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# Suggestions for Teaching with Historic Newspapers from the Library of Congress' *Chronicling America*

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- Ask students to select an article that makes a strong argument. Challenge students to identify the specific claims the article makes, and to see if each claim is backed by at least one piece of evidence. How does the amount of evidence cited change students' ideas of a particular article's authority?
- Find two articles from different newspapers that express very different points of view on a single issue or event. Encourage your students to compare and contrast the methods used by the two writers to make their case. Do they cite different evidence? Or do they use different persuasive techniques?
- Newspapers of 100 years ago were full of cartoons, maps, portraits, and other visual elements. Select a visual, and ask students to compare it with a newspaper text account of the same event. What does each medium do better than the other? How much more convincing do your students find one or the other?
- Choose newspapers with differing perspectives and ask students to study and compare how each paper reported about a particular event. Students might begin by scanning the headlines and images, if any, attached to an article. To deepen their analysis, they might focus on word choice, which facts or details are included or omitted, and the order in which the facts are presented. They might even find that the papers report different sets of "facts." Do they cite different evidence? Or do they use different persuasive techniques?
- Students might select a news story they find and track it for a few days to see if the reporting changes. They might consider how information changes, but they might also analyze the placement of the story within the paper – when does it move from the front page to the inside pages? Is it "above the fold" or below, and does the placement change?
- After analyzing perspectives or tracking changes in reporting about an event over a few days, students might compare the news report of the event to how (or if) their textbooks record the event. Ask them to speculate on why the historical account might differ from the textbook account.

- Analyze newspaper advertisements to identify the persuasive techniques they use.
- Compare prices of products from the newspaper and determine how much a family might need to live at a certain time in history.
- Explore the impact of new inventions and technological advances on society.
- Compare newspaper coverage of natural disasters of the past with those from current time. What's the same and what's different?
- See what the headlines were for a certain day in history. Look at newspapers from other states for the same day. Are the same issues important in different parts of the country?
- Students can see what happened on their birthday
- Comparing the use of historical print media (in its heyday) versus current print media would make a good economic lesson.
- Encourage your students look at "100 years ago today" for a twist on the familiar practice of looking at daily historical events. Have your students look at these pages daily to learn about the past from primary sources.

Compiled from the *Teaching with the Library of Congress Blogs*;  
<http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2013/03/teaching-with-informational-text-historic-newspapers-from-the-library-of-congress/>, <http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2011/09/finding-treasures-in-an-archive-of-historical-newspapers-chronicling-america/>, <http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2011/06/historic-newspapers-paper-paper-get-your-paper-here/>