

Hello. My name is Jessica Ellison and I'm a teacher educator at the Minnesota Historical Society. I've also been working on the Inquiry in the Upper Midwest grant from the Library of Congress. And as part of that grant, we're presenting some webinars with information about how to analyze primary sources. And today we're going to talk about analyzing images.

There's a lot of different types of images that you can teach with in the classroom. Photographs are certainly one of the best, especially if you're working with young children or English learners or students who struggle with reading. But there's also artwork, posters, and political cartoons.

So today we're going to use a tool called the "Observe-Think-Wonder" tool to practice analyzing images.

So, let's start with this image here. And as we look at this image, and we observe-think-wonder, let's think about first, what it is that we just see. What do you observe in this image? And then also think about what do you think about this image, which is a little different than observation because it brings in more inference. And then finally, what do you wonder about this image? What questions do you have?

So, some things that you might have thought about as you're looking at this image is, "I observe an adult and children. I observe desks." And then when you get down to the think, the inference, you think, "Well, I think since there's an adult and children and desks, this might be a school. And I think that the teacher might be helping this group around her desk." And then some questions that might have come up are, "I wonder why there are no boys in this picture. And I wonder what the words on the board say."

Observe-think-wonder is a really great tool for doing introductory analysis for images.

So, let's look at another one. So, take a look at this image. What do you observe? What do you think? What do you wonder? You might observe that there's a lot of people, that there's a person in uniform, that there are people sitting off to the side. You might think, "Are these people being examined? You might: Is that Ellis Island that I see at the very bottom in the caption, and are those people being examined coming into the country?" And then you might wonder, "Well, where are these people from? And what are they being examined for?" There's a whole lot of questions that can come from this, after you think about what you see and what you think.

Let's take a look at another one. Political cartoons can be a little more complicated to analyze. But the observe-think-wonder tool can be a great way to get that introductory look at what is in this political cartoon. So, what do you observe, what do you think and what do you wonder? You might observe that there are three people standing, looking up. You might observe that there's a wall with the words "Literacy Test" and books on top. You might think, "I wonder, I think that those people might be immigrants." You might think, "That's Uncle Sam at the top." And you might wonder, "Where are these people from, and what is the literacy test?"

There are a lot of great questions that can come from using the observe-think-wonder tool, and can bring great conversation into your classroom.

So now, how do you apply this in your class? So, consider an upcoming unit. How might you incorporate images into your curriculum? Whether that's photographs, or political cartoons, or other types of images. And then also, how might you use the observe-think-wonder tool with your learners? At the beginning of the unit? As an assessment at the end of your unit? There's a lot of great ways to bring in this tool to get students really thinking deeply about images.

And finally, there's a great assessment that you can use with images to get kids, again, really digging deep into what they know about an image, and what it reflects about a time period. So, this is called the "Thought Bubble and Caption" activity, to assess students' analysis of images. So, using a post-it note, students will write either a thought bubble or a caption, and stick it onto an image. So for this image of a family at Ellis Island, they might say, "Look, family. That will be our new home in America." Or they might write a caption that says: A newly immigrated family waits on a dock with all of their belongings. And then after students have written the thought bubble or caption, they will post their images with the captions all around the classroom walls, so people can see what other students have said about their images.

If you'd like some further resources about teaching with images, you can look at the Inquiry in the Upper Midwest website. Or you can look at the Library of Congress. They have a great teachers page, and they have an amazing collection of prints, photographs, and other images. Thank you so much, and have fun analyzing images.