
**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. To appreciate the value of the many kinds of visual primary sources available in any investigation of the past.
 2. To better understand how various features of any visual image can help it to convey information about the past.
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Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.

**THE PRIMARY SOURCES
AND THE EXERCISES**

Ten primary sources are provided for this lesson. They are all visual primary sources — drawings, photos, posters, editorial cartoons, etc.

These visual sources all have to do with the changing nature of warfare and of ideas about warfare from 1300 through the end of World War II, in 1945. You may not yet have covered this entire time period in your history class. That shouldn't be a big problem for you, however, given the aim of this lesson and its exercises. Again, no single DBQ is offered on all these sources. Instead, the goal is to help you think critically about how to interpret visual primary sources. Visual sources can be fun to work with. But learning to interpret them is not as easy as it may seem. The exercises for this lesson will help you better understand what you can and cannot learn from such sources.

**KEY CONCEPTS
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Basically, the exercises will focus your attention on the following broad concepts and strategies in analyzing visual primary sources:

1. You need to be aware of **the power of visual images to call forth strong emotions** that can shape the way you respond to or understand the meaning of an image.
2. You need to recognize that **any image is a limited, or selective, view of reality, not reality itself**. The image may leave out or distort aspects of the subject and give you a one-sided view of it without your really being aware of this.
3. You need to realize how **your own knowledge, opinions and values shape what you see** and how you react to what you see in any visual primary source.
4. You need to think about how the various **formal features** of any visual affect your response to it and the meaning you read into it.
5. With editorial cartoons, you need to pay attention to **symbol and metaphor, and the exaggeration and distortion of objects** in the cartoon. These are some of the elements in the **“language” of editorial cartoons** that you should learn to notice.

Lesson 2 — Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

The Documents

The Changing Image of War: 1300-1945

Document 1

The Battle of Crecy in 1346, the first key battle of the Hundred Years War a battle which proved the superiority of the longbow to the crossbow.

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Document 2

Siege of Dublin, showing use of cannons. Woodcut from Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 1577.

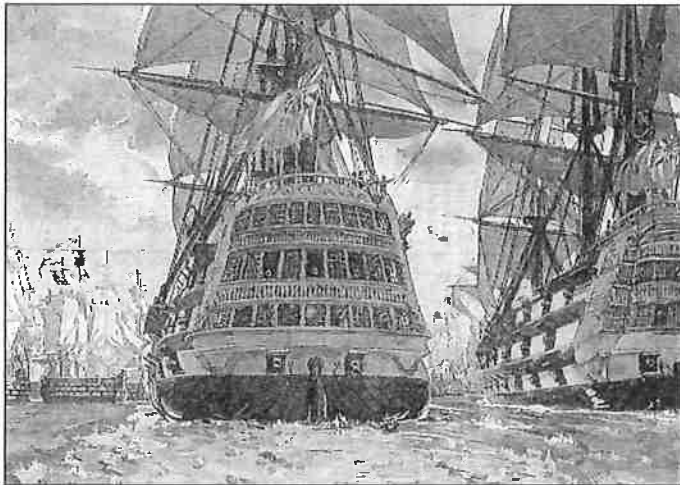
© Bettmann/CORBIS



Document 3

The Battle of Trafalgar, 1805, during Britain's long war with Napoleonic France. In the battle, Admiral Horatio Nelson was able to surprise and destroy the combined French and Spanish fleet.

Stock Montage, Inc.



Document 4

A British cartoon expressing outrage at a massacre of British civilians during the "Sepoy Mutiny" of 1857, a revolt by Indian soldiers under British command.

Cartoons from "Punch"



Lesson 2 — Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

The Documents

Document 5

A French poster from 1914, at the start of World War I. The poster is an appeal to citizens to purchase bonds to help pay for the war. The soldier is saying, “we will beat them!”

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Document 6

Canadian troops are seen here training to go “over the top” in the trench warfare typical of the fighting on the Western front during World War I.

The National Archives



Document 7

A French poster from near the end of World War I in 1918. The French countryside burns in the background. A victorious French soldier is shown standing alone in the foreground, with the words “They shall not pass!” in the clouds behind him, along with the years of the war.

The National Archives



Lesson 2 — Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

The Documents

Document 8

A huge Nazi swastika hovering over Poland in a cartoon that appeared September 1, 1939, just days before Germany attacked Poland, triggering World War II in Europe.

Fitzpatrick in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch



Document 9

A terrified infant sits alone and abandoned in the rubble of Shanghai during the Japanese attack on that city in 1937. Japan's war on China in the 1930s was part of a drive for dominance that led directly to its clash with the United States in World War II.

The National Archives



Document 10

The two atomic bombs that ended World War II left the entire world wondering about its nuclear future, as this cartoon indicates.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Seeking Her Future