

Classroom Activity—Image Detective

One Room Schoolhouses

Objective: Students will analyze and interpret primary source material – photographs and copies of photographs.

Materials:

“One Room Schoolhouse – Image Detective” sheet

Pen, pencil, or marker

Backstory:

Historians are a lot like detectives. They investigate the past by asking questions and looking at the evidence left behind – like photographs. Historians use this evidence to help us understand what the past was like. Historians usually use two types of evidence when they investigate the past: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are things that were written or made at the time in the past that you are studying. Diaries, letters, drawings, and photos are examples of primary resources. Secondary sources are any record of the past created after the time of an event. In this activity we will be using photographs – primary sources – to ask questions and learn about the past.

Activity:

- Study each picture for a few minutes. Then have the students answer the questions underneath each picture.
- After they have answered the questions, have the students discuss their answers.

Image Detective: One Room Schoolhouses

Directions: Investigate these photographs of One Room Schoolhouses. Make observations about the people you see, the locations, and other details in the photograph.

Use the questions below each image to help you make observations.

What other information do the photographs tell? Use who, what, where, when, why, and how questions to think about what else the photographs can tell you.

Class in a One-Room School House¹



1.) Who are the people in this picture? _____

2.) What items in the picture make you recognize what's going on? _____

3.) When might this picture have been taken? Why do you think that? _____

4.) If this picture was in color, what colors would you expect to see? _____

¹ Image from the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Recess at a One-Room School, September 1939²



1.) What does this picture show? _____

2.) What would you expect to hear if you had been there when this picture was taken? _____

3.) How is this picture different than the other pictures? _____

4.) Choose one of the objects in this picture and describe it in detail _____

² Image from the Wisconsin Historical Society

Hillcrest School, 1933³



1.) How many people do you see in the picture? Is the teacher in the picture? _____

2.) What might happen next in this picture? What makes you say that? _____

3.) Describe the building in this picture. _____

4.) Compare this picture with the pictures of other schools in this section. How is it different? How is it the same? _____

³ Image from the Wisconsin Historical Society

Public School⁴



1.) Describe the building in this picture _____

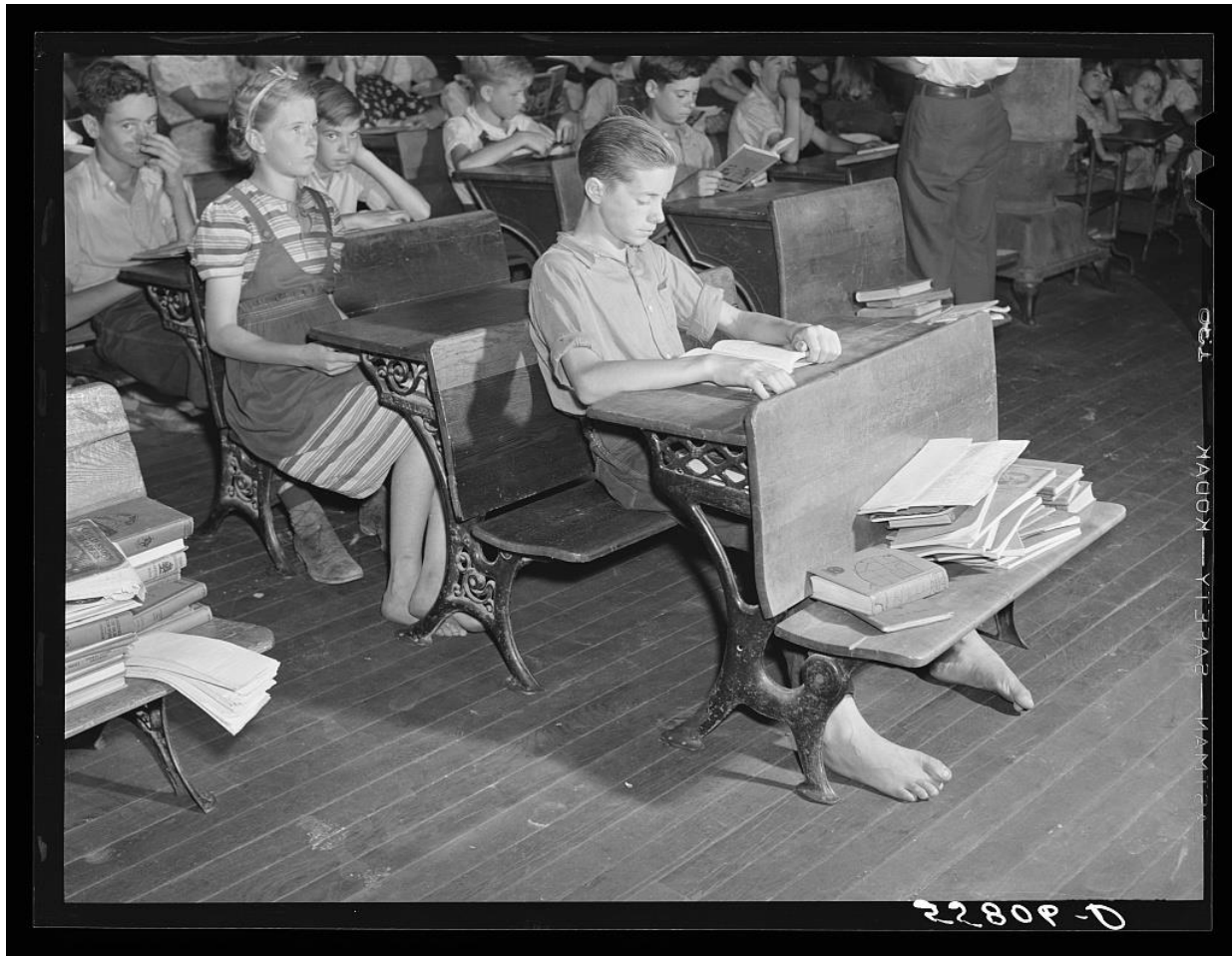
2.) What do you think you would see inside the building? _____

3.) If there were people in this picture, what do you think they would be doing? _____

4.) Why do you think the photographer took this picture? _____

⁴ Image from the Wisconsin Historical Society

Students at School.⁵



1.) What does this picture show? Why do you think that? _____

2.) Describe the people in the picture: _____

3.) How does this picture make you feel? Why? _____

4.) Compare this picture with the pictures of other schools in this activity. How is it different? How is it the same? _____

⁵ Image from the Library of Congress

Children & Instructors in Classroom, 1916⁶



1.) What do you think this picture shows? What makes you say that? _____

2.) What might the people in this picture be saying? _____

3.) Compare this picture with the pictures of other schools in this activity. How is it different? How is it the same? _____

4.) What might happen next in this picture? What makes you say that? _____

⁶ Image from the Wisconsin Historical Society