



Primary Source Analysis at North Carolina Freedom Park



"If the house is to be set in order, one cannot begin with the present; he must begin with the past."
Dr. John Hope Franklin

Overview

In this hands-on learning experience, students will analyze and interpret source packets (including primary and secondary sources) for the "Voices of Freedom" represented throughout [North Carolina Freedom Park](#). By engaging directly with and analyzing primary and secondary sources, students foster critical thinking, historical empathy, and a deeper understanding of the events, people and perspectives that NC Freedom Park addresses. (While this activity is designed to be completed on-site at Freedom Park, it can also be utilized back in the classroom, regardless of whether students visit the site in person.)

Source packets and activities are included for Harriet Jacobs (1813 - 1897); Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown (1883 – 1961); Lyda Moore Merrick (1890-1987); and Golden A. Frinks (1920-2004.) Teachers can also develop their own source packets for additional people featured throughout the Park. An optional culminating activity to allow students to artistically process what they learn is also provided, in which students create an artistic collage out of primary sources and other elements they choose.

Duration

40+ minutes (time will vary based on how many sources teachers have students analyze, the depth of conversation around them, & whether or not the culminating collage activity is implemented)

Grades

- 6th - 12th
- While sources involving reading are most appropriate for middle & high, elementary teachers can still utilize visual sources and discussion questions in their classrooms.

Materials

- Copies of Source Packets (available via the links below) - Packets are provided for four of the twenty "Voices of Freedom:"
 - [Harriet Jacobs \(1813 - 1897\)](#)
 - [Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown \(1883 – 1961\)](#)
 - [Lyda Moore Merrick \(1890-1987\)](#)
 - [Golden A. Frinks \(1920-2004\)](#)
 - Teachers can choose to edit the packets (omitting, adding or swapping out sources) as they see fit. In the case of time restraints or for simplicity, for instance, teachers may just choose one source for students to review.
 - Teachers may also consider finding sources and/or creating packets for other people represented throughout the Park, particularly for anyone with connections to your local area.
 - Teachers may want to assemble these in folders or on clipboards for easier interaction with them on-site at NC Freedom Park.
- (Optional) Access to internet-connected devices for playing video clips (e.g., smartphones, tablets, etc.)
- (Optional) Collage Activity supplies:
 - Samples of collage art are available via an internet search, such as those [here](#) and [here](#)
 - Scissors, glue sticks, and other collage art supplies
 - Copies of primary sources that can be cut apart
- *Additional activities for use before, during and after your visit to NC Freedom Park, as well as lesson plans for teaching about the people, history and themes of NC Freedom Park more in depth in the classroom, are*

available [here](#). All educational resources are aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study/NC Essential Standards in Social Studies.

Preparation

- Students should have a basic familiarity with North Carolina Freedom Park and should be prepared with expectations for engaging with the themes represented in the Park. See the lesson plan [“An Introduction to North Carolina Freedom Park.”](#)
- Teachers utilizing this activity on-site at Freedom Park should make sure students have a prior understanding of what primary and secondary sources are, as well as strategies for engaging with them.
- Before your visit to NC Freedom Park, copy and assemble the source packets; teachers may want to put them into folders or onto clipboards for easier use on-site.

Procedure

Introducing Primary/Secondary Source Analysis Activity (5 minutes)

1. As a warm up, project/provide the quote from Dr. John Hope Franklin: “If the house is to be set in order, one cannot begin with the present; he must begin with the past.” Ask students to take a few independent minutes to consider the quote and write down their thoughts regarding what they think Dr. Franklin’s message is.
2. Ask for a few student volunteers to share their interpretations, and then ask students to consider what role primary sources play in “beginning with the past.” Lead a quick discussion reminding students of the importance of primary sources, their role in understanding complex history, as well as the difference in primary and secondary sources. Explain that while on-site at NC Freedom Park, they will be doing a closer examination of one of the “Voices of Freedom” by analyzing a Source Packet related to that person.
3. Break students into groups and provide each group with one of the prepared packets. Students should also have pencils, and if they will be utilizing the web links or QR codes provided for video excerpts, they will also need an internet-connected device, such as a smartphone or tablet. (Teachers who are unable to provide access to devices can also remove these sources.)
 - Packets for four of the twenty “Voices of Freedom” are included. Teachers can alter the sources as they see fit, or create additional packets for other “Voices of Freedom.” (If any of the people featured throughout the Park hail from your local area or region, you might want to ensure they are included, for instance.)
 - Each packet includes diverse sources, such as video excerpts, photographs, writings, etc. related to the assigned person, as well as a worksheet with guiding questions that encourages each group of students to examine various aspects of the person’s life, challenges, accomplishments, etc.

Primary/Secondary Source Analysis (20+ minutes)

3. Review expectations for respectful and productive group work, then tell students to find their assigned person’s quote within NC Freedom Park then work together to examine the sources provided, using the worksheet to guide their discussion. Let students know how much time they will have to work with their groups.

Quick Reflection: “3-2-1” (Time Varies)

4. If the class is completing the source review on site at NC Freedom Park and you are waiting until you are back at school to have groups discuss and reflect as a whole class, one immediate strategy that can be used on the move is “3-2-1.” Students can come back together somewhere in the Park, or this can even be led on a return bus ride. Have a spokesperson from each group share (3) things their group learned about

their assigned person; (2) things they found interesting and/or would like to learn more about; and (1) question they have. (This strategy can alternatively be used with questions framed about NC Freedom Park and the visit in general. It can also be utilized back in the classroom. Students can alternatively be asked to write down their individual “3-2-1” responses.)

Culminating Discussion (20+ minutes)

5. Facilitate a class discussion where each group of students reports their observations and analyses of the source sets they reviewed and share how these sources deepened their learning about their assigned person. (Depending on timing and class size, discussions can be facilitated at NC Freedom Park, or back in the classroom.) Encourage students to support their points with evidence from the specific sources they reviewed. After a discussion about each Source Set, further discuss:
 - Generally speaking, how do primary sources help us understand historical figures and the time periods in which they lived? What about secondary sources?
 - What do the sources you analyzed reveal about how African Americans throughout North Carolina’s history have experienced, been restricted from, fought for, and/or achieved freedom?
 - How reliable are primary sources? Secondary sources?
 - Why is learning to analyze and think critically about a source an important skill to have?
 - How did your source review deeper your understanding of the larger historical context of NC Freedom Park in general, as well as the concept of freedom overall?

Back in the Classroom: Culminating Collage Activity (Optional)

6. As a creative processing activity, tell students that they will create a piece of collage art to process what they learned about their assigned person, as well as about the concept of freedom in general. Share a few examples of collage art with students, such those available as [here](#) and [here](#). Either individually or in the same working groups, students will create their own collage art representing the person they were assigned, and the concept of freedom in general as it relates.
7. Have students consider what message they want to convey before they start cutting and gluing. They should think creatively about how they might alter and use various primary sources (or portions of sources), combined with other artistic elements (text, found objects, textures, additional decorations, etc.), and arrange such items to highlight specific aspects of the theme of freedom and/or the “Voices of Freedom.”
8. Provide students with the necessary materials for cutting out sources, images, supplementary materials, etc. and arranging them on poster board, cardboard, etc. (They will need copies of the sources they have engaged with for tearing, cutting, and altering, as well as other art materials.)
9. Students should experiment with different arrangements to find the most visually appealing and informative composition based on what they want to convey. Once satisfied with their layout, students can start gluing and adding text, creative elements, and/or additional decorations that help provide context.
10. After completing their collages, have students write a short reflection (individually or as a group) on their choices, explaining how their final piece represents the theme of freedom.
11. Once the collages are complete, consider displaying them in the classroom and have students do a [Gallery Walk](#) in which they view and discuss each other’s work. For an added level of collaboration, students might be instructed to figure out how to combine certain collages to create larger works of art. Final products can be displayed in a common area where other students and teachers can appreciate the work, allowing for further engagement with NC Freedom Park and its themes.