Researching and Analyzing primary sources:
Comparing the lives of children in 1900 and 2013

Overview: Students will work with primary sources to compare the lives of children in the 1900’s with their lives today. They will be taught to research and find the information on the Library of Congress website in order to analyze photographs and an article about child labor. They will use their notes and analysis to write a short argumentative essay on their preference of era.

Goal: To teach students to find, process, and analyze knowledge found on the Library of Congress website and apply it in a personal reflection.

Objectives: Students will be able to use analysis tools to better understand primary sources. Students will be able to identify and use primary sources found on the Library of Congress website. Students will be able to apply research in the writing of an argumentative essay.

Guiding Question (LDC Task 4): Would you rather live in the year 1900 or 2013? After reading the magazine article and analyzing the pictures, write a 2-3 paragraph essay that compares being a child in 1900 and 2013 and argues why you would prefer one over the other. Be sure to support your position with evidence from the text.

Time Requirement: Three 35 minute class periods.

Grade: 6th

Subject: Library

PA Common Core Standards: CC.1.2.6.H Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Diverse Media, CC.1.4.6.1 Opinion/Argumentative Content, CC1.4.6.S Responding to Literature, CC1.4.6.V Conducting Research, CC.1.5.6.C Comprehension and Collaboration: Evaluating Information
**Preparation**

**Materials Used:** Analysis worksheet from the Library of Congress website for primary sources, graphic organizers (Venn diagram and concept map), rubric for essay, computers, printouts of excerpt from the Atlantic Monthly, pencils, and highlighters.

**Resources Used:**


**Instructional Procedures**

Class Period #1

- Library will introduce the lesson on research and analyzing primary sources. Ask students the difference between primary and secondary sources.

- Students will be given a concept map and asked to write down what they know or think about how children lived in the early 1900’s. The librarian will ask questions to guide them: ‘What did they do for fun?’ ‘What did their school look like?’ ‘What did they learn?’, ‘Did they work? If yes, what types of jobs did they do?,’ etc.

- Students will be given time to complete the concept map, followed by a class discussion so the librarian can establish a baseline of student knowledge from which to build.

- Librarian will write the guiding question on the board so that students can continuously refer to the goal of the activity.

- Students will go to computers where the librarian will lead a discussion on the merit of various website types as sources. For example, .gov means it is a government website, so their information is probably reliable. Any site with .com or .net may not be as reliable of a website.

- Students will be directed to the Library of Congress website and be instructed to search for primary sources related to the activity. An appropriate search phrase is: Children’s lives at the turn of the twentieth century. After the search results are displayed, a discussion of the available resources should be conducted, including the usefulness of results and the various filtering options.
• Have students select the primary source set result (2nd result at the time of writing) for further analysis. When loaded, explain the available sources, be sure to convey that teacher guides are not the sources they are looking for.

• Students will be given a copy of the Primary Source Analysis Tool from the Library of Congress website and asked to pick any two pictures from the primary source set and independently write down answers to the prompting questions about what they see in the images they chose.

• They will be given the remainder of the class to complete the exercise, and should turn in the concept map and analysis tool at the end of the class.

Class Period #2

• Librarian will reintroduce the topic and write the guiding question on the board.

• Students will be given a handout with an excerpt from The Atlantic Monthly article Children’s Labor: A Problem. Librarian will provide background information on the article including that it is a primary source.

• Librarian will distribute highlighters and instruct students to read the article and highlight sections that relate to the guiding question. Any information that indicates how children lived in the 1900s should be considered, especially that which resonates with the student.

• Provide the students an appropriate amount of time to read and highlight the article, encourage them to take notes that will help them to develop an opinion regarding the guiding question.
• Distribute Venn Diagrams and assign students partners to discuss their findings and choose a few parts that stick out as being good for use in their essays. Have them fill out the Venn Diagrams, differentiating activities and impressions of children in the 1900s and today. This should take the remainder of the class.

• Students will turn in the articles and notes at the end of the class, to be returned during Class Period #3.

Class Period #3

• Librarian will reintroduce the topic and write the guiding question on the board.

• Librarian will return all materials to the students and give them the opportunity to reexamine the primary source pictures from the Library of Congress website, reminding them of the search procedure if necessary.

• The majority of Class Period #3 should be spent having students write their argumentative essays answering the guiding question. Librarian will instruct the students what is expected of them, including the length of the essay, the choice between the 1900s and 2013, and the use of primary source materials for supporting evidence.

• Before the end of the class, students can have peers read over their papers before they turn it in to check for any errors, and make sure that it follows the guidelines and answers the question.

• The end of this learning activity will be marked by the students turning in their essays.
Assessment Methods

LDC Writing Task

• 2-3 paragraph argumentative essay

Mini-tasks:

• Concept map
• Primary source analysis tool
• Venn Diagram

Librarian will grade the tasks based upon the quality of the students’ work with regard to effort, ability to answer the guiding question, and use of primary sources to support their argument.