RECORDING A CHANGING NATION

Lesson Extension: Historical Analysis

Duration: 50 minutes

Grade Level: 6\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} grade

About this Resource: Looking “beyond the frame” helps students consider a document’s larger context and assess the completeness of the narrative as it has been presented. In this activity, students will consider the in/visible social and historical forces at play in a photograph, then consider the perspectives excluded from it. Depending on your curriculum, consider reviewing a timeline of the major events of the 1970s and 1980s.

This activity may serve as preparation for the Continuity and Change Over Time activity.

Materials: This activity will require access to print or electronic reproductions of select images.

Protocol:

After completing a Visual Analysis, select one photograph from that set and conduct the protocol below with students focusing on that single photograph. After each step, bring students back together so that they may share their discoveries and you can check their understanding.

1. Contextualize and Consider Intention: Independently read the photograph’s label text, then try to answer the questions below. If you hit a gap in your knowledge, note it down as a research question.
   - Where was the photograph made? Consider not only the state, but also the city, neighborhood, and specific setting or site.
   - When was it made (year, season, time of day, and even occasion)?
   - Who made it? Look beyond the artist’s identity and consider whether s/he worked alone or in collaboration. Who paid for the materials or paid the photographer?
   - Why was this photograph made? Who was the intended audience?
   - What else was going on at this place and time? What other accounts can you find? Consider accounts created by authors of different backgrounds.

2. Research and Share: Working with a partner, pool your research questions. Which two seem most helpful for understanding the time period (historical context) and the people or surroundings (social context) of this photograph? Conduct a quick online search, making certain to exercise good sourcing habits, then share what you discovered with your whole class.

3. Consider Multiple Perspectives: The photographer made this image amongst many others. It captures one moment in time and one set of people and things, thereby narrowing the viewer’s focus to the people and places the artist chose.
   - Whose perspectives are represented in this photograph? Consider the figures, words, and objects captured inside the frame as well as the people or perspectives implied by the composition.
• What historical events or social issues are relevant but not represented? Who from that time period might have a perspective on one or more of those issues but are absent from the frame?
• Generate a list of questions you would ask people both present in and absent from this photograph so that you might better understand the complexities of the time.

4. **Express**: Of the perspectives or voices that are left out of the photograph, which one do you feel most connected to? What could you do to alter or update this photograph in order to better represent that perspective? Once you’ve redesigned the image, create a "beyond the frame" label text that explains your discoveries, cites sources, and describes your rationale for the update.

5. **Curate**: Placing your altered image and new label amongst those of your classmates, look at these as a set. What stories does the set tell that the individual photographs do not? What larger themes emerge? Which images would you group together in order to make those themes more explicit?

6. **Reflect**: What are the strengths and limitations of photographs as tools for understanding history? As a historian, why is it important to consider multiple perspectives and missing voices? Why might it be important to hear from multiple perspectives, as an elected official?

**Note to Teacher**: Step Four invites students to redesign the photograph. Depending on available resources, this step might involve using digital tools to edit or add to the existing photograph. Alternatively, students might draw a new scene or verbally narrate what a new image might look like.

**Formative Assessment**: Steps Two, Three, and Four provide assessment points. Having selected a photographic series from a period of history under examination in your curriculum, listen for students’ application of content knowledge to their assessment of the photograph. If, at this point, they have not shared aloud information previously studied, revisiting that material at this point may be essential.

**Summative Assessment**: Step Five provides an assessment point in the form of an exhibition of learning. Consider using student work product from this step as an activity preview for students in subsequent school years.