

Audio-Visual Primary Sources

Course

Analyzing Audio [7:42]

https://players.brightcove.net/2566261579001/HyuWsfFhb_default/index.html?videoId=5656534417001

About

Like the analysis of film, we want students to be active consumers of audio sources, making meaning of them and connecting a source to prior knowledge, as they ask new questions for future learning.

Transcript

Let's take the idea of active viewing and transition to the analysis of audio primary sources. Like the analysis of film, we want the students to be active consumers of these sources, making meaning of them and connecting a source to prior knowledge, as they continue to make new meaning and ask new questions for future learning.

Just as primary source film have some distinctions that can make them preferable over other formats, audio primary sources have some typical features that may have appeal to students and educators.

Like film, because the audio clip takes place over time, there's sometimes a chronological or story element that can be derived from an audio recording. Students can often connect to an audio source in a different way than other sources because they're encouraged to create a picture in their mind. Also, because of the ability to hear tone and inflection in the voice as well as other accompanying sounds, it is sometimes easier to connect an emotion to the primary source itself or react with an emotion.

Like a film primary source, student analysis will be grounded in making observations, reflections, and asking questions. I want students to do that in a way that enhances those distinctions while minimizing some obstacles. Part of that is in how I frame the analysis itself. The student's sourcing and contextualizing will prepare them for the analysis, but the educator can also ask questions that may direct the student's attention during the analysis.

Let's take that audio recording from earlier in the workshop, I may ask students what the audio primary source tells us, not only about early automobiles, but people interacting with them. That question encourages students to focus on different aspects of the audio clip, but also, to make that connection by putting themselves in the moment, them interacting with the automobile.

If I wanted them to focus on story or emotion, I may ask them to think about why the voice actor is sharing the story about his interaction with the automobile. Like sourcing and contextualizing, using the word story gives them an understanding as they begin to listen to the primary source, that there's going to be a story told, and they can draw on their background of story to understand it.

Questions that frame the primary source analysis can always be important, but can be especially important when analyzing an audio primary source. To continue the idea of story, we may alter our Primary Source Analysis tool. When making observations of an audio source, students are choosing quotes or sounds directly from the recording. Their reaction to or interpretation of that is a reflection.

If I provide stages to the observation, such as grouping observations into beginning, middle, and end, I reinforce those same elements of story. In its most simplistic, in the beginning of our example recorded audio, the man has a car delivered, in the middle, he struggles to start and drive the car, and in the end, he wrecks or crashes the car. They're direct quotes that reinforce this sense of story while also telling us about automobiles and their culture.

Creating these structures within the Primary Source Analysis tool can encourage students to identify with that story structure, thereby helping them understand the audio primary source and be able to then analyze it more closely and look for additional understanding.

Lastly, we may want students to draw upon the emotional connection with the audio primary source. Since it is not usually explicitly stated, those emotional connections, either emotions that were intended by the creator of the source, how people likely emotionally react to the source, or how the students themselves emotionally reacted to the source, are reflections. Those potentially change throughout the chronology of the source so their reactions would likely not be based on the entire source but instead on

moments quoted as observations in the analysis.

My experience is that many students are challenged to find nuanced vocabulary to describe shades of emotion; brainstorming those emotion words or having a list of emotion-related vocabulary available to students may be helpful.

I've also used emojis with facial expressions for those students that struggle with the language element of emotions. There are so many subtleties between them. When I've used them, I printed emojis in color to represent how they, the students, are emotionally reacting to an observation they make, and in black and white, to represent either how they believe the creator intended the emotional reaction or how the students think listeners at that time reacted emotionally. Students can expand on the emoji with additional written descriptions.

And there's one additional adaption I sometimes suggest for students when they're analyzing an audio primary source. Just as I sometimes provide vocabulary for challenging text-based primary sources, I listen to the audio source to identify any words or pronunciations that students may find challenging and provide them a list along with the timestamp of when it is said within the recording. While I typically don't provide a full transcript, this support piece can make listening to an audio primary source a smoother experience and give students moments to check in during their listening to make sure they're still following along with the piece.

We've talked about how we can prepare for audio-visual primary source analysis through taking stock of issues of technology and time and support student's preparation in sourcing and contextualizing the audio-visual primary source. We've talked about adapting the features of the Primary Source Analysis tool from the Library of Congress to overcome hurdles and speak to strengths that are unique to audio-visual primary sources. But the analysis of primary sources, including audio-visual primary sources, do not exist in a vacuum, and there's evidence of that in the analysis itself.

Through every analysis, students generate questions. Questions from some students inevitably will require little further investigation. When was the automobile invented? What models of cars were common in the early 20th century? But others may require deeper investigation, gathering learning through multiple sources. What do levers and cranks do on early cars? Why did both the delivery man and the woman ask if the man was going to be driven around in the car? Was that common during the time period? The analysis of primary sources should lead to some type of further investigation by students.

That can look very different depending on the learning that needs to take place and the resources and time available. At times, educators may find and provide information to students, and students can also reach out to librarians for help in searching databases or using print resources. Students can investigate related primary sources also. Often, the analysis of related primary sources help to inform the student's understanding around the first primary source. And typically, analyzing different formats can lead to great benefits, keeping students engaged, making connections, and continuing to ask questions.

So as you begin to think about incorporating audio-visual primary sources into your students' learning, think about other types of related sources as well, including manuscripts, photos, newspapers, sheet music, or maps. Think about the role audio-visual primary sources play in the larger learning picture, and explore options to maximize the benefits of audio-visual primary sources through your students' analysis.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Primary Source Audio Visual Resources](#)

[Primary Sources Used in This Workshop](#)

[Teaching with AV Sources.](#)

MLA CITATION

Bober, Tom. "Audio-Visual Primary Sources. Analyzing Audio [7:42]." *School Library Connection*, ABC-CLIO, January 2018, schoollibraryconnection.com/Home/Display/2123894?learningModuleId=2123886.

<https://schoollibraryconnection.com/Home/Display/2123894?learningModuleId=2123886>

Entry ID: 2123894

