Lesson Description

In this activity, students will practice thinking like a historian. In addition to reading published works, students will read correspondence between the traveler, Freya Stark, and her mother. This will engage students further in historical analysis and assist developing the critical thinking skills needed when examining artifacts.

Objectives

- Independently with a time limit of 15 minutes, students will read an excerpt from Freya Stark’s Valley of the Assassins, discussing as a whole class what is in the text, the purpose, intended audience, and relevance.
- In groups of 3-4 students for up to 45 minutes, students will visit stations with different images of Freya Stark’s correspondence in the early twentieth century, answering HIPP for each document in addition to artifact analysis questions.
- After discussing their findings as a whole class, students will provide a) at least two further questions they have and b) one way Freya Stark’s work is relevant to them on an exit ticket.

Enduring Understanding(s) & Essential Questions

Identifying and analyzing a document’s historical context, intended audience, purpose, and its author’s perspective—and in the case of original artifacts, the document’s current condition and construction—enables us to critically examine a text in order to determine its meaning and relevance.

- Why do we study and examine history?
- How can we be sure of what really happened in our past?
- How does the historical context of when it was written affect a document’s meaning?
- How does the intended audience of a document affect its meaning?
- How does a document’s purpose affect its meaning?
- How does the perspective of the writer affect the document’s meaning?
- How does the current condition of an artifact affect its meaning?
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Target standards)

World History Studies

§113.42. World History Studies (One Credit), Beginning with School Year 2011-2012.

(10) History. The student understands the causes and impact of World War I. The student is expected to:
   (C) explain the political impact of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the political and economic impact of the Treaty of Versailles, including changes in boundaries and the mandate system;

(16) Geography. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major historic events and processes. The student is expected to:
   (A) locate places and regions of historical significance directly related to major eras and turning points in world history;

(24) Culture. The student understands the roles of women, children, and families in different historical cultures. The student is expected to:
   (A) describe the changing roles of women, children, and families during major eras of world history;

(25) Culture. The student understands how the development of ideas has influenced institutions and societies. The student is expected to:
   (D) explain how Islam influences law and government in the Muslim world.

(26) Culture. The student understands the relationship between the arts and the times during which they were created. The student is expected to:
   (A) identify significant examples of art and architecture that demonstrate an artistic ideal or visual principle from selected cultures;
   (B) analyze examples of how art, architecture, literature, music, and drama reflect the history of the cultures in which they are produced; and
   (C) identify examples of art, music, and literature that transcend the cultures in which they were created and convey universal themes.

(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:
   (A) identify methods used by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and geographers to analyze evidence;
   (B) explain how historians, when examining sources, analyze frame of reference, historical context, and point of view to interpret historical events;
   (C) explain the differences between primary and secondary sources and examine those sources to analyze frame of reference, historical context, and point of view;
   (D) evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author;
   (E) identify bias in written, oral, and visual material;
   (F) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, drawing inferences and conclusions, and developing connections between historical events over time;
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<th>Pre-requisite Knowledge and Skills</th>
<th>Reading comprehension; ability to read cursive writing</th>
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<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Time Required</strong></td>
<td>90-110 minutes</td>
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| **Materials Required**            | • “The Valley of Assassins selection, Freya Stark” document  
  Contact Rachel Meyer at the Hemispheres office via email to request an electronic copy of this PDF. rachelmeyer@austin.utexas.edu  
• “Thinking Like a Historian” PowerPoint Presentation  
• “Freya Stark Document Stations” PowerPoint Presentation  
  Contact Rachel Meyer at the Hemispheres office via email to request an electronic copy of this PDF.  
• “HIPP_Artifact Analysis Activity” document |
Lesson Plan:

Engage
10-15 minutes

Students will find copies of pages 7-8 and 13-14 from Stark’s *The Valley of the Assassins* on their desks when they arrive for class and the following instructions posted on the board:

Read the text on your desk and be prepared to discuss. As you read, think about the purpose of the document, its intended audience, and how this material is relevant today.

* Contact Rachel Meyer at the Hemispheres office to request an electronic copy of this PDF.

After students have finished reading, discuss the implicit questions from the given pre-reading instructions and provide a brief introduction to Freya Stark.

Introduce & Explore
10 minutes

Use slides 2-4 of the “Thinking Like a Historian” presentation to guide students in a discussion of

- What historians do,
- Why they do it (*why study history?*), and
- Why it matters.

Next, introduce HIPP: Historical Context, Intended Audience, Purpose, and Perspective (slide 5-6). Explain the differences between each element of the acronym.

Explain
10 minutes

Guide students toward a model example for each element of HIPP based *The Valley of Assassins* excerpt through the use of questioning as much as possible. When necessary, provide information for those elements that students are unable to generate answers.

Apply & Elaborate
45-50 minutes

In order to practice “thinking like a historian,” students will put on their *historians’ hats* and

1. Continue to analyze the text written by Freya Stark and its enduring meaning, including artifact analysis, and
2. Place themselves in her shoes: think about her thought processes as she was on this expedition.

Pass out the “HIPP_Artifact Analysis Activity” and clarify instructions as needed.

In groups of 3-4, students will spend ~45 minutes visiting stations with images from the “Freya Stark Document Stations” PowerPoint Presentation* and using HIPP to analyze artifacts of Freya Stark’s correspondence in the early 20th century.

* Contact Rachel Meyer at the Hemispheres office to request an electronic copy of this PDF.

Note: Most of the letters are from Ms. Stark to her mother, Flora; there is one letter to Ms. Stark from her mother and another from Eric Maxwell. With regard to the letter from Maxwell: Freya writes in a letter to her mother around that same time explaining
her troubles. The Geniesse excerpts on the last slide are intended for teacher background knowledge only.

**Evaluate**

15 minutes

After 45 minutes, students will return to their desks for a 15-minute class discussion. Use questioning to facilitate a discussion of students’ general impressions, what stood out to them, and what made them uncomfortable. As time permits, project images of the correspondence and go over students’ answers to the artifact analysis questions.

**Closure**

5 minutes

Exit Ticket: Students will record two lingering questions they have and one way they related to Freya Stark through reading her correspondence.

**Resources:**


Maxwell, Eric. Handwritten letter to Freya Stark, 7 September 1932. Box 17, Folder 2, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.


-----, -----. Handwritten letter from Flora Stark, 23 September 1931. Box 22, Folder 10, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Stark, Freya. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 2 April 1932. Box 7, Folder 1, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 10 April 1932. Box 7, Folder 1, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 13 August 1932. Box 7, Folder 1, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 8 September 1916. Box 6, Folder 5, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 27 September 1931. Box 6, Folder 7, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 10 October 1931. Box 7, Folder 1, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

-----, -----. Handwritten letter to Flora Stark, 16 October 1931. Box 7, Folder 1, Freya Stark Collection. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.