

GETTING STARTED

Activity 1. Making Connections

Engaging students with historic images can be a challenge since they are so different from the visuals supplied by television, video games, and websites. Begin by allowing students the freedom to explore and respond to the Tower Tube materials before requiring specific assignments of them.

Display the Tower Tube images around the room and tell students to treat the room as a gallery. Give them a few minutes to walk around, allowing them to informally view and discuss the images. Students who need more structure can be asked to look for something simple and specific: a favorite image, for example, with two reasons to justify their opinion. Engage students in a discussion about the images, and have each student write a fictional museum placard (including title, artist, year of composition, and a brief description) to describe the image of their choice.

Activity 2. Building Basic Vocabulary

Encourage students to use these basic architectural terms to describe images from the Tower Tube and skyscraper.org. Additional vocabulary is provided with each of the activities in this User Guide.

- Skyscraper** a tall building that is taller than the buildings around it at the time of construction, contains a steel or concrete skeleton frame and an elevator, and has floors where people live or work
- Aerial View** a photograph or map showing buildings or city scenes from the air
- Blueprint** a scale representation of an architect's plan in white on a blue background (or blue on a white background), used in the construction of a building
- Floor Plan** a diagram or "map" showing how rooms are arranged in one floor of a building
- Skyline** a view of buildings against the sky or horizon

Activity 3. Strategies for Examining Primary Sources

The ability to examine, analyze, evaluate, and even synthesize primary sources is not just a skill students must master to pass standardized tests. The critical thinking taught through primary source examination will be necessary to the future of students as they enter the 21st Century workforce.

Tower Tube resources level the playing field for primary source interpretation by reducing the importance of variables like vocabulary, reading level, and prior knowledge. Students for whom English is not their first language, who have learning disorders, or are academically advanced—all can view and discuss the Tower Tube images using the same technique. The technique can then be applied to other primary sources—other images, newspaper articles, letters, etc.

Step 1. *Literal*

Students examine the document and make note of what they see.

- *What kind of document is it?*
- *How was the document created? What kind of technology did it use?*
- *If there is an image, what is it an image of? How is that thing depicted?*
- *When do you think the document was created? Look for clues in the document, including technology, language, and images.*
- *Does the document have any interesting physical qualities? (e.g., handwriting, stamps, watermarks)*

Step 2. *Community*

Students move one step beyond the document and into the world in which it was created.

- *Who might be responsible for making the document?*
- *Who was the intended audience for the document?*
- *What was the document intended to communicate?*

Step 3. *World*

Students move beyond the immediate world of the document and into their own world.

- *How does this document relate to your own life—relationships, experience, or opinions?*
- *Why might this document be interesting to historians?*
- *Does this document—or combination of documents—teach us something true about the world that might be useful today?*