



American Poster - War Work Campaign

Online Collections Database, 1920.1.257b, www.theworldwar.org/research/database. National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online.

Sweeter Than Fiction: How Authors Use Primary Sources to Inform Narratives

Recommended Grade Levels: 7+

Course/Content Area(s): English Language Arts/Humanities

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LESSON OVERVIEW:	<p>Using Claudia Friddell and Elizabeth Baddeley’s engaging children’s book, <i>Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call</i> as a mentor text, students will explore and analyze the important –and for readers, often unnoticed– role of research and primary sources in writing a narrative about the past, whether it is a work of historical fiction, creative nonfiction, or a biography.</p> <p>This lesson helps introduce students to different writing genres and the work that they produce during this lesson can serve as an example if they are assigned to write their own original narratives.</p>
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be able to identify images and information from primary sources within a narrative text. ● Students will be able to explain the ways in which authors use primary sources such as photographs, letters, and newspaper articles to inform their writing about historical events and people.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	<p>English Language Arts</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.9 Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p>
TIME NEEDED:	Approximately three or four 60-minute class periods, depending on grade/level
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	<p><u>History/Social Studies:</u> This lesson would complement a history/social studies unit on WWI, women’s history, or using primary sources.</p> <p><u>STEAM:</u> This lesson could connect with a STEAM unit on communications technology or how new technology impacted the 20th century and warfare.</p> <p><u>Visual Arts:</u> Pair this lesson with an art lesson using the illustrator’s drawings based on artifacts and photographs from the Museum.</p>
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since this lesson is centered around ELA standards, extensive knowledge of World War I is not required for students to participate in this lesson. ● It is recommended that students have a basic understanding of when the war took place, who was involved, and what the outcome was. ● To provide students with this background knowledge, have them explore the Museum and Memorial’s WWI timeline and key dates, or assign a video from their YouTube channel.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If students want or need more historical context about this particular topic, they can access the Museum’s online articles about Grace Banker and women’s involvement in WWI.
<p>MATERIALS NEEDED:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BOOK: <i>Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call</i> by Claudia Friddell, illus. Elizabeth Baddeley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ideally, you’ll want enough copies of the book for each small group in your classroom. ○ Note: if you use the website, Epic! in your classroom, a digital version of this text is available for students. ● Lesson PowerPoint ● Primary Source “Case File” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can either provide students with this document digitally or, for a more hands-on experience, print out the pages and place them in an envelope as if it is a “case file.” ● Student Graphic Organizer

LESSON

PRE-ASSESSMENT/INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

Hook: What Am I Looking At? (Slide 2 in [Lesson Slides](#))

- Have students look at the image on the slide and follow the instructions on writing their own museum placard for the object. They can write their responses in a notebook, on a scrap piece of paper, or in an assignment on their LMS.
- Assure students that it is okay if they don't know what the object is; they should use their imaginations!
- Have some students share their responses with the class. Ask them how they came up with their description of the object.

At this point, do not tell students what the object is – they will discover this as they progress through the lesson!

DIRECTIONS:

Part I: Reading the Text

Show students the cover of the picture book, *Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call*. Make sure that every student can see the cover – either pass the book around, walk to each student/table with the book, or project **Slide 3** of the Lesson Slides.

- What do you notice about the cover? What stands out? *Students should note that the “mystery object” from the hook appears on the cover. At this point, you can confirm that it is a headset with an “earphone, voice horn, and switchboard plug,” as listed on the real museum placard.*
- Based on the cover, what might a “Hello Girl” be? How do you know?
- What other observations or predictions can you make based on the cover?

Read the text aloud as a class. As you read the text, invite students to “think aloud” by discussing images, details from the text, or predictions they have.

- For example, on the fourth page of the text, the illustrator includes a number of posters to persuade citizens to support the war effort. Ask students what kinds of symbols they see, types of rhetoric used, or who they think the intended audience for the posters must be. Ask them to think about what impact seeing those posters might have on Grace Banker.
- Students will also notice that some of the text is in blue rather than black, and that a few times, the point-of-view changes from third person to first person. Ask students why they think that is. What could those changes signify?

At the end of the book, ask students what they think the process for writing the book was like. How much research would it take to write or illustrate a book like this? What might that research look like? What types of materials would you need to find?

Part II: Investigating Primary Sources

Elicit students' prior knowledge about primary sources.

- What counts as a primary source? How are these different from secondary sources?
- Which of these might be more valuable to the writer or illustrator of this book?

Show students **Slide 4** of the Lesson Slides, which are the Museum and Memorial's definitions of primary and secondary sources. Explain that while both primary and secondary sources are important and informative, primary sources are closest to the historical events. Tell students that primary sources had a major role in the book they just read, and that they will have time to interact with many of those primary sources in today's class.

Introduce the Primary Source "Case Files" and the graphic organizer (Appendix A). Project a copy of the graphic organizer or **Slide 5** of the Lesson Slides. Tell students that they will receive a "case file" of primary sources that were used by the author and illustrator to write the book; their job is to find out how the primary sources were used. As they reread the text in small groups, they will try to match primary sources to where they were used in the book. Explain the following categories:

- **Taken DIRECTLY from primary source(s)** – the primary source included in the book is exactly the same as the original primary source.
- **INSPIRED by primary source(s)** – the primary source included in the book bears some similarity to the original primary source, but is not exactly the same.
- **INVENTED details** – oftentimes, writers or illustrators will include some details that are not completely factual or reliant on primary sources (ie. a piece of dialogue, a thought the character has) that are still within the realm of possibility for that time period. This is common in historical fiction, even about real historical figures. Students should think about what the author or illustrator may have invented to make their story engaging, or make the narrative flow.

Once students have received their "case files" and graphic organizers (or have access to them digitally, if not printing out), they can sort through the primary sources in small groups. Before they start rereading the text, they should review each primary source.

Have students reread the text in small groups. Ensure that they begin with the title page, as this page gives them key information about the meaning of the blue text (these are Grace Banker's own words, taken from primary sources). As they read with their groups, they should fill in their graphic organizer with their findings.

This part of the lesson will likely take more than one class period; collect the "case files" at the end of the period and have students keep their graphic organizers in a safe place.

Part III: Analyzing the Use of Primary Sources

Once students feel that they have completed the graphic organizer, regroup as a whole class to discuss their findings. Ask students the following questions:

- What did the author and illustrator pull directly from primary sources?

- Possible answers: posters, photographs of the girls at work, the photo of the barracks being bombed, Grace Banker’s own words in blue text.
- What wasn’t exactly the same as the primary sources, but may have been inspired by them?
 - Possible answers: the ad for telephone operators, the telegram, the image of the *Celtic* (there is no evidence of this ship having dazzle paint, but the illustration in the book includes it).
- What might the author or illustrator have invented for the story?
 - Possible answers: the girls sliding down the stair railing, some of Grace’s antics, some of the different careers pictured at the end of the book.
- Which of the three categories had the most evidence? Why do you think that is?
- How much influence did primary sources have on this book? Was this surprising to you? Why or why not?

Have students collect and pass in the “case files;” they should hold onto their graphic organizers to help them with the exit ticket.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

Exit Ticket: (can be completed in class or as a homework assignment)

- 1) Based on the activity you completed in today’s class, describe the relationship between primary sources and Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call. How did the author and illustrator use primary sources within this book to tell Grace’s story? Give at least 2 examples of how primary sources were used.
- 2) What did completing this activity show you about the role of research when writing a narrative about a historical event or person? If you were to write your own narrative set in the past, what sources would you seek out?

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- Provide an audiobook/read-aloud of the text for students.
- Limit the number of primary sources in the “case file” for groups/students who may become overwhelmed by lots of information.
- Provide one example for each part of the graphic organizer beforehand if students need an exemplar.
- As students share their findings in Part III, start a class graphic organizer and type their responses as they share them. Then, make this class graphic organizer available to the class.
- Give students the option to use speech-to-text to write their exit ticket.

Further Resources:

For more information on the process of writing and illustrating this book, watch this interview with Claudia Friddell and Elizabeth Baddeley, hosted by the National WWI Museum and Memorial: [Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call – Claudia Friddell and Elizabeth Baddeley](#)

“Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call – Claudia Friddell and Elizabeth Baddeley.” *YouTube*, National WWI Museum and Memorial, 23 Mar. 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfvvnYp4RmA.

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