

Evaluating Primary Sources: High School Project

Jean Elizabeth Goodrich Digital Scrapbook

Amount of Time Needed

One fifty-minute class period.

Material Needed

Computers with internet access, a projector connected to a computer, screen for the projector, pens, and notebook paper.

Objectives

1. Interpret the past within its own historical context rather than in terms of present-day norms and values.
2. Distinguish historical fact from opinion.

Procedure

1. Each student should be asked to bring or be ready to discuss an object they would place in a scrapbook to the next class meeting. It should be an object the individual student would feel comfortable sharing with the class.
2. The instructor should give a brief demonstration of the digital scrapbook, and show how to flip through and search the scrapbook.
3. The students should divide into smaller groups.
4. Each group should use a computer with internet access to explore the scrapbook.
5. While exploring the scrapbook the students should record their group's answers to the Scrapbook discussion questions below.
6. The class should meet back together and discuss answers to the questions.
7. Students should then introduce their objects and use the object discussion questions below to discuss the objects.

Scrapbook Discussion Questions

1. Why did Bettie create this scrapbook?
2. Did you find anything unexpected in the scrapbook? Why was it unexpected?
3. What three things does the scrapbook tell us about Bettie's interests and/or values?
4. What stereotypes do you see in the scrapbook?
5. What was happening in the world and the United States in 1933-1937?
6. What items in the scrapbook reflect what was going on in the nation and/or world in the 1930's?
7. What items would you expect to find in the scrapbook that are not there?
8. What items do you think Bettie's classmates would have put in a scrapbook?
9. How has the scrapbook affected your opinion of the 1930's?
10. What questions does the scrapbook raise?
11. What primary sources would you use to answer some of these questions?
12. What secondary sources would you use to answer some of these questions?

Object Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of the object?
2. What does the item say about the larger world back then?
3. How do you think students fifty years ago would have viewed the object?
4. How do you think students in fifty years will view the object?