidency.

The Irish and the Civil War

Much of the anti-Catholic bias that confronted Irish-American immigrants focused on the figure of the Pope. To many nativist Americans, the idea that Catholic immigrants professed allegiance to a foreign-born religious leader raised serious doubts about whether they could ever be "truly" American. The advent of the War Between the States created an opportunity for the Irish immigrant community to "prove" its Americanism—to demonstrate loyalty to its adopted country, and by so doing, put the lie to the assertions of Know-Nothings and other nativists, who saw the Irish as unfit to be called American.

Most Irish Catholics had settled in the industrial North, and many were quick to express their support for the Union cause. Barely a week after the attack on Fort Sumter that sparked the hostilities, thousands of Irish Americans gathered at a rally in New York's Union Square, cheering on Major Robert Anderson and other Union defenders of Sumter. Urged on by Catholic bishops such as New York's John Hughes and Boston's John Fitzpatrick, thousands of Irish enlisted in the Union Army. (Samito, 2011)

Many of these enlistees joined all-Irish "heritage units" led by Irish-American officers. The Army's "Irish Brigade" included New York's Famous "Fighting 69th" Regiment, which distinguished itself during the Seven Days Battles, and the Massachusetts Ninth Volunteers, which fought at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. The well-publicized heroics of these and other all-Irish units helped establish the "Americanism" of the Irish-American community and contributed significantly to the process of Irish assimilation. (Samito, 2011) Some Irish-American soldiers segued naturally into politics after the war; Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher, commander of the Irish Brigade, was later governor of the Montana Territory.



Depiction of the aftermath of the New York Draft Riots. (Click icon for citation) ©

But even as the Irish were fighting to preserve the Union, many balked at the goal of abolishing slavery. Since first arriving in America in great numbers, Irish immigrants had frequently found themselves competing economically with free African Americans. Tensions between the two communities, both struggling on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, had flared into violence on several occasions before the war, including the Cincinnati riots of 1829 and 1841. (Osofsky, 1975)

The New York Draft Riots

In 1863, economic tensions were exacerbated by the fear, common among Irish immigrants and other working-class whites, that President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would lead many freed African Americans to move to the North and compete with them for jobs. At the same time, resentment over the newly instituted military draft—from which African Americans were exempt, and which wealthy whites could avoid by paying a $300 fee—festered among the Irish working class.

The drawing of draft numbers was scheduled to take place in New York City in July. On July 13—less than two weeks after the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg—rioters attacked the building where the drawing was taking place. Police were unable to restore order, and what began as a protest against the draft quickly turned into a four-day race riot. Federal troops, coupled with the state militia, eventually quelled the mob, but the "Draft Riots" left an estimated 120 people dead and another 2,000 injured.

Even as the Civil War provided the Irish-American community with an avenue toward assimilation, the Draft Riots and their aftermath led to lingering tension and distrust between the Irish and African American communities. (Hauptman, 2003)

Political Mobilization

Even before the Civil War, Irish Catholics sought to protect their community and assert their strength by organizing politically. Most Irish identified with the Democratic Party, and their growing numbers allowed Democratic political machines to dominate many major cities, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco, in the late 1800s. Irish-American political bosses retained power in many cities through the Great Depression of the 1930s, and in some cases, well beyond that.

These local political machines provided many valuable social services at a time when state and local governments did not. They helped immigrants—originally mostly Irish, but as time passed, newcomers from many other lands as well—become citizens and find jobs, and they would often help out with money or food in times of need.

But many of the political machines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were notorious—and rightly so—as hotbeds of graft and corruption. In New York City, the Democratic machine led by Boss William M. Tweed embezzled between $40 million and $100 million in just five years, and similar (though smaller-scale) corruption flourished in many other cities.

The emergence of government-provided social services, beginning in the Great Depression, displaced the local machines and helped contribute to their eventual demise. Still, the big-city political machines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries unquestionably eased the burdens for millions of immigrants and helped them find their place in American society.

New York's "Boss" Tweed was depicted as a vulture in this cartoon by Thomas Nast. (Click icon for citation) ©

Assimilation

With the passage of time, the Irish have assimilated fully into American society and culture. While the Irish immigrants of the 19th century were poor and ill-educated, today's Irish Americans as a group rank well above the national averages for household income and educational attainment. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014)

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Exercise: Further Readings

As you begin research for your historical analysis essay, you will encounter secondary sources, such as scholarly journals and periodicals. The following passage is from a scholarly journal article that looks at possible job discrimination against the Irish in Major League Baseball during the 1880s. Read the passage and then answer the question following it, keeping in mind the historical concept of **change** over time.

The passage below is excerpted from "Anti-Irish Job Discrimination circa 1880: Evidence from Major League Baseball", pages 409 to 410 and 415 to 416. Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *This reading is required. You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials to access this article.*

The Famine Irish

From about 1846 to the early 1850s Ireland was beset by a series of disastrous failures of the potato crop, a staple for poor peasants in the rural western and southern counties. One outcome was an estimated 1.1 to 1.5 million deaths from starvation and related diseases, roughly 15 percent of the country's pre- famine population (Kenny 2000: 89). Another was a mass exodus, primarily to the United States. About 1.5 million Irish entered the United States from 1846 to 1855, by far the largest immigrant wave up to that time. This was 45.6 percent of total U.S. immigration in the 1840s and 35.2 percent in the 1850s (ibid.: 90). The wave subsided after the mid-1850s (Hatton and Williamson 1993: 596).

The famine immigrants tended to settle in large northeastern cities, often the ports where their transporting ships landed. In 1850, 37 percent of the U.S. Irish-born population lived in cities of 25,000 or more, compared to just under 9 percent of the general population (Kenny 2000: 105). In 1870, 44.5 percent of the Irish-born lived in the 50 largest cities (ibid.). They remained in these alien urban environments partly because they had no money to move inland and partly because their

experience back home as farm laborers and small-scale tenant farmers had not prepared them for success in American agriculture. Once settled, Irish immigrants quickly discovered that their rural, underdeveloped homeland had provided very little in the way of industrial experience or skill, forcing them to the bottom of the occupational hierarchy (Laurie et al. 1975: 240). The result was a concentration of the Irish in big-city tenement slums.

All these circumstances made the Irish quite conspicuous and worked against their rapid assimilation. William H. A. Williams (1996: 1) writes: "Irish Catholics were in many respects the first 'ethnic' group in America . . . the first immigrant group to arrive in extremely large numbers, to gain high visibility by clustering in cities . . . , and to appear sufficiently 'different' in religion and culture so that acceptance by native-born Americans was not automatic, and assimilation was, therefore, prolonged." Although most spoke English in addition to their native Irish (Gaelic), this was insufficient to overcome their various disadvantages.

The native-born U.S. population reacted in part by developing negative Irish stereotypes similar to those associated with bigotry toward African Americans. The long history of English domination of Ireland already had planted notions of Irish inferiority that English immigrants had brought with them in the two centuries before the famine exodus. In fact, the Irish generally were viewed as a separate "race," although the term would hardly be applied to Irish Americans today. The basic elements of the stereotype were innate low intelligence, unreliability, laziness, and (for males) a penchant for drunkenness and fighting. Newspaper and magazine cartoonists of the era often portrayed the Irish with simian features. They were regularly characterized as racially inferior to Americans of Anglo-Saxon origin, even in the pages of respectable intellectual periodicals (Kenny 2006: 366; Lee 2006: 25).

In contrast, the other main non-English immigrant group of the period, the Germans (Cohn 1995), assimilated much more easily. While language was a problem, they were more highly educated and skilled than the Irish. In 1860 German men were most highly concentrated in skilled crafts, in contrast to the Irish, who were disproportionately made up of unskilled laborers (Conley and Galenson 1998: 471). Also, German immigrants had been preceded by numerous fellow "countrymen" during the previous century who had paved the way by establishing themselves economically and socially in America. The stereotypical German was hardworking, disciplined, earnest, and frugal (Gerlach 2002: 39). While the famine Irish had been preceded by a steady stream of Scots-Irish, starting in the early 1700s these non-Gaelic Protestants from the north of Ireland were a distinct group (Chepesiuk 2000). They generally settled in inland rural areas (e.g., Appalachia and the southern Piedmont), and where the two groups coexisted, the Scots-Irish were often antagonistic toward the new immigrants.

The Irish ballplayers circa 1880, during our study period, were mainly the sons of the famine immigrants. While assimilation had clearly begun by this time, it was hardly complete. For example, Kerby A. Miller (1985: 492) notes: "Between 1870 and 1921 Irish-Americans emerged from the near ubiquitous poverty and crippling prejudice of the Famine decades. The process was slow, halting, and incomplete even by 1921." Negative stereotypes lingered after the turn of the twentieth century, and the popular press continued to portray the Irish with simian features at least into the 1890s.

Early Professional Baseball

The origin of major-league baseball is usually identified with the 1876 founding of the National League (NL), which has operated continuously to the present day. It joined with the American League in 1903 to form modern Major League Baseball (MLB). The NL's basic business model and operating format at its inception were essentially the same as those of modern professional baseball, as were most playing rules.

There were, however, some important differences circa 1880. First, league membership typically changed from year to year (see Eckard 2005). For example, by 1881 only Boston and Chicago remained of the original eight NL clubs. During 1876-83, 18 cities were represented. The NL had eight teams in each of these years except 1877 and 1878, when it had six.

A second difference was the entry of independent major leagues. In 1882 the American Association (AA) began play, recognized then and now as a second major league. The AA fielded six teams in its first year and eight in its second. It lasted for a decade before merging with the NL in 1892. In 1884 the Union Association (UA) claimed major status, although it lasted but a single season. It was highly unstable with several midseason failures. Including replacements, 13 cities were involved in its eight-team circuit. In response to this entry, the AA expanded to 12 teams for 1884 but with one failure and replacement also included 13 cities. Thus the total number of major-league teams more than doubled from 16 in 1883 to a still record 34 in 1884, with a concurrent significant dilution of player quality.

The season lasted from April to October, nearly as long as today, but fewer games were scheduled. During 1876-83 the number varied from only 60 (1877 and 1878) to 98 (1883), spread more or less evenly over the six-month season. Major-league clubs augmented their "championship" schedule with exhibition games against independent teams. An important difference in playing rules is that midgame player substitutions were allowed only in the case of injury. Thus there was no pinch-hitting, pinch-running, or late-game defensive substitution. Nor was there relief pitching as we know it today. A pitcher removed for poor performance had to trade positions with another player already in the game who could also pitch (called a "change" pitcher). But this seldom occurred; pitchers usually completed over 90 percent of their starts. Partly for this reason, circa 1880 pitchers were used much more intensively than today, with teams relying primarily on only one or two pitchers for the entire season. Also, pitchers often played in the field in games in which they did not pitch.

For all these reasons, rosters seldom had more than a dozen players at any one time, fewer than half the number on modern MLB teams. Clubs often took only 10 men on road trips plus a nonplaying agent of the owners responsible for general supervision and business matters. Player salaries circa 1880 varied roughly from $500 to $2,500, comparable to the wages of skilled craftsmen and many white-collar workers (see Voigt 1983: 56-57, 81). Contracts were typically for a single year, and contrary to myth, "revolving" or contract jumping among major-league teams was virtually nonexistent (Eckard 2001).

The first successful attempt by NL owners to limit competition for players was the partial reserve system introduced in 1880, applying to five players per team. Owners agreed among themselves not to bid for players reserved by other teams. But in 1880 and 1881 a few significant independent clubs still competed for top players (Eckard 2005: 127-28), undermining the resulting monopsony power. The nascent reserve system collapsed in 1882, when the entry of the AA caused a bidding war for players. In 1883 the AA and the NL agreed on a joint system, although it worked imperfectly before collapsing again with the 1884 entry of the UA.

If you're interested in reading more about the Irish immigrant experience on your own, you might also be interested in these *optional readings:*

- **Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and the Dilemmas of Romantic Nationalism**: An article on the frictions between Irish immigrants and African Americans and the reluctance of many Irish to support the abolition of slavery. You can read it at this link.
- **Ethnic Diversity and Democratic Stability: The Case of Irish Americans**: An analysis of the involvement of Irish immigrants in 19th-century Democratic machine politics. You can read it at this link.

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 2-1: The Québécois Immigrant Experience

(Click icon for citation)

Historical context helps students of history understand the importance of an event and the relationship of that event to other parts of history. Context can often be the most engaging part of studying history, because it tells a certain narrative. In order to gain a better understanding of one event, you have to know more about the time and place in which it occurred.

Before moving forward in this learning block, refresh your memory about the aspects of historical thinking that you were introduced to in Learning Block 1-2.

This learning block uses the experience and context of French-Canadian (or Québécois) immigrants in the United States to explore the importance of cultural context and the challenges of maintaining a cultural identity in spite of outside resistance.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Learn more about historical context through the case study of Québécois immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Practice studying a historical event through different historical lenses
- Match research questions with specific historical lenses

Coming to America: The Québécois

A Québécois family arriving from Montreal, 1913.
(Click icon for citation)

From the late 19th century until the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, an estimated one million French-speaking Canadians came to America in search of jobs, an event sometimes referred to as the Quebec diaspora. Also known as Québécois (or Quebeckers, in English), this population of French-speaking people was drawn to America by the promise of industrial jobs in New England. This group was initially slow to assimilate because of the language barrier and the fact that most of them were Catholic, in contrast to the predominantly Protestant populations of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

Québécois were able to enter the United States easily during this time period because the border was open. Before 1895, immigration officials did not even monitor the border between the United States and Canada, so numbers of Québécois immigrants during this period are only estimates. When the U.S. imposed immigration quotas in 1921, Canadians were exempt. It was not until the system changed almost half a century later that Canadians would be subject to immigration quotas; 1968 was the first year in which Canadians were required to get visas in order to permanently relocate to this country. (Kelly, 2013)

Historical Context

In 1870, the city of Lowell, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston, was the second largest textile manufacturing city in the United States. Three out of four working people in Lowell earned a living in the textile factories. At that time, six percent of the population of the city was Canadian. By 1900, that number jumped to 16 percent, because of the increased immigration of Québécois to the area. (Early, 1982)

Lowell is just one example of the rapid migration of Québécois from Quebec to the northeastern United States. This migration was spurred in part because of the overpopulation of rural areas in Quebec, high birthrates, and poverty in the rural farming areas of Quebec. All of these changes meant that participants in the older, rural economies and social structures did not have sufficient land to continue that way of life as urban development spread. A recession in Quebec in the early 1920s also meant Québécois needed to look elsewhere for work.

Lowell, MA, mills on the Merrimack River. (Click icon for citation) ©

Immigrant Experience

In 1870 and the years following, quality of life for Québécois in Lowell and the rest of New England was not desperate, but it was bleak. They came to the United States for jobs, which is what they found. They spoke French and initially found it hard to communicate. Despite their predominantly rural farming backgrounds, the Québécois went where jobs were plentiful but often undesirable. This usually meant they ended up in the industrial centers of New England.

Due to this influx of immigrants, Québécois replaced the Irish as the primary source of unskilled labor in the United States after the Civil War. (Early, 1977) The textile mills and shoe factories of the Northeast needed reliable, cheap labor in order to keep up with the manufacturing boom during this time period. Mill owners even traveled to Quebec to recruit more labor because it was in such high demand.

Very few immigrants in Lowell, MA and other cities at this time owned land, and most of them lived in overcrowded tenement houses. They had very little to eat, and they were not adequately clothed for the harsh winters, because of their extreme poverty. Québécois women and children over the age of 10 were overwhelmingly employed in working-class laborer positions, usually in the textile factories. (Richard, 2009) A typical working day in the factory was 12 hours long, leaving little time for food preparation or properly tending to children (Early, 1977).

Québécois immigrants distinguished themselves not only by the language they spoke but also by the religion they practiced. The Catholic Church was instrumental in helping Québécois adjust to life in New England. The establishment of a French Catholic parish in Lowell in 1868 meant that new immigrants had a familiar place to go when they reached their new home. (Early, 1977) The priests of these parishes operated as intermediaries between the rest of the town and the Québécois communities, often called "Little Canadas." They also formed their own charitable organizations to provide help for fellow immigrants who needed it, so they would not be forced to request government assistance.

Some towns in the Northeast had populations that were majority Québécois—because once families were settled in one place, other family members followed behind. Towns such as Woonsocket, Rhode Island and Biddeford, Maine were almost 60 percent Québécois by 1900. Crowded, dingy tenement housing was prevalent in the industrial factory towns where most Québécois settled, which meant that these communities were especially important to these settlers. Their homes no longer enjoyed the fresh open air of farmland that they enjoyed in Canada.

Backlash

Their Roman Catholic faith, the French language, and the formation of their own neighborhoods made Québécois and their descendants targets of the Ku Klux Klan in Protestant New England. By 1920, half of the population in the industrial center of Lewiston, Maine was Québécois, most of whom were Catholic. (Richard, 2009) The Ku Klux Klan's nativist ideas and religious prejudice—most were Protestant—led them to target the Québécois in the area.

Membership to the Klan in Maine skyrocketed as the Protestants in the state rallied to take back what they believed belonged to them. They attempted to assert their control over the communities they felt were being threatened. Leaders of the Klan in the state spoke out against any ethnic groups that brought religions other than Protestantism to the area. They warned that if Catholics became involved in politics in the area, the offices would be tainted by foreign influence.

In Dexter, Maine, in 1924, Protestants and Catholics grew increasingly intolerant of each other. One activist priest told members of his congregation to boycott any establishments run by Klan sympathizers, and in return, Protestants refused to support Catholic merchants. During this time, the Klan burned a cross on a hill in Dexter, Catholics heckled Protestants, and members of each side resorted to violence by throwing rocks at each other and brandishing weapons. Although the Franco-American community in the town attempted to thwart the efforts of Klan, Protestant candidates still swept the elections in town that year. (Richard, 2009)

Some people were resistant to the presence of these immigrants because they thought they were uninterested in assimilating into American culture. Public officials in places like Lowell argued that the availability of cheap immigrant labor was driving wages down. The KKK's hostility towards the Québécois is just one example of the persecution they faced because of their religion, language, and cultural differences.

Assimilation

Despite the initial cultural and language barriers the Québécois faced in the United States, over time their experience successfully became a piece of this country's history. They contributed to the U.S. economy at a time when cheap labor was necessary to power the transition to a new landscape of factories and manufacturing after the Industrial Revolution.

The Québécois were not only instrumental in the success of the manufacturing boom, but many of them also served in both World Wars for the United States. Many notable Americans are descendants of Québécois immigrants. Jack Kerouac, author of *On the Road*, was born to Québécois parents in Lowell, MA, for example.

Rene Gagnon, one of the men pictured raising the flag at Iwo Jima, was born to Québécois immigrant parents who worked at a shoe factory in Manchester, NH. (Kelly, 2013)

References

Early, F.H. (1977). Mobility potential and the quality of life in working-class Lowell, Massachusetts: The Québécois ca. 1870. *Labour/Le Travail, 2*, 214-228. Retrieved from: http://doi.org/10.2307/25139903

Early, F.H. (1982). The rise and fall of Felix Albert: Some reflections on the aspirations of habitant immigrants to Lowell, Massachusetts in the late nineteenth century. In R.B. Breton & P. Savard (Eds.), *The Quebec and Acadian diaspora in North America*. Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario. Retrieved from: http://www.ourroots.ca/page.aspx?id=3759200&qryID=95b27876-a070-4a25-93c4-39f668d97143

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Exercise: Further Readings

As you begin research for your historical analysis essay, you will encounter secondary sources, such as scholarly journals and periodicals. The following passage is excerpted from a scholarly journal article by historian Frances Early called "Mobility Potential and the Quality of Life in Working-Class Lowell, Massachusetts", pages 214 to 218. This article examines the quality of life of Québécois immigrants in Massachusetts during the late 19th century.

Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *This reading is required. You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials to access this article.*

As you read the passage, keep in mind the concept of historical **context**. You will need to choose a sentence or passage that illustrates this concept for your discussion board posting. Click on the highlighted section that serves as an example and explanation of what context the information can provide for readers who are unfamiliar with this time period.

Mobility Potential and the Quality of Life in Working-Class Lowell, Massachusetts

Lowell, at the close of the American Civil War in 1865, was a major industrial town and center for textile production. Only Fall River, Massachusetts, exceeded Lowell in the production of textiles in the United States in this period. Almost 40 percent of Lowell's workforce was engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries, mostly related to textile production. Although 65 percent of Lowell's populace of 41,000 was native-born in 1870, the majority of workers in the textile industry were drawn from the various, largely English-speaking immigrant groups resident in Lowell at this time: 22 percent of the total population was Irish, 4 percent was English, and 3 percent was from Scotland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and "other." In addition, in 1870, 6 percent of Lowell's citizenry was Canadian, in large measure Québécois.

Lowell attracted many working-class people in the immediate post-Civil War years. In its annual report for the year 1866 the Ministry-at-Large of Lowell, a non-denominational charity organization, noted with consternation that in the past two years over 10,000 persons, many of whom were "utterly destitute," had entered the city in search of work. Many of the persons arriving in Lowell were "wretchedly poor" working-class people from other New England cities who were attempting to "better their condition." The report continued with a statement that a significant portion of the newcomers were Québécois. They were described in a highly unflattering manner:

"They are nearly all Catholic, do not speak English, are in a low, sensual condition of life, and are less disposed than others to improve themselves. They are not so accessible to our influence. Not mingling freely with society, they do not catch the dominant spirit. The great hope is with the children, who, in our common schools, are readily acquiring our language and adopting our ideas and feelings, and will become teachers to their parents."

The Ministry-at-Large evidently accepted, albeit grudgingly, that the French-Canadian influx into Lowell was not a temporary phenomenon. In this, the report was correct. In 1865 only a handful, perhaps 100 Québécois, resided in Lowell. By 1868 the number was around 1200. A brief two years later, in 1870, the approximate number of Québécois living in Lowell was 2000, 5 percent of the Lowell population of 41,000. In the next three decades the French-Canadian population would increase to 15,000, accounting in 1900 for about 16 percent of the 95,000 residents of the city.

The French-Canadian presence in Lowell in the latter part of the nineteenth century was part of a larger pattern of migration. Between 1860 and 1900 approximately 600,000 Québécois migrated to New England. By 1900 one in every ten New Englanders or about 575,000 persons, was of French-Canadian stock. Roughly one in every four French Quebecers was living in New England in 1900.

Québécois abandoned their homeland for economic reasons: the rural system could no longer provide livelihoods for many farmers' sons and Quebec industry was undeveloped. Soil depleting farming methods combined with repeated subdivision of lands among the offspring of the large French-Canadian families had by mid-century destroyed the viability of the traditional Quebec agricultural system. Although Quebec land was available for colonization, this alternative was largely unsuccessful as most virgin farm land was located in remote areas of Quebec with inadequate transportation facilities. To a large extent, therefore, Québécoiss had little choice but to migrate. As noted in the report of the Seventh Census of Canada (1931), Québécois were forced to settle in New England in this period "not in quest of a higher standard of living but to avoid a lower."

The economic and demographic factors which pushed Québécois out of Quebec were complemented by similar factors which favored their settlement in New England. Southern New England was by 1865 experiencing rapid economic growth. Industrialization, well under way by the

1860s, created a stiff demand for workers in the textile and boot and shoe industries. Laborers were also needed in building construction and in canal and railroad work. The native and Irish-immigrant labor force present in New England in 1865 could not meet the labor demands of industry. In increasing numbers, therefore, Québécois responded to the lack of economic opportunity in Quebec by moving to industrial centers like Lowell in New England to procure work.

This sentence explains why people in Quebec needed to look elsewhere for work, because their rural way of life was threatened by farming methods and overuse of land.

If you are interested in reading more scholarly articles about the Québécois immigrant experience, they are linked below. These readings are optional, but they provide more context for the case study in this learning block.

- **The Family Networks and Geographic Mobility of Québécois Immigrants in Early-Twentieth-Century Lowell, Massachusetts**: A study of the movement of Québécois immigrants between 1900 and 1920 and an examination of the importance of kinship and family ties to migration patterns. You can read it at this link.
- **This Is Not a Catholic Nation**: An analysis of the role of the Ku Klux Klan in Maine during the early 20th century and its resistance to Franco-American Catholics in the state. You can read it at this link.

References

Early, F.H. (1977). Mobility potential and the quality of life in working-class Lowell, Massachusetts: The Québécois ca. 1870. *Labour/Le Travail, 2*, 214-228. Retrieved from: http://doi.org/10.2307/25139903

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 2-2: Primary and Secondary Sources

Historians use a variety of sources in their research. In order to begin your historical analysis, you will need to familiarize yourself with the types of sources available to you. As you do your research in the Shapiro Library, you will encounter many different types of sources, which can generally be grouped into two different categories: primary sources and secondary sources.

You should use scholarly sources in your historical analysis. Scholarly sources are books, periodicals, and reference materials that are written for the purpose of supporting and advancing scholarly research rather than general interest in a topic. Scholarly sources address a narrow topic in either a book-length or an article-length format.

As you gather and evaluate sources and encounter new information, be sure to keep an open mind. You will certainly have some initial opinions as you begin your analysis, but it is okay to change your position in light of new evidence and arguments you encounter while researching. In fact, failing to keep an open mind can have undesirable consequences. Too stubbornly committing yourself to a particular viewpoint too early in the writing process may cause you to ignore compelling counter-evidence or to use sources that are not credible or compelling.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

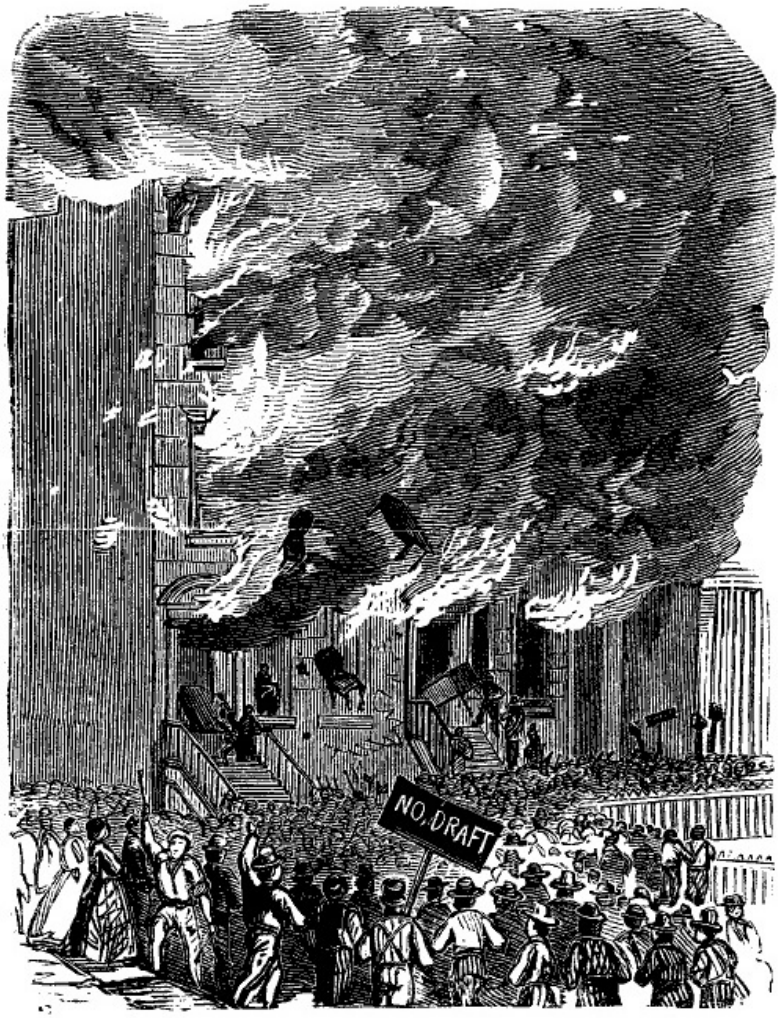
- Learn what primary sources and secondary sources are
- Distinguish between the two types of sources
- Understand the benefits of incorporating each type of source into your writing plan and historical event analysis
- Get recommendations for where to find these resources

Primary Sources

A primary source is a source directly related to a historical topic by time period or participation in the event. Primary sources include letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles, photographs, paintings, and oral histories, to name a few. Primary sources are created by someone who was a participant in, or witness to, the historical event you are studying. A primary source can take many different forms, but what is important is that *it is defined by its direct relation to the historical event being researched.*

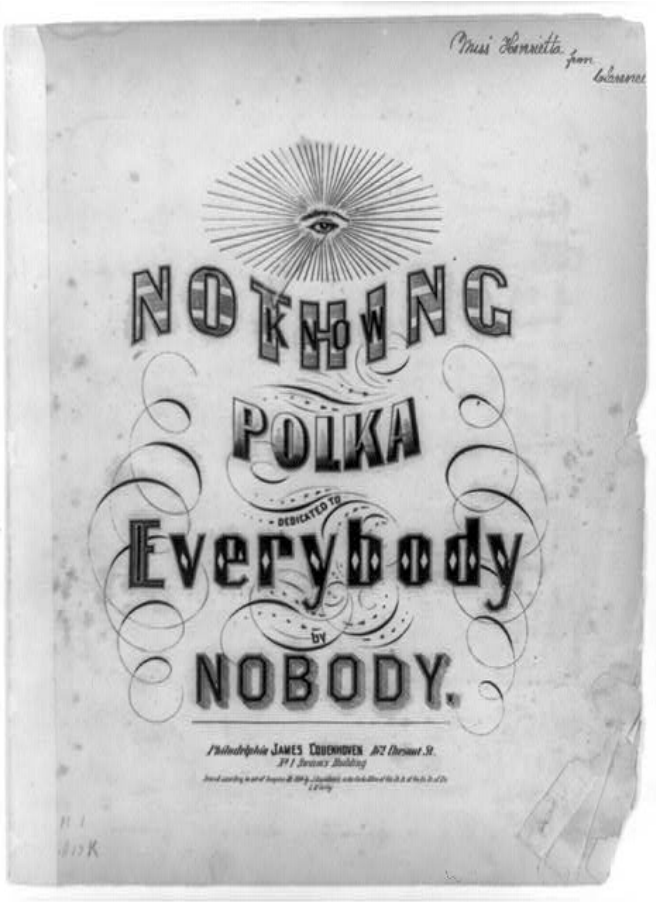
For example, let's say you were examining the New York Draft Riots of 1863 as an example of ethnic and racial tension in America in the 19th century. Primary sources might include pictures of participants, political cartoons depicting the event, newspaper articles about the riots, and firsthand accounts of what happened.

A depiction of the destruction of an orphanage for African-American children during the draft riots, which was published in *Harper's Weekly* in August of 1863. (Click icon for citation)



THE RIOT IN LEXINGTON AVENUE. Page 169.

A cartoon depicting the New York Draft Riots by Joel Tyler Headly. (Click icon for citation)



The cover of sheet music for the "Know Nothing Polka." (Click icon for citation)

A political cartoon depicting two white men about to beat a black man. The caption reads "HOW TO ESCAPE THE DRAFT." This image was published in *Harper's Weekly* in August of 1863. (Click icon for citation)

Importance of Primary Sources

Primary sources give you a glimpse into the past, so that you can see history with your own eyes. Firsthand accounts and documents can make history feel more real, and they give you an opportunity to draw your own conclusions about historical events. Primary sources also help develop your critical thinking skills as you analyze the sources, and they require other knowledge of the event, as primary sources are often incomplete.

Studying primary sources allows you to examine any potential biases surrounding an event and how the point of view may affect an eyewitness account. By looking at primary sources, you can draw conclusions about historical events for yourself, rather than relying on someone else's interpretation.

Finding Primary Sources

Shapiro Library has many suggestions for digital collections that include primary sources such as photographs, manuscripts, and documents. Additionally, there are many other resources available online, which are listed below.

- Primary Source Sets: This collection from the Library of Congress provides primary source sets for selected key topics in American History.
- 100 Milestone Documents: From the National Archives, this collection includes documents that chronicle American history from 1776 to 1965. Original and transcribed copies are both available.
- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog (PPOC): This database includes photographs, drawings, prints, and drawings that represent close to 95% of the holdings in the Library of Congress.
- Smithsonian Source: A collection of primary sources from the Smithsonian Institute that can be searched by keyword, topic, or type of source.

These resources will be valuable as you begin to research the historical topic for your writing plan and your essay. You will learn more about searching for and examining primary sources in **Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas**. For now, you need to know what a primary source is and start thinking about what primary sources might be helpful in your historical event analysis.

Secondary Sources

A secondary source summarizes, evaluates, or otherwise informs you about primary sources. Secondary sources include scholarly journal articles, books, and other periodicals. Most of the sources you will find in the Shapiro Library, such as journal articles and books written by historians, will be secondary sources.

Secondary sources give you an idea of what others have written about a topic and what arguments historians have made about certain issues. This context will be important to know when writing your historical analysis, so that you can compare and contrast your argument to existing material.

Types of Secondary Sources

Authors of secondary sources create their own interpretation or narrative of events based on primary source documents. Below are some examples of secondary sources that you might find when researching your historical event analysis.

Some examples of secondary sources you might find during your research in Shapiro Library:

- **Journal articles:** Scholarly journals are a great resource for shorter historical analyses. These essays will give you an idea of what arguments already exist surrounding your topic.
- **Popular periodicals:** Magazines and newspapers can provide context for the historical event you choose. For example, editorial pieces can reveal how people felt about certain events, either when they happened on in retrospect.
- **Monographs:** These books deal with narrow topics or an aspect of a topic, such as a specific time period in American history.

Reference books, such as *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and reference websites, such as Wikipedia, provide basic information about your topic for you to use as a cursory reference. These reference books and websites may give direction as to where to look for academic resources (people, places, events to research for example), but they are not in and of themselves a valid academic resource. They should not be used for critical research and should not be referenced in your paper. *You should use Shapiro Library as the starting point for all your research.*

Graphic: Types of Sources

To determine whether or not a source is a primary or secondary source, you need to assess its relationship to the historical event you are analyzing. If it was created by a participant directly involved in the event, then it is a primary source. If it was created by someone who was not directly involved, it is a secondary source. **It is possible for a primary source for one historical event to be a secondary source for another event.**

Primary Source VS Secondary Source

An original source from the time period when the historical event took place.

Body Text: Double click to edit

An evaluation or summary of a historical topic.

Created by someone who was a participant in or witness to the historical event.

Created by someone who is analyzing and commenting on the event in retrospect.

Primary Source Examples

- Letters
- Speeches
- Diary entries and memoirs
- Pieces of artwork
- Interviews and oral histories
- Newspaper articles from that time period
- Photographs of the event

Secondary Source Examples

- Scholarly journal articles
- Biographies
- Monographs
- Textbooks
- Sources written after the time period

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 2-3: Searching for Sources

Through the Shapiro Library, you have access to peer-reviewed journal articles and other academic periodicals. However, wading through them requires some savvy searching. While you may typically use an Internet search engine like Google to search for everyday topics, you should use SNHU's Shapiro Library when researching in this course and others. Knowing how to search the databases effectively will not only be useful as you start researching your historical event analysis but also in other courses you take at SNHU.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Learn about the different ways to search databases for sources
- Practice developing search terms for the sources that will be used in your historical event analysis

Effective Searching

With all of the resources at your disposal, it might be overwhelming to start searching for information about your chosen topic. Utilizing these search strategies will ensure that you are not wasting your time searching through resources that you cannot use in your analysis.

Keyword searching

This type of searching is the one that you are probably most familiar with, since it uses "natural language." When you enter a phrase into Google or a similar search engine, you are using natural language. Keywords are used to search through content to find certain themes and ideas.

When searching for your topic, try out different combinations of words and phrases. Don't worry if your initial search yields irrelevant or insufficient results. Try multiple keywords, different combinations, and synonyms.

You can find more helpful information about keyword searching through the Shapiro Library at this link.

Subject searching

Subject searching allows you to search by categories within a database or online catalog. Subject terms are predefined within a database. You can usually find the subjects of an article or periodical under the "info" tab.

This method of searching is most effective after you have found a useful resource on your topic and find which subject search terms are associated with that resource. Subject searching allows you to broadly search for sources on a topic. Since the subjects are assigned to each articles within a specific database, results will vary from one database to another.

You can find more helpful information about subject searching through the Shapiro Library at this link.

Boolean searching

Boolean searching uses Boolean operators to search with more precision. The most common Boolean operators are **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**. These words help search engines broaden or narrow search results.

AND: Tells the search engine that you want to find information about two or more search terms. The search engine will only bring back results that include both or all of your search terms.

OR: Tells the search engine that you want information about either of the search terms you entered. Using OR will broaden your search results because the search engine will return any results that have either (or any) of your search terms in them.

NOT: Tells the search engine that you want to find information about the search term but not the second one. This method will narrow your search results.

Using Boolean operators helps make connections between keywords when you are searching to yield more specific results. This is a good method to use in conjunction with keyword searching.

During this learning block, you will devise **relevant search terms** for your topic that you will use in your research. This will continue the process of drafting the writing plan for your historical event analysis essay, which you will submit at the end of **Theme: Approaches to History, Learning Block 2-4**.

Video Transcript: Keyword Searches

Selecting effective keywords will generate the best source results for your research paper.

Begin by stating your research topic or question. For example: The importance of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Next identify major concepts related to the topic or question. For example: Battle of Gettysburg, Civil War, Civil War Battles.

Next, identify keywords based on concepts. For example: Battle of Gettysburg, Civil War, Civil War Battles, Important Civil War Battles

Then assess the keywords. Are they too general? In this case, no. Are they related to the topic? In this case, yes.

If you need ideas for more specific topic-related keywords, check abstracts or the end of journal articles for more ideas.

Now, test your keywords in a search. Search - Battle of Gettysburg. What are the results?

Searching Battle of Gettysburg generated several good sources and the search engine suggested new keyword combinations.

If your search does not generate several sources, try to find least one good source to scan for new keywords.

Use Boolean operators to manage search results as needed.

Theme: Approaches to History | Learning Block 2-4: Drafting a Writing Plan

The first assessment for this course will consist of a one- to two-page writing plan for your essay analyzing a historical event. The writing plan must include:

1. A brief description of your topic—that is, the historical event you have chosen to analyze
2. The research question you will attempt to answer in your essay
3. Some sources you plan to utilize (not an exhaustive list)
4. A working thesis statement and message of your essay **(this will be covered in Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas)**
5. The audience for your essay and a description of how you plan to communicate your ideas to the chosen audience **(this will be covered in Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas)**

You will begin working on a draft of your writing plan in this learning block. You will submit this draft at the conclusion of this learning block. Drafting a writing plan will help you conceptualize how will approach your final essay, due at the end of **Theme: Thinking About History**.

Your final writing plan must be submitted at the end of **Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas, Learning Block 2-4.**

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Study a sample writing plan
- Discuss your choice of an essay topic
- Discuss your research question
- Begin working on your writing plan
- Submit the initial draft of your writing plan to your instructor

You should plan to spend at least **one to two hours** working on your writing plan before the conclusion of this learning block.

Preliminary Writing Plan

Writing Plan Progress Check 2

You have already assembled several major elements of the writing plan for your historical event analysis essay. In the first week of Theme: Approaches to History, you chose a topic and a research question; so far in the second week of Theme: Approaches to History, you have selected some search terms as well as secondary sources that you will consult as you research your essay.

Now it's time to put those pieces together to form your *preliminary writing plan*.

If you haven't already done so, consider a sentence or two that explains *why* the event you have chosen is historically significant. You might also think about going into more detail about your research question: what other questions are likely to arise as you continue to research this topic? What other aspects of this issue interest you?

You should also give some more information about your secondary sources. Why are these sources important? What sort of insight do they provide?

Take a look at a sample preliminary writing plan for a historical event analysis that focuses on the efforts of Congressman John F. Fitzgerald—later mayor of Boston and the grandfather of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy—to oppose a restrictive immigration law that would have forbidden any person who could not read or write from entering the United States.

Jane Doe

HIS 200: Applied History

Southern New Hampshire University

April 10, 2016

Preliminary Writing Plan

For my historical event analysis, I have chosen to focus on Congressman John F. Fitzgerald of Boston, the son of Irish immigrants, and his opposition to an 1897 immigration bill which would have barred illiterate foreigners from entering the United States.[1] According to contemporary observers, Fitzgerald's opposition helped convince President Cleveland to veto the bill in one of his final official acts as President.[2]

In examining Fitzgerald's opposition to the immigration reform bill, I will try to recreate the political calculations that drove Fitzgerald to champion the idea of open immigration. Specifically, I will try to answer the following research question: *How did John Fitzgerald's political ambitions, and the interests of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, affect his position on the 1897 immigration reform bill?*[3]

Why was this issue so important to Fitzgerald, who would go on to become mayor of Boston and a major figure in Massachusetts politics?[4] Was he simply trying to make a political name for himself? How much of a factor was Fitzgerald's personal distaste for Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Sr., the Republican sponsor of the immigration bill?

Search terms that I have used in my research so far include: FITZGERALD, John F.; LODGE, Henry Cabot; Emigration and immigration law; Massachusetts politics; 1897 immigration bill; and

LODGE, Henry Cabot and CLEVELAND, Grover AND Immigration.[5]

My analysis needs to take into account how this issue played out, both for Fitzgerald and for the nation, in the ensuing years. One valuable secondary source, then, is *"Honey Fitz" Three Steps to the White House: the Colorful Life & Times of John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald*, by John Henry Cutler (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs Merrill, 1962).[6] This book, the only full-length biography of Fitzgerald, traces Fitzgerald's political career and contains several revealing anecdotes about Fitzgerald's contentious relationship with Senator Lodge.[7]

Another extremely valuable secondary source is *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys: An American Saga*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987). This book, the definitive history of the Fitzgerald family, places Fitzgerald's career in broad historical context and relates his efforts to the development of the Irish-controlled Massachusetts Democratic Party.

[1] The student describes her topic choice.

[2] The student explains why this topic is historically significant.

[3] The student explains what research question she hopes to answer in her essay.

[4] The student raises other questions that are likely to come up during her research.

[5] The student lists search terms she has used in her research.

[6] The student identifies some of the secondary sources she plans to use in the essay.

[7] The student provides additional information about this secondary source.