

Revisiting the Massacre at Lancaster

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Lesson Overview:

Two core historical core historical thinking skills of the AP US History curriculum are properly sourcing documents and understanding change and continuity of topics over time. Students must demonstrate both skills by contextualizing and analyzing primary source documents and responding in the College Board exam. This exercise is envisioned as part of the final preparation for the exam, though it could also be used as a mid-term review or as a review at the conclusion of Period 4 (1800-1848).

The lesson first asks students to source *Massacre of the Indians in Lancaster* (1841). It requires they locate the image in context of both 1763 and 1841 and answer the essential question of how the attitudes towards native peoples and understanding of the incident may have changed in the intervening period. It then asks them to extrapolate this understanding by formulating their own AP short answer or essay prompt questions which they will peer-answer.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will source an image by assessing the historical context, point of view of the lithographer, the lithographer's intended audience, and the intended purpose.
- Students will recall and explain the historical context of the massacre of the Conestoga.
- Students will recall and explain the historical context of the 1840s, specifically the cultural forces of Manifest Destiny, the Indian Removal Act, and antebellum reform movements.
- Students will distinguish how the social forces of the 1840s may or may not be reflected in the lithographer's point of view and intended purpose.
- Students will analyze the extent of change and continuity in attitudes of White Americans towards Native Peoples in the intervening period between 1763 and 1841.
- Students will extrapolate historical questions related to the same essential question and provide historical evidence to support analytical answers to those questions.

Grade Level: AP US History and Grades 10-12

Duration: Two 40-minute class periods or one 80-minute block.

Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific detail to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3:** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WH.6-8.1 (b):** Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WH.11-12.1 (e):** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.

Historical Background:

1763 marked the end of the Seven Years' War which left the British as the dominant European power in North America. This destabilized the native peoples delicate strategy of playing the French and British off of each other diplomatically and economically contemporaneous with British policy abandonment of the gift-giving and ceremonial negotiations. Inspired by Neolin vision of a pan-nativism response, Native Peoples responded with violence in what became known as Pontiac's War. To assert royal authority over the Ohio Valley, the British crown introduced the Proclamation Act of 1763, restricting white settlement west of the Alleghenies, which was met with derision and non-compliance of white settlers. In this milieu, a group of white settlers from in central Pennsylvania attacked a group of peaceable Native People at Conestoga Indiantown, killing six and razing their homes under the pretense that they were defending against an attack on their settlements. While charged for murder, these "Paxton Boys" were not held accountable. Instead, they were hailed by other white settlers as heroes who challenged "Indian" aggression and the feckless Quaker government in Philadelphia.

Throughout the early-1800s conflicts between Native Peoples and settlers continued with the southern and western expansions of the era. Driven by Jacksonian policy, the story of Indian removal from the eastern half of the North America became the central event of the 1830s 1840s. Yet the era of the 1830-1840s also saw the emergence of the social reform movements, particularly the abolitionists. The question in sourcing the document is one of both point of view and purpose. While *Massacre of the Indians in Lancaster* was engraved in a period of virulent violence against Native Peoples, aspects of the image may promote a more compassionate memory of the Conestoga. This lithograph was also produced in Lancaster, where abolitionists sentiments ran strong. Sourcing of this document therefore requires students to consider these various social forces and account for change and continuity in this complicated relationship.

Materials:

- James Wimer, *Massacre of the Indians in Lancaster* (Lancaster, 1841), Digital Paxton.
- Handout: Sourcing a Document or Image (AP US History Format)

Reference Materials:

- Will Fenton, "Historical Overview," Digital Paxton.
- Theda Purdue, "Indian Removal," Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.
- Joyce Appleby, "National Expansion and Reform," Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Procedures:

1. Teacher frames key question: How did attitudes of white settlers change towards the native people in the period from the end of period 2 to end of period 4 of the APUSH curriculum? (3 minutes)
2. Distribute copies of the *Massacre of the Indians in Lancaster* and the Sourcing a Document or Image Handout.
3. Student complete step 1 of the Sourcing a Document worksheet. (5 minutes)
4. Students complete step 2 of the Sourcing a Document worksheet. (7 minutes)
5. Teacher facilitated discussion. (20 minutes)
 - a. Survey initial responses to the key question.
 - b. Assess understanding and recall of the historical context of Conestoga massacre.
 - c. Socratic discussion of point of view: Who is artist? When did he engrave the image? What is his perspective on the Paxton Boys?
 - d. Socratic discussion of audience and purpose. Who is artist trying to reach? Why?
 - e. Assess understanding and recall historical context of publication date (1841).
 - f. Revisit point of view/audience/purpose in light of 1840s historical context.
 - g. Poll: Students propose theories of point of view and purpose. Take a class poll.
 - h. Reveal research finding: Image was included *Events in Indian History*, authored and published by James Wimer in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It was one of multiple reviews of "Indian" history, which were popular because of the significant discussion of Indian removal policies. It features the massacre as it probably was a key event in local history. As such, the image and book should be seen as informative—albeit problematic. While the image may project a compassionate view of defenseless Conestoga being killed, it is worth noting that the Paxton men are portrayed in the clothing of Jacksonian supporters and therefore could be perceived as *endorsing* a Paxtonian agenda. (10 minutes)
6. Students develop their own APUSH short-answer questions based on the College Board format.

Assessment and Extensions: Students answer a question prepared by a peer.

James Wimer, *Massacre of the Indians in Lancaster* (Lancaster, 1841), Digital Paxton.



Sourcing a Document or Image
AP US History Format

Step 1: Individual Analysis

<p>Initial Conclusion: Based on your observations and conclusions above, how does the document answer to the key question?</p>	
<p>What is the historical context of the document/image?</p> <p>What specific evidence and context clues from this document supports your conclusion?</p>	<p>What is the point of view the author/artist?</p> <p>What specific evidence and context clues from this document supports your conclusion?</p>

Who is the intended audience of the document/image?	What is the intended purpose of the document/image?
What specific evidence and context clues from this document supports your conclusion?	What specific evidence and context clues from this document supports your conclusion?

Step 2: Pair/Group Analysis

What new information / specific evidence about the historical context was provided by your team?	What new information / specific evidence about the point of view was provided by your team?
Do you have consensus on the historical context of the document/image? Why or why not?	Do you have consensus on the point of view of the document/image? Why or why not?