

Lesson Plan: Connecting Primary Sources Through Historical Storytelling

Time Required: 1–2 class periods (50–90 minutes total)

Instructional Strategy: Historical Thinking, Close Reading, Creative Writing, Evidence-Based Writing

Lesson Title

Finding the Story: Connecting Three Primary Sources

Essential Question

How can multiple primary sources be used together to tell a historically accurate story?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze three primary source documents for historical context and point of view.
- Identify connections among multiple historical sources.
- Use evidence from all three documents to create a historically accurate narrative.
- Cite evidence from primary sources within their writing.

Historical Thinking Skills

- Sourcing
- Contextualization
- Corroboration
- Historical Evidence
- Chronological Reasoning
- Perspective Taking

Activity Part 1: Analyze the Sources (20–25 Minutes)

This activity can be done individually or in groups of 3.

Read the following primary documents. There are three of them that all reference Delaware along the Delaware River in the 1670s. Fill out the Part I analysis sheet for each document.
(Doc 1)

Activity Part 2: Making Connections (15 Minutes)

Students compare all three documents using Part II of Document 1.

Connection Questions

1. What event connects all three documents?
2. Which people appear in more than one document?
3. What common themes exist?
4. How does each document show a different perspective?
5. How could these documents fit together into one historical story?

Students complete a planning chart.

Document 1

Name:

Date:

Period:

Primary Document Analysis Part I

What is the title of the document?	What is the date of the document?
What type of document? (Letter, Broadside, law, etc.)	What terms do you not understand?
Who wrote the document?	For whom was the document written?

What larger event was happening at this time? (Context)
What was the Purpose of the document?

Comparing the Documents Part II

Document	What event connects the documents?	What themes connect the documents?	What people connect the documents?
2			
3			
4			

How do these documents fit together?

Document 2

Translation

Propositions made about the fortifications at Delaware

Series:

[A1879](#)

Scanned Document:

[NYSA A1879-78 V20 0011](#)

On the proposition of the Hon. Capt. Caar to the Lords High Councillors, that a suitable place be selected here in New Castle in order to have some fortifications for defence in times of emergency; and that a suitable place also be selected above Christina Kill in order to make it defencible as a place of refuge in times of emergency, on which proposition it was answered and resolved:

1. That the market where the bell hangs is deemed the most suitable location in New Castle to make a fortification of block houses, which are to be situated in such a way that will be judged most proper, provided that the Honorable Capt. Caarshall cede forever the required land without retaining any claim on it. Concerning the expenses and labor of the aforementioned fortification and block houses, the citizens of New Castle shall, for the present, each according to his means and position, defray the expense of paying the workers, provided that the inhabitants in this jurisdiction shall suitably obligate themselves in such labor and work each according to his capacity.
2. Concerning the fortification above, this is left to the discretion of the officials above, to arrange their defences in the most suitable place or places.
3. All of this, however, with the provision, that, if war does not break out with the natives, God forbid, the aforementioned block houses shall be used as public buildings, such as Town hall, jails and other public needs, on the condition that the expense shall then be charged to the general and public account throughout the entire river.
4. This resolution is not to be put into effect without having orders from the Honorable General, but necessary preparations are to be made secretly without arousing suspicions among the natives. Thus done and confirmed this 5th of October 1670.

John Carr

Will. Tom

H. Block

Israel Helm

Piter Rambo

Piter Kock

[Endorsed:] Propositions made about the fortifications at Delaware, under the hand of C. Carre and the rest of the high Court there. 1670. The order of the High Court.^[1]

Document 3

(Letter to Capt. Carr about Threats Uttered by Some Indians)

These are to Informe you that heare ware one Friday night withine night a party of Ind
() about 4 or 5 and twenty and would with violence into our houses but wee kept them ()
only one, which said thay Cam from the () awa () and would do us no hurt but for the
English and all new Castll thay would kill man woman and Child and burne the howll
please, so thay say () fare from our houses that night wee () not a Little watch full I feare
wee shall () have order tell tise two Latte pray ee Carful and Keepe good watch

Yours Thomas S ()

Document 4

(William Tom and Peter Alrichs to Gov. Lovelace about Indian Affairs)

9th of March 1670

Right Honorable

Yours of the 28 of February wee have receav() and to give your honor a full answer is more th() wee can doe being not all one mens children and for us few English none of us able to speake to the Indians but so farre as wee can advise your honor is as followeth.

1 first that wee are in a sad condicon is most certaine being under the power of the Heathen and no power to defend by reason a number of out plantacions are not able to secure them selves and wee make a greate question if wee in the place cann will secure ourselves and to bring them into the Towne wilbe there utter ruine and losse of the river for then they expose there houses corne and cattell to the fury of the Indians and wee not able to mainteyne them here for prevencion of which our best proposal is if you honor could spare so much time as our best proposal is if your honor could spare so much time as to come over to treat with the Sachems without dispute the reverence to your person would procure us 4 or 5 yeares respect and by that time the numerous issue by the assistance of god wilbe able to defend them selves

2 The Sachems of the Indians give for reason of there warre that they threaten to make upon the Christians is they say where the English come they drive them from there lands and bring for instance the North Virginia and Maryland and feare if not timely prevent () shall does so here.

3 Thirdly if possible to invite Capt. Carteret to beare your honor company the most of the Indians living upon his side.

4 Fourthly with all reverence your honor having writ that your honor if occasion was would expose yourselfe to the trouble of coming over and desired to know what forces to bring with you wee doe think that 25 men is enough for the guard of your honors person and that number will not frighten the Sachems and more may render your honors journe unprofitable by there non appearance your honor now att the time of the yeare not being to fight but to treat

5 fiftly if your honor comes as wee well hope be pleased by the first to send an expresse and Peter Aldricks shall meete your honor att the time prefix to pilot your honor from the Navecinck and informe the Indians of your coming that they may not leave there houses att the sight of so many men to them unexpected

6 sixtly our intencion here is to build a blocke house 40 foote square with 4 att every end of Flanckers in the middle of the Towne the fort not being fit to be repaired and if repaired of noe defence lying att the extreme end of the towne and noe garrison therefore wee begg that wee may have liberty to pull itt downe and make use of the tiles bricks and other materi() for the use of our new intended fortificacion which if wee have no occasion for as wee reare wee shall will be convenient for a Court house notwithstanding

Writing Assignment

Prompt

Using evidence from all three primary sources, write a **one-page historical story** that accurately connects the documents into one narrative.

Your must be written from the perspective of:

- A Historian in modern times

Your story should remain historically accurate

Story Requirements

Students must include:

- ✓ Information from **all three** documents
- ✓ At least **three direct references** to evidence
- ✓ Accurate historical setting
- ✓ Logical sequence of events
- ✓ Beginning, middle, and end
- ✓ Approximately one page (400–600 words)

Assessment Rubric (20 Points)

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Uses all three documents	Skillfully integrates all three	Uses all three with minor omissions	Uses only two effectively	Uses one or lacks evidence
Historical Accuracy	Completely accurate	Mostly accurate	Some inaccuracies	Many inaccuracies
Evidence	Multiple well-integrated references	Uses evidence from each source	Limited evidence	Little or no evidence
Organization	Clear beginning, middle, end	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow

Exit Ticket (5 Minutes)

Students respond to the following questions:

1. Which primary source was the most useful for writing your story? Why?
2. What did combining multiple documents help you understand that a single document could not?
3. How do historians use primary sources in ways similar to what you did today?