

## **Can you write a scholarly essay entitled "Teaching with Primary Sources in the Next Digital Age" for an audience of archivists and librarians? (GPT-3.5 November 2022)**

Title: Teaching with Primary Sources in the Next Digital Age

As we enter the next digital age, teaching with primary sources is more important than ever. The explosion of information available online means that students and researchers can access an unprecedented amount of information. However, this also means that the importance of primary sources is often overlooked, as students may rely on secondary sources or simply skim over primary sources without truly engaging with them. Archivists and librarians play a crucial role in ensuring that primary sources are used effectively in the classroom, and that students develop the skills necessary to navigate and critically evaluate these sources in a digital environment.

One of the primary challenges of teaching with primary sources in the digital age is the sheer volume of available materials. Archivists and librarians must work to curate collections that are relevant to specific educational contexts, and to develop tools and strategies that help students navigate these collections effectively. For example, many archives and libraries now offer online portals that allow users to search for specific materials, browse collections by subject or format, and even create digital exhibits or multimedia projects using primary sources. These tools can be invaluable in helping students engage with primary sources in meaningful ways, and in developing critical thinking and research skills.

In addition to developing tools and strategies for navigating digital collections, archivists and librarians must also work to ensure that students have the necessary context to understand the significance of primary sources. This may involve providing historical background, explaining the context in which the source was created, or helping students understand the different perspectives and biases that may be present in primary sources. It may also involve working with instructors to develop assignments and activities that encourage students to analyze and interpret primary sources in a critical and nuanced way.

Another important challenge for archivists and librarians in the digital age is the need to promote digital literacy skills among students. In addition to understanding how to find and navigate digital collections, students must also be able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of online sources, and to understand how to cite and use these sources appropriately. Archivists and librarians can play a key role in promoting digital literacy skills by developing online tutorials and workshops, by incorporating digital literacy into classroom instruction, and by partnering with instructors to develop assignments that emphasize the importance of digital literacy.

Ultimately, teaching with primary sources in the next digital age requires a collaborative effort between archivists, librarians, instructors, and students. Archivists and librarians must work to develop tools and strategies that help students engage with primary sources in meaningful ways, and to provide the context and background necessary for students to understand the significance of these sources. Instructors must work to develop assignments and activities that encourage critical thinking and analysis of primary sources, and to promote digital literacy skills among their students. And students must be willing to engage with primary sources, to critically

evaluate the information they encounter online, and to develop the skills necessary to navigate and interpret primary sources in a digital environment.

In conclusion, teaching with primary sources in the next digital age is both a challenge and an opportunity. Archivists and librarians have a crucial role to play in ensuring that primary sources are used effectively in the classroom, and that students develop the skills necessary to engage with these sources in a digital environment. By working together and emphasizing the importance of primary sources and digital literacy skills, we can ensure that students are prepared to navigate the vast and complex information landscape of the 21st century.