

# HISTORY DAY CALIFORNIA

 *Primary & Secondary  
Source Research* 

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Sponsored by: CA Foundation for History Education



# Agenda \*

**Make it Reliable**

**Make it Expansive**

**Make it Diverse**

# NHD *Roadmap*



## WE ARE HERE:

- ✓ Identify the theme  
(Frontiers In History: People, Places, Ideas)
- ✓ Choose a Topic
- ✓ Craft a Research Question
- 📍 Primary & Secondary Source Research
- ...

# HISTORICAL RESEARCH WITH PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES

Make it  
*Historical*



- Start with your question & hypothesis
- Always have a plan
- Reliability is key!
- Search deliberately



# Make It



# *Relevant*



"Your question and hypothesis give you your most important basis for screening sources: they help you focus only on those that test your hypothesis, either supporting it or challenging it."



**One relevant source is more valuable than a dozen irrelevant ones.**

**Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

# Make it *Reliable*

## After screening for relevance, you should screen for reliability!

A few indicators of reliability:



- The source is published by a reputable press.
- The publisher uses peer reviews for everything it publishes.
- The author is a reputable scholar.
- The source is current.

● ● ● **Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

# THREE TYPES OF SOURCES



- **Primary sources** are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation.
- **Secondary sources** are usually published books or articles by an author who makes a personal interpretation about a topic based on primary sources.
- **Tertiary sources** are books and articles based on secondary sources. They synthesize and explain research in a field, usually for a popular audience.



# What's the big deal about *Secondary Sources*



Information that has  
undergone some sort  
of analysis or  
interpretation



Secondary sources  
are the arguments  
and methods of  
historians



# NOT ALL NON-PRIMARY SOURCES ARE SECONDARY SOURCES

Make it  
*Reliable*

- The ideal secondary source will have been written by a respected historian, reviewed by other historians, and published by well-known publisher.
- Secondary sources put student researchers in the conversation with other scholars
- Finding a great secondary source will lead to primary sources!



Let's Talk About



# *Primary Sources*



All primary sources  
are equally important.



What matters most is  
how you use the  
source.

Historic objects

Government  
records

Photographs

Manuscript  
collections

Newspapers from  
the era

Music of the era

Interviews with  
participants

Letters

Original film  
footage

Autobiographies

Make it  
*Primary*



# Make it *Expansive*

"Once you have located one reliable academic book or article, you have a trailhead for finding more: its **footnotes** and **works cited** point to sources you can track down, and their citations will point still farther down the trail."

● ● ● **Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.



Skim the  
preface

Skim the  
works cited  
& index

Follow the  
bibliographic



*Trail*



Start with  
sources  
mentioned  
most often

One source  
always  
leads to  
others

**Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. The Craft of Research. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.



Skim the  
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w

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*Research*

*Question!*

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**Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. The Craft of Research. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Make it  
*Expansive*





# PRIMARY SOURCES & HISTORICAL POV

## First: Identifying Primary Sources

Research Description: Analyzing primary sources will help you to draw your own conclusions about the significance of your topic and its connection to the theme.

### Types of Sources:

- Letters, Diaries, Telegraph Messages
- Government Documents and Legal Cases
- Photos, Moving Footage, Newsreels, Speeches

- Who is the author?
- What is their point of view?
- How is this person involved?
- Does the information conflict with or agree with the secondary sources?
- What other information do you need to answer your questions?



# PRIMARY SOURCES & HISTORICAL POV

First: Identifying Primary Sources	Second: Thinking like a Historian	
Research Description: Analyzing primary sources will help you to draw your own conclusions about the significance of your topic and its connection to the theme.	Historians interpret the past by looking at events and turning points through historic lenses. They use these lenses to better understand the way turning points affected people in different ways.	
Types of Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letters, Diaries, Telegraph Messages</li><li>• Government Documents and Legal Cases</li><li>• Photos, Moving Footage, Newsreels, Speeches</li></ul>	Documents that illustrate cultural impact, economic impact, religious impact, political impact, social impact	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is the author?</li><li>• What is their point of view?</li><li>• How is this person involved?</li><li>• Does the information conflict with or agree with the secondary sources?</li><li>• What other information do you need to answer your questions?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did your topic influence society as a whole?</li><li>• Were any members of society impacted more or less than others?</li><li>• What was gained or lost because of your topic?</li></ul>	

# PRIMARY SOURCES & HISTORICAL POV

First: Identifying Primary Sources	Second: Thinking like a Historian	Third: Historical Significance
Research Description: Analyzing primary sources will help you to draw your own conclusions about the significance of your topic and its connection to the theme.	Historians interpret the past by looking at events and turning points through historic lenses. They use these lenses to better understand the way turning points affected people in different ways.	A thorough understanding of historical context, turning point, historical debates, primary sources, and historic lenses will enable you to show your topic's significance in history. You will argue this significance with a thesis statement.
<p>Types of Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letters, Diaries, Telegraph Messages</li><li>• Government Documents and Legal Cases</li><li>• Photos, Moving Footage, Newsreels, Speeches</li></ul>	<p>Documents that illustrate cultural impact, economic impact, religious impact, political impact, social impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal cases that use your topic as a reference.</li><li>• New laws that can be traced back to your topic</li><li>• A continuing debate that is based on your topic</li><li>• Foreign or domestic policy that changed because of your topic</li></ul>
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ABCs of

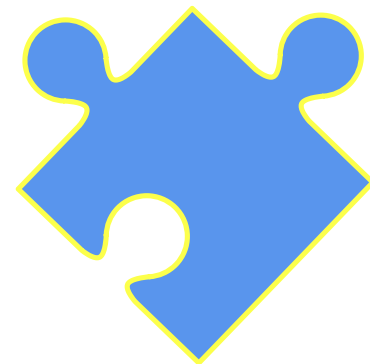
NHD



**ALWAYS**





**BE**




**CONNECTING**

**BACK TO THE  
THEME**




"TO MAKE YOUR RESEARCH AS  
RELIABLE AS YOU EXPECT YOUR  
SOURCES TO BE, YOU HAVE TO  
USE THEM FAIRLY AND  
ACCURATELY."



**Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. The Craft of Research. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

# THREE USES FOR SOURCES

- **Read for a problem,** "if you are having trouble formulating a problem or question. [...] Look for claims that puzzle you, that seem inaccurate or simplistic, or for data that others have ignored or not pursued"
- **Read for an argument,** "one way to use a source is to borrow not its specific substance (that would be plagiarism), but the logic of its argument. [...] When you take notes, [...] create an outline of the argument and note the kind of evidence used as support."
- **Read for evidence,** "This is the most common reason for consulting sources: to find data useful as evidence to support a claim. When you find evidence, report it as completely and accurately as possible and cite the source fully, not only to give credit but to help readers find your source so that they can check the data for themselves."



● **Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. The Craft of Research. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.



# Make it

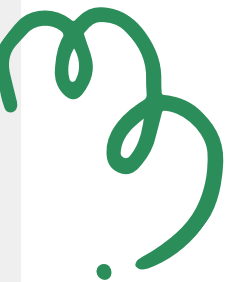


## *Diverse*



A perspective is one point of view; one person's experience or side of the story.

Multiple perspectives are present when a topic is considered from more than one point of view, considering the different experiences or opinions of the people involved.



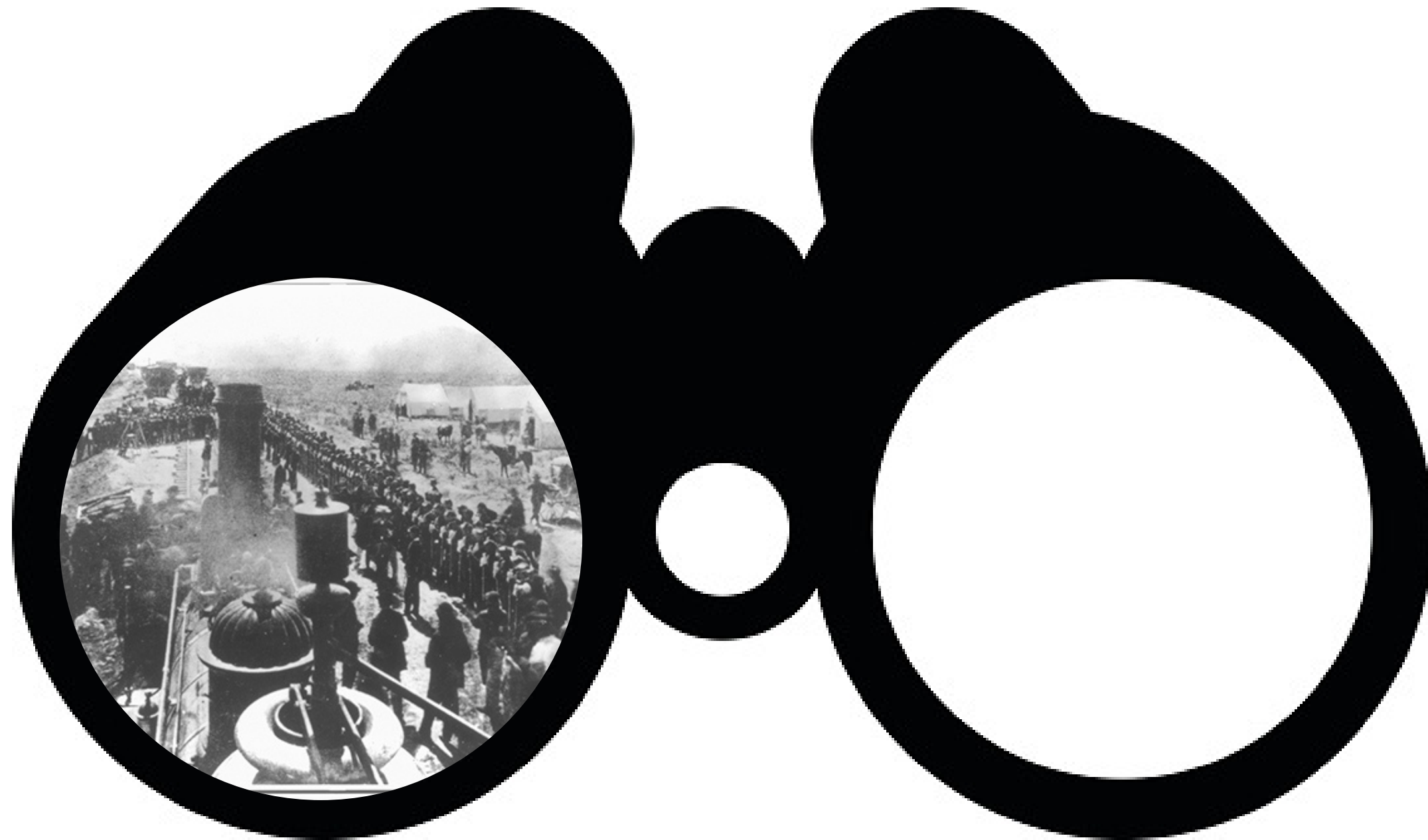


# Why are multiple perspectives important to historians?



Looking at just one point of view is only part of the story. This is single-sided and incomplete.

Like closing one eye and looking through only one lens of binoculars. You aren't seeing the full picture.



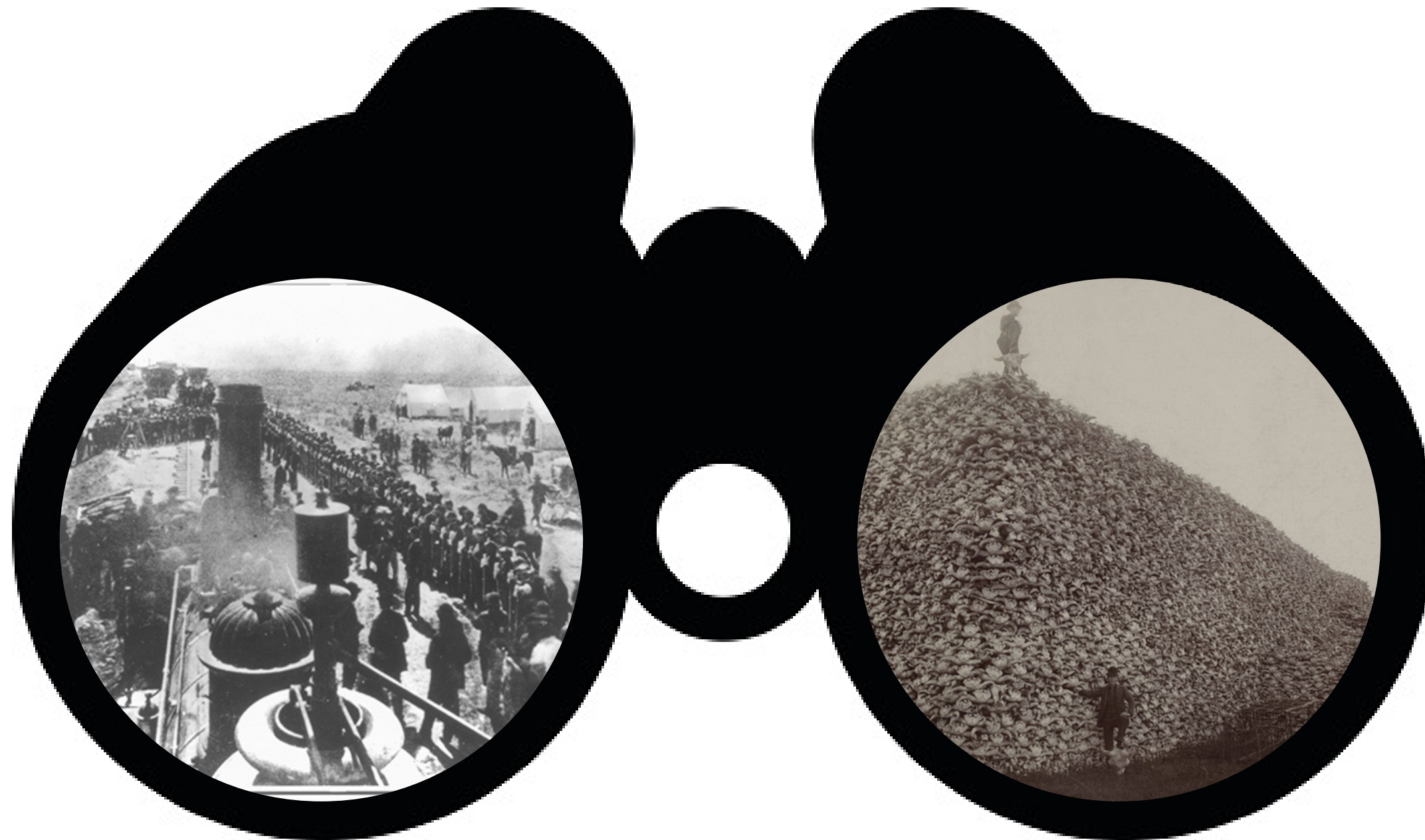
**Source:** "Wedding of the Rails," Today in History, May 10. Library of Congress.

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Multiple perspectives add to the story, especially those with different opinions or experiences.

Look through both lenses and the picture changes because you have more information.

**Source:** "Where the Buffalo No Longer Roamed," *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 17, 2012.



*There are likely a variety of perspectives within each group.*

How did the experiences or opinions change among those:

With or  
without  
power or  
influence?

Who stood  
to gain or  
lose  
financially?

By  
location?

By religion or  
cultural  
background?



**Declaration of  
Independence**



*Different topics will need to consider perspective in different ways.*

**NOT EVERY  
POINT OF  
VIEW**



**PLAYED AN EQUAL ROLE**





**WAS IMPACTED EQUALLY**




**NEEDS TO SHOW UP IN THE  
SAME WAY IN YOUR  
PROJECT**





"THE TRICK IS TO READ WITH AN OPEN MIND,  
AS OMNIVOROUSLY AS YOUR TIME ALLOWS,  
BUT WITH A MIND THAT ALSO CAN WEED  
OUT THOSE SOURCES THAT DO NOT SPEAK  
TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTION AND ITS  
POSSIBLE ANSWERS."



**Source:** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. The Craft of Research. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

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# QUESTIONS

