

Library of Congress On-Line Resources

Library of Congress Web Site

<http://www.loc.gov/>

The Library of Congress Web site offers a gateway to many history resources and primary materials. Important support materials for many K-12 curricular areas, include:

THOMAS: Legislative Information

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Here students will find federal legislation that may impact many aspects of their own lives. THOMAS provides bill summaries, status, and full-text along with Congressional Record and Congressional committee reports. Check out Congress in the News for an index to legislation that has received a significant amount of public discourse. Students can learn about the legislative process, what their Member of Congress has proposed, and examine public policy issues through the lens of Congress.



Exhibitions

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/>

The Library of Congress assembles exhibits on various topics for visitors to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Sometimes, the material for these on-location exhibits come from Library of Congress collections; in other cases, the materials are on loan from other institutions. Portions of these exhibits are digitized and presented on the Web. For example, visit the “Treasures of the Library of Congress” exhibit to see Francis Scott Key’s hand-written text of the Star-Spangled Banner. Students may be amazed to learn that this song commemorating the flag that flew over Fort McHenry in the War of 1812 did not officially become the national anthem until 1931. Or, if students are researching the role of women in the workplace throughout our nation’s history, consider the on-line exhibit, “Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers, and Broadcasters During WW II.” This economic and social “turning point” of women returning to the workforce can also be researched in many American Memory collections. *(See the American Memory description that follows.)*

Today in History

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/today.html>

Here students will find items from the American Memory collections that happened on or relate to today’s date. These illustrated essays provide links to the American Memory collections where many “turning points” in history can be documented in primary sources. Students may enjoy searching on their birthday as an entry point to the collections.

American Memory

<http://memory.loc.gov/>

Use this URL to go to the “front door” of American Memory. Click on “Enter” to proceed to this on-line archive of primary sources that relates to the history and culture of America. This illustration shows the American Memory Home Page. As of this writing, there are more than 80 on-line collections that are freely available to educators, students, and the general public. Collection formats include digitized documents, manuscripts, films, photographs, sound recordings, and maps. In most cases, no special viewers are required to access these on-line collections. For audio collections, however, a RealAudio player is recommended; for motion picture collections, QuickTime and/or MPEG is recommended. Information on how to configure your Web browser is available from the Learning Page. (See *Learning Page description* below.)



American Memory collections range from the *Mr. Lincoln's Virtual Library* to *Selected Civil War Photographs* to the *Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers*—all three collections representing the work of people and events that have changed the course of history. Students may be interested to know that the Library of Congress collection grew from Thomas Jefferson's private collection of 6,000 books that he sold to Congress near the end of his life. He noted, “there is, in fact, no subject to which a Member of Congress might not have reason to refer.” Students will be fascinated with photographs of the Civil War soldiers as they learn more about how photography can be used to document many aspects of war, including its horror. The inventions of Alexander Graham Bell and his work with the deaf community may become a springboard for other students looking at technological “turning points” in history. All American Memory collections are rich and varied, providing unique and personal insights into American history and culture.

Use the Collection Finder to locate resources by broad categories or by format: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/finder.html>. Or, choose the List All Collections option to see a brief list of all collections currently available. (Note: you will need to use your “scroll bar” after you have chosen this option to see this list.)



Learning Page

<http://learning.loc.gov/learn/>

The Learning Page is a companion Web site to American Memory. It is designed to help educators and students become more familiar with the American Memory collections and their relevance to K-12 school curriculum strands.

The Learning Page provides:

- **Search Help**—easy access to American Memory collections via events, people, places, time, and topics.
- **Features**—interactive essays that dip into several American Memory collections, highlighting frequently occurring themes and topics familiar to a K-12 school audience. Features illustrate representative topics reflected in the collections. Current features focus on historical “turning points” such as Elections, Immigration, Inaugurations, Presidents, Inventors & Inventions, Thanksgiving, and Women Pioneers. And a new *American Memory Timeline*, which presents items from the collection by time period, is now available.
- **Learn More About It**—interactive collection summaries that reveal common historical themes as they are represented in individual American Memory collections. Search tips are provided as well as sample student language arts and social studies activities.
- **Activities**—fun student exercises. For example, students will enjoy the *Big Picture* jigsaw puzzle and the *Inventors & Invention* treasure hunt.
- **Lesson Ideas**—guidance on using American Memory collections with specific learning objectives. Teachers will find many useful suggestions and lesson plans including the “Historian Sources.” This lesson plan provides teacher materials and student activities that explore primary sources in general; it is an excellent launching pad for using any of the American Memory collections.
- **Educators Programs**—information about the National Digital Library Program (NDLP) and its outreach to K-12 teachers, media specialists, technology and curriculum coordinators. Here you will find information on professional development opportunities and special programs sponsored by the NDLP.
- **Research Tools**—information on citing electronic sources, copyright, and technical tips on using the American Memory collections. Also available is an Internet directory that links



to other on-line reference sources for history and social studies.