

Confino Primary Source Activity Lesson Plan Appropriate for Middle School Students

Objective: To use primary sources to tell the story of a young girl and her family. To build an understanding as to how primary sources/documents can be used to piece together stories from the past.

Materials:

- Confino Primary Source Materials packet. The documents can be found at the end of this lesson plan
- Pencils
- Paper

Procedure:

- Put your students in groups of 3 or 4 students.
- Ask your students and discuss with your students the following:
 - Do you know that you can find out a lot of information about a person without ever meeting them? What are some of the ways?
 - Primary source documents are one of the best ways to find out information about people you've never met. Primary source documents are written records like government reports, diary entries, and letters and postcards.
 - The Lower East Side Tenement Museum uses primary documents to help them find out information about the people who lived in their tenement building long ago. Historians to find information about specific people, places, and events also use them.
 - Today we will have a chance to do the same kind of historical research. Each group will receive a document that will help you learn about a young girl named Victoria Confino. She was a resident at 97 Orchard Street, the location of the Tenement Museum, for 3 years with her family.
- Distribute one page of the Confino Primary Source Materials packet (and a set of the question to go with the source, if you deem them necessary), to each group.
- Tell each group of students that they should examine their document, consider the questions, and write as much about Victoria as possible based on their single document.
- Questions for each source:
 - The Postcard:
 - Describe the picture on the front of the postcard
 - What's the name of the town?
 - Is it similar to or different from New York City?
 - What do you think it would be like to grow up in this town?
 - Can you read the language on the back? Do you know what language it is?

- Mr. Confino's Passport:
 - What does the word VISA mean? Why is it printed on this passport?
 - What other information can be learned from reading this?
 - When did Victoria arrive? How did she travel to America?
 - Why might someone write the note that appears on the passport?
- Victoria's Report Card:
 - What information can be gained from this document?
 - How often did Victoria attend school? Was she absent often?
 - What were her grades for? What grades did she receive?
 - How do you think Victoria felt about going to school?
- Family Photograph:
 - What is this?
 - Who might it be a picture of? How many people are in it? Is it a family? I one Victoria? Which one?
 - What are they wearing? Is this what you would wear for a family photo today?
- Once each group has discussed and written about their document bring the class back together.
- Have the groups share their findings to the rest of the class.
- Ask your students to put together a story about Victoria based on all the pieces of information they found today.
- Emphasize to your students that they have just done the work of real historians. Historians use primary sources in all of their work. They piece together information about a time, place, event, or person based on recorded information. Primary sources are essential to the work historians do.

Assessment: Assessment should be largely based on the process of learning how to decipher primary source documents. Evaluate students on their ability to engage in the process and draw conclusions from the given information. Ask students questions that expand their thinking about Victoria.

Primary Source Documents



A postcard of Kastoria, the home-town of the Confino family.



Victoria's father's passport. On it, she wrote, "Victoria Confino came in this country August 19 the year 1913 the ship was Martha Washington."



A photo of the Confino family. Victoria can be seen on the far right.

Victoria's second grade report card

P. S. No. 65, Girls' Dept.

Eless R. Burck. Teacher

		Days Present	Effort	Proficiency	Days Absent	Times Late	Department	Promoted to	Phys. De.	Books Returned
	Name <i>Cochino, Victoria</i>	16	B+C	C	2	0	B		B	
	Born <i>Jan. 1, 1903</i>	20 1/2	A	C	1 1/2	0	B+		B+	
	Residence <i>97 Orchard 4th fl. #1</i>	11	A	C	6	0	A		A	
	Parent's Name <i>Abraham</i>	19	A	B	2	0	A		A	
	Register Number <i>3923</i>	21	A	B	1	0	A	30(30)	A	
	Name <i>Davidson, Esther</i>	12	B+	B	6	0	B+		B+	
	Born <i>Sept. 22, 1906</i>	20	B	B	2	0	B		B	
	Residence <i>92 Chrystie 3rd fl. #4</i>	15	B	B	2	0	B		B	
	Parent's Name <i>Abraham</i>	21	B+	B+	0	0	B+		B	
	Register Number <i>2834</i>	21	B+	B+	1	0	B+	30(30)	B	
1907	Name <i>Epstein, Yetta</i>	17	B+	B+	1	0	B+		A	
	Born <i>Sept. 21, 1906</i>	19 1/2	B+	B+	2 1/2		B+		A	
	Residence <i>282 Broome 4th fl. #15</i>	15 1/2	B+	B+	1 1/2	0	B+		A	
	Parent's Name <i>Nyman</i>	21	B+	B+	0	0	B+		A	
	Register Number <i>3463</i>	21	B+	B+	1	0	B+	30(30)	A	
	Name <i>Fishberg, Paula</i>	18	B	B	0	0	B		B	
	Born <i>April 4, 1903</i>	22	B+	B+	0	0	B		B	
	Residence <i>78 Chrystie 2nd fl. #2</i>	15 1/2	B+	B+	1 1/2	0	B+		B+	
	Parent's Name <i>Lebbe</i>	21	A	A	0	0	A		A	
	Register Number <i>3470</i>	20	A	A	2	0	A	30(30)	A	
	Name <i>Fried, Pearl</i>	18	B	B	0	0	B		B	
	Born <i>Sept. 19, 1906</i>	22	B	B	0	0	C		B	
	Residence <i>77 Forsyth 3rd fl. #12</i>	16	B	B	1	1	C		B	
	Parent's Name <i>Isaac</i>	20 1/2	B	B	1 1/2	0	B		B	
	Register Number <i>3261</i>	21	B	B	1	0	B	30(30)	B	
1907	Name <i>Goldberg, Helen</i>	16 1/2	B	B	1 1/2	0	B		B	
	Born <i>Aug. 15, 1906</i>	20 1/2	B+	B	1 1/2		B		B	
	Residence <i>181 Division 2nd fl.</i>	16	B+	B	1	0	B		B+	
	Parent's Name <i>Abraham</i>	21	A	B	0	0	B+		B+	
	Register Number <i>3296</i>	21	A	B	1	0	B+	30(30)	B+	
	Name <i>Goldberg, Jessie</i>	18	A	A	0	0	A		A	
	Born <i>April 11, 1906</i>									
	Residence <i>73 Aldridge 2nd fl. #1</i>									
	Parent's Name <i>Sam</i>									
	Register Number <i>3270</i>									

A copy of Victoria's 2nd Grade Report Card