

TITLE: Comparing “quick” communication-the postcard vs. the email

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- How has communication changed from the “postcard era” and the “email era”?
- Does the way a society communicates over distances affect the way the society communicates face to face, or is communication styles a reflection of the way a society communicates?
- How does an individual’s personal record of history reflect a larger history?

ASSESSMENT: Students will be evaluated by responses given on the [Comparing postcards to email worksheet](#), as well as using the [Debate Rubric](#) for the final discussion.

SETTING THE PURPOSE: Students will examine and compare the written content of archived postcards and current day email content to draw conclusions regarding how communication has changed over the last century. This comparison will be used to contemplate how changing forms of communication effect every day life (or is a reflection of changing lifestyles). In other words, does technology affect lifestyle, or does lifestyle dictate technological advances? Finally, students will use the methods used to find historical information in archived materials to see what history is present in their current day emails.

DURATION: 1 TO 2 CLASS PERIODS

PROCEDURE:

- Have students get into the same pairs each were in for lesson two. Have them pull out completed [Written Analysis Worksheet](#) from lesson 2.
- Write on the board: “How has communication changed over the last century?” Discuss this information and put responses on the board, overhead, or white board.
- Tell students that today, the pairs will be comparing two forms of communication that are used to communicate small, quick bits of information-the postcard craze of the early 1900’s, and the email craze of the early 2000’s.
- Distribute [Comparing postcards to email worksheet](#) (one per pair).
- Have students get out printed emails they were to bring in (told at end of lesson 2). If students didn’t bring some, ask if others would be willing to share.
- Go over [Comparing postcards to email worksheet](#) together. Tell students they will be comparing similarities and differences between the postcards they evaluated in lesson two and their personal emails they have brought in. Remind them to think of subjects like content, style, artwork, delivery method, cost, etc.

- After students have finished, gather the group together to discuss results and record these responses on the board, overhead or whiteboard for the class to see and take notes on.
- Then, ask:
 - ✓ *How might life be different if we didn't have email (or instant messaging) now?*
 - ✓ *Why do you think that postcard use became popular? Why not just stick to letters, which are more informative?*
 - ✓ *What was happening in the country at this time that may have propelled the popularity of postcards?*
 - ✓ *Do you think that the way we communicate with each other face to face would change if we never had email?*
 - ✓ *Some people say that our attention spans are shrinking. Do you think that the quickness of communication is causing this, or do you think quicker communication could be a reflection of a community with a shorter attention span? Or, do you think neither of these things are true. Support your answer.*
- To close this discussion, tell students that for the culmination activity, they will be creating their own postcards that reflect the time in history they live in.

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES:

Collection of Postcards from the Champaign Cattle Bank, Champaign, Il. Postcards with transcriptions of written material. Paper copy attached.

Completed [Written Analysis Worksheet](#). U.S. National Archives and Records Written Analysis worksheet. (used in lesson 2)

TIES TO NATIONAL PRIMARY SOURCE OR SOURCES:

None used in this lesson.

ANNOTATED LIST OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

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[Student participation](#). From the San Diego County Office of Education website (<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/>)

[Debate Rubric](#) from ERTC online (<http://www2.lhric.org/ertc/>)

ATTACHMENTS:

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TIES TO ILLINOIS STATE LEARNING STANDARDS, HABITS OF MIND, AND VITAL THEMES OF HISTORY