

Teacher's guide: Using the digital textbook

A full educator's guide to each module, including lesson plans and additional readings, is in development. We are also planning online professional development and support for teachers who want to implement the textbook in their classrooms.

• • •

We recognize that using this digital textbook presents two important challenges for a teacher. First, the concept of an online textbook may be a hard one to sell to students, parents, and administrators. Second, using primary sources and multimedia as the backbone of a course, rather than just a supplement, requires a different approach to teaching history than most teachers traditionally take.

But you don't have to dive in headfirst. This guide will get you started by explaining some of the ways you can use this textbook to enrich your teaching.

A flexible textbook

Because it's on the web, you don't have to commit to using the entire book for an entire year. You can try it out, integrate small parts of it into what you're already doing, and then add more as you see fit.

ALL OR PART

The textbook is modular in design, so each page can stand on its own. As a result, you can excerpt from it to meet your needs, using it in a variety of ways:

- **Piece by piece.** You can use individual articles and primary sources from the textbook or our broader collection on North Carolina history to supplement your usual curriculum, with the lesson plans provided or with your own.
- **As a supplement to a traditional textbook.** You — or your students or administrators — may be more comfortable with a printed, narrative textbook. You may assign this

online textbook in addition to, or in place of, a printed book. You may also choose to use only the primary sources.

- **As a primary textbook.** It's designed to be used as *the* textbook for a course in North Carolina history, and we hope that you will consider using it that way.
- **Searching the collection.** Regardless of how, or whether, you use the textbook modules, you can search our collection¹ on North Carolina history, culture, and environment for materials to use in your classroom. Whenever possible, we've linked them to additional content and relevant lesson plans.

ON THE WEB OR IN PRINT; IN SCHOOL OR AT HOME

This web-based textbook is intended to be read online, and we've taken care to design it to be as easily readable as possible. It has special functionality that can't be reproduced in print. Most important, while the comments on primary sources could be removed to footnotes, asking students to refer back and forth from text to notes will make their reading more difficult.

We know, though, that sometimes you or your students will want — or need — to read and work offline. We've provided a PDF edition of each module, which you can print as needed for your classroom. The PDF editions provide all of the content of the web editions, including images, glossary terms, and commentary — except, of course, audio and video.

We also recognize that internet access will be an issue for many students, both in school and at home. To help solve that problem, we're working on a downloadable version of the textbook that can be saved to a hard drive or burned onto a CD.

Working with primary sources

When primary sources are used in K–12 classrooms, they're typically used in one of two ways: as side activities, using brief excerpts and focused questioning, or as the basis of open-ended research projects. While there's nothing wrong with either of those approaches, this textbook uses primary sources to tell important parts of its main story. Page-length or longer excerpts are reprinted, with comments that provide historical background, explain terms and concepts, ask key questions, and — most important — model the kind of reading skills and inquiry students will need to use primary sources successfully.

In addition to these comments, we've also provided a number of “process guides” for using various types of primary sources. These are included in the textbook as appendices or in the full educator's guides to modules. The process guides offer specific procedures for examining various types of primary sources.

On the web

More from LEARN NC

Visit us on the web at www.learnnc.org to learn more about topics related to this article, including primary sources and textbooks.

Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/projects/history>.