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# Artifacts Module: An Introduction to the Role of Sources in Making Evidence-Based Claims About the Past Middle School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

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Project READI Curriculum Module  
Technical Report CM #16

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# PROJECT **READi**



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Please send us comments, questions, etc.: [info.projectreadi@gmail.com](mailto:info.projectreadi@gmail.com)

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Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd’s Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials such as those in this module were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

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## **Artifacts Module: Introduction to the Role of Sources in Making Evidence-Based Claims in History**

This module introduces students to the concept that we use multiple sources to learn about the past. Students are introduced to physical artifacts as one type of source and the idea that we use multiple sources to learn about the past. Students make observations and inferences about physical artifacts from the past and then read complementary print sources about one of the artifacts to draw a conclusion about the artifact. The process of making observations and inferences to draw conclusions lays the groundwork for making evidence-based claims about artifacts (where observations become evidence, inferences become reasoning, and conclusions become claims).

This introductory module is also designed to help students begin to develop a disposition of reading with an inquiry stance for several types of sources.

### **Day 1**

**Focus:** Introduction to artifacts as one important type of source

*[Teacher Comment: At the beginning of the lesson, I put up the “Sources Historians Use” poster and have one source listed, “artifacts.” I tell students, “Historians use different types of sources. We’re going to keep a list of different types of sources they use. Artifacts are one type. I’m deliberately not defining artifact for you. You will be analyzing artifacts today. While you’re doing so, think about what an artifact is so you can define it on your own at the end of class.”]* See Appendix A Scaffolds for Middle School Historical Inquiry Modules, pg. 14.

#### **Texts:**

- Various physical artifacts with which students are not necessarily familiar (i.e. fish skinner, egg beater, old fashioned iron) (D1.a)

#### **Materials:**

- Observation-Inference T chart (D1.b)

#### **Activities:**

- Students make observations and inferences about physical artifacts using Observation-Inference T Chart
- Students construct individual definition of artifact. Students work together to construct a group definition of artifact.

*[Teacher Comment: The reason I have students generate their own definition of artifact is because it gets students into an inquiry stance -to get them in the mode of “we figure things out.” After students have had time to investigate each of the artifacts, they usually have a pretty good idea of how to define what an artifact is.]*

#### **Classroom Products:**

- *Sources Historians Use* poster (with just “artifact” listed as a source)
- Classroom constructed definition of artifact

## Days 2-4

### Foci:

- Acclimate to closely reading across multiple sources to draw conclusions based on observations and inferences
- Bridge the language of observation/inference to claims and evidence (Appendix A, pg. 12) (Project READI History Learning Goals, Appendix B)

### Texts:

- Print sources that complement the artifacts (i.e. magazine advertisement about a fish skinner, page from an antique dealer's website about different kinds of egg beaters) (D2-4.a, D2-4.b, D2-4.e, D2-4.f, D2-4.g, D2-4.h, D2-4.i)

### Materials:

- Chart paper and markers

### Activities:

- Teacher models making observations and inferences and then drawing conclusions from two print source examples. Teacher thinks aloud about the connection between the print sources and the physical artifact. (D2-4.a, D2-4.b, D2-4.c)
- Students closely read and annotate (Appendix A, pg.3-6) two or more print sources to draw conclusions about an artifact they analyzed the previous day.

*[Teacher Comment: I don't use a graphic organizer for this activity, as I've noticed that when students are asked to do graphic organizers while they read, they often start looking for things to fill in the chart rather than making their own initial meaning of the text. Therefore, I usually have them read for multiple purposes, such as clarifying, asking questions, making connections, etc. I try to leave it deliberately open ended so as not to squash the inquiry. However, I do set one key purpose for reading to ensure one of the main goals is met – for students to draw one clear conclusion about the artifact based on evidence from more than one text. I usually tell students at the beginning of class that they will be expected to write a clear conclusion for the exit ticket at the end of the day. But I also encourage them to be metacognitive about their general sense-making through annotations and sharing their ideas in discussion.]*

- Students write conclusions about the artifact using more than one source (the two print sources and the physical artifact) (D2-4.d)
- Introduce the term “claim” as refined/worked-through conclusions. Read example student conclusions (D2-4. E) and determine criteria for what comprises a high quality claim.

*[Teacher Comment: I type up a few examples conclusions students wrote from the prior activity that illustrate strong and weak qualities of claims. Students read through these examples to get a concrete understanding of what comprises a high quality claim.*

*It's important for me to have a clear idea in my own mind of what criteria I want students to generate. That helps me look for student writing samples that will elicit those ideas from students. For example, I want “based on evidence” to be one criterion, so I purposely select an example that is not based on evidence so students will notice that and point it out. Another criterion I want students to come up with is that a claim should be “concise and clear,” so I pick an example that is rambling. Students will say “this person doesn't really have a point.” And I'll ask “if this isn't good then what criteria should we develop based on this?” And they'll say “a good claim should be clearly stated, have one clear point.”]*

- Closely read two more print sources related to one of the artifacts. Practice writing claims

about the artifact and peer editing the claims based on list of criteria students constructed. (D2-4.e, D2-4.f, D2-4.g, D2-4.h, D2-4.i)

Classroom Products:

- Criteria for What Comprises a High Quality Claim chart
- Student claims

Days 5-7

Focus: Bridge the language of observation/inference to claims and evidence

*[Teacher Comment: The reason these tasks take place over several days is because there is a gradual release of responsibility. First I model making a claim based on evidence from multiple sources. Then students practice making claims. Next, we examined several students' claims and generated criteria for what comprises a strong claim. Finally, students had to independently read two sources and write a claim based on evidence from those sources.]*

Texts:

- Student claims (examples students wrote from prior lesson that illustrate strong and weak qualities of claims)
- All sources (physical artifacts and complementary print sources) (D2-4.a, D2-4.b, D5-7.e, D5-7.f, D5-7.g, D5-7.h, D5-7.i)

Materials:

- Claim and Evidence Notetaker; Claim rubric (D5-7.a)

Activities:

- Add criteria for what comprises a clear claim to chart (evidence should emerge as one criterion for a clear claim)
- Independently write one clear claim supported by evidence from more than one source about chosen artifact using the Claim and Evidence Notetaker

Classroom Product:

- *What Comprises a Clear Claim Criteria* poster

D1.a

Artifact Examples



D1.b

Artifacts: Taking an Inquiry Stance

Observation	Inference
Artifact #1	
Artifact #2	

D2-4.a

Express Egg Beater	 A photograph of an Express Egg Beater, a mechanical device with a circular gear mechanism at the top and a wire mesh paddle at the bottom, set against a blue background.
Loll Beater	 A photograph of a Loll Beater, a mechanical device with a circular gear mechanism at the top and a long, thin handle with a circular end, set against a blue background.

The Express beater was patented in 1887 and utilized a wire “fly-swatter” dasher or paddle that makes a back-and-forth motion. The Loll Beater has an unusual dasher configuration and has revolving cast iron “fingers” that do the egg beating. Unusual egg beaters like these can sell for hundreds and sometimes \$1000 or more dollars when promoted properly.

SOURCE: retrieved from [www.antiqbuyer.com](http://www.antiqbuyer.com), the website of Larry and Carole Meeker, Internet Antique Dealers and Brokers

9-16-10

# LADD BALL BEARING BEATER

*It Whirls Whirls Whirls*  
**For Faster, Better Beating.**

Made with  
White and  
Colored  
Handles

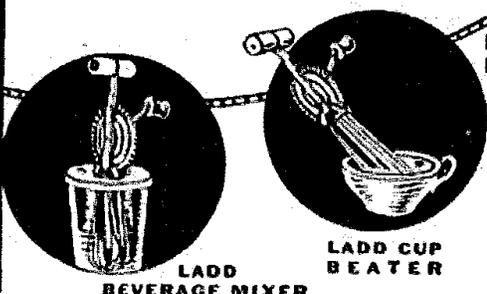
THE smooth, rushing whirl of a Ladd Ball Bearing Beater will delight you. No wobbly, jerky action to cause spills and annoying delays—but wonderful results in a hurry—with thorough blending of ingredients and flavors and highest degree of healthful aeration of foods and beverages.

This splendid beater has 8 blades that keep shape. Finely made ball bearings are hidden in the wheel. Finish is shining nickel with handles large, comfortable and colored to suit your fancy.

Order a Ladd Ball Bearing Beater To-day: Sold by Hardware, Houseware and Department Stores, or sent direct.

UNITED ROYALTIES CORPORATION  
1133 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

<b>Ladd Ball Bearing Egg Beaters</b>	
No. 3 . . . . .	\$1.00
(Home)	
No. 4 . . . . .	\$1.25
(Large Home)	
No. 5 . . . . .	\$1.00
(Cup Size)	
No. 5 . . . . .	\$1.60
Beverage Mixer	
At Dealers.	
By mail 10c extra	
Other Ladd Beaters	
at various prices.	

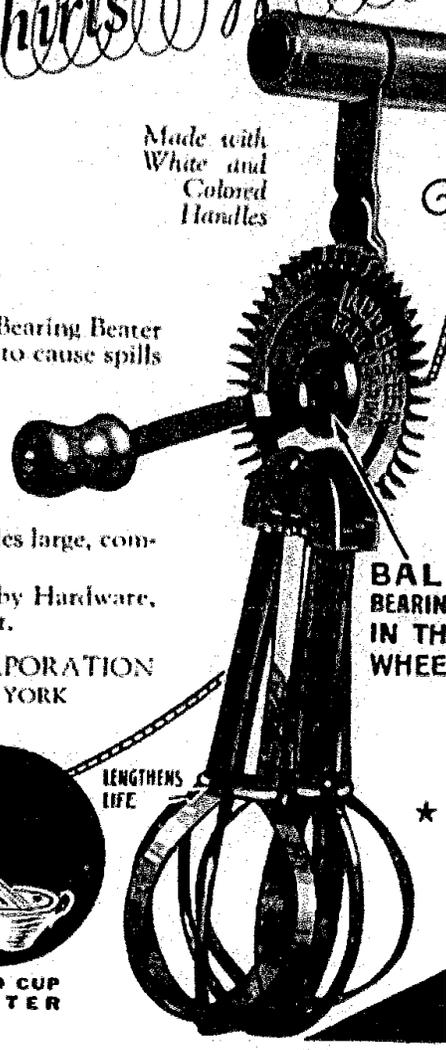


LADD BEVERAGE MIXER

LADD CUP BEATER

LENGTHENS LIFE

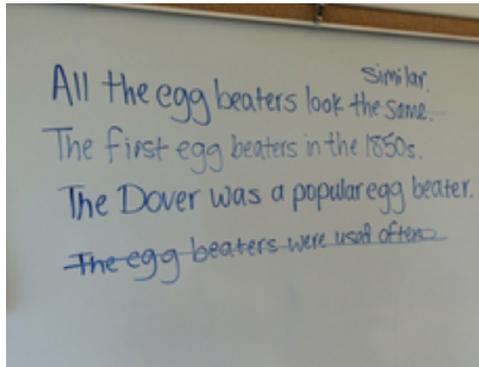
BAL BEARIN IN TH WHEEL



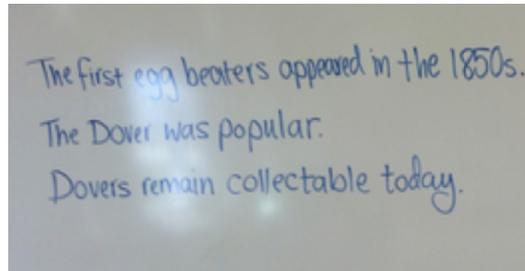
## D2-4.c

### Teacher Think-Aloud

Text a



Text b



## D2-4.d

### Example student conclusions

A: I can conclude that the Dover and the Ladd were very similar, but the Dover was more simple. I know this because the Dover had four blades and had a simple design, and because the Ladd had eight blades and looked to have more details in its design.

B: I can conclude that the two egg beaters were different made of different materials. I know this because the two beaters were made at different times, and because in the 1900s it looks like it was made only metal.

C: I can conclude that the Ladd is better. I know this because so many of the egg beaters were spoons. So the company Ladd made an egg beater that is better than spoons.

D: I can conclude that the Ladd Company wasn't the first company to come out with an egg beater. I know this because in 1900 Farwell came out with different kinds of egg beaters, and because Ladd said it was "faster" and "better," for beating.

E: I can conclude that the Ladd copied Farwell's Dover. I know this because the only thing different is they copied it, and because they made it better and they stole Farwell's great idea.

F: I can conclude that egg beaters are very helpful for cake mixes and cookie dough. I know this because I have done it before.

Additional examples of print sources to complement artifacts: newspaper article about old fashioned iron, rug beater photo, rug beater catalog page

9/6/13

St. Charles History - Then and Now

# ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS Howell Co. may close city plant

By Alan Anspaugh

What many have feared for years soon may happen: The Howell Co. in St. Charles may close.

Howell General Manager Arnold Hoenke told workers Monday the company "wants to discuss discontinuing operations in St. Charles."

Hoenke said "economic conditions" have caused the firm to decide "in the near future" whether to continue plant operations. If the company closes, about 150 office and factory workers will be left without jobs.

A strike by factory workers has continued since Oct. 16, when the firm's contract with the International Assn. of Machinists and Aerospace Workers expired. Negotiators have met at least twice, but both sides reportedly are "miles apart" on an agreement.

The 120-year-old company manufactures kitchen furniture and other items. Rumors of its demise began in 1975, when Interlake Inc. employed more than 300 workers at the plant.

The company was sold to William Burd, president of Burd Inc., who reportedly owns at least four plants in other states.

Burd was attending the Dallas Furniture Market this week and could not be reached for comment.

Hoenke declined to say what has caused the firm's reported financial trouble, but he said some contracts have been lost, "many primarily because of the strike."

"We were having a difficult time prior to the strike, and the strike aggravated the situation," he said.

Union representative George Eigenhauser downplayed the strike's role in the company's apparent closing.

"If they (Howell officials) want to continue in St. Charles, all they have to do is make a decent offer and I'll take it to the people for a vote," Eigenhauser said.

"We bailed them out the last two times (the firm settled contracts), but we won't take another standard increase," he said.

Eigenhauser said Howell officials could have avoided the present strike if they had acted before it began.

Management was notified when the people turned down the contract (in mid-October). They were told that the union was available to meet with them before the strike began," he said.

(Continued to page 13)

(Continued from page 1)

The first negotiating session occurred Oct. 22, and the last meeting was Dec. 13. Both proved fruitless.

Hoenke declined to say what contracts the firm lost recently, but a major deal with Montgomery Ward reportedly fell through during the first week of the strike.

Eigenhauser said workers will continue to picket the South First Street plant until it closes or a settlement is reached.

The more than 80 factory workers receive a union strike paycheck equal to about a third of their normal checks, but they are not eligible to collect unemployment compensation "because it is a labor dispute," he said.

Workers will be able to collect unemployment checks if the company folds.

Howell was founded in 1860 in Geneva and made the transition from cast-iron implements to metal furniture in 1923. The company pioneered tubular steel in 1929, and its innovations were recognized during the Chicago and New York World's Fairs during the

1930s.

Howell moved to St. Charles in 1937, needing room for expansion despite the Depression. Its current building was occupied by the Cable Piano Co., then the world's largest manufacturer of pianos and organs.

During World War II, its production of shell casings, mess trays, airplane wings and fuselages earned Howell the Navy "E" award.

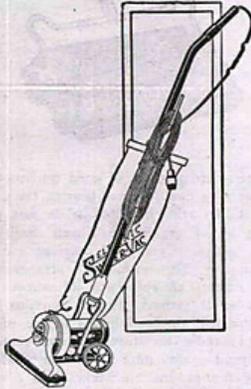
Area residents have long considered the company a "permanent fixture" on the Fox Valley's business horizon.

*St. Charles Chronicle  
16 January 1980  
Sec. 1 p. 13*



*The W Bingham Co*

**VACUUM CLEANERS**  
ELECTRIC



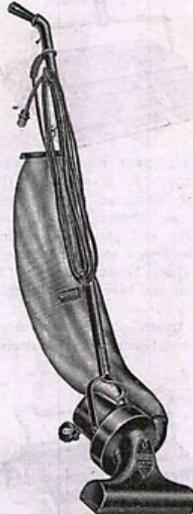
The only Motor Driven Brush Vacuum Cleaner that has real ease of operation without necessity of adjusting for different grades of rugs. Has worm drive on motor shaft which allows the brush to revolve at exactly the proper speed for perfect sweeping of the rug without injury. The suction works independent of the brush by simply shifting lever. Has air cooled motor.

**Sweeper Vac.**  
Direct or alternating current. 100 to 120 volt. 25 to 60 cycle.  
**Sweeper Vac.**—Height 7 in. Nozzle 12 in. Weight 11½ lbs. .... Each \$57.50  
One in a Case



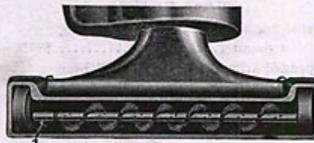
No. 1—Connector to join hose to cleaner.  
2—Corner tool for reaching crevices. Also used for blowing tool.  
3—Reinforced hose.  
4—Upholstery tool to clean mattresses, furniture, stairs, etc.  
5—Three feet tubing for extension.  
6—Moulding and wall brush.  
7—Curved adapter to join to No. 5 and make proper angle for reaching walls.  
**Sweeper Vac. Attachments**.... Per Set \$10.50  
One Set in a Carton

**VACUUM CLEANERS**  
ELECTRIC



Sturdily built, light in weight, easy to manipulate, economical to operate. Has friction driven brush, easily removed. Beautiful verd green finish.

**Universal**  
Direct or alternating current; 100 to 120 volt. 25 to 60 cycle.  
No. E-701—Height 6½ in., nozzle 12 in., weight 11 lbs. .... Each \$45.00  
One in a Case



Showing friction brush.



Easily connected to center of cleaner.  
No. 1—8 ft. web covered hose 1¼ in. diam.  
No. 2—30 in. extension tube.  
No. 3—7 in. drapery nozzle.  
No. 4—Hollow clothing brush.  
No. 5—Blower nozzle.  
No. 6—Connector tube.

**Universal Attachments**  
No. E-7011 ..... \$10.00  
One Set in a Carton

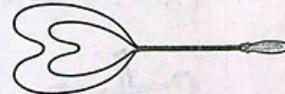
**CARPET BEATERS**



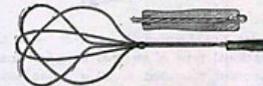
Made of heavy galvanized wire, with stamped steel handle, japanned. Wire is held in handle by two rivets and cannot come out.  
No. 4.....Per dozen \$2.60  
One Dozen in a Bundle



Made of No. 10 market spring wire. With nicely finished hardwood handles. The raised handle protects the knuckles, and double-braced shank gives durability.  
No. 6—Length 30 inches.....Per dozen \$2.40  
One Dozen in a Bundle

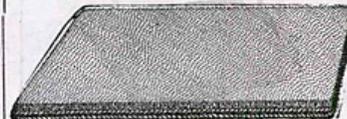


Made of No. 10 market spring wire. One wire passes completely through the handle with a ring turned on it.  
No. 5.....Per dozen \$2.00  
One Dozen in a Bundle



Made of the best tinned spring wire. Have wide spread heads and elastic untwisted shanks. Have twisted wire in and out of the handle, which greatly strengthens the wire directly at the handle.  
No. 10—Head 10x15 inches, length 35 in.  
Per dozen ..... \$4.50  
No. 11—Head 10x14 inches, length 32 in.  
Per dozen ..... 4.00  
One Dozen in a Bundle

**DOOR MATS**



Extra grade brush cocoa.

Climax			
Nos. ....	20	30	40
Size, inches .....	16 x 27	18 x 30	20 x 33
Per dozen .....	\$45.00	57.00	69.00

Medium grade brush cocoa

Glenfield Special			
Nos. ....	1	2	3
Size, inches .....	14 x 24	16 x 27	18 x 30
Per dozen .....	\$27.00	37.50	45.00

AT LAST!  
A SLICK,  
QUICK WAY TO  
**SKIN  
FISH**



—for cooking, freezing, filleting

Eliminate messy flying scales and reduce fish-cleaning time. How? By **skinning** fish with the Townsend Fish Skinner. Smooth or scaly, large or small, Townsend skins 'em all. Easy to use. Welcome in every kitchen. Smart gift for anyone who fishes. See your dealer. If he can't supply, write for **FREE FOLDER** or send order to Townsend Engineering Co., 331 E. 2nd, Des Moines, Ia.

REPLACEMENT OR REFUND OF MONEY  
★  
Guaranteed by  
Good Housekeeping  
IF NOT AS ADVERTISED THEREIN

a grand **GIFT**

- an advertisement from Townsend Engineering Co., originally published in *Good Housekeeping Magazine* in the July 1, 1949 edition.

The screenshot shows an Etsy product listing for a '1960's Townsend Fish Skinner'. The top navigation bar includes the Etsy logo, 'Register', 'Sign In', a search bar, and a 'Cart' icon with a '26' item count. The seller's name is 'DavesCoolStuff' with a 'Favorite Shop' badge. The product title is '1960's Townsend Fish Skinner' and the price is '\$18.50'. A green 'Add to Cart' button is visible. The 'Overview' section lists: 'Vintage item from the 1960s', 'Only ships to United States from Seattle, Washington', and 'This shop accepts Etsy Gift Cards'. A 'Like this item?' section with a 'Favorite' button is also present. The main image shows the product box with the text 'TOWNSEND FISH SKINNER' and 'QUICK, EASY WAY TO SKIN ANY FISH'.

from Etsy website 9/6/13

**Final assessment including claim notetaker and claim rubric**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**ARTIFACT UNIT FINAL ASSESSMENT**

1. Closely read both of the sources about the fish skinner. Annotate your thinking as you read.
2. Complete the template below to make a claim about the fish skinner that can be supported by evidence from both sources. Make sure your claim meets the criteria for a high quality claim.

**MY CLAIM** (Write one simple sentence that asserts a truth about the fish skinner.)

**EVIDENCE FROM DOCUMENT A**

(Explain the evidence from Document A that supports the claim you made.)

**EVIDENCE FROM DOCUMENT B**

(Explain the evidence from Document B that supports the claim you made.)

**CLAIM RUBRIC**

<b>1- Developing</b>	<b>2- Approaching Mastery</b>	<b>3- Mastery</b>
The student did not write a claim or the claim is unclear or unreasonable. The claim is not based on evidence from either source.	The student attempted to write a claim based on evidence, but it is difficult to understand and/or it is not reasonable. The claim is based on only one of the two sources.	The student wrote a claim that is clear, easy to understand, and reasonable. The claim is based on relevant evidence from both sources.

## SCAFFOLDS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORICAL INQUIRY MODULES

Historical inquiry means close reading of multiple sources, both primary and secondary, to construct evidence-based interpretations about the past. Close reading in history involves detailed, careful analysis of sources to make sense of the past through practices such as sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization. It involves comparing and contrasting key historical details within and across sources while considering how the context and the source information (i.e. author, date, audience) play a role in shaping the narrative. To support students in constructing their own evidence-based interpretations of the past, I design units that center on an addressing an overarching essential question through close reading and discussion of a carefully constructed text set. I work to establish routines of making our thinking visible through close reading and annotation routines. I build in supports to move students to independently draw conclusions about the topic of inquiry by to habitually interrogate sources and making claims based on reasoning through what textual evidence best supports their argument.

This document breaks down some of the steps of this process. The sections of this document are not necessarily meant to be read in order or to imply a sequential process of designing and implementing these units. Rather, it is meant to complement the module materials by providing a more thorough explanation of how I establish routines, how I incrementally support middle schoolers' historical thinking, what guides some of my decisions, etc.

### **Designing modules**

While planning throughout the year, I center units around essential questions that give students something thought-provoking/challenging that supports their historical thinking. I carefully choose a text set for each unit that provides students with much evidence related to the essential questions, so students will be able to have text-based discussions. Determining the essential question(s) is an iterative process of considering the interrelation between the historical content, available sources, and learning objectives. It is a constant back and forth process of “testing” out various versions of questions with multiple combinations of sources and determining the affordances of each source for addressing the question. I revise the question depending on the historical information available in the sources and the specific historical inquiry practices to which the sources lend themselves in relation to what the students know and are able to do at that time of year. I also play around with adding or removing sources to construct a text set in consideration of the following criteria:

- The text set as a whole should offer answers to the essential question. Whenever possible, there should be more than one answer to the essential question that could be given based on evidence from the text set, so students will have to grapple with which is best.
- Texts in the set should “talk to each other.” In other words, the texts, when read together, should provide opportunities for discussions. There should be places where the various sources agree, disagree, provide diverse opinions and perspectives, show evidence of various biases, etc.

- The text set should include various types of texts (primary, secondary, visual, print, multimedia, etc.)
- Texts should afford opportunities to move students toward deeper historical thinking.

When I'm thinking about how to sequence texts within a module, I like to sequence them in such a way that I can create a sense of inquiry that isn't teacher-directed, but is derived from students' experiences while reading the texts. For example, I may choose a text to be the first one that students read knowing that, with the right prompting from me, I can almost certainly get them to ask a specific question. When they do, I will record this question on our question chart, and instead of answering it, I will invite students to look for an answer to that question throughout the module as we keep looking at new sources. Then I'll sequence the reading experience so that students will later read a source that answers that exact question, so they can "find" the answer. I do this in the Egypt unit when I begin with a map that shows that all of the biggest cities in Ancient Egypt were within the annual flood plains. Without fail, students always ask, "Why would anyone build a city in a place where it floods every year?" Soon after, I have students read a text which explains the benefits of the annual flooding, and students easily recognize when they have found the answer to their own question.

When I'm planning a module, I plan a culminating task that will allow students to address the essential question. Knowing from the beginning that they will be required to produce some kind of evidence for their answer to the question gives students an incentive to track the question closely throughout the module. Often the culminating task is an essay, and I emphasize to students that this is usually how historians present their arguments about history, in writing. Sometimes I like to give students alternative ways to show their thinking, like creating causal maps that answer the essential question in graphic form.

### **Unpacking (READI) Learning Goals**

At the beginning of the year, I post the 6 READI History Learning goals prominently on the wall in student-friendly language. In the first few weeks of school, I ask students to read one at a time and unpack what meaning they can find in the goal statement. For some of the goals, students don't understand much at first because they don't yet know the specialized vocabulary (i.e. contextualization, corroboration, sourcing, frameworks, etc.) but they at least are aware of what parts they understand and what parts they don't. Gradually, as I introduce, teach, and model components of the learning goals, I point students back to the learning goal statements and they begin to internalize them. During the first few weeks, each time I give the objective for the lesson, I show students which learning goals align with the objective. Then I start showing students the objective, and ask them to talk to a partner and share out about which learning goals relate.

### **Unpacking Essential Questions**

At the beginning of a new unit, I introduce students to the essential questions for that unit and, instead of explaining it to them, I ask students to unpack the questions. What I mean by "unpack" is to thoroughly break down the meaning of each component of the question. I ask students to first think and annotate, then share with their partner and whole group, and I prompt them with questions like: What is the question asking? Can you say it in your own words? Are there any words I don't understand in the question? What kinds of evidence would I need to find

to support an answer to this question? The point of this activity is to help students internalize the questions so they will attend to them while they are reading.

### **Close Reading Annotation Cycle**

For each unit I regularly engage students in cycles of close reading and annotating of primary and secondary sources from the unit's text set to support their historical inquiry. This involves a succession of reading and annotating portions of a text individually, sharing thinking with partners about the text, discussing as a whole group, and then repeating the cycle. I set a variety of purposes for reading each text depending on the intended learning goal and what students need at the time (see "Reading for Multiple Purposes" section).

At the very beginning of the year, I usually encourage students to share all types of sense making during the close reading cycle - from identifying words they don't understand in the text and making personal connections to asking questions about the historical context - to get students comfortable sharing and to build a culture of collaborative inquiry. Over time I build in supports to move students to delving into texts from a historical inquiry stance through modeling and establishing routines of sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization. Throughout the year, as students learn to habitually engage in historical inquiry practices, I also continue to support general/literal sense-making through the close reading cycle. I purposefully interleave historical practices and general literacy skills to support students of varying reading levels and to promote the close reading of texts that are increasingly complex as the year progresses. Texts can increase in complexity in multiple ways, from containing more difficult language and syntax as well as representing more complex historical concepts.

The close reading cycle begins with individual, silent close reading of a short section of the text (a designated chunk of the text) with annotations, such as previewing the source information before reading a poem/hymn from ancient Egypt or reading the first paragraph of a textbook excerpt about the Egyptian social pyramid. I usually set multiple purposes for each section of reading, from addressing the essential question to asking our own questions about the historical context (see "Reading for Multiple Purposes" section). I try to limit the time for this individual reading to no more than two minutes, because reading independently for long periods of time can be frustrating and overwhelming for students who are not confident in their reading abilities or students who find it difficult to sustain mental focus. Also, it is useful to stop periodically and make collective sense of what we are reading before moving on. After silent independent close reading, I invite students to move into partner conversations. I encourage students to share with their partner their experience with the text, whether it be things they understood, things they found confusing, words they didn't know, connections they made to other texts or historical constructs, insights about the overarching essential question, questions they had, etc. Finally, I invite students to share-out with the whole group some of their experiences with the reading or some of the ideas that stood out as significant in their partner conversations. After this discussion, we choose another short section of the text and repeat the cycle.

Each part of the close reading cycle requires a lot of explicit teaching, modeling, and encouragement from me, especially early in the year. For the silent, independent reading phase, I watch for students who are getting frustrated and try to intervene early to keep them from forming negative associations with this step. If a student is doodling, or staring at the ceiling, or

seems to be getting agitated, I lean close and, in a whisper, remind the student that for this part of the cycle, it's okay if you don't understand every word, and it's alright if you just work on figuring out a word or two or even just studying the pictures to make meaning from them. I remind the student that he will be sharing with a partner soon, and all he has to do is tell "his experience with the text," whatever that may be. I also say to the student, "I wouldn't ever ask you to sit and read a really hard text all by yourself for an hour. I'm just asking you to do what you can on your own for one minute. After that, you know that you'll start to gain even more understanding by talking with your partner and even more understanding by talking with the whole group, so you are just getting started on your own." Once I've delivered this speech, I watch for even the tiniest bit of evidence that this student is trying to make sense of the text independently, and I reinforce this positively. I might point to a student's annotations and whisper, "This is really interesting thinking, and I hope you'll raise your hand and share it with the class." Or I may ask the student if I can put his annotations on the document camera as an example for the other students.

For the partner conversations, I spend time at the beginning of the year teaching, modeling, and reteaching/remodeling the behaviors and attitudes for successful partner conversations. This includes things like making sure both partners have a turn to speak, looking at your partner when he/she speaks, sharing your thinking naturally like a conversation instead of just reading annotations from your page. I observe students during partner conversations and notice behaviors that I want to highlight as exemplary (i.e. repeating back what a classmate said to make sure you understand him correctly) or behaviors I want students to avoid (i.e. dominating conversations, interrupting, belittling others' ideas). For the positive behaviors, I praise students publicly, but for the negative behaviors, I address them anonymously by saying something like, "I'm noticing that some of you are occasionally forgetting to look at your partner while he/she is speaking. How does it feel when you are sharing your thinking and your partner is looking away? Why do you think it's important that we look at the speaker while we are talking with a partner?" Sometimes I model what to do/what not to do so students learn a principle of respectful partner conversation from the example and the non-example. For example, I may act out active listening body language (slight lean toward speaker, sustained eye contact, slight nodding of the head at key points, etc.) and then act out the opposite (slouching or leaning away from speaker, gaze not focused on speaker, etc.) and ask students, "Which partner would you rather share your ideas with? Why? What is this partner communicating non-verbally?"

Regarding partner groupings, I try to change up my methods of grouping students throughout the year. Sometimes I strategically partner students heterogeneously (a more proficient reader with a less proficient reader), knowing that both students will benefit from the conversation (one will gain deeper insights from explaining, the other will gain knowledge from hearing explanations). Sometimes I pair students so that they can use their native language as well as English to explain their thinking if that is more comfortable for them. Sometimes I allow students to choose their own partners. I try to sometimes have students stand up and walk around the room to find a new person to speak to during the partner talk phase of the close reading cycle.

For the third phase of the close reading cycle, whole group discussion, I facilitate to help students surface key parts of their reading experience with this section of the text. I maintain focus by introducing specific purposes for reading, but also allow flexibility for the

conversations to reflect students' unique experiences. (See other sections of this document, such as "Facilitating Inquiry Discussions" and "Reading for Multiple Purposes" sections for more details.

### **Annotations**

Early in the year, I find it is important to invest students in the value of using annotations while closely reading historical texts. I use annotations as a way to make our historical thinking visible. I model historical thinking through my annotations on the document camera throughout the year, progressing the focus and complexity of my thinking over time (i.e. xx). I use students' annotations as formative assessment of their historical thinking and as a way to support collaborative inquiry (i.e. encouraging students to use their annotations to guide their partner and whole group conversations).

Often students come to my class with preconceived ideas about annotations. I usually ask in the first few days of school if students like annotations or find them helpful, and most of my students say they do not like them or don't find them helpful. When I ask them why, they often say that it feels tedious or it slows down the reading process. They don't like having to worry about what the teacher is looking for, or wonder how many annotations they need to prove that they have read and get 100% on the assignment.

I try to affirm students' feelings about annotations-as-a-teacher-task, and I tell them, "If I'm lying on the couch on a Saturday afternoon, lost in the pages of a Harry Potter novel, I don't get out my post-its and write down my personal connections, and I would hate it if someone forced me to do that." I then try to make a case for when annotations can be valuable. I say something like, "There are times, though, when I use annotations, not because someone tells me to, but because they support me as a reader. (And I'm a pretty good reader; I've made it through college and graduate school, which required a lot of reading.) I find it helpful to use annotations when I'm reading something that is really, really challenging for me. When I'm reading something very technical from a field that I'm not very familiar with, such as physics, or philosophy, I read the same paragraph over and over again, and I'm still not sure what it means. In those times, annotations help me to keep track of the sense I am making of the text, and also help me to keep notes in the places where I don't understand. Sometimes I go back and read my annotations later to remind myself what things in the text mean or how I was interpreting information in the text at that time. Another time when I use annotations is when I know that I'm going to have to talk about what I'm reading with other people. Like I've been in Book Clubs before, where I read a chapter and then meet with other people to talk about it. I use more annotations then, because I know that the notes I write down will help me to remember the things I want to bring up in the conversations with other people. In that case, my annotations are really not primarily about making sense of the text, but more about helping me to share my thoughts with the community." By sharing those real-life examples, I try to encourage students to disconnect from their previous experiences with annotations and use the strategy when they find it helpful to either unpack a challenging section of a text, or to prepare thoughts to share in class discussions.

Another way I work to invest students in the value of annotations is to highlight examples of interesting annotations early in the year. For example, I look for students who are showing their

sense making in their annotations, or demonstrating the use of strategies that I hope other students will use, or showing evidence of sourcing, corroboration, contextualization or other historical practices, and I ask them if I can put their paper on the document camera to show everyone how their annotations support them in the inquiry. Basically, I highlight any kind of thinking that I hope students will imitate. Sometimes I do this specifically just to boost the confidence of a struggling reader to send a message that I value the work they are doing to make sense of difficult text and that it is worth sharing with others. Other times I do this when I want to reinforce specific historical practices such as attending to the source information of a text. When I'm doing think-alouds, I am always strategic in planning to model annotations on the document camera, hoping that students will imitate what they see me do there. I have noticed changes in students' annotations based on what I have modeled. At the very beginning of the year I may intentionally focus my annotations more on making sense of the text, such as defining words or summarizing a difficult part. As the year progresses, I strategically model annotations that represent important historical ways of thinking, such as circling the date of the document and writing my thoughts about how the date might impact the author's interpretation of the event, or highlighting information in one text and noting how it corroborates with information in another text we read.

Later in the year, I may occasionally give students tasks in which the annotations are graded using an annotations rubric that emphasizes showing meaning making and historical thinking. For example, after teaching students about sourcing, I may give a kind of assessment in which I tell students that I will be giving them a grade for showing the thinking they are doing about sourcing the document through their annotations. I encourage students to show as much thinking as possible to demonstrate how they source a text. When I do this, I encourage students to use their own style, and never try to standardize the process (i.e. "Write a question mark next to words you don't understand.") because I want them to think of their own annotation style as very personal.

In general, though, I avoid mandating annotations or making it punitive if students don't annotate. Instead, I encourage the use of the strategy by praising and highlighting students' attempts to use it.

### **Reading for multiple purposes**

I like to give students lots of different "entry points" into the daily close reading sessions, so I offer various purposes for reading. This is a kind of built-in differentiation for everyone, because students who struggle with the reading may find it only possible to attend to one purpose (which may just be decoding words or phrases) while more proficient readers may find that they can simultaneously read for a variety of purposes. When I introduce students to a new text, I then share some possible purposes for which students may read. For example, on a given day I may say, "Today, as you are reading, be prepared to share with your partner or with our group anything at all about your experience with this text. You might notice something that helps you answer one of our essential questions, or you might find an answer to one of the questions on our questions chart. You might find yourself asking a new question, which would be great to share with the class, too, so we can add it to our list of questions." As I'm listing these purposes, I move around the room and point to the various charts and spaces on the board for notetaking for each of these purposes, so that students have a visual reminder of the purposes as they read. (I

try to keep these locations in the room as consistent as possible, so students connect that space with that purpose.) When I first started engaging students in close reading for multiple purposes, I was skeptical, thinking that they would be overwhelmed. But in fact, I've been astounded at how many purposes students can track simultaneously.

When we read for multiple purposes, I try to maintain a balance between allowing students to guide the discussion with their own authentic reading experiences, and also making sure that the discussion continues moving in a direction that achieves the day's objective. If discussions start focusing on tangents, I need to be prepared to gently redirect students by reminding them of our primary purposes for the day's lesson. For instance, if students ask a question that isn't necessarily "answerable" from information in the text we are reading (i.e. xx), I guide students in determining whether there is evidence in this text or other texts we've read so far to answer the question. If there isn't, I usually write the question on the History Questions Chart and advise students to look out for information to answer it in the texts we encounter moving forward. I have found this approach serves to honor students' questions and motivate them to read further, while at the same time it reinforces the historical practice of relying on textual evidence to construct claims rather than making conjectures based on lack of information).

Although I try to be flexible enough to let the reading experience feel "owned" by students. I am very intentional about the purposes I introduce for each lesson. I think long-term about the kind of thinking I want to see students doing while reading, and I plan to move them toward that. For example, at the beginning of the year I might focus more on reading strategies to get students comfortable with making their thinking visible, but at the end of the year we rarely mention general reading strategies and focus more on historical thinking. Also, the purposes for reading might be dictated by the affordances of a text. When I closely read the text in preparation for instruction, I think about what students might struggle with in a text or what opportunities for historical thinking it presents, and I design the purposes to elicit that thinking. For instance, when we read Mrs. O'Leary's testimony in the Chicago Fire unit, the text affords consideration of how the source information shapes our interpretation of the document. The text is a testimony from the primary suspect under oath who was an Irish woman during a time period of anti-Irish immigrant sentiment in the U.S. Thus, I make sure to focus on sourcing and contextualizing as primary purposes for closely reading that particular source (in addition to other relevant purposes, such as answering the essential question).

### **Whole Group Inquiry Discussions**

I try to make discussion a regular part of every day instead of a special event that happens infrequently. Discussions usually occur within the close reading annotation cycle, where students have regular opportunities to first read silently and independently for a short time and then discuss their historical sense-making process with a partner and then whole group (see "Close Reading Cycle" section).

Before instruction and throughout the year, I look for opportunities to celebrate and highlight student contributions to discussions that are exemplars of respectful behavior, risk-taking, initiative, out-of-the-box thinking, etc. (Any attitude or behavior that I want to see, I look for students to do this and make a big deal out of it when it happens!) Conversely, I stay on the

lookout for students who seem hesitant or anxious about participating in discussions to provide extra support and encouragement, and praise them liberally and publicly when they take risks!

While planning beginning of year lessons (introducing routines, procedures, etc.) I am mindful and intentional about also planning community building/bonding experiences that will give students opportunities to take small risks and develop a beginning level of trust in the learning community. I lead students in conversation about what builds trust and what breaks down trust in groups, and the ideas generated in that conversation become the key components of co-constructed classroom norms that we post in the classroom for the rest of the year to establish norms and expectations for speaking and listening in class. Just because we establish these norms early on, doesn't mean that students grasp them or consistently follow them. They need lots of opportunities to practice and evaluate their own progress toward maintaining these norms and expectations. In these discussions of norms, I look for opportunities to normalize struggle and make it okay to not know something or to share an idea in discussion that later turns out to be unfounded. I have to explicitly communicate to students that we are striving to have conversations that center on grappling, rather than clear-cut correct answers, and then model in my facilitation of discussion that I value that kind of communication.

To reinforce the historical practice of basing interpretations on evidence within and across sources, I use prompts in discussions that probe for evidence and reasoning (i.e. "what in the text makes you say that?"), but I also talk explicitly with students about the goal that they will eventually prompt each other for evidence and reasoning. I teach and model ways that students can probe for evidence and reasoning, and allow opportunities for them to do this. For example, if a student makes a statement without providing evidence, instead of saying, "How did you know that?" I would say, "Would anyone like to respond to Javier's statement?" to allow students to notice that he hasn't provided evidence and challenge him to do so.

I introduce routine sentence stems for how to respond to classmate (i.e. "I would like to respond to what \_\_\_ said about \_\_\_."). I teach and model each. I give students opportunities to practice and engage in conversation about the utility (and limits) of each. I also introduce students to supportive structures and routines in the classroom that will be consistent daily. For example, I let students know that whenever they discuss, I will keep a visual record of the points raised in discussion on a certain spot on the board. During whole group discussions, I find that keeping a visual record of discussion on the white board as students talk supports students in following the key points of the discussion. When I'm introducing the purposes for reading, I create designated spaces on the whiteboard for each purpose, and when students share-out in whole group, I try to capture the key ideas in phrases on the whiteboard. This supports students who may not hear their classmates, or it may help students gain deeper understanding by reading the words while also hearing them spoken aloud. It helps us all to track what has been said and what has not yet been said in a discussion. We often review what has been recorded to make collective conclusions about what ideas are more likely, what ideas have the most evidential support, etc. We may look over the arguments listed on the board and cross out claims that are not supported by evidence and reasoning and circle the claims that are still in the running to discuss further. For example, in the WWI unit, for each text we read, we determined what claim that text was making about why the U.S. entered WWI. I recorded students' ideas on the board as they emerged during discussion. We continually referred to the list, crossing off ideas that did not make sense or did

not come from the specific text we were examining at the time. We used the list to draw a collective conclusion about each text's causal claim and then to compare the claims across texts, discussing why the claims differed. Having a visual representation of students' ideas served multiple purposes, such as allowing students to scrutinize each other's ideas and to compare claims across sources.

Throughout unit and lesson planning, I plan explicitly not only for the content, but also for the student talk that will take place in that lesson/unit (What supports will be needed? What should be taught/modeled? Etc.). When planning specific lessons, I read the text carefully with the same purposes for which students will read it, and I think about what the text affords in terms of discussion. Based on this analysis, I post questions and sentence stems specific to that day's lesson to support students in more productive discussions. For example, in a lesson in which students are reading a primary source from the Lakota-U.S. Government conflict over the Black Hills, I remind students to read with the purpose of answering the essential question: What were the causes of the conflict? To support students in looking for and using textual evidence relevant to the overarching inquiry while they are reading and during small and whole group discussion, I post the following question on the board: According to this source, the cause of the conflict between the U.S. Government and the Lakota was \_\_\_\_\_. I continually remind students to use this sentence stem to keep students focused on the main purpose, to encourage them to use text evidence, to prompt students to draw conclusions if there are several ideas out on the table, etc. I also often use a simple claim/evidence t-chart under the question to encourage students to cite and keep track of evidence for their claim. I find that if I provide a space for the evidence that supports the claim, students are more likely to share their supporting evidence when they share a claim in discussion. Regarding questions and sentence stem supports during close reading, I have found that it is helpful whenever possible to keep these supports in a specific spot in the classroom where students know they can always look for support as needed. I teach/model these stems when I'm introducing the purposes for reading, and give students opportunities to practice using them.

I welcome opportunities to have discussions based on student inquiries so that it moves beyond the teacher asking questions. When new questions come up, I try to allow space and time for students to pursue their own interests in discussions. (i.e. see "Student Generated Questions Chart" section that explains how students track their progress toward answering student-generated questions in addition to the essential questions.)

I provide a set of group goals that the class will work on together. I teach and model each goal, giving students opportunities to practice and talk about what we are doing well, what we still need to work on. I ask students to interpret the goals at the beginning of the year and keep returning to their understanding of the goals throughout the year (and how they are relevant to the tasks you are doing). Later on, I make opportunities to build in self-assessment in addition to teacher formative assessment (i.e. through rubrics). I periodically audio record students in whole group discussion and track their progress toward the discussion goals using a discourse tracker. I report results to students in percentages (i.e. 42% of the time when students spoke in this discussion, they provided evidence without prompting from the teacher). From these results, I ask students to choose one of the goals as a group goal. For this, we choose one component of discussion that we think that we need to focus on because improving it would improve the

overall quality of our discussions. This component of our discussions then becomes the content of upcoming mini-lessons. In addition to a group goal, I also ask each student to choose an individual personal goal for how they will support the group toward meeting all goals. This is important because sometimes individual students need to change their individual discussion habits to improve the overall discussion (i.e. not interrupting, speaking more often, speaking less often). Students need to think both about how we work together as a group and how each individual impacts the outcomes of discussions. When we audio record discussions, I always encourage students to celebrate successes and to continue to talk about how we can improve. We revisit group and individual goals and revise as needed. These audio check-ins are not punitive or intimidating (not treated as a “gotcha”) and they are not entered in the gradebook in any way. The purpose is to give informal feedback on progress. I prefer to think about and talk about discussion as a means to the end (which is the exit ticket) and not the end in itself. As I observe student discussions, I keep watching for problems or concerning trends. As needed, I design mini-lessons to teach/model and practice attitudes and behaviors that I want to see in discussions. Sometimes I share my own thinking process as a teacher with students, especially related to my role as facilitator of discussions. I sometimes set my own personal goal as facilitator and share it with students. For example, last year I made a goal that I would rephrase students’ comments less often to encourage students to listen to one another more carefully and ask each other to repeat their statements or ask for clarification when necessary.

### **Rolling out sourcing**

One of the first things that I do, before I even start mentioning sourcing, is to make a habit of briefly sourcing documents when I do think-aloud models in class. Students start to notice that I have a practice of routinely noticing the author, date, and other important source information for a document before I launch into a close reading of the content. Often, students will start to imitate this practice before I even explicitly teach it, just because I am modeling it. Once I begin to teach sourcing explicitly, I can build on the many times students have seen me do this without realizing that it was sourcing. Usually, by the time I formally introduce sourcing to students, I tell them it is something they are already doing.

In one of the first lessons in which I have students engage in a sourcing task, I ask students to preview a source and to determine: Who wrote this? When was it written? What type of source is this? I’ll say “look over each page, look at the pictures and captions, notice things that jump out at you, and notice things you think might be important.” I’ll also say “we’re going to read this more closely later, so this is a first pass like skimming the source.” I try to make sure discussion is focused on the three questions, but I also accept other things students notice. We address these questions by going through the close reading cycle (individual, pair share, whole group discussion), focusing on textual evidence and reasoning. We then closely read the text keeping these questions in mind to see if our answers need to be revised based on new evidence and reasoning. I introduce my 6<sup>th</sup> graders to this activity with a text in the Egypt unit called Hymn to the Nile. This text is a rich and engaging source to use because the source information is not very straightforward for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine. Rather than that being frustrating, it actually gives students an opportunity to grapple with sourcing, making them more interested in figuring it out on their own (through my support). For example, the original author of the hymn is unknown, but there are names on the text to indicate the authors of the edited volume in which it is published. This confuses young students and they engage in debates about who the author is.

Also, there are two dates printed on the text, the date the book was published (1907) and one in the title of the Hymn that states “c 2100 BCE.” Students also recognize that the language of the text sounds “ancient” and reason it must have been written thousands of years before the book was published. Students challenge each other about which date makes more sense and eventually conclude that it is a primary source from BCE. Students even struggle to identify what type of source it is. Every year, for example, someone says, “It is a letter written by a person named ‘Hymn’ to a person named ‘Nile.’”

I guide students through discussion and close reading to eventually come to reasonable conclusions about this source. When we have determined our collective reasoning about the source, I ask, “How does knowing the author, the date, and the type of text help you to understand what you a reading?” I want students to internalize the idea that sourcing is not just a teacher-task that they do because they are told to do it, but that it helps them to gain a deeper understanding of what they are reading. I also want to reinforce that sourcing is not something we just do “before” reading a text but throughout the process of close reading a source.

As a routine part of previewing and closely reading each text after this introductory activity, I continue to have students answer the questions: Who wrote this? When was it written? What type of text is this? After engaging in this process a few times, I usually explicitly introduce the term “sourcing” and tell students they’ve already been doing it. I then model sourcing with a think aloud, reinforcing much of the same things we’ve been practicing, but really emphasizing that I’m not just identifying source information but how it will help me make sense of the source in relation to the historical context (such as noticing if the date important in relation to the event, noticing who the author is and why that’s important, etc.).

Later, I introduce the acronym SOAPSTone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone) as a support while sourcing to introduce students to some specific types of details they should notice to gain a deeper sense of the source. I try to not use SOAPSTone as a rigid protocol that students must follow step-by-step, because then I find it actually deters close reading and students get too focused on finding each component. I make it a point not to spell out each letter of SOAPSTone so that students don’t think it is necessary to identify every component for each source. When I teach and model this support, I always try to show in my annotations and my thoughts that I notice these things when I encounter them in my reading, and emphasize how they help me make sense of the text.

After students have had some experience with sourcing, I like to have them generate a definition of the term – first individually, then as a table group, and then we share out to compile a group definition that is posted in the room. I think this is much more powerful and meaningful than if I give them a teacher-written definition or ask them to memorize a definition from the dictionary.

Over time, I move students to a point where I can say, “source the document,” and they know what to look for. One way I measure this is by giving an assessment in which I tell students that they will be graded on their annotations only (something I normally don’t do!) and then I tell them to show me all of their thinking related to sourcing the document in their annotations. I use an annotations rubric to grade this, but I also analyze their annotations closely to see what kinds of things they are noticing and how they are using those elements to make sense of the text. This

works best if the text is one that can easily be misunderstood if the reader doesn't closely attend to the sourcing information.

The ultimate end goal, of course, would be that students automatically source a new document without any instruction from me because they know that this will inform their historical sense-making as they continue in close reading.

### **Rolling out corroboration**

Similar to sourcing, I do not immediately teach the term “corroboration” at the beginning of the year. Instead, I try to design text sets that include similar and different details between sources, and then look for moments early in the year when students naturally notice similarities and differences between texts. When students notice similar or different details in two texts, I try to probe reasoning with questions like, “When you notice that, what do you think?” or “How does it help you to notice when two texts tell similar or different details?”

One thing that I've found to be helpful in pushing students to naturally corroborate is to post dates on our class timeline. Especially when we are studying very ancient history, various sources will often cite different dates for events. For example, one source may say c. 3000 B.C. and another source may say 2800 B.C. By teaching students to notice dates and compare the dates in one source to dates they noticed in other sources, they will naturally notice and question when sources give discrepant information. Then I will probe reasoning by asking, “Why might it be that these two sources are telling us different dates? What does this help us to understand by noticing these different details?” It's not uncommon for students to say things like, “One of them must be lying,” so it is necessary to push them through discussion over time to arrive at the understanding that these differences occur because the sources are arriving at different conclusions based on what evidence they analyze and how they interpret it.

Later, after students have experienced corroboration naturally as it comes up in close reading experiences, I'll gauge when it is a good time to teach the term and make this the explicit focus of a few lessons. Usually I do this when the texts in the text set afford this because of the similarities and differences in accounts. Like I explained above about assessing sourcing, I sometimes ask students to independently read a new source and show in their annotations their thinking related to corroboration to see if students are noticing similar and different details while they are reading and what kind of thinking they do when they notice them.

After students have had some experience with corroboration, I have them generate a definition of the term – first individually, then as a table group, and then we share out to compile a group definition that is posted in the room. Similar to doing this with the term sourcing, I think this is much more powerful and meaningful than if I were to give them a teacher-written definition or ask them to memorize a definition from the dictionary.

### **Rolling out claims, evidence, reasoning**

At the beginning of the year, I introduce students to the six history learning goals that are posted in the classroom. When they unpack learning goal #3, I tie this to the Big Goal I have set for them for the end of the year, which is to prepare, present, and defend an original historical argument. I show them that the components of learning goal #3 are all things that they will need

to be able to do independently in order to meet the Big Goal at the end of the school year. After that, whenever I teach or model a component of learning goal #3, I connect to the learning goal poster and the Big Goal poster.

I have found it helpful to roll out argumentation little by little, one component at a time. First, we start by making claims. When students make claims in class discussions, I invite the group to distinguish between claims that are based on evidence and claims that are not. I also encourage them to distinguish between claims that are more or less reasonable given the evidence available. We generate a list of criteria for a strong claim by reading several student claims and evaluating them. The list often includes things like: somebody could argue against it, it is stated clearly, it is concisely worded, it is based on evidence. We refer to this list throughout the year whenever students are constructing written arguments. At the end of the first unit (the Artifacts unit), I give a culminating assessment that requires students to make a claim that meets our established criteria for a strong claim based on two pieces of evidence. At this point, I expect every student to be able to do this, and if they cannot, I work with them one-on-one to make sure they can before moving on.

Next, I begin to focus more explicitly on evidence. In discussions I start pushing more for students to state the evidence to support the claims they make. I push for students to state their evidence base without prompting from the teacher and for classmates to notice and prompt for evidence when it is missing from discussions. I introduce a claim-evidence t-chart for students to use in their writing when organizing ideas to answer the essential question. I model my thinking when using this chart and encourage students to share their thinking.

As students become comfortable with the routine of making claims based on evidence and identifying/stating the evidence that supports their claims, I begin to explicitly focus more and more on reasoning. I can do this by asking, “How does this evidence support your claim?” I also look for opportunities to focus on reasoning when students make claims that are unreasonable. I can invite the group to discuss, “Is that a reasonable claim?” and guide them to distinguish more reasonable claims from less reasonable claims. I look for opportunities that present themselves in the text set to have a more explicit focus on reasoning.

### **Process for selecting and analyzing Ss writing samples as a group**

One way I work to improve students’ historical writing is by choosing a few student writing samples to type and present to the group for evaluation using whatever rubric I use to grade it. When I choose these samples, I look for one that is an almost-perfect model of what I want to see (sometimes I write it myself if I can’t find a student example), and then I look for a few samples that exemplify problems that I notice in most or all of students’ writing. (When students read the problem samples, I want them to think, “That doesn’t sound right? What could I do instead?”) For example, if I want students to develop more authentic, natural language for writing arguments, I may choose a very well written argument and pair it with one that uses, “My claim is . . . My evidence is . . .” When students compare the two, they will most likely notice that they prefer the first and talk about why they prefer it. This can be used to generate criteria or even sometimes to create a template from the well written argument. We go through this process several times, focusing on different components/problems of their writing as they develop throughout the year.

### **Sources Historians Use chart**

At the beginning of the year, one of the anchor charts I post in the room is labeled, “Sources Historians Use.” Each time we use a different type of source (i.e. artifacts, newspapers, letters, maps, etc.) we add it to the list. This list is important in helping students to construct a sense of how we know what happened in the past by analyzing different types of sources. I keep this posted throughout the year and it is helpful to refer to during discussions. For example, if we are reading a textbook excerpt about the Great Chicago Fire, I might say, “This textbook was written in 2006. None of the people who wrote this were alive when the fire happened. How do they know what happened, and how did they come up with the claims they present in this text?” If students are struggling to answer a question like this, sometimes all I have to do is point to the “Sources Historians Use” poster, and they arrive at the idea that historians (or textbook authors) analyzed sources and made interpretations based on evidence from those sources to construct an account of what happened.

### **History Word Wall**

During each unit, I post a word wall for that unit. (i.e. “Egypt Word Wall”). When we encounter words in our reading that are significant for our inquiry, we add them to the word wall. I try to limit the words to the most significant, and the ones that students will most likely be presented with in other texts, so it doesn’t become a dumping ground for any word that someone doesn’t understand. For example, while we are reading about the environmental factors that influenced early settlers to live near the Nile River, students will encounter the words “fertilization” and “irrigation.” Some will struggle with the words, but others will be able to work them out and share their understanding through discussion. We add those words to the word wall because students will be encountering them again in later texts. But later, when reading another text, if a student struggles with a word like “mingles,” we’ll go through a similar process of figuring out the meaning, but I won’t add it to the word wall, because it isn’t essential to our inquiry, and we won’t likely see it again in a text.

In general, I like students to learn vocabulary by encountering new words in authentic texts and figuring them out through group discussion. I tend to not assign isolated word lists or have students copy definitions from dictionaries, and trust that they will not only learn important words, but appropriate them into their own vocabularies (which I see more and more as the unit progresses), when they learn them in the context of an authentic inquiry with a rich text.

### **Student Generated History Questions Chart**

At the beginning of each new module, I introduce a blank poster labeled, “Our Questions about \_\_\_\_\_” (i.e. “Our Questions about Ancient Egypt”). When we are closely reading sources in class, I encourage students to share any part of their reading experience, including questions that come to their minds as they read about the historical context. When students share questions, we add them to the chart, and I encourage the class to notice if we ever find answers to any of these questions. In addition to the overarching essential questions I introduce for each module, these questions often become an important part of our inquiry. For example, xx. Students become very invested in finding answers, not only to our essential questions, but also to the questions that they and their classmates generated while reading.

### **Mini-discussion/inquiry based on Student Questions**

Sometimes a student will ask an important question during during small or whole group discussion from closely reading a source. At times I will make room on the spot for jointly addressing that question during whole group discussion. I usually make a mini-activity out of a student's question by writing the question on the board and asking students to keep it in mind as they continue their reading and discussions. I like to do this because it places a high value on students' questions, and my students tend to be more invested in finding answers to questions that are developed from their own inquiries. I lean toward focusing on a student-generated question during discussion if I know that the text affords opportunities for students to answer that question in various ways through closer reading and interpreting, or if the question elicits some kind of historical thinking and I want to capitalize on the opportunity for students to engage in that thinking authentically. I might also choose to do this if I am getting a sense that the question represents a mental stumbling block for a lot of students. This is why it is important for me to have thoroughly read the text myself with the lesson's purpose in mind before teaching the lesson so that I can make decisions about how productive it would be to spend time on questions and ideas that spontaneously emerge during our talk. If I am unsure in the moment, I sometimes table the question and resurface it in a subsequent lesson after I've had time to determine the utility of spending an ample amount of class time addressing it.

I will share an example of this type of scaffold from a lesson on the primary source "Hymn to the Nile" from the Ancient Egypt module. When students were reading this text, one student struggled with the line, "When he arises earth rejoices and all men are glad," and wondered to whom the pronoun "he" referred. I asked students to respond to his question, and students raised several responses that were all based on evidence from the text, but some were more reasonable than others. I made a decision, in the moment, to add the question, "Who is "he"?" to the board and to list the various student responses. I then invited students, as they continued reading, to continue thinking about which answer made the most sense in the context of "Hymn to the Nile."

### **Source files**

I encourage students to keep all of their texts/sources with their original annotations in a source file that we keep in the classroom. When students are reading new sources, they have their source file nearby on their desks. This is strategic because it encourages students to corroborate details they see in sources. When a student reads something and thinks, "I remember reading something similar to this in another source," I want to encourage him/her to check the other source and corroborate details. When I notice students doing this, I praise them for good thinking to encourage others to imitate it. The source files are useful at the end of the unit when we are completing a culminating task, because I want students to base their final essays on all of the sources.

### **Exit tickets**

I regularly use exit tickets to measure student mastery of the daily objective. In my planning, I think, "What skill/strategy/content do I want students to learn in this lesson?" Then I design a question or task that will measure whether or not students have learned what I want them to learn. This will be the exit ticket for the lesson. After I design the exit ticket, I move on to think, "What do I need to teach/model in order for students to answer this question or complete this

task? What kind of learning experience will students need to be able to do this?" Answering this question informs my planning for the mini-lesson, think-aloud, and activities in the lesson.

I find it helpful to preview the exit ticket at the beginning of the lesson so students know exactly how their learning will be measured. At the beginning of the lesson, when I'm introducing the objective and sharing the purposes for reading, I post the exit ticket question/prompt, and say, "While we are reading and discussing today, keep in the back of your mind that this is what you need to do at the end of class to show what you've learned." During discussions, if students address the exit ticket question, we make notes on the board. (I usually make a point of erasing those notes related to the exit ticket right before students write, but sometimes I leave it, if I think they will need the support.)

Sometimes I like to ask the same question at the beginning and end of a lesson to see how student thinking changes as a result of the learning experience. For example, in the first lesson in the artifact unit, I ask students to do a quick write at the beginning of class to answer the question, "What is an artifact?" At the end of the lesson, I ask them to write again about the same question, and add the prompt, "Reread what you wrote at the beginning of class. Has your thinking changed at all? If so, explain how your thinking has changed."

Sometimes I use group discussion as an exit ticket assessment in place of an individual written exit ticket. When I do this, I emphasize that students must work together to generate answers to the question through discussion. I give students a group grade based on the audio recording of the discussion (percentage of the time they are meeting goals) as well as the record of the points made in discussion on board. The grade is partly determined by their participation in discussion but also partly the content of their collaborative answers to the question.

### **READI History Learning Goals for Instruction\***

The READI team developed six learning goals that reflect an integrated instructional approach to the Core Construct knowledge, skills, and practices that had guided the development of the initial units. The learning goals were intended to guide the instructional design as well as the assessment of progress toward the goals.-

The six READI learning goals in history are the following.

1. *Students engage in close reading of historical resources, including primary, secondary, and tertiary documents, to construct domain knowledge. Close reading encompasses meta-comprehension and self-regulation of the process.*

Reading closely is just as important and relevant to the study of history as it is to the English Language Arts. Through close reading in history, students learn what the text says – literal comprehension, as well as what the text is doing, and its larger meaning. These processes inform analysis and evaluation of the information, processes that are detailed in additional learning goals (Goals 2-6) discussed below. Close reading is in service of these other goals.

When prompted, historians have been found to be actively reflective about the processes they use to read history text, and they explicitly regulate how they read.<sup>7</sup> Thus, a close reading goal includes these attributes. We wanted students to engage in the process of close reading as historians do.

2. *Students synthesize and reason within and across historical resources using comparison, contrast, corroboration, contextualization, sourcing, and other historical inquiry processes.*

Historians have particular ways of interpreting what they read and study about the past. They consult many sources of information because they know that no single source tells the whole story. They compare one version of events with another, looking for consistencies and inconsistencies across different versions. They interpret a document based upon its place in history, about what was happening at the time and how the document fits into that milieu, the chronology of events and activities, and how it helps them make claims about aspects of history such as cause-effect and significance. Like historians, we wanted students to engage in these processes in order to identify, understand, and make claims about significance, cause/effect, and other insights into the past.

3. *Students construct claim-evidence relations, using historical evidence and explaining the relationship among pieces of evidence and between evidence and claims. Historical claims interpret the past. The interpretations are grounded in historical evidence (written documents, eyewitness testimonies and artifacts from the period of study) and informed by the work of historians on the subject. These claims, which form historical argument, may be expressed as descriptive, explanatory or narrative accounts.*

Historical arguments explain the relationships among pieces of evidence and the reasoning that connects evidence and claims. For example, a historian may describe and discuss the evidence itself, show how various pieces of evidence together build a cohesive picture or how a particular perspective made sense within the context of the times. We wanted students to engage in historical argumentation themselves by learning to analyze evidence, create claims, and explain how the evidence connects to the claim.

4. *Students use interpretive frameworks such as societal structures (e.g. political, economic, technological), systems (e.g. feudalism, colonialism, Jim Crow), patterns (e.g. periodization, individual vs. mass agency, immigration, industrialization) and schools of historical thought (e.g. idealism, material determinism) to analyze historical claims and evidence.*

Interpretive frameworks are the lenses historians use to analyze the past. These lenses allow them to not only analyze claims and evidence but to create their own arguments and even their own interpretive frameworks. We wanted students to become aware of all of these kinds of interpretive frameworks and use them in the development of their own arguments.

5. *Students evaluate historical interpretations for coherence, completeness, the quality of evidence and reasoning, and perspective.*

In order for historians to create plausible interpretations of the past, they must evaluate what they read, and so must students. In order to evaluate a historical interpretation (argument), they must be able to read the argument closely and analyze it on a number of levels. We want students to recognize the work of historians as argument and have the tools to comprehend, analyze and evaluate them.

6. *Students demonstrate understanding of the epistemology of history—as inquiry into the past, seeing history as competing interpretations that are contested, incomplete approximations of the past, open to new evidence and new interpretations.*

This last focus is the most overarching of the six—encompassing understandings gleaned from each of the prior points. Students will be hampered in developing historical inquiry practices and achieving the other five learning objectives if they do not take up

the epistemology of historians. However, many students view history as a set of facts to memorize.<sup>8</sup> Rather than just hope that students, by working toward the other five goals, will come to view history as interpretation, the epistemology needs to be made explicit through document sets that contradict one another (provide conflicting accounts), through discussions about why historians read and write the way they do, and by opportunities to engage in reading, thinking and writing like a historian.

\*Excerpted from:

Shanahan, C., Bolz, M. J., Cribb, G., Goldman, S.R. Heppeler, J. & Manderino, M. (2016) Deepening what it means to read (and write) like a historian: Progressions of instruction across a year in an eleventh grade history class. *The History Teacher*