

Teaching Notes

The goal of RI.4.6 is for students to learn how to compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic. Students also learn how to describe the differences in focus and information between the two. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Use the following link to an article written by a teacher who gives a firsthand account about the flooding in Thailand in 2011. Use secondary sources from the school library or the Internet to allow students to compare and contrast the teacher's experience with others' experiences: **"TKN Exclusive: How Thailand's Floods Have Affected Me":** <http://teachingkidsnews.com/2011/11/21/tnk-exclusive-how-thailands-floods-have-affected-me/>
2. This standard can lead to discussions about perspective and point of view. Students must truly engage with the material to determine who has written the text (or taken the photograph). Worksheets about perspective and point of view can be used while teaching this standard. One example is the following: **"Pizza Night!"** <http://www.englishworksheetsland.com/grade4/readinginfo/6/3pizza.pdf>

Writing Prompts

1. Show students a photograph that is also a primary source. Examples can be found at the link below. Have students write a paragraph as someone within the picture telling the story. Then, have students rewrite their paragraph as an outsider giving a secondhand account. Students should notice how the pronouns change but also how the secondhand account is more factual, while the firsthand account is more emotional. **"Primary Source Sets":** <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/>
2. Have all students write a firsthand account about a specific time period during their school day (recess, a music class, a guest speaker, etc.). Then, have students share their firsthand accounts with the class. Notice the differences in each student's perspective. To take it a step further, turn the accounts into an article for a parent newsletter or class website by combining points from all the firsthand accounts to make a secondhand account.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RI.4.6:

"Primary Sources and Elementary Students": This article explores other forms of primary sources, like manuscripts, paintings, photographs, and even sheet music. These primary sources can be utilized to "bring history alive":

- <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/elementary/article.html>

"Using Primary Sources": This article guides teachers in ways to think critically about how they use primary sources in the classroom:

- <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/>

“Engaging Students with Primary Sources”: This PDF from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History is a resource for engaging students with primary sources:

- <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/PrimarySources.pdf>

“Comparing Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts of Susan B. Anthony’s Trial”: In this lesson plan, students will compare and contrast firsthand and secondhand materials on the trial of Susan B. Anthony:

- <https://www.engageny.org/file/54591/download/4m4.118.pdf?token=nFp9jXywFg4VN3sx6LpXM7YvHkE4OPUiGQ9jTBk6EBY>

PREVIEW