

What Is A Digital Library? (Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan)

Overview:

Students will use Ruth Dorcas Gates' scrapbook alongside the other Notable Women of Simmons scrapbooks to discover what a digital library is and how it can help learn about the past. Students will explore the digital scrapbooks and write an essay on what they found. They will discuss why or why not digital libraries may be useful to historians and students, as well as the benefits or drawbacks of the collections for history education.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn what a digital library is.
- Students will learn how to use both browse and search functions of a digital library to enhance their research skills.
- Students will practice critical thinking and learn how to support an argument through their writing.

Resources:

- [The Notable Women of Simmons College Digital Scrapbook Collection](#)
- Computer lab or library
- Internet access
- One class period to explain the assignment and explore the collection

Procedure:

1. Before class, take time to become familiar with the scrapbooks in order to aid the students in their explorations as well as to decide on the most important elements of the students' essays.
2. Schedule a time for the class to visit the computer lab or library.
3. Have the students access the link provided above to the Notable Women of Simmons College Digital Scrapbook collection.
4. Once on the page, ask the students to pick one or two of the scrapbooks that they think they would be interested in.
5. Once in the scrapbooks, have the students attempt to both browse and search the collections for items of interest.
6. After they have spent time with the collections, ask the students to write an essay that discusses what they found, takes a position as to whether digital libraries are useful research tools for history students and historians, and uses their finding to support that position. If they find that digital libraries are not useful, what would they change? If they find that they are useful, which specific elements did they find to be the most useful?