

Archives and Archivists

Archives: Answer Key

Answer Key - Part I: Videos and Questions

Below are suggested answers to the video questions:

Meet an Archivist + At the Heart of Every Story is an Archive

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/1060638033>

1. What does an archivist do?
 - An archivist takes care of photographs, journals, letters, artwork, sound recordings, audio-visual recordings, and digital files in a collection.
 - An archivist brings in new archival materials and talks to/works with the people donating the materials.
2. Why “can’t you tell history without the archive”? Give examples.
 - Without some sort of “archival” item or document, you wouldn’t be able to identify the dates of things, the color of the sky in certain places, how things were manufactured, and specific details of the past.
3. Define “archival items.”
 - Items of evidence that document a point in time.
4. What can a piece of evidence or documentation tell us about “what was before”?
 - How roads were built, how someone grew up
5. “The first point in collecting an archive is capturing a memory.” What objects capture memory?
 - Photographs, journals, letters, artwork, sound recordings, visual recordings, digital files, your own phone or camera

Detective Work

<https://vimeo.com/518772212>

1. Archivists are inquisitive. What are some “open questions” archivists ask about the collection?
 - Who is the person that made it?
 - What was their life like?
 - What was their environment?
 - Why was this made?
 - Why was it saved?
2. What question did the archivist have about the Assistance League of Los Angeles?
 - If the Assistance League of Los Angeles is 100 years old, and they did so much good work, why hasn’t she known these stories from before?

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3. In wanting to find out more about the Assistance League of Los Angeles, what type of evidence did the archivist use “inside” the collection? What type of evidence did the archivist use from “outside” the collection?
 - Inside: Photographs, scrapbooks, reports, publications
 - Outside: Newspaper clippings, other libraries and collections across town

Songs from the Past

<https://vimeo.com/518767781>

1. What can oral histories tell us about the past?
 - Oral histories give a great “landscape” of how things were in the past by listening to the words of people that came before us.
2. In the video, the archivist is discussing Manuela Garcia’s Spanish folk songs. How are the lyrics, melodies, and sounds of the folk songs recorded and preserved so we can know how they sounded?
 - The lyrics were written down in a songbook. The songs were recorded onto wax cylinders. They were recorded by Charles Lummis.
3. How can people listen to Manuela Garcia’s songs today?
 - They can listen to them on the internet archives.
 - They can listen to them by playing the wax cylinders using a new technology that reads the vibrations of the cylinders with lasers.

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Answer Key - Part II: ARCHIVES & ARCHIVISTS

WHAT ARE ARCHIVES

“Archives are everywhere and collected by everyone”

- Archives are full of evidence that document a point in time
- Archival Objects: Photographs, journals, letters, artwork, sound recordings, visual recordings, digital files, pictures on your phone
- Can include oral histories that give you a great landscape of how things were by listening to words of those who came before us

HOW ARCHIVES TELL STORIES

“At the heart of every archive is a story and at the heart of every story is an archive”

- Without archives, you wouldn’t know the dates of things, the color of the sky, how things were manufactured, how roads were built, or how someone grew up
- Oral histories can give you a great landscape of how things were by listening to words of those who came before us
- Archives help us tell diverse stories from the past
- Looking at what’s missing from an archive can also reveal information about the past

WHAT AN ARCHIVIST DOES – TOOLS

“Archivists are like detectives”

“There are always moments of awe, discovery and newness”

- An archivist takes care of photographs, journals, letters, artwork, sound recordings, audio-visual recordings, and digital files
- An archivist communicates with the person taking care of the collection
- An archivist asks open questions about archives/objects:
 - Who is the person that made it
 - What was their life like
 - What was their environment
 - Why was this made
 - Why was it saved
- Archivists look at inside and outside sources
 - Inside: Photographs, scrapbooks, reports, publications
 - Outside: Newspaper clippings, other libraries and collections across town

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Answer Key – Part III: BE AN ARCHIVIST ACTIVITY

FINDING CLUES IN THE EVIDENCE

What do you see?

Who do you think is in the photograph?

If there are words, what do they say?

(Printed and handwritten)

Where do you think this picture was taken?

- In this photograph, I see two people, a woman and a baby, a girl and a child
- Words on the front
 - Handwritten: Hortense Bardash, 6 months old (this is the name and age of the baby in this picture)
 - Printed: Blessing & Bro, Galveston
- Words on the back
 - Handwritten: cursive that is hard to make out on the top, 91.177.1 (this is the collection number created by the Autry)
 - Printed: Blessing & Bro Photographers, 174, Tremont Street, Galveston, Texas, Send name and get additional prints, at \$3 per dozen
- This photograph was taken in Galveston Texas
 - 174 Tremont Street, Galveston, Texas

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

What do you think is the relationship between the woman and the baby?

What makes you say that?

Why do you think they took this photo?

- The relationship between the woman and the baby could be:
 - Mother and daughter?
 - Sisters?
 - Friends?
 - Caretaker and baby
- The body language is very formal, they aren't smiling
- They took this photo:
 - To preserve a memory
 - To keep a record

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ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EVIDENCE What questions do you still have about the photograph?	• Who is the woman in the picture? • Why didn't they write down her name and age? • What is the unknown woman's job? • What is the unknown woman's relationship to the baby? • How was this picture taken/developed?
FINDING THE STORY IN ARCHIVES What do you think is the story in this photograph? Use your evidence, analysis, and questions and summarize what you think this photograph is about.	<i>Here is the "correct answer," students may come to other valid conclusions:</i> • This photograph depicts a woman and a baby, The woman is the baby's caretaker. The baby is named Hortense Bardash and when this picture was taken, she was 6 months old. This picture was taken in Galveston, Texas by Blessing & Bro Photographers. • The identity of the caretaker was not written down on the picture. We don't know who she is. This could be because she was African American and wasn't viewed as a valued member of this family.