

Reading in Social Studies

Connections

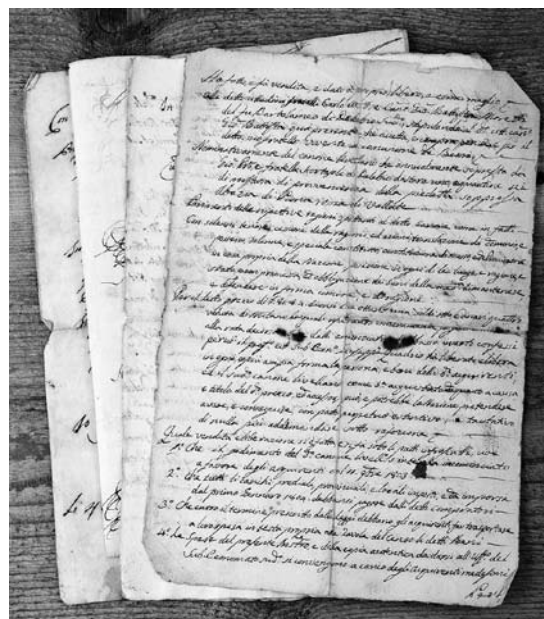
Have you ever ...

- Listened to a political speech?
- Read a diary or autobiography from another time period?
- Voted on an economic issue?

Politics, history, and economics are just a few aspects of social studies that affect your everyday life. In social studies, you'll often read texts from different times and places. These texts may present very different perspectives or points of view than you have.

A **primary source** is a text that was written or created in the time and place you're studying. A **secondary source** is a text written about another time and place, often citing and analyzing primary sources. An author's perspective is especially important when you are reading a primary source document.

The author's perspective includes his or her values, beliefs, background, and reasons for writing. The author may have been affected by what is happening in the world. Likewise, the author's culture and knowledge may affect how he responds within the text. Understanding the author's perspective will give you insight into the text you're reading.



Learn
It!

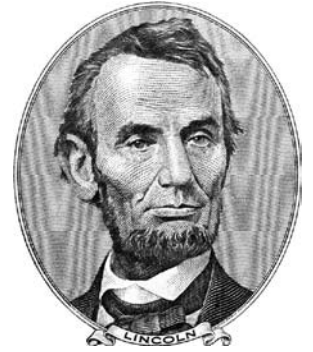
Determining Author's Perspective

An author's perspective is a specific viewpoint—a way to think about the topic. It is related to the purpose, and also to the author's cultural and political background, interests, experiences, and values. You can examine the author's perspective by looking at the **big picture and details**.

Use this passage for the exercises that follow.

The Emancipation Proclamation

President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, as the United States was facing a third year of the Civil War. It was an order as Commander in Chief to the military and executive branch. The proclamation declared “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are, and henceforth shall be free.” The following is an excerpt from the proclamation.



By the President of the United States of America:

A Proclamation.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

This historical passage is from a **primary source**. The introduction is a **secondary source**.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

Source: The National Archives, adapted from “The Emancipation Proclamation,” http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/

Big Picture

Before you read the text, examine your background knowledge. Do you know anything about the author or subject matter? What can that tell you about the author’s perspective? Skim the text, making sure to read any context or background information like location and time period.

- ? 1. Skim the passage and think about your background knowledge. Fill in the Big Picture on the graphic organizer.

Big Picture & Details

Big Picture: Skim and use your background knowledge to get an overview. What’s the big picture?

--

Details: Look for details to expand and support your ideas.

Detail Meaning	Detail Meaning
-------------------	-------------------

President Abraham Lincoln created this document during the Civil War. It declared all slaves in the rebelling southern states free. The word *emancipation* means the act of freeing. You might assume that there are complex political issues behind this document, from keeping the country united to the moral stance of abolitionists, who strongly opposed slavery.

Details: Examine the Author’s Word Choice

Authors’ words communicate their perspective. In a conversation, your words show your feelings and viewpoint. Authors’ words do the same thing when they write.

- ? 2. Add one word that shows the author’s perspective to the graphic organizer.

Big Picture & Details

Big Picture: Skim and use your background knowledge to get an overview. What’s the big picture?

<i>Lincoln is declaring the military should free Southern slaves in the Civil War, may be many political reasons</i>
--

Details: Look for details to expand and support your ideas.

Detail Meaning	Detail Meaning
-------------------	-------------------

You might choose the word *order* or *declare* because they show Lincoln’s demand to end slavery. He is not asking or recommending. He is ordering and declaring that slaves are free.

Details: Examine Facts and Examples

Locate a detail that shows an author’s perspective, and then find its meaning. What does it tell you about the author?

- ? 3. Add a fact, example, or piece of evidence that shows the author’s perspective to the graphic organizer.

Big Picture & Details

Big Picture: Skim and use your background knowledge to get an overview. What’s the big picture?

Lincoln is declaring the military should free Southern slaves in the Civil War, may be many political reasons

Details: Look for details to expand and support your ideas.

Detail declare
 Meaning state strongly; certain, formal

Detail
 Meaning

You might choose “act of justice” or “gracious favor of Almighty God” as details that show Lincoln’s values.

Determine Author’s Perspective

You can make inferences about an author’s beliefs, feelings, and values. Examine the **big picture and details** to define the author’s perspective.

Big Picture & Details

Big Picture: Skim and use your background knowledge to get an overview. What’s the big picture?

Lincoln is declaring the military should free Southern slaves in the Civil War, may be many political reasons

Details: Look for details to expand and support your ideas.

Detail declare
 Meaning state strongly; certain, formal

Detail “act of justice”
 Meaning justice is valued, important

- ? 4. Review the **big picture and details**. What can you say about Lincoln’s perspective?

The document is a rule issued by the President to set military policy. It’s a strong political action against the South, framing the war as one about slavery. Lincoln also refers to justice, the Constitution, human kindness, and God. As a reader, you can infer that these are values that influenced the document.



The following passage is from the majority opinion on *Brown v. Board of Education*, a U.S. Supreme Court case that resulted in the desegregation of public schools in 1952. A majority opinion explains the reasons for the ruling agreed on by the majority of justices.

Use this passage to answer the questions that follow.

Opinion

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN delivered the opinion of the Court...

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

In *Sweatt v. Painter*, *supra*, in finding that a segregated law school for Negroes could not provide them equal educational opportunities, this Court relied in large part on “those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school.” In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, *supra*, the Court, in requiring that a Negro admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students, again resorted to intangible considerations: “... his ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession.” Such considerations apply with added force to children in grade and high schools. To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone....

We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of

the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.



This historical passage is from a **primary source**—a text written during a historical period being studied.

Source: *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) (USSC+), available at The National Center for Public Policy Research, <http://www.nationalcenter.org/brown.html>

1. Complete the graphic organizer with the **big picture and details** about the author’s perspective.

Big Picture & Details

Big Picture: Skim and use your background knowledge to get an overview. What’s the big picture?

--

Details: Look for details to expand and support your ideas.

Detail Meaning	Detail Meaning
Detail Meaning	Detail Meaning

2. Describe Chief Justice Warren’s perspective as the author of this decision.

3. What is the reason Warren gives to overturn “separate but equal” in education?
 - a. Separate schools are impossible to maintain.
 - b. Separate schools don’t provide equal education.
 - c. Separate schools are too costly and unnecessary.
 - d. Separate schools have tangible equal factors.

4. Chief Justice Warren writes, “To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.” What does this quote show that Chief Justice Warren values?
 - a. Special treatment of minority races
 - b. Government regulation
 - c. Children’s psychological well-being
 - d. Religious freedom

The following passage is from Susan B. Anthony's 1873 speech after she was arrested, tried, and fined \$100 for voting in the 1872 Presidential Election.

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Friends and Fellow Citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.



The preamble of the Federal Constitution says:

“We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”


It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people—women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government—the ballot.


For any State to make sex a qualification that must ever result in the disfranchisement of one entire half of the people is to pass a bill of attainder, or an *ex post facto* law, and is therefore a violation of the supreme law of the land. By it the blessings of liberty are for ever withheld from women and their female posterity. To them this government has no just powers derived from the consent of the governed. To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic. It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex; the most hateful aristocracy ever established on the face of the globe; an oligarchy of wealth, where the rich govern the poor. An oligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant, or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this


oligarchy of sex, which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters of every household—which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects, carries dissension, discord and rebellion into every home of the nation.


This historical passage is from a **primary source**.

Source: “Is it a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?” by Susan B. Anthony, available at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/anthonyaddress.html>

-  5. Describe Susan B. Anthony’s perspective.

-  6. Select and explain two powerful details that show Anthony’s beliefs, feelings, or values.

-  7. What does Anthony mean when she says, “To them this government has no just powers derived from the consent of the governed”?

-  8. Imagine you are researching women’s fight for the right to vote. How might you use the information in this passage?



Check Your Skills

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The following is an excerpt from the first Fireside Chat with former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on March 12, 1933. It was given after the nation's banks closed to stop mass withdrawals by people worried about bank failures.

I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking—with the comparatively few who understand the mechanics of banking but more particularly with the overwhelming majority who use banks for the making of deposits and the drawing of checks. I want to tell you what has been done in the last few days, why it was done, and what the next steps are going to be. I recognize that the many proclamations from State capitals and from Washington, the legislation, the Treasury regulations, etc., couched for the most part in banking and legal terms, should be explained for the benefit of the average citizen. I owe this in particular because of the fortitude and good temper with which everybody has accepted the inconvenience and hardships of the banking holiday. I know that when you understand what we in Washington have been about I shall continue to have your cooperation as fully as I have had your sympathy and help during the past week....



Because of undermined confidence on the part of the public, there was a general rush by a large portion of our population to turn bank deposits into currency or gold—a rush so great that the soundest banks could not get enough currency to meet the demand. The reason for this was that on the spur of the moment it was, of course, impossible to sell perfectly sound assets of a bank and convert them into cash except at panic prices far below their real value....

This historical passage is from a **primary source**.

It was then that I issued the proclamation providing for the nationwide bank holiday, and this was the first step in the Government's reconstruction of our financial and economic fabric.

Source: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, First Fireside Chat, available at: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5199/>

1. Which of the following describes President Roosevelt’s message in the passage?
 - a. President Roosevelt is explaining why the banks have closed.
 - b. President Roosevelt is giving a lesson on banking to the people.
 - c. President Roosevelt is blaming the people for the failure of the banks.
 - d. President Roosevelt is angry at the banks for closing.

2. Why does President Roosevelt thank the listeners for their strength and patience?
 - a. He is paying an underhanded compliment to his opponents.
 - b. He is being sarcastic and pointing out the harm of panicking.
 - c. He wants the listeners to accept future bank closures.
 - d. He wants the listeners to be supportive of his policies.

3. Who is the main audience President Roosevelt is speaking to in this Fireside Chat?
 - a. The American people
 - b. The banking industry
 - c. President Roosevelt’s friends and family
 - d. The world

4. What is President Roosevelt’s purpose for speaking?
 - a. To explain banking to the public
 - b. To calm the public’s fears about the bank failure
 - c. To entertain with stories about the Great Depression
 - d. To deceive the public into taking his side

5. Which best describes President Roosevelt’s interest in the banking failure?
 - a. He thinks the banks deserve to fail because of the down-fall of the economy.
 - b. He wants to protect the people from the knowledge that more banks could fail.
 - c. He wants to bail the banks out with government money.
 - d. He wants to work with the banks to reconstruct the economy.

*Remember
the Concept*

The author’s perspective can help you understand how to read a text and how the author’s values, background, and biases can affect a text.

Reading in Social Studies

Determining Author’s Perspective

Practice It!

pages 145–148

1.

Big Picture & Details

Big Picture: Skim and use your background knowledge to get an overview. What’s the big picture?

The Supreme Court ruled to desegregate schools because segregation negatively impacts the education of children.

Details: Look for details to expand and support your ideas.

Detail Sense of inferior status
 Meaning Segregation make minorities feel others look down on them.

Detail Lifelong inner wounds
 Meaning Problems from segregation last a lifetime.

Detail “separate but equal” has no place
 Meaning Education cannot be separate & equal

Detail “hearts and minds”
 Meaning Shows court’s empathy for students

2. Chief Justice Warren has reviewed examples where students were negatively impacted by segregation. He has determined that, legally and emotionally, segregation deprives students of equal educational opportunities. He believes that segregation itself makes students feel unequally valued and separates them emotionally from the community.
3. b. Separate schools don’t provide equal education.
4. c. Children’s psychological well-being
5. Susan B. Anthony sees voting as her right as a United States citizen. She sees women as being equal to men and included in the Constitution through the phrase “We, the people.” She believes that any country that would not recognize a woman’s vote is not a democracy.
6. **Example 1:** “I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen’s rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.” With these words, Anthony claims that her decision to vote is justified by the U.S. Constitution because it refers to “We, the people,” not just “the white male citizens.”

Example 2: “And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government—the ballot.” Anthony strongly rejects the idea that liberty can be separated from the ballot, the right to vote. She uses the word mockery, which shows her strong emotion.

7. Anthony is stating that to women, the government's powers are unjustified because women have no representation in the government. Without the right to vote, women cannot be justly ruled over by a government.
8. You might use the information in this passage to learn more about the American women's rights movement and the core beliefs and arguments of its leaders.

Check Your Skills

pages 149–150

1. a. President Roosevelt is explaining why the banks have closed.
2. d. He wants the listeners to be supportive of his policies.
3. a. The American people
4. b. To calm the public's fears about the bank failure
5. d. He wants to work with the banks to reconstruct the economy.