Finding Facts in Film

Introduction National History Day is a yearlong program engaging over half a million students in the research, writing, interpretation, and presentation of historical projects at a regional, state, and national level. Each year thousands of Oklahoma students become young historians through participation in this program. Here is one activity that can help you be a young historian, too!

Suggested Grades 6-12

Overview Historians use numerous sources to learn about the past. Historic video footage can be a very useful tool as they provide a unique glimpse into daily life during a different time. Films can tell us about people, places, and culture of a time period and geographic region.

Objectives Students will watch and analyze a historic film. This activity will help students examine life as it is reflected through this source. Students will use the film to draw conclusions about the people and society during this time period in Oklahoma.

Time Needed Watching film: 1 minutes
Discussion: 20 minutes
Follow-up activity: 15 minutes

Materials Needed Access to internet

Instructions

1. Watch commercial about Sonic Drive-in from 1977 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c90YbjO-uGo) and the commercial from B.C. Clark in 1956 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LJBB65r-9o)
2. Have students write down 3 things that stuck out to them in the video.
3. Re-watch film.
4. Have students divide into small groups and answer the following questions:
   a. Why was this film made? Who might have made it?
   b. Who were the people in the film? What were they doing? Where are they? What did you notice about their job? Their clothing? Their attitude/demeanor?
   c. What did this film show you about the economics in Oklahoma? How do you know?
   d. What does this film say about life during this time? What about the people? Do you think this reflects American society as a whole? Why or why not?
5. Have groups share thoughts with the class.
6. **Follow-up activity:** Pretend you are the narrator for these film. Write down the script that you would use.

Additional Information

To learn more about National History Day in Oklahoma, you can contact us at 405-522-3602 or visit www.okhistory.org/historyday.

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