

JACKDAWS

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WHAT IS A JACKDAW?

A jackdaw is a collection of reproductions of primary source documents, gathered together on a single topic. Its name comes from the crow-like bird who makes a habit of collecting objects to bring back to its nest. Jackdaws are usually on history topics, though some have been made for science, literature, and biographical topics as well. Jackdaws have the potential to be used across the curriculum.

A typical jackdaw consists of a number of reproductions of primary source documents plus support materials including a timeline, background essays on the topic, a bibliography of additional reading material, teacher ideas, and lesson plans. Jackdaws also have the potential to include audiovisual primary sources such as interviews on audiocassette, newsreels, or music.

WHAT GRADE LEVELS ARE THEY USED IN?

Jackdaws are used from grades 4 through 12, and can be used in higher education as well.

WHAT ARE PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS?

Primary source documents are writings—letters, maps, diaries, journals, telegrams, newspaper articles, manuscripts, drawings, photographs, certificates, government reports, inscriptions, postcards—that come from the time period or place being studied or the person being studied. Primary sources are “the horse’s mouth”. Secondary sources are writings using or incorporating the primary sources. For example, a person’s memoirs would be a primary source, whereas a biography written by another person using the memoirs would be a secondary source.

WHY ARE PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS IMPORTANT?

Primary sources allow students to actually see and touch history when they don’t have access to the actual documents. It allows them to use critical thinking skills to make observations and draw their own conclusions from the historical evidence before them. They also learn the difference between fact and interpretation of fact/opinion. Primary sources can be used as trigger points for discussion. All of this, in turn, ultimately gives them an appreciation for the detective work that goes into historical research.

Understanding the significance of primary sources is particularly important today because, with the prevalence of Internet use, it has become all too easy to plagiarize, copying a primary source without acknowledging it in a citation. Primary sources quoted only partially or out of context can lead to

misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Students need to get into the habit of checking their “facts” by going back to the primary sources of those facts. They also need to understand how a person or the media can use primary sources or parts of primary sources to manipulate people into accepting their ideas and agendas.

WHERE CAN YOU GET JACKDAWS?

Jackdaw Publications is the primary producer of jackdaws for school use. For a free catalogue, go to:

www.jackdaw.com

or write to: Jackdaw Publications
P.O. Box 503
Amawalk, NY 10501-0503

Or call: 1-800-789-0022.

OR you can check out the MVCC Utica Campus Library’s collection of jackdaws, which circulate for 3 weeks. Go to the MVCC Libraries’ web page: <http://www.mvcc.edu/academics/library/> Click on Library Catalog, and type in jackdaws as a keyword to view the list and see which are currently available (ie, not checked out). Or see the list below.

MAKING YOUR OWN JACKDAW

You can create your own jackdaw for use with a teaching unit or assign it as a classroom project. Local history topics are perfect for this. Here are some tips for doing so:

Identify where local history primary sources are found. This could be in libraries, museums, historical societies, private collections, newspaper morgues, local government archives, or other places.

Make arrangements ahead of time for someone knowledgeable to assist you in your search. Make sure that you will have permission to photocopy items and ascertain the cost.

Allow yourself plenty of time to sift through documents for those appropriate to use.

Use primary sources that are grade-level appropriate.

You may have to transcribe old cursive writing that may be difficult for students to read. You may also find documents in a non-English language that will need to be translated.

Be aware that some documents may be self-explanatory and some may require some background context to understand.

Be sure if you are copying an article, photograph, or ad from a newspaper, magazine or journal article to cite what issue and page the article came from.

VIRTUAL OR e-JACKDAWS

Many primary source documents are being scanned into computers and made available through the Internet as PDF files (for multi-page documents) or as .jpg files (for single sheets or pictures). These can be assembled into an online or electronic jackdaw. While PDF or .jpg documents may not give students the feel of the size, texture, or color of the originals, it does give them access to documents which are housed in locations too far away or too fragile to access in person.

You will need a computer with the program Adobe Acrobat in order to open and read PDF files. Most of the time, when you try to access a PDF file a window will open leading you to a free downloadable version of Adobe Acrobat if your computer is not already equipped with it.

Some primary source documents are transcribed online (HTML) rather than scanned in as PDF files. Many government documents are available in both formats. Some journal articles and whole books are also available as both HTML and PDF.

An easy way to find PDF files in an Internet search is to use PDF as a search term. For example, if you want to find PDF files pertaining to Utica, New York, schools you could type the following search into Google:

+pdf +"utica, new york" +schools

You can also scan in any primary source documents that a student, parent or grandparent might own, with their permission.

JACKDAWS AVAILABLE AT THE MVCC UTICA CAMPUS LIBRARY

Note: All jackdaws are shelved in a bin behind the circulation desk. Ask at the circulation desk to peruse them.

The American Revolution. (Grades 7-12)
American Revolution: Women on All Fronts. (Grades 5-8)
Boston Tea Party to the American Revolution. (Grades 5-8)
California Gold Rush 1849. (Grades 5-8)
The Civil War. (Grades 7-12)
Colonial Immigration. (Grades 5-8)
Columbus and Explorers Come to the New World. (Grades 5-8)
Computers. (Grades 7-12)
Cortes and the Aztecs. (Grades 5-8)
Erie Canal. (Grades 5-8)
The First Transcontinental Railroad. (Grades 5-8)
French & Indian War. (Grades 5-8)
The Great Depression in America. (Grades 5-8)
The Holocaust. (Grades 6-12)
Immigrants Come to America, 1870-1930. (Grades 5-8)
Immigration, 1879-1930. (Grades 7-12)
Indian Resistance in Growing America. (Grades 5-8)
Indians of North America. (Grades 7-12)
Industrial Revolution Comes to America. (Grades 5-8)
Jamestown Colony. (Grades 5-8)
Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806. (Grades 5-8)
Louisiana Purchase and Its Legacy. (Grades 7-12)
New York State History. (Grades 4-5)
The Oregon Trail. (Grades 5-8)
Pilgrims and the Mayflower. (Grades 5-8)
Shakespeare's World and the Theatre. (Grades 5-8)
Slavery Comes to America. (Grades 5-8)
Slavery in the United States. (Grades 7-12)
Story of the Constitution. (Grades 5-8)
Story of the Declaration of Independence. (Grades 5-8)
Struggle for Black Voting Rights. (Grades 5-8)
Struggle for Women's Rights in America. (Grades 5-8)
Trail of Tears. (Grades 5-8)
Tutankhamun and the Discovery of the Tomb. (Grades 6-9)
Underground Railroad. (Grades 5-8)
War Between the States: Civil War. (Grades 5-8)
Witch Hysteria Comes to Salem Village. (Grades 5-8)
Women's Rights in the United States. (Grades 7-12)
World War II: Life at Home. (Grades 5-8)
Writing: Cave Paintings to Printing Presses. (Grades 5-8)

ELECTRONIC JACKDAW: THE ERIE CANAL

Compiled by Krista Hartman, Librarian, MVCC

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Primary Source Documents:

Daily Wage Rates on the Erie Canal, 1845 to 1870 (in unadjusted dollars)

(transcribed from: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, c1970.)

<http://alpha.furman.edu/~benson/docs/wage4570.htm>

1868 Color Map of New York Canals and Railroads

(from University of Rochester's Department of History web page: History of the Erie Canal)

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/canal/map/1868ny.jpg>

The Erie Canal: a Journey Through History

(from web site: ePodunk)

Contains a multimedia tour of the Erie Canal with digitized old postcards of communities along the canal.

<http://www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal/index.html#>

The Erie Canal at Little Falls: Old Lithographs, Paintings, Woodcuts, etc.

(from web site: The Erie Canal)

<http://www.eriecanal.org/LittleFalls-1.html>

Evolution of boats used on Erie Canal, 1825-1899

(from University of Rochester's Department of History web page: History of the Erie Canal)

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/canal/map/1899boat.jpg>

Evolution of canal cross section, 1825-1899

(from University of Rochester's Department of History web page: History of the Erie Canal)

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/canal/map/1899prsm.jpg>

Maps of the Erie Canal

(from web page: The Erie Canal) Contains many digitized old maps.

<http://www.eriecanal.org/maps.html>

"The Marriage of the Waters": painting by C.Y. Turner, 1905

(from web page: The Erie Canal)

<http://www.eriecanal.org/images/general-1/marriage.jpg>

Whitford, Noble E. *History of the Canal System of the State of New York...*

Full text of this 1906 2-volume history, from University of Rochester's Department of History web page.

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/canal/bib/whitford/1906/>

Supporting materials:

Erie Canal Chronology and Bibliography (to 1868)

(from web site: University of Rochester, Department of History)

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/canal/chron.htm>

Exploring the Erie Canal: MVCC Libraries Resources

Compiled by Krista Hartman, Librarian. Includes books, videos, web sites.

http://www.mvcc.edu/academics/library/erie_canal.pdf

KEHartman

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