



# Strategies

4TH AND 5TH

**STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF IOWA**  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**LIBRARY  
OF CONGRESS**  
**TEACHING**  
**WITH PRIMARY**  
**SOURCES**

# Introduction to Strategies

Inquiry-based learning is an approach to learning guided by the students through curiosity, questioning, and research. There are many strategies to use with students to make an effective inquiry-based classroom. Each of the following tools may be used in its entirety, or modified to fit the teacher's own needs.

The following strategies are addressed:

1. Gallery Walk
2. Question Formulation Technique (Right Question Institute)
3. Analyze That!

Each of these strategies come with an overview, steps, and tips to help teachers implement each in their classroom.

# Gallery Walk

A gallery walk is a strategy where students explore multiple sources of information. For 4th and 5th grade classrooms, it is suggested that teachers use historical photographs for their gallery walk. Check out this [video](#) for help completing the gallery walk.

## Step 1: Develop Compelling Question and Select Photographs/Texts

Develop a compelling, or guiding, question and select a range of 5-6 photographs or texts (depending on your class size) for students to observe and investigate. You can also select a question that your students developed, like through a QFT. If you need help deciding on a compelling question or selecting images and documents, take a look at the State Historical Society of Iowa's [Primary Source Sets](#).

## Step 2: Display Photographs/Texts around the Classroom

Photographs and texts should be displayed “gallery style,” in a way that allows students to disperse themselves around the room. Sources may be hung on walls or placed on tables. The most important factor is that they are spread far enough apart to reduce significant crowding.

## Step 3: Explore Photographs/Texts

Group students into pods of 4-5 students (depending on class size and number of photographs). Students will travel around to each photograph or text to observe and write down their thoughts. Give students a time limit at each source and make sure to mediate the rotations. Try to prevent more than one group from viewing a photograph or text at one time as it increases the likelihood of off-task behavior.

## Step 4: Debrief the Gallery Walk

Once students have had a chance to view a sufficient number of the texts and photographs around the room, debrief the activity as a class. Depending on the goals of the gallery walk, this debrief can take a variety of forms. You might ask students to share the information they collected, or ask students what conclusions they can draw about a larger question from the evidence they examined.

# Question Formulation Technique

The Question Formulation Technique, or QFT, is a structured approach for creating and enhancing questions that was created by the Right Question Institute. It reduces complex varieties of divergent, convergent, and metacognitive thinking into a straightforward, approachable, and repeatable technique.

The QFT develops the ability to ask questions, a crucial but frequently undervalued lifelong learning skill that enables individuals to think critically, feel more power and self-efficacy, and become more self-assured and prepared to engage in civic life. Check out this [video](#) for help completing the QFT.

## Step 1: The Question Focus (QFocus)

The QFocus serves as a catalyst for questions and connects to your lesson topic. The QFocus can be anything that prompts further inquiry, including a statement, phrase, word, graphic, audio, video, or equation. It should be relevant to the subject or desired learning outcomes. A good QFocus should promote alternative thinking and be easy to understand.

## Step 2: Produce Questions Using 4 Rules

Give students 1 minute to write as many questions as they can on a piece of paper. Make sure to display the following rules for students to follow while constructing questions.

1. Ask as many questions as you can.
2. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions.
3. Write down every question exactly as it is stated.
4. Change any statement into a question.

## Step 3: Classify Questions

Students will classify questions as open or closed. Work as a whole group to change the questions from one type to another. Then move students into groups and partners to practice changing questions.

# Question Formulation Technique

## **Step 4: Prioritizing Questions**

Sort the previously created questions as a whole group. Have students pick which 3 questions they feel relate best to the QFocus.

## **Step 5: Next Steps**

Lead students through reading and research by modeling how to find answers within a text or on the computer. Show students how to take notes by using their own words and transfer into paragraphs.

# Analyze That!

Analyzing primary sources is the key to successful inquiry in the classroom. Analyze That! is a collection of worksheets and questions to help guide students through this process. Check out this [video](#) for help completing Analyze That!

Primary sources come in many engaging forms. Beyond written documents and records, students can be taught through primary sources such as first-person accounts, music clips, statistics, maps and more. Some examples of primary sources include:

- Original Photographs
- Political Cartoons and Illustrations/Campaign Poster
- Historic Video Clip
- Song Audio Recordings/Speech Audio Clips
- Ship Manifests
- Newspaper Articles
- Campaign Ads
- Maps and Infographics
- U.S. Senate Report and Supreme Court Decisions
- Handwritten Letters
- Video Interviews

On the following pages, worksheets are provided to help students analyze the following primary sources: Document, photograph, audio recording, video, political cartoon/illustration, map, and object. The same worksheets are found in the Primary Source Toolkit.

## Think About

1. Choose at least two or three primary sources that support the learning objectives and are accessible to students.
2. Consider how students can compare these items to other primary and secondary sources.

# Analyze That!

3. Identify an analysis tool or text-dependent (guiding) questions that students will use to analyze the primary sources. A question developed through a QFT would work well with any Analyze That! worksheet.

# Analyze a Document



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?





# Analyze a Photograph



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?



# Analyze an Audio Recording



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?



# Analyze a Video



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?



# Analyze a Cartoon/Illustration



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?



# Analyze a Map



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?



# Analyze an Object



(K-5)

What do you observe?



What do you think?



What do you wonder?



What questions do you have?



What is it?