



Yale-New Haven  
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2006 Volume I: Photographing America: A Cultural History, 1840-1970

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## Photographs as Aids to Writing

Guide for Curriculum Unit 06.01.09  
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If you are looking for a unit to teach multiple genres of writing to middle school students, then this is the right one. This unit uses photographs as aids to writing. The background is built by historical events or movements, thereby making it interdisciplinary. Though this unit has been designed for grade six, it can be adopted/modified to suit your need.

In this unit, students analyze various photographs and interpret them from different points of view. Then they communicate their thoughts and feelings in writing. They understand the important role of primary sources in discovering the past and make connections to self, text, and the world. Using higher order thinking skills, they organize and sequence the information they glean. They identify the elements of art in photography -- color, design, shapes, symmetry, texture, balance. They recognize the influence of the time period of the photographer on the style of the photograph. By analyzing the people, objects, and activities in the photograph, they make their inferences.

This unit is designed for seventeen periods of sixty minutes each but could be extended, depending on the pace of student writing. It includes graphic organizers such as the word web, *Venn diagram*, *circle graph*, *window organizer*, and *photo analysis worksheet*. The *response starters* encourage students to write different kinds of sentences and provide an opportunity for every student to be involved with writing.

(Developed for Writing, grade 6; recommended for Reading, Writing, Social Studies, and Middle School, grade 6)

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