

Stamps, Sarcophagi, and Songs: Teaching World History with Online Resources

Kelly Schrum

What do student protests in Tiananmen Square and a Polish postage stamp have in common? What can we learn about changing notions of childhood from a Roman marble sarcophagus? How did popular songs reflect and shape the political currents of the French Revolution? And most important, where can a world history teacher look to begin answering these questions?

Teaching world history is challenging. In addition to covering the history of the world geographically and chronologically, it is difficult to find high quality, translated materials ready for classroom use. The Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University offers free, online materials, including primary sources, teaching strategies, and lesson plans, designed to facilitate world history teaching. *World History Matters* (<http://worldhistorymatters.org/>) provides a portal to seven websites that address world history broadly as well as through specific topics such as the French Revolution, the Soviet Gulag, and the history of 1989.



These free, educational projects are designed to help teachers and students locate, analyze, and learn from primary sources to explore the complexity of the past. Collectively, while emphasizing historical thinking skills, they focus on comparative issues and global forces that transcend individual societies,

such as trade routes, technology diffusion, migration, and disease transmission.

Explore these individual projects and the many resources they provide.

Children and Youth in History

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/>

In textbooks, knowledge about children is usually limited to famous young people, leaving most youth on the margins of history. But what happens when we ask about the lives of everyday children and adolescents? Or how different societies have defined childhood and how children have shaped history, societies, and cultures?



"Child with Purple Plastic Doll near Kumasi, Ghana," Color Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1971, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Image number EEPA EECL 1015

Children and Youth in History provides historical sources and pedagogical insights to integrate the history of children and youth into world history classrooms. It offers a window into the lived experiences of children and youth and an exploration of changing notions of childhood and adolescence, including a database of 300 annotated objects, photographs and paintings, quantitative evidence, and texts. Fifty website reviews covering all regions of the world critically explore valuable online resources. The website also includes twenty teaching case studies, written by experienced educators, that model strategies for using primary sources to teach the history of childhood and youth, as well as ten teaching modules that provide historical context, strategies for teaching with primary sources, and a lesson plan and document based question.

Materials cover topics ranging from the Black Death in Europe to educational reform in Japan, from the transatlantic slave trade to boy scouts in Africa. An introductory essay outlines major themes in the history of childhood and youth and how primary sources can deepen our understanding of this history.

Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives

<http://gulaghistory.org/>

The Soviet Gulag existed neither as a single unified experience, nor as one institution. This massive and lethal machine shaped the lives of millions of people from 1917 to 1988. *Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives* presents an in-depth look at life in the Gulag through online exhibits featuring original documentaries and prisoner voices; an archive filled with documents and images; and teaching and bibliographic resources for further study.

Online exhibitions present a thematic exploration of Gulag life, including a virtual tour of the reconstructed camp and museum. Topics include forced arrest, labor, propaganda, solidarity, and survival. Watch, for example, as former prisoner Paulina Myasnikova describes her trial in an oral history interview:

This is how the trial went. They asked us our name, last name, patronymic, date of birth and whether or not we admitted our guilt. And then they left the room. Five minutes later they reappeared back in the room with the sentence all typed up, and you would get a 10-year prison sentence.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>

Imaging the French Revolution

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/imaging/>

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution offers an accessible, lively introduction to the French Revolution, including an archive of more than 600 texts, images, maps, and songs. Essays offer an introduction to the main themes of the Revolution, including social causes, the fall of the monar-

chy, women and the revolution, the story of Napoleon, and legacy. Sources range from political cartoons and paintings to objects, such as decorated fans and porcelain. Texts, translated into English and edited for student readers, include personal memoirs, official reports, newspaper articles, treatises, and eyewitness accounts. Maps illustrate changing European borders, military campaigns, and sites of Parisian revolutionary activity, while songs document the changing musical landscape of France in the revolutionary era. A timeline chronicles key events before and after the Revolution.

A companion project, *Imaging the French Revolution*, emphasizes visual sources through multiple perspectives and viewpoints. Pro-revolutionary engravers occasionally celebrated the crowd violence that helped fuel the French Revolution, but more often contained it by minimizing details of death and destruction or by emphasizing other elements such as popular justice. Violence could be “rationalized,” but engravers also reminded the public of what lurked beneath the surface. Counter-revolutionary artists seized upon the grotesque and anarchic elements as well as the role of women. An image tool permits close study and comparison for the classroom.

Making the History of 1989

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/>

Few images from the second half of the twentieth century endure as vividly as the jubilant crowds atop the Berlin Wall in 1989, seemingly tearing down the Cold War with their hammers, hands, and hopes. These images compete in popular memory with equally powerful but horrific scenes: the Romanian President, Nicolae Ceausescu, and his wife executed on live television or emaciated Bosnians behind prison wire following the outbreak of civil war in Yugoslavia. As rapid as it was unexpected, the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the period of transition that followed brought the twentieth century and the Cold War to a close in ways few expected. Those who lived through this time will never forget the sense of watching “history in the making.”



Photo of Lennon Wall, taken in Malá Strana, Prague 1, Hlavní mesto Praha, CZ, in 2007 by Mills Kelly.

Making the History of 1989 was developed to provide vivid, historical documents in English that convey the epochal events of 1989 and allow students to explore the causes, events, and aftermath of the era. Key features provide historical context, tools, and strategies for teaching the history of 1989, including primary sources, interviews with historians, lesson plans, and document based questions.

Women in World History

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/>

How does history change when we look at all participants? When women emerge from the shadows and become active and important players in our analysis of the past? Placing women in world history does not simply expand our understanding of events, it reshapes that understanding. For example, warfare is often represented in textbooks as a narrative of battles and military prowess. When we consider war as having both a home front and a fighting front, however, the discussion expands to include not only women's varied wartime activities but also the experiences of families, children, and noncombatant males. This approach permits examination of non-heroic accounts of the experience of war, differing attitudes toward male and female collaboration and resistance, and postwar social continuity and change.

Visit *Women in World History* to explore primary sources, website reviews, teaching materials, and interviews with scholars to facilitate that exploration. Topics include writers of the Heian Era, imperialism in North Africa, gender and race in colonial Latin America, and politics in Southeast Asia.

World History Sources

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/>

Ten years ago, it was impossible to imagine students taking a virtual tour through archaeological ruins of the ancient Indus River Valley civilization. Or watching art historian Dana Leibsohn as she carefully analyzes two images to explore social, religious, and political life in sixteenth-century Spanish America. Today, these options are available anytime, anywhere and are accessible through *World History Sources*.

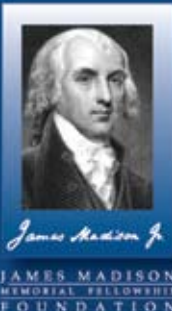
This free, educational website provides a wealth of resources, including website reviews, guides to working with specific kinds of primary sources (such as material culture, travel narratives, and music), interviews with scholars that model historical thinking, and teaching materials. Search by region or time period, browse by type of primary source, or search for specific topics, such as midwifery, architecture, dance, travel narratives, and official proclamations.

How do these resources help answer the questions above about stamps, sarcophagi, and songs? Visit the case study entitled "Remembering Tiananmen Square" [<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/exhibits/stamps/essay>] on *Making the History of 1989* to learn

how Eastern European dissidents used symbols of protest in China to reinforce memories of local resistance. Read about "Roman Children's Sarcophagi" [<http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/case-studies/52>] on *Children and Youth in History* to teach students to analyze images and objects while exploring representations of children and their role within the family. And use the essay on songs and the archive at *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* [<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/chap11a.html>] to learn about the meaning and content of French hymns and songs throughout the 1790s, reflecting social and political tensions and helping to shape public perceptions of the Revolution.

Explore all of these projects and the possibilities for your classroom today! 🌐

KELLY SCHRUM is director of educational projects at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media and an associate professor at George Mason University. Schrum is the director of Teachinghistory.org, the National History Education Clearinghouse.



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