

AMERICAN LEARNING LIBRARY

Historic



newspapers

STATE STUDIES

Using the resources

1. Newspapers

- ▶ As you will know, the Library of Congress has a huge collection of newspapers that they have made available online. These represent local opinion and stories as it happened day by day, and so they give a unique opportunity for students to get a glimpse of life in the past.
- ▶ We have scoured these newspapers for you to make some pages available as part of our memories collection that we think will enhance your state studies and prove fascinating to your students.
- ▶ You have to remember that the LOC does not have every edition of every paper, so we have had to skip from one year and one paper to another in order to span this amazing history. Mostly they cover 75 years, from a century ago backwards to the 1850s, and include great events such as world wars seen from local perspective, as well as domestic issues. The LOC public collection stops at 1922 so we cannot bring you anything more recent than that. In general we give you page 1 of the paper, not the whole paper.
- ▶ The main objective is to add a unique system of memories that are local, not just to your state, but also often to your city.
- ▶ If you need more, go to Library of Congress, digitized newspapers.

- ▶ The material we have gathered is in PDF format, so you can either give it out to students in printed form, or digitally.
- ▶ Something to remember, and depending on the age and ability of your students, is that the material can seem daunting, so if you can bring the pdf up on a classroom board, so much the better, for then you can hone in on a piece and study that.
- ▶ You will need to read the pages carefully before you use them in class to decide exactly what approach to take. For example, are you going to use them as a basis for a lesson on graphic design, or on the style of English literature a century ago, or for world or local events, or for technology (machinery etc) or for fashion?
Another objective might be for comprehension, summarizing etc.
- ▶ Just one of these objectives will be quite enough for a whole lesson.

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Detailed use

▶ Make sure your students know where the newspaper was/is located in your state.

▶ Here are some hints on how to use them.

1. Look at the format. What does that tell you about the technology of the time (no photographs, for example)?
2. Ask students to look at books of the time (use our memories books) and you will see that it was not expected that pictures would play a great part.
3. Think about how expensive paper might have been, and how difficult it was to make and transport. So many newspapers were quite short. As a result, getting as much into them as possible was vital. How did they do this (by multiple columns, small font)?
4. Look at the advertisements. These are a wealth of resources to help build a picture of what people used in the past. Compare to what we do today and also compare between editions. You will see they become more visual over the years. We have tried to find papers that show adverts near to Christmas time, to help you to show students what toys were available and what expectations were of this event. Students should be told that people were not as wealthy as they are today, and so

everyone looked forward to getting a present because presents were rare. Today it is all too easy to buy something any time. How might this all have affected family life?

5. Print off or scan any article from the paper. Make it a short one. Give different ones to students and ask them individually or in groups to read it and then summarize it. Then they should tell the rest of the class what was in it. If you get a number of readings like this, you will build up a snapshot in time made by individuals in your class.
6. For more advanced years, we sometimes have included some pages that tell of attitudes in the past. These need to be taken with caution and explanation, but are incredibly valuable. You need to explain that a century ago people in many states still felt themselves to be pioneers on the edge of the world, and their reactions match this. See how students think things have changed, and why. This will also help you with constitution and multicultural studies.
7. Also for more advanced years, ask students to look at the balance between domestic and global news coverage. We have sometimes included pages from the Great War, so you can discuss with students how the local area was

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affected by global events, and what they thought of it. Discuss with students how people in the U.S. might have reacted to a world war when they all were immigrants with a heritage fairly evenly divided between the protagonists.

8. Occasionally we have also been able to find events of national importance, such as the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, so that you can see the way this was reported nationally. Feel free to look in the California memories for that and compare it with the reporting of your state newspapers.

These are just starting points for all manner of cross-curricular investigations. Enjoy reading them – we have!

Plenary session

- ▶ Review the way that historic newspapers help us to see life as it was in the past far better than a textbook alone could. Review also any limitations students might have seen in this kind of historical record.

3. Further work/homework

- ▶ Get students to visit the LOC site and try to look at newspapers for themselves.