



Wheels of Progress Primary Source Guided Analysis Grades 6-12

Objectives: Students will analyze and interpret primary source material. Students should be able to determine the audience, bias, and cause of a primary source and subsequently answer critical thinking questions to determine feeling and importance of the piece and its broader context within the era.

Illinois State Standards:

SS.6-8.IS.2.MdC: Determine the credibility of sources based upon their origin, authority, and context.

SS.9-12.H.5: Analyze the factors and historical context, including overarching movements, that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

SS.9-12.H.7: Identify and analyze the role of individuals, groups, and institutions in people's struggle for safety, freedom, equality, and justice.

SS.9-12.H.11: Analyze primary and secondary historical sources from multiple vantage points and perspectives to identify and explain dominant narratives and counternarratives of historical events.

Materials:

- The ABC's of Primary Source Analysis document (posted on our website)
- Access to this document or notebook paper to document answers

Directions:

- Review the document "The ABC's of Primary Source Analysis" with students
- Students should read the primary source independently
- Once students have finished reading, they should answer the guided analysis questions either independently or with partners. This can be done by typing directly in the document or on notebook paper. Encourage students to use evidence from the source to substantiate each answer.



“Wheels of Progress” Short Film
by U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, Department of Agriculture, Educational Film Service –
Library of Congress
1927

<https://archive.org/details/Wheelsof1927>

Shotlist:

A variety of wheeled vehicles are shown from 1897 on. Shows workers progressing from walking and bicycles to cars. Recreated footage of great authenticity: Opens in 1897, bicycles on street; horse and carriage with African-American driver. women ride bicycles in grove of flowering trees. Title cards; workers with handlebar mustaches sit on barrels eating dinner slums with laundry lines stretched across; housing directly off train tracks with laundry flying from fire escapes; men in top hats off to work; rural horse and cart on dirt road; early horseless carriage driving and getting stuck in a rut; 1910 car; 1927 car; factory; street scenes; traffic; hitchhiker [longshot]; President Coolidge in a top hat [at 01:09:57:11] (with Mrs. Coolidge and another man) step into a convertible car outside the White House. African-American family starting car with crank and driving off; early traffic jam; early street light repair from the a high platform on the back of a truck; truck barreling past horse and buggy; early fire engines; early street cleaning truck spewing water; grocery store; World War I soldiers disembarking truck; World War II soldiers in truck convoy; early gas stations; early milk tanker trucks; early snow plows; early buses; horses and trucks travelling along the same busy city streets; early passenger buses; bus terminal; Excellent period bus interior; Double-decker New York City Bus marked 5th Avenue and 57th Street to Washington Square.

Guided Analysis Questions:

1. ABC's: Who is the audience? What is the bias? What is the cause?
2. Explain what is meant by the shift from businesses looking “up” to “out”. Describe how the automobile drove this shift. Use evidence from the video to support your answer.
3. How did the rise of automobiles alter the lives of the average working man? Contrast their goals and perspectives on the "ideal" life before and after this transformation. What aspects of life were considered important before, and how did that shift in the new era? Use evidence from the video to support your claims.
4. How did the rise of motor-powered vehicles change society, including landscapes, business, and the economy? What new industries or enterprises emerged as a result of this transformation?
5. What were some of the ways automobiles improved people's daily lives? What challenges did they bring?
 - a. What are some ways automobiles improve your daily life in modern times? Are there any challenges of a society so heavily reliant on automobiles?



Bring this lesson to the museum!

Help students connect their learning to real-world contexts by exploring these related vehicles on display at Klairmont Collections:

- 1867 Roper Steam Cycle
- 1903 Oldsmobile Curved Dash Roundabout
- 1905 Rapid Nine Passenger Omnibus
- 1910 Buick Model 10 Touring "The White Streak"
- 1919 Ford TT Fire Engine Pumper Truck
- 1927 Rolls Royce Phantom 1 Brougham
- 1939 Chevrolet Chicago Daily Times Newspaper Truck
- 1952 Cadillac Series 75 Durham Limo
- 1956 Lincoln Premiere Convertible