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## Secondary Social Studies Newsletter

### Connecting Past with Present

Students often see the past as an insignificant preamble to the present identifying only surface level connections and missing the concepts, trends and themes that are the root cause of the similarities and/or differences recognizing by students.

One approach for connecting the past with the present is examining the past through the lens of finding similarities in the present often produces only surface level connections which are a starting point for deeper examination that identifies the larger historical theme attributed to these similarities or that begins to examine change over time. For example, stating that Ancient Greece was a democracy and present day United States is a democracy is a surface level connection. Opportunity for deeper exploration lies in examining how the two democracies are different, how each civilization came to utilize that form of government, etc.

Another approach is interpreting the past and adjusting it to the present in which case students see meaning in past events through the extraction of lessons that can be applied to the present day. This allows students to apply lessons of the past to their lives which helps them construct memorable meaning from the past. It also presents the opportunity for students to recognize patterns in history that they can apply to the present.

Historical fiction also provides a view into the past that can make the events more relevant than simply reading facts from non-fiction text. Having a narrative arc humanizes history as well as ties together the story and the facts which makes the content more memorable for students. Obviously there is a strong instructor influence included with using historical fiction as students need guidance to recognize what facts might be exaggerated for the purpose of engaging the reader or making a point as well as keeping students focused on the history more than the story.

*From Michelle Anderson, "Connecting the Past to the Present" and Anna Diamond "Using Historical Fiction to Connect Past and Present"*

### Women's History Month

#### [Women's History Month - Primary Source Collection](#)

A collection of resources on Women's History from the Library of Congress, National Archives and National Endowment for the Humanities

#### [Beyond Rosie the Riveter: Women's Contributions During World War II](#)

From the Gilder Lehman Institute of American History, three activities with corresponding resources for exploring the role of women during World War II

#### [Cultural Change and the Women's Rights Movement](#)

From the National Endowment for the Humanities, four activities looking at the Women's Rights and Suffrage Movements and the relationship between political ideas and cultural attitudes

#### [Losing the War for Girls' Education in Afghanistan](#)

From Human Rights Watch, information and images about the status of education for girls compared to that of boys in Afghanistan. An opportunity to discuss gender discrimination and how it presents itself in parts of the world.

#### What Tomorrow Brings

An independent documentary film about the first girl's school in an Afghan village and the negative response it has received.

- [Video Clip](#)
- [Video Trailer](#)



# Essential Questions

## **Byzantine Empire**

What impact did the fall of Constantinople have on Western Europe, and to what extent was it a turning point in global history?

## **Trade**

How has trade influenced culture in Western Europe?

How does a society determine what is valuable?

What are the unintended consequences of commerce?

## **Middle Ages**

How does religion shape social structure?

How does religion influence art and innovation?

Can religious wars ever be justified?

Did the Catholic Church do more harm than good during the Middle Ages?

How much power and authority should religious officials have in affairs of the state?

## **Renaissance**

How was the world changed by the ideas of the Renaissance?

Did the Renaissance give birth to the modern western world?

What influence did the Renaissance have on the Reformation?

## **Credit / Budget**

Is credit an asset or hindrance to financial independence?

What determines value?

## **Labor Unions**

How effective were/are labor unions in improving the lives of American workers?

Can workers attain economic justice without violence or destruction?

Have labor laws have evolved so much since the early 1900s that unions are no longer necessary?

Should the minimum wage be raised?

## **Branches of Government**

Which do you think is the most important branch of the United States government?

Do you think the three branches of government is a successful system?

What if the three branches of government was never developed? How might the government be different?

Has the power of the president changed over time?

What landmark court cases have shaped the American system?

## **Elections**

Does an increase in the number of voters make a country more democratic?

What factors influence voter participation?

## **Federalist Era**

Does state or federal government have a greater impact on our lives?

Are political parties good for our nation?

## **Jeffersonian Era**

Should we expect elections to bring about revolutionary changes?

Should presidents' appointees to the Supreme Court reflect their policies?

## **Imperialism**

How did the relationship between colonies and imperial powers change over time?

In what ways did imperialistic nations justify their actions?

In what ways do economic factors drive political and military decisions?

## **Greece**

How did Alexander the Great change the lands he conquered?

How did the geography of Greece both help and hinder its development?

## **Rome**

How did Rome's expansion affect trade?

What ideas from the government in the Roman Republic influenced the government of the United States?

How did Rome's location on the Mediterranean affect its growth into a world power?

How do Roman accomplishments continue to impact our lives today?

## **WWI & WWII**

Does war cause national prosperity?

Is everything fair in war?

To what extent was WWII a continuation of WWI?

What role did changing technology contribute to the changing nature of warfare?

# Resources

## Byzantine Empire

### [Medieval and Byzantine Art](#)

Short 'explainer' video showing the differences between medieval and byzantine art

## Trade

### [China's New Silk Road](#)

News report on China's One Belt One Road Initiative that is being called the modern day Silk Road

### [The Silk Road: Connecting the Ancient World Through Trade](#)

Video and lesson from TEDed

## Middle Ages

### [Plague Doctor](#)

Video from Simple History on the Plague and medical treatment available at the time

### [Combat in Medieval Armor](#)

Two present day actors demonstrate realities of fighting with medieval swords in armor

## Renaissance

### [Annotated Mona Lisa - Renaissance Art](#)

Chapter from the Annotated Mona Lisa on Renaissance Art

## Labor Unions

### [Unions Today Simulation Lesson](#)

Lesson from PBS with a few videos to introduce the idea of unions and their role in the present, including the role of sports unions, then a negotiation simulation activity

## Taxes / Budget / Credit

### [United States Debt Infographic](#)

Infographic showing if the US is a household with a credit card, which credit cards it is using and what is the credit status with each card

### [What is the Credit Score of the United States](#)

Infographic showing the credit score of the United States with an explanation of how the score was determined

## Elections

### [Electing a US President](#)

Video from Common Craft explaining the election process in simple terms

### [Electoral Decoder](#)

From PBS an interactive map and explanation of past election results and an interactive predictor for the upcoming election so students can see how electoral college votes determine election outcomes

## Jeffersonian Era

### [Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln Primary Source iBook](#)

Interactive iBook from the Library of Congress with primary source documents focused on these three Presidents

### [Friends Divided: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson](#)

Article from the author of friends divided on the topic of how Jefferson and Adams worked together despite political differences

## Imperialism

### [Scramble for Africa](#)

Al Jazeera documentary on the Scramble for Africa and its effects. First twenty minutes of the 45 minutes documentary give a good overview

### [Congo - Brutal History](#)

BBC Video, 10 minutes, about King Leopold's motives and tactics in the Congo. Tactics and motives discussed could be used to analyze other instances of imperialism. *Note: Preview this before showing to students as it is very blunt about the topic so it might upset younger students.*

## WWI

### [World War I Primary Source iBook](#)

Interactive iBook from the Library of Congress with primary source documents focused on the first world war

## WWII

### [The Fallen of World War II](#)

An interactive documentary that examines the human cost of the second World War and the decline in battle deaths in the years since the war. The 15-minute data visualization uses cinematic storytelling techniques

### [World War II Propaganda Posters](#)

20 posters from the US during World War II on the topic of Careless Talk.

### [The Fascist Movement that Has Brought Mussolini Back to the Mainstream](#)

Article from the Guardian about Italy's upcoming election for Prime Minister that resembles the conditions that allowed the rise of Mussolini. *Shows the repetitive nature of history and makes a connection between the past and the present.*

# Historical Thinking Skills

## Historical Empathy, Part I

*“The easiest way to define empathy is by what it is not. Historical empathy is not putting students in positions where they will have the same beliefs or feel the same emotions experienced by people living in the past: these are impossible goals for students and historians.*

*Students can not adopt an identity as if they possess the body and soul of someone or sometime in the past.”*

Empathy is the ultimate historical thinking skill as it requires students to use historical thinking skills and historical imagination so they can logically fill in the gaps in the historical evidence.

Historical empathy requires students to understand past institutions, social practices or actions to make sense of the way people saw things the way they did and use that to consider why an individual or group of people acted in a certain way given the circumstances.

A challenge of historical empathy investigations is to avoid historical imagination. Asking students to debate if Truman should have dropped the atomic bomb is imagined history because students must judge that action through the lens of the present. It does not require them to consider the historical realities of the situation in which the decision was made. Historical empathy would ask students to debate if Truman’s decision to drop the bomb was consistent with or a departure from American wartime ideals, goals and tactics at the end of the second World War. This requires students to examine the decision within the parameters of the time in which the decision occurred.

Historical empathy is best explored through structured dilemma such as key leadership decisions such as that of US Presidents. For such decisions there are a wide variety of source documents and empathy is focused on an individual rather than a large group of people. Additionally leadership decisions are often easy for students to condemn such as Andrew Jackson’s decision to remove the Eastern Indian tribes or Truman’s decision to drop the atomic bomb.

*From Bruce Lesh, “Why Won’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?”*

Since the beginning of recorded history, the concept of ‘literacy’ meant having the skill to interpret shapes on a piece of paper as letters which, when put together, formed words that conveyed meaning. Today information about the world around us comes to us not only by words on a piece of paper but more and more through the powerful images and sounds of our multi-media culture. Consider that candidates are elected by 30 second commercials and wars are fought real-time on television, one needs to be able to distinguish between different media forms and know how to ask basic questions about everything watched, heard or read.

## Media Literacy

**Media literacy is important because:**

***The influence of media in our central democratic processes.***

*People need two skills in order to be engaged citizens of a democracy: critical thinking and self expression*

***The high rate of media consumption and the saturation of society by media.***

*Allows students to navigate knowledgeably through the sea of images and messages*

***The media’s influence on shaping perceptions, beliefs and attitudes***

*Media experiences exert a significant impact on the way we understand, interpret and act on our world*

***The increasing importance of visual communication and information***

*Our lives are increasingly influenced by visual images so learning to ‘read’ the multiple layers of image-based communication is a necessary adjunct to traditional print literacy*

***The importance of information in society and the need for lifelong learning***

*Students need to understand where information comes from, whose interests may be being served and how to find alternative views.*

## The Five Key Questions of Media Literacy

- Who created this message?
- What techniques are used to attract my attention?
- How might different people understand this message differently from me?
- What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?
- Why was this message sent?

# Professional Development

## NCAAT Online

In addition to its two locations where it hosts professional development, NCAAT also has several fully online courses that can be done asynchronously. These short courses are free and you can start anytime.

Some of the online course offerings focus on digital teaching and learning skills such as integrating technology into the classroom, learning to use canvas, and getting organized online. There are also courses on non-technology topics such as literacy strategies and differentiation.

Take a look at what they have to offer on the [NCAAT Course Catalog](#).

## Integrating Technology

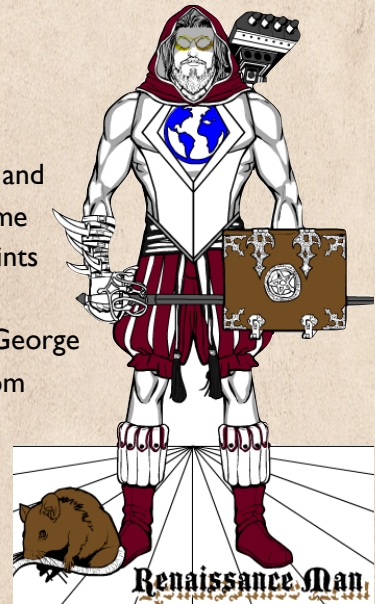
### History Comics

Comics have reflected current events and popular culture since they began to boom in the 1920s and 30s. Comics serve as a time capsule for society and students can analyze changes they see over time such as the changes in female super hero costumes to accommodate political and societal viewpoints at the time of creation.

Students can create comics to take their historical knowledge into the unknown such as George Washington's military tactics at the Battle of Gettysburg or a discussion between philosophers from different periods of time or remake a scene from history with events unfolding differently.

Students can also create comics to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of historical events and periods such as showing the change over time in trade methods or depicting a comparison of the spread of Buddhism and the spread of Islam in various civilizations. Or they can make their own historical superhero

by taking a prominent historical person and adapting them into a superhero.



### Tools

[Make Beliefs Comix](#)

Create short comic strips

[Hero Machine](#)

Create superhero characters

[Pixton](#)

Comic or graphic novel creator

[Strip Generator](#)

Comic strip creator with flat emotion characters

[Storyboard That](#)

Storyboards (like comics) with variety of scenes and characters

### Vocabulary Review

#### Favorite Words

For reviewing/revisiting vocabulary from the course thus far, have students identify what is their favorite word. Model by sharing your favorite word and why you like it, such as it reminds you of something or you like the way it

sounds. Ensure students understand the meaning of the word by having them share when they last used the word in their regular life. This also can help engender an appreciation of words.

### Miscellany

In the 8th century, the Donation of Constantine granted a large amount of Roman Empire land and power to Pope Sylvester I and his successors. But it was a fake.