

Jessica B. Schocker argues that ‘teaching with primary source documents adds significant value to a student’s learning experience, resulting in deeper levels of understanding beyond mere fact acquisition’ (p.421). Furthermore, she maintains that using digitised primary sources such as photographs, posters, cartoons and other visual images can increase levels of critical thinking and inspire deeper levels of historical understanding.

In this article, Schocker offers a number of different strategies or ways of thinking about images that move beyond a simple observation of the image. Why not try some of these other strategies in your classroom? Let us know what worked and what didn’t.

Strategy Name	Author	Description
Close Looking	Woyshner	Phase 1: Physical observations made without inferences, speculation, or assumptions until thoroughly examined. Phase 2: Observations include inferences, speculation, and assumptions.
Switching Places	Woyshner	Discussion of how the context and meaning of an image would change if the people or groups of people pictured switched places and took on each other’s roles.
Juxtaposition	Woyshner	Two or more images are placed together and analyzed, compared, and contrasted.
Sourcing	Wineburg/ Mattson	The image’s source is considered, including how that source influences what is portrayed. Consider motivation of the creator, intended audience, and perceptions by intended (and unintended) audiences.
Inside-the-Frame/ Outside-the-Frame	Mattson	Phase 1: Analysis of what we can see happening in the image (inside the frame). Phase 2: What other circumstances exist (outside of the frame) that may provide context for the image?
Intertextuality	Mattson	Images and documents are combined for analysis.
Framing Historical Questions	Mattson	Creation of a series of questions about an image based on historical context.
Fashioning	Shifrin	Study of the way a person or group of people are dressed to provide more information.
Figuring	Shifrin	Analysis of figures such as cartoons and allegorical figures and how those figures are intended to be portrayed and how they are received by others.
Portraiting	Shifrin	Creation of a graphic portrayal or description. Often used as illustrations and may perpetuate stereotypes if not analyzed in conjunction with other strategies.
Telling	Shifrin	Use of an image to tell a story by constructing a narrative.

Figure 2: Strategies for historical image analysis.

See:

Schocker, Jessica B. 2014, ‘A case for using images to teach women’s history’, *The History Teacher*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp.421-450.