

Locate Primary Sources at LOC.GOV

Primary sources can be found in many places throughout the Library of Congress Website. Below are **just a few** of the areas at LOC.gov that teachers find valuable.

Main Page Search Box (broadest search)
LOC.gov → enter a term in the search box

The Teachers Resources Page
LOC.gov → “Especially for Teachers”

Digital Collections
LOC.gov → “Digital Collections”

America’s Story from America’s Library
LOC.gov → “Especially for Kids & Families” → *America’s Library*

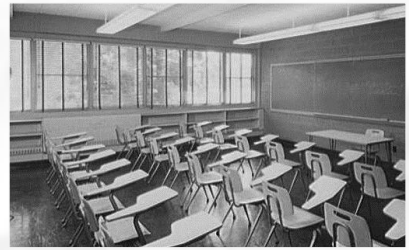
Topics
LOC.gov → make a selection under “Topics”

Exhibitions
LOC.gov → scroll down to “More Exhibitions” → “All Exhibitions”

The screenshot shows the Library of Congress website homepage. Key features and annotations include:

- Top Navigation:** "ASK A LIBRARIAN", "DIGITAL COLLECTIONS" (highlighted with an orange box), and "LIBRARY CATALOGS".
- Main Search Box:** A large search bar with "All Formats" dropdown and "Search Loc.gov" text, with a "GO" button.
- Collection Highlights:** A grid of featured collections including "American Memory", "Prints & Photographs", "Historic Newspapers", "Performing Arts", "Veterans History", "Sound Recordings", "Film", "Maps", and "Manuscripts".
- Topics:** A list of topics including "American History", "Arts & Culture", "Government, Politics & Law", "Maps & Geography", "News & Journalism", "Religion & Philosophy", "Science, Technology & Business", "Sports & Leisure", and "World History & Cultures". The "Especially for Kids & Families" link is highlighted with a red box, and the "Teachers" link is highlighted with a purple box.
- Featured Webcasts:** A video player showing a person in a pilot's uniform.
- Explore & Discover:** Sections for "Today in History", "Places in the News", "Blogs", "MyLOC", "Read.gov", and "National Book Festival".
- Services:** A list of services including "Ask a Librarian", "Cataloging Services", "Duplication Services", "Interlibrary Loan", "Library Standards", "National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped", and "Reader Registration".

Selecting Primary Sources



Source: Fairleigh Dickinson, Teaneck, New Jersey. Classroom building, classroom I., Gottscho-Schleisner, Inc., 1956. From the Library of Congress.

✓ Consider your students

Length:

Will the length of the letter, diary entry, or newspaper article affect student comprehension? Is an excerpt or the entire source more appropriate?

Prior knowledge needed:

Do outdated terms or phrases need to be defined? Will your students be able to connect to the time period and/or geography related to the source?

Diverse learners:

Will source(s) challenge a diverse group of learners? Will sources include text and/or imagery? Will sources be diverse to include multiple formats, such as a narrative, advertisement, artifact, oral history, letter, film, and/or map?

✓ Consider copyright restrictions and fair use

Are there restrictions on the item(s)?

Check the rights and restrictions statement on the item's bibliographic page or on the item's collection home page.

Will your use be considered fair?

Refer to Copyright and Primary Sources - For Teachers (Library of Congress):
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/copyright.html>

✓ Consider point of view and perspective

Target audience and purpose of the primary source:

Can students infer the intended audience for the primary source, and whether the creator might have been promoting a certain idea or agenda?

Your own point of view:

Consider your own beliefs about a historical event or issue. By selecting a particular primary source, are you inadvertently presenting one point of view over another?

Different perspectives:

When using more than one primary source, have you selected items that present different perspectives?

Overall meaning preserved:

If you plan to use an excerpt of a primary source, is the meaning of the entire primary source preserved?

✓ Consider historical context

Bibliographic information:

How detailed is the item's bibliographic record?
Should you provide a source statement or share background information?

Creator name and creation/publication date:

Are the creator's name and creation date available on the primary source or in the bibliographic record? Are you studying point of view and therefore need to identify the creator of a particular primary source?

Time and topic under study in your classroom:

How important is the source in understanding the time and topic under study?

Contextual clues:

Are there clues *within* the primary source that will help students place the primary source into context? Will students be familiar with any of the personal, social, cultural, or political events that surrounded the creation of the primary source?

Contextual extraneous markings or annotations:

Will Library of Congress cataloguer's notes or other markings distract your students and interfere with their ability to place the primary source into historical context? How will the markings impact your plan in teaching with the source?

Source: Adapted from the Teaching with the Library of Congress Blog, *Selecting Primary Sources, Parts I-IV*,
<http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2011/07/selecting-primary-sources-part-i-knowing-your-students>