

# Introduction to Using Primary Sources

## Professional Development Activity

This activity is to introduce teachers to resources available to enhance instruction in reading and social studies.

Developed by: Lenora Richardson, Cabell County Public Schools, WV

Time: 2-3 hours

Prerequisite: Library of Congress Self-Paced Online Modules

- [Introduction to the Library of Congress Module](#)
- [Supporting Inquiry with Primary Sources](#)

Resources:

- Internet connection
- Laptop
- Projector
- Document Camera
- Attached PowerPoint presentation (Images of child miners are part of the “National Child Labor Committee Collection” from the Library of Congress available at: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/nclc/>.)

Goals:

1. Demonstrate process of analyzing photographs using the [Interactive Analysis Tool](#)
2. Demonstrate process of students citing evidence from source when making inferences.
3. Use strategies to increase academic vocabulary.
4. Use writing frames to scaffold descriptive essay about the depicted photo.
5. Demonstrate text-dependent questioning.

### Procedure:

1. Use the attached PowerPoint: "Child Labor in Coal Mines During Early 1900s"
  - Slide 2: Use the interactive analysis tool. (15-20 minutes)
  - Slide 3: Compare Slide 3 to Slide 2. What are similarities? Differences? What inferences can be made? Have students determine meaning of "trapper" and "shunt" by citing evidence from the caption.
  - Slide 4: Use text to make observations. Introduce the concept of company scrip. Show the artifacts of paper scrip and coin scrip for Lamar Colliery Coal Company.
  - Slide 5 and 6: Students continue to add observations from text to analysis tool.
  - Slide 7: What other jobs might young boys have in coal mining in the early 1900s? List from text.
  - Slide 8: Going Further
2. Group Write using writing frame (attached): Students can use the analysis tool constructed to write a descriptive essay about the life of children working in coal mines during early 1900s.

### Assignment:

Students will be given writing frame and completed analysis tool to write an individual descriptive essay.

### Assessment:

Students will be provided a writing rubric. Teachers have the option to have students enter essay on West Virginia Writes for further assessment.

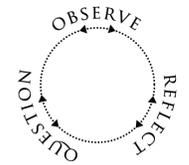
### Teacher Resources Attached:

1. Sample Completed Analysis Tool for Coal Breaker Boys
2. Writing Frame
3. Sample Class Group Write
4. PowerPoint presentation: "Child Labor in Coal Mines in Early 1900s"

## SAMPLE COMPLETED ANALYSIS TOOL: Coal Breaker Boys

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/det.4a16385>

**Format:** Photographs and Prints



OBSERVE	REFLECT	QUESTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are 4 boys in the picture.</li> <li>2. Boys are wearing dirty, worn out work clothes.</li> <li>3. The boys shoes have holes in the toes.</li> <li>4. There are two rectangular containers, one has a handle the other has a circular lid.</li> <li>5. Boys' hats have lights on top.</li> <li>6. Boy #1 has a cigar in mouth, boy #2 has corncob pipe.</li> <li>7. Boys have dirty, sooty faces.</li> <li>8. Boys are standing in front of wall of wooden slats.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The boys work in a coal mine.</li> <li>2. The metal containers are a lunch pail and water jug.</li> <li>3. The boys are between 10 and 15.</li> <li>4. The picture was taken outside during their lunch break.</li> <li>5. The picture was taken during cold weather.</li> <li>6. The boys are very poor.</li> </ol>	<p>When was this picture taken?                      Why was this picture taken?                      Why were young boys allowed to smoke?                      Why did coal companies not pay in real money?</p>

**FURTHER INVESTIGATION**  
 The students wanted to further investigate the other jobs children did in early 1900s, especially in West Virginia.

## Writing Frame

### Coal Breaker Boys Descriptive Essay

Use the Analysis Tool completed in class to write a descriptive essay

In the picture, I observed (boys) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Also, I observed (picture setting) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

I think (inferences) \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. (For each inference, cite your evidence from the picture)

In conclusion, the life of child coal miners \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Sample Completed Writing Frame

Coal Breaker Boys Group Write

Fifth Grade Class

In the picture, I observed four boys who were dressed in dirty, ripped work overalls. Their shoes had holes in the toes which had rags or newspaper filling the holes. Their faces were sooty and had serious expressions. Two boys were smoking a cigar and a corncob pipe.

Also, I observed the boys were standing in front of a wooden slat wall. Two metal containers which were a lunch box and a water jug were on the ground. There was a barrel in the picture, too.

I think the boys worked in a coal mine because they years had lights on their hats and their clothes were very dirty. The boys seemed to be between 10 and 15 years old, because of their physical appearance.

In conclusion, the life of child coal miners seemed to be very hard because of the long 16 hour work days, low pay, and dangerous work conditions.

Green highlight – Claim or inference

Yellow highlight – Evidence supporting claim

# Child Labor in Coal Mines in Early 1900s





A young trapper boy inside Turkey Knob Mine in MacDonald, West Virginia. His job was to open and close the wooden trap doors for the mining cars being shunted through.

Read more at

<http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/history/news-photographs-boys-working-mines-early-1900s#q7pq0vMQLiVM8GxG.99>



"Breaker Boys" were used in the coal mines to separate slate rock from the coal after it had been brought out of the shaft. They often worked 14 to 16 hours a day and were paid 50 cents in company scrip. Some are as young as 5 or 6 years old.

Can you imagine working long hours each day, six or seven days a week in a coal mine? Well, less than one hundred years ago, many American children did just that. If you lived at that time and were the son or daughter of a wealthy family, you would probably spend your days much as you do now, at school. However, if you were the son or daughter of poor parents or immigrants, your life would be much different. You might work in a mill, mine, canning shed, or field for many hours each day for very little money.

Besides being dangerous, mines were also unhealthy. The younger boys who worked at the mine were called breaker boys. They did not actually work in the mine itself. They sat on long benches while coal flowed along beneath their feet and picked out the bits of rock from the coal. These places were poorly lit, and the boys had constant coughs because of the dust. The moving coal would often cut their fingers, and they could hardly stand up straight because of leaning over the coal for so many hours each day. Also, boys would sometimes fall and get smothered or crushed in the huge piles of coal. Worse yet, when the boys turned twelve they would be sent down into the mines where there was a constant threat of cave-ins and explosions.



Clement Tiskie, (smallest boy next to right hand end) is a nipper. Arthur Havard, (on Clement's right hand) is a driver. Jo Puma, (on Arthur's right) is a nipper. Jo's mother showed me the passport which shows Jo to be 14 years old, but he has no school certificate although working inside the mine. Frank Fleming, (boy on left of photo), a nipper. Works a mile underground from the shaft which is 500 ft. down.

# The Harrowing Lives of Child Miners in the Early 1900s

<http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/history/news-photographs-boys-working-mines-early-1900s?image=0>