**Analyzing Sources Related to the *Sultana* Disaster**

**Grades 9-12**

**Social Studies**

**Length:**

1-2 50 minute class periods

**Objective:**

1. The student will analyze primary and secondary sources related to the sinking of the steamboat *Sultana.*
2. The student will analyze primary and secondary sources to determine the causes and effects of the *Sultana* disaster.

**Essential/Compelling Question(s):**

How can we use primary and secondary sources to answer questions about the events and people from the past?

What were causes and effects of the sinking of the *Sultana?*

**Guiding Questions:**

How do secondary sources like these help us come to conclusions about historical questions?

What do the sources tell us about the Sultana and its legacy?

How does the author’s point of view affect the meaning of the source?

How do primary sources help us come to conclusions about historical questions?

**Common Core Standards:**

Grades 9-10

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/9/) Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Grades 11-12

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/7/) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**C3 Frameworks:**

D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

**Key Terms:**

Maritime, steamboat, primary source, secondary source, APPARTS

**Materials:**

Computer or SmartBoard for video and access to web exhibit for sources.

**Opening:**

Show the following video to the class to introduce the *Sultana* disaster (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-ureLMb1wA>). Afterwards, pose the essential questions to the class. What were the causes and effects of the sinking of the *Sultana* and how can we use primary and secondary sources to answer our questions? Ensure that the students know the difference in primary and secondary sources. Ask the students to come up with three questions about the disaster that they would like answered by the end of the lesson. Ask for some examples from the class to identify some of the main questions and write them on the whiteboard or Smartboard. The questions and answers can be used as an exit ticket (optional).

**Activities:**

1. Sultana Background Reading Activity: Divide the class into groups of 3-4 and give half of the groups the article titled “[Understanding the Sultana Tragedy: The Long Way Home](https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/understanding-the-sultana-tragedy-the-long-way-home/)” and the other half the article titled “[Sultana: Greatest Maritime Disaster in American History; A Nation’s Best Kept Secret](https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/sultana-greatest-maritime-tragedy-in-united-states-history-a-nations-best-kept-secret/)”. These articles (linked above) can be found on the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture web exhibit, [*As Much As The Water: How Steamboats Shaped Arkansas*](http://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/)*.* First, ask the students to scan the readings for unfamiliar words and explain where needed. Have each group read their assigned article and develop a summary of it to report to the rest of the class. Address similarities and differences in the summaries of each article and discuss as a class. Promote class discussion by asking the following questions: Was anyone able to answer any of their questions from the opening after reading the articles and hearing the summaries? Could the disaster have been prevented? If so, how? (Ask for evidence from the readings) How do secondary sources like these help us come to conclusions about historical questions?
2. Document Analysis: First, give the students an overview of Frederick T. Anderson, a steamboat artist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (use the article in the UALR web exhibit titled [“Frederick T. Anderson - Romantic Landscape Artist”](https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/frederick-t-anderson-romantic-landscape-artist/)). Show the students examples of his paintings (including <https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/frederick-t-anderson-romantic-landscape-artist/#gallery/255312726f5e64d0e2b70b6e2c997d51/14> and <https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/frederick-t-anderson-romantic-landscape-artist/#gallery/9512956d799fc55f64bc5352c099f78d/4>). Then show the Anderson painting [*The Sultana*](https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/frederick-t-anderson-romantic-landscape-artist/#gallery/2e6d8185097c1ee79e459af4dfce95ca/86)*.* Along with the painting, introduce the students to the document analysis acronym APPARTS attached at the end of the lesson. In groups of 3-4, have the students use the articles on Anderson and their knowledge of *Sultana* to apply APPARTS to the Anderson painting of the infamous steamer. The students may use other sources such as “[Frederick Tanqueray Anderson’s Steamboats](https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/frederick-tanqueray-andersons-steamboats/)”. Go through the acronym as a class and address questions and examples. What does this painting tell us about the Sultana and its legacy? Does Anderson’s previous work with steamboats affect the meaning of the painting? Focus on the point of view of the author. Transition the class into primary sources by explaining how they differ from secondary sources.
3. Sultana photograph primary source: Using the [photograph](http://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/files/2015/06/sultana-poem-image.jpg) of Sultana taken just hours before the disaster, begin a class discussion using the following question to analyze the primary source: From what we know from the articles in activity #1, what is the mood of the soldiers aboard the boat? What had they gone through to get to this point? If you had thought that this was simply an accident, did the photograph alter your interpretation in any way?

**Closing:**

Ask the students to refer back to the three questions they wanted to be answered from the opening activity. Were the questions answered? If not, ask those students to identify remaining questions and use as a discussion, using other students responses to answer those questions. Have the students write a paragraph stating their opinion on the causes and effects of the Sultana disaster and citing which items led them to this conclusion.

**Assessment:**

Students will be assessed on participation and group work as well as the summative paragraph with evidence.

**Content Resources:**

UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture web exhibit. <http://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/>

Encyclopedia of Arkansas entry on the Sultana

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2269>

Sultana Bibliography

<https://ualrexhibits.org/steamboats/explore-the-exhibit/archival-resources/>

**APPARTS**

**AUTHOR**

Who created the source? What do you know about the

author? What is the author’s point of view?

**PLACE AND TIME**

Where and when was the source produced? How might

this affect the meaning of the source?

**PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

Beyond information about the author and the context of its

creation, what do you know that would help you further

understand the primary source? For example, do you

recognize any symbols and recall what they represent?

**AUDIENCE**

For whom was the source created and how might this affect

the reliability of the source?

**REASON**

Why was the source produced at the time it was produced?

**THE MAIN IDEA**

What point is the source trying to convey?

**SIGNIFICANCE** Why is this source important? What inferences can you draw from this document? Ask yourself, “So what?” in relation to the question asked.