

**Cantigny First Division Oral History Project Phase II**  
**Research Kits**  
**Created by Students at Ball State University, Department of History**  
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Pre-service teachers enrolled in a history/social science content teaching methods course during the Fall 2009 semester created research kits that implement a systematic approach to engage high school students in historical thinking and to increase their knowledge about the past. The method, designated the 1<sup>st</sup>-/2<sup>nd</sup>-/3<sup>rd</sup>-Order Method of Source Analysis, was designed by Frederick D. Drake and has been described in two articles by Drake and Drake Brown and in Drake and Nelson's book, *Engagement in Teaching History: Theory and Practices for Middle and Secondary Teachers*.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, this method is designed to enable teachers to model the crafting of a thesis, enlarge students' capacity to make history meaningful, engage students in the implementation of historians' habits of mind, require students to shape and reshape historical narratives linked to primary sources, and promote deliberative discussion among students.

Numerous publications have acknowledged the decline in Americans' civic ethic and have noted specifically that few Americans learn about participatory democracy through actual participation in civic life. In a world dominated by sound bites masquerading as news and the relative anonymity provided by blogs and chat rooms, Americans seldom are provided with the opportunity or the need to engage in deliberative discussion. In her 1999 book, *Democratic Education*, the theorist Amy Gutmann reminds us of the importance of deliberation as a key component in education for democracy. Through the use of discipline-specific habits of mind and cognitive skills, the discipline of history teaches students the art of deliberation as it educates them for democracy. While the structure inherent in oral history interviews promotes deliberation, the research kits designed to accompany these interviews will engage students in deliberative processes by emphasizing the "doing" of history and the establishment of the history classroom as a laboratory of human experiences.

By emphasizing historical content and ways of knowing specific to the discipline of history, the research kits provide students with the opportunity to empathize with men and women who were part of the Big Red One, examine causation, evidence, and accounts, and question their world, their nation, and themselves. Thoughtful, historical questioning lies at the heart of deliberation, and deliberation lies at the heart of education for democracy. We need citizens who can ask historical questions and recognize multiple ways of knowing by utilizing historical thinking and history's habits of mind. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Frederick D. Drake and Sarah Drake Brown, "A Systematic Approach to Improve Students' Historical Thinking," *The History Teacher* 36, no. 4 (August 2003): 465-489; Sarah Drake Brown and Frederick D. Drake, "History in Education for Citizenship in a Democracy," *International Journal of Social Education* 20, no. 2 (2005): 13-34; Frederick D. Drake and Lynn R. Nelson, *Engagement in Teaching History: Theory and Practices for Middle and Secondary Teachers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009), 138-155.

research kits designed in conjunction with the Cantigny First Division Oral History Project will hopefully contribute to the education of such citizens.

These research kits are united by the Vital Themes and Narratives “Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas, and Institutions” and “Conflict and Cooperation” as articulated by the National Council for History Education. The kits emphasize NCHE’s Habit of Mind “how things happen and how things change, how human intentions matter, but also how their consequences are shaped by the means of carrying them out, in a tangle of purpose and process.”

### **Research Kits**

The 1<sup>st</sup>-Order document is a primary source that is essential to the history teacher’s lessons. This core document must be located at the epicenter of the teacher’s instruction, and it must be a document that the teacher cannot live without in designing lessons about a specific topic, theme, or time period. For example, when teaching about the Cold War, a teacher might designate Churchill’s Iron Curtain address as a 1<sup>st</sup>-Order document. When teaching about ancient Greece, Pericles’ Funeral Oration might represent the most essential document for the teacher. First-Order documents must meet the criteria listed below. The criteria will, to varying extents, reflect the intellectual direction of the teacher assembling the sources and designing the research kit.

### **Three Key Criteria for Selecting the First-Order Document:**

- 1) Its historical value
- 2) Its potential contribution to students’ historical knowledge
- 3) Its potential to help students develop their historical thinking

### **Two Essential Qualities for the First-Order Document:**

- 1) Addresses the heart of the historical issue/period
- 2) Provides a vivid expression of a position

### **Questions to Consider When Selecting the First-Order Document:**

- Will the document be of interest to my students?
- Will the document enable students to draw on their prior knowledge?
- Does the document allow my students to relate the concept, idea, or event to knowledge with which they are familiar?
- Does the document allow my students to examine change over time?
- Is the document appropriate cognitively for my students?
- In what ways might the document deepen my students’ contextual understanding of the past?
- How will the document affect my students’ preconceived historical narrative?
- How will the document contribute to my students’ abilities to deliberate and make informed decisions?

- In what ways does the document require students to use one or more of history’s habits of mind?
- How does the document relate to one or more of history’s vital themes and narratives?
- How does the document relate to state and local standards and performance indicators that call for the development of historical thinking?

Historical inquiry, the questioning of sources, and conceptualizing relationships among sources lie at the heart of this method. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to develop open-ended questions to initiate discussion about their 1<sup>st</sup>-Order source. These questions should compel students to consider “how” and/or “why” events occurred, decisions were made, people responded, etc. “Should” and “would” questions must be avoided during the nascent stages of the deliberation. Such evaluative questions often compel students to rush to judgment or engage in presentism, and the aspects of reflective inquiry the Systematic Approach is designed to foster can be undermined.

After teachers have identified their 1<sup>st</sup>-Order document, they need to identify three to five 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order sources. At least one of these sources should be an image. The 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order sources must either support or challenge the perspective articulated by the 1<sup>st</sup>-Order document. These sources surround the 1<sup>st</sup>-Order document and will contribute to a discussion addressing the open-ended question that unites the sources and focuses students’ attention on the interpretive aspects of source analysis.

Finally, teachers identify potential 3<sup>rd</sup>-Order sources. Third-Order sources are those sources that *students* identify and bring to the discussion. Like 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order sources, the students’ 3<sup>rd</sup>-Order sources must relate to the 1<sup>st</sup>-Order document. Since students have identified their 3<sup>rd</sup>-Order sources based on their understanding of the relationship among the previous sources analyzed, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-Order source, in effect, is the students’ *essential* source and therefore represents *their* 1<sup>st</sup>-Order source. It is imperative to provide students with the opportunity to discuss the sources that their teacher has identified and to relate their own source to the context of this larger discussion. Such inclusion compels students to engage in the “doing” of history and enables them to recognize their role as historical beings and contributors to deliberation in a civil society.

*First-Order Document:* The most essential primary source for the teacher on a particular topic in history.

*Second-Order Source:* Three to five primary or secondary sources that challenge or corroborate the central idea in the first-order document. At least one source should challenge the first-order document. These documents, selected by the teacher, provide a nuanced understanding of the topic by offering multiple perspectives.

*Third-Order Source:* Additional primary or secondary sources that students find to challenge or corroborate the first-order document. Ultimately, students should select a third-order document to serve as their first-order document.

The research kits that were developed by pre-service teachers in the History Department at Ball State University as part of the Cantigny First Division Oral History Project incorporated the information obtained during the Project's oral history interviews, focused on the appropriate content linked to those interviews, included links (below) to National Standards in History and National Standards in Civics and Government, and reflected the intellectual direction of the pre-service teachers designing the research kit.

### **National Standards in History addressed through the research kits**

#### *Historical Thinking Standards:*

##### Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

- A. Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
- B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
- C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses.

##### Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

- A. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
- B. Consider multiple perspectives.
- C. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation, including the importance of the individual, the influence of ideas.
- D. Challenge arguments of historical inevitability.

##### Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

- A. Formulate historical questions.
- B. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources.
- C. Interrogate historical data.
- D. Identify the gaps in the available records, marshal contextual knowledge and perspectives of time and place.

##### Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

- A. Marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances.
- B. Evaluate alternative courses of action.
- C. Evaluate the implementation of a decision.

### National Standards in Civics and Government to Explore Through the Research Kits

#### IV. What is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?

- A. How is the world organized politically?
- B. How do the domestic politics and constitutional principles of the United States affect its relations with the world?
- C. How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

## References

Center for Civic Education. *National Standards for Civics and Government*. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1994.

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