



## Using Primary Sources to Develop Research Questions and Inform Student Voices

NCTE Conference Houston Nov.18, 2018

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### Agenda

1. Overview
2. Defining primary sources
3. Finding primary sources
4. Analyzing primary sources
5. Using primary sources to develop research questions



## 1. Overview: Who Are We?



- Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region at Waynesburg University
- Regional Program supports schools, universities and cultural institutions to prepare teachers to infuse primary sources into local classrooms
- Free Online Teacher PD Classes <http://tps.waynesburg.edu>
- Brashear High School, Pittsburgh, PA

### English 4 Research Paper 2016-2018

How do writers, artists, scientists, and innovators who live and work in Pittsburgh impact our community and society?



**Brashear High School Pittsburgh, PA**

## 2. What is a Primary Source?

- Primary Sources are the raw materials of history
- Original documents and objects
- Created at the time under study
- Clues for future historians and writers who describe the past.
- Examples: Diaries, Letters, Photos, Portraits, Murals, Statutes, Newspaper Articles, Legislation, Court Documents, Census Records



## Primary Sources Are the Evidence of our Lives

Think • Pair • Share

1. Mentally list your activities for the last 24 hours.
2. Identify one activity that produced a written or visual record.
3. Describe that record to your neighbor.
4. Ask your neighbor to play the role of a future historian and explain who you are or what your lifestyle is like based on the evidence you shared.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 reversing roles.





### 3. Finding a primary source

#### A. Start with a secondary source to gather context and find keywords.

- Print Resources in school and neighborhood libraries
- Pittsburgh Public Schools Digital Resources (Subscriptions)
  - World Book
  - Contemporary Authors
  - Historic Black Newspapers

- Wikipedia

#### B. Search in Digital Libraries

- Pittsburgh Carnegie Public Library
  - Biography in Context
  - Proquest
- Library of Congress
- Congressional Record
- Digital Public Library of America
- Google Newspaper Archives

<https://news.google.com/newspapers>  
1800-Present



### Pittsburgh Carnegie Library: Biography in Context

Logout My Library Links Sign in with Google Sign in with Microsoft

**GALE BIOGRAPHY IN CONTEXT**

Browse People

Search Results

Search results: Name: "Wilson, August"

Suggested Topic Pages

**August Wilson**

**Biographies 12**

- August Wilson**  
 Encyclopedia of World Biography, December 12, 1996  
 Updated: November 21, 2006  
 New York Drama Critics Circle Best Play for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, 1985; Whiting-Wheeler Award from the Whiting Foundation for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, 1986; Outstanding Play Award, American Theatre Critics, Drama...
- August Wilson**  
 Contemporary Black Biography, January 4, 2006  
 Updated: May 18, 2009  
 Playwright. Worked as a sheet-metal worker, porter, toy-store stock worker, gardener, dishwasher, and short-order cook; poet, 1970s; Black Horizons on the Hill (theater company), Pittsburgh, PA, co-founder, 1968...
- August Wilson**  
 Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History, 2006  
 APRIL 27, 1945 The playwright August Wilson was born Frederick August Kittel in Pittsburgh, the fourth of six children. Growing up near the steel mills, in a neighborhood called the Hill that was populated by poor...

**Everything**

- Biographies (12)
- Images (1)
- News (206)
- Audio (16)
- Magazines (166)
- Academic Journals (28)
- Web Sites (1)

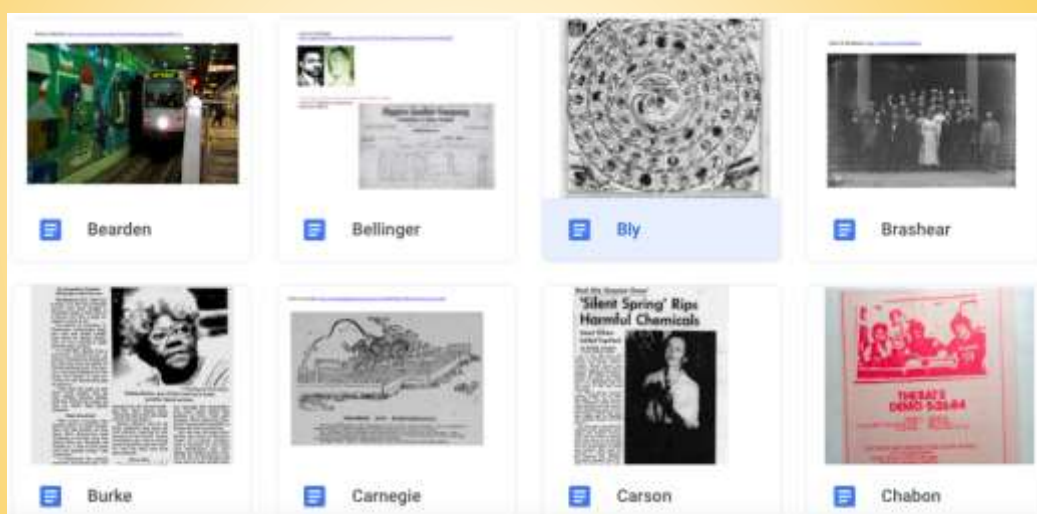
Search within results

<http://loc.gov>



## Brashear HS Primary Source Set

<http://tinyurl.com/Brashear4>



## CONGRESSIONAL RECORD <http://congress.gov>

October 7, 2005

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — *Extensions of Remarks*

### EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

#### MAUDELL SHIREK POST OFFICE BUILDING

SPEECH OF  
**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 27, 2005*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to recognize an unsung hero and political legend in the East Bay area, Ms. Maudelle Shirek.

The legislation we are considering here today, H.R. 438, would name the post office building at 2000 Allston Way in Berkeley after Maudelle Shirek.

It would have been impossible for the House to consider this bill without the timely help of my colleagues, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Government Reform Committee, Congressman TOM DAVIS

Ms. Maudelle Shirek is a fearless and inspirational woman who for over 60 years has tirelessly fought to make this world a fair and just place. She has spoken for the voiceless and has been a staunch defender of our basic civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in supporting this resolution, H.R. 438.

The world would be a better place if we had more Maudelles.

#### THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF AUGUST WILSON

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

in the U.S. Army 1964. Determined to start a writing career, he in his first typewriter a house in Pittsburgh worked a series of short-order cook, boy, and gardener. poems were published early 70s in several Negro Digest created son.

However, it was heard the voice of record "Nobody in Jellyroll Like Mine," responsibility to caretors and assume the of Black American history and dignifying blues motivated, ch

## Building • Monument • Mural • Artifact

### August Wilson Mural 2014

by Kyle Holbrook  
2037 Centre Ave.  
Pittsburgh PA





## 4. Analyzing a Primary Source

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### PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

Use this tool to record your responses to a primary source.  
If you need guidance, use the sample questions. Feel free to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

Select format of your primary source

Photo, Print, Drawing

#### OBSERVE

**OBSERVE:** What do you notice first? What people and objects are shown? What are the facial expressions? What emotions are displayed in the body language? What words do you see? What do you see in addition to the mural?

#### REFLECT

**REFLECT:** What are the people doing in this mural? Why is the mural located at this place? What kind of place is the location? When was it made and what was going on at that time? Who do you think was the audience? What is the artist's point of view? What can you learn from examining this mural?

#### QUESTION

What do you wonder about? Who? What? Where? When? Why?

**FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

Record responses here

## Audience Response

**OBSERVE:** What do you notice first? What people and objects are shown? What are the facial expressions? What emotions are displayed in the body language? What words do you see? What do you see in addition to the mural?

Respond at [PollEv.com/anncanning003](https://www.poll-ev.com/anncanning003)  
Text **ANNCANNING003** to **37607** once to join, then text your message.



## Audience Response

**REFLECT:** What are the people doing in this mural? Why is the mural located at this place? What kind of place is the location? When was it made and what was going on at that time? Who do you think was the audience? What is the artist's point of view? What can you learn from examining this mural?

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## Audience Response

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## 5. Generating Questions from a Primary Source

### QFT from RQI

Question  
Formulation  
Technique

Right  
Question  
Institute

Small Group Worksheet  
added based on student  
and teacher feedback

**QUESTION FORMULATION  
TECHNIQUE SMALL GROUP  
WORKSHEET**

**RQI**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Group Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules for Producing Questions:**

- Ask as many questions as you can
- Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any questions
- Write down every question exactly as it is stated
- Change any statement into a question

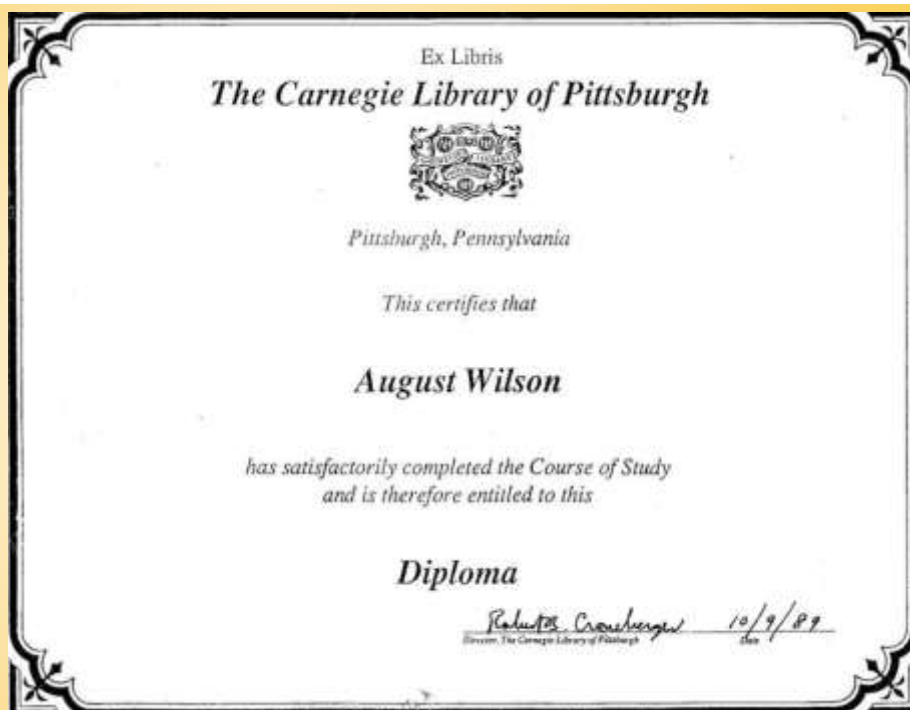
**Question Focus:** (Write the name of your selected topic or theme for your inquiry)

August Wilson's Legacy

Group Questions:
1.
2.
3.

Question  
Focus:

Pittsburgh  
Post-Gazette  
09 Oct 2011



## **Generating Questions from a Primary Source**

1. Form groups of 4-5
2. Designate a recorder
3. Generate questions about diploma document (found in your folders)
4. Follow rules:
  - Ask as many questions as you can
  - Do not stop to discuss, judge or answer any questions
  - Write down every question exactly as stated
  - Change every statement to a question

## **Improving Questions Open vs. Closed Questions**

1. Define a closed question
2. Define an open question
3. Change one closed question from list to open
4. Change one open question from list to closed

## Reflect

What are advantages and disadvantages of open vs. closed questions?

## Prioritizing Questions

QUESTION FORMULATION  
TECHNIQUE SMALL GROUP  
WORKSHEET



QF: August Wilson's Legacy

Priority Questions:

1. Why was this a library diploma and not at university diploma?

2. Why did he take a course of study in 1989?

3. What is the course of study?

## RATIONALE

QUESTION FORMULATION  
TECHNIQUE SMALL GROUP  
WORKSHEET



**QF: August Wilson's Legacy**

Rationale:

You need context before you build on the others.  
Reveal a lot more about him.

## Share and Discuss

**Next Steps- how can questions be applied to  
curriculum and student learning?**



## Brashear Student Interview 2016

What worked?

What would  
you change?



Play excerpt from 3:37-4:20

## Brashear Teacher Reflections About Adding Primary Sources to Research Project

Makes it personal and real.

Gave students a focus to ask their own questions.

Had been superficial before. This added depth.

Created excitement and a sense of adventure.

Nellie Bly and Rachel Carson had bored students before.

This year, they inspired students.

Made research relevant.

Made the projects 3D.

Gave students an opportunity to touch and see and feel history in  
their neighborhoods.

Primary sources used in presentations more than in essays.

## Works Cited

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## Contact Information

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