

# *Historical Inquiry with*

## **The *Statistical Atlas of the United States* (1870) Population Maps**

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### **About the Historical Document**

The *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870* was published in 1874 and compiled under the authority of Congress by Francis A. Walker, M.A., the superintendent of the ninth Census and a professor of political economy and history at the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale College (now Yale University). As stated on its title page, the document includes “contributions from many eminent men of science and several departments of the government.”

Walker supervised the Census using scientific methods and sought to make the Census information gathered more accessible to the general public by producing the *Statistical Atlas*, which provides explanations and charts and maps of the data collected. He expanded the amount of information collected in the Census and applied statistical techniques to more accurately reflect the development of the United States after the Civil War.

The page of the *Statistical Atlas* used in this activity is “The Progress of the Nation 1790-1820, Maps...of the Population of the United States,” which includes four maps of U.S. population density and distribution based on the 1790 (first), 1800 (second), 1810 (third), and 1820 (fourth) Censuses, respectively. The optional extension activity uses similar maps for the 1830 (fifth), 1840 (sixth), 1850 (seventh), 1860 (eighth), and 1870 (ninth) Censuses.

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### **Uses for This Activity**

This activity allows students to see maps depicting the best data available for the U.S. population at the time and practice historical inquiry skills. The activity may be used as a way to introduce early migration or as a supplemental activity.

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### **Standards and Benchmarks** (see page 11)

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### **Grade Level**

8-12

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## Materials

- Internet access and a whiteboard to display the following PDFs of pages in the *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870*:

NOTE: PDFs are provided because they have better resolution than the *Statistical Atlas* online version. The full *Statistical Atlas* is available at the Federal Reserve online archive, FRASER®; <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/64>. Reference Maps 1 and 2 (at the end of this activity) correspond to PDFs 1 and 2 and are provided as samples of the maps' composition.

- PDF 1 (page Pl.XVI, "The Progress of the Nation 1790-1820, Maps...of the Population of the United States" [page 65 in the online version]); [https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF1\\_SA1790\\_1860Maps.pdf](https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF1_SA1790_1860Maps.pdf) (Reference Map 1)
- (Optional) PDF 2 (page Pl.XVI<sup>a</sup>, "The Progress of the Nation—1830 and 1840" [page 66 in the online version]); [https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF2\\_SA1830\\_40Maps.pdf](https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF2_SA1830_40Maps.pdf) (Reference Map 2)
- (Optional) PDF 3 (page Pl.XVII, "The Progress of the Nation—1850" [page 67 in the online version]); [https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF3\\_SA1850Map.pdf](https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF3_SA1850Map.pdf)
- (Optional) PDF 4 (page Pl.XVII<sup>a</sup>, "The Progress of the Nation—1860" [page 68 in the online version]); [https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF4\\_SA1860Map.pdf](https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF4_SA1860Map.pdf)
- (Optional) PDF 5 (page Pl.XVIII [top left-hand corner]/Pl.XIX [top right-hand corner], "Constitutional Population" 1870 [page 68 in the online version]); [https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF5\\_SA1870Map.pdf](https://www.stlouisfed.org/~media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF5_SA1870Map.pdf)
- Handout 1, one copy for each student
- Handout 1—Answer Key, one copy for the teacher
- If using the optional extension activity, Handout 2, one copy for each student

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## Procedure

1. Display *PDF 1: SA1790-1820 Maps* (see the Materials section for the PDF URL). Explain to the students that this is a primary source document. It is a collection of maps of the U.S. population from a document called the *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870*. In this activity, they will practice historical inquiry by examining the maps and answering questions about them. Explain the following:

## *Historical Inquiry* with the SA (1870) Population Maps

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- The *Statistical Atlas* was published in 1874 and is considered a watershed moment for statistics in the United States, bringing the United States on a par with our European counterparts.
  - The maps were created using data from the first four Censuses that were conducted as mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
  - Maps of these data had not previously been produced for public use.
  - The scale shows five degrees, or categories, of density and distribution of the population within the territory east of the 100th meridian.
  - The five color-coded and numbered (with Roman numerals) categories of density indicate the number of inhabitants per square mile.
  - Cities with more than 8,000 inhabitants are marked by solid color circles (e.g., Boston). The sizes of the circles are relative to the sizes of the cities. The bigger the circle, the bigger the city and vice versa.
  - Article I, section 2 of the Constitution specifies that Indians (now called “Native Americans”) who were not taxed were to be excluded from the enumeration that became the Census. Native American families that had renounced tribal rule and lived under state or territory laws exercised the rights of citizens and were enumerated. In this and other places in this *Statistical Atlas*, such Native Americans are referred to as “civilized.” All Native Americans were not given the right of U.S. citizenship until 1924. More information regarding Native American enumeration can be found at the following website:  
<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/summer/indian-census.html>.
2. Continue to display PDF 1. Distribute a copy of *Handout 1: Historical Inquiry* to each student. Have the students work in pairs and instruct them to look at the maps together and answer the questions on Handout 1. After students complete the activity, discuss their findings; refer to the Handout 1—Answer Key as needed.

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### Assessment

3. Instruct the students to write an essay that (i) summarizes their findings and (ii) provides evidence gathered from this inquiry and classroom learning that supports their findings.

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### Extension (Optional)

4. Distribute a copy of *Handout 2: Historical Inquiry Extension* to each student and display each of the following PDFs of maps from the *Statistical Atlas* in order (see the Materials section for the PDF URLs). Have students compare the maps, including the population center for each Census (the single stars, which have moved over time) and population changes in general and answer the questions on Handout 2.

## *Historical Inquiry* with **the SA (1870) Population Maps**

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- *PDF 2: SA1830-40 Maps.* Explain that these two maps were created using the data from the fifth U.S. Census in 1830 and the sixth U.S. Census in 1840.
- *PDF 3: SA1850 Map.* Explain that this map was created using the data from the seventh U.S. Census in 1850.
- *PDF 4: SA1860 Map.* Explain that this map was created using the data from the eighth U.S. Census in 1860.
- *PDF 5: SA1870 Map.* Explain that this map was created using the data from the ninth U.S. Census in 1870.

## **Handout 1: Historical Inquiry**

### **Observe**

1. What is the time period of this document?
2. What do you first notice about this document?
3. Describe what you see in this document.
4. What is (are) the source(s) of information for this document?
5. What does the legend (if there is one) tell you about this document?
6. Is there anything that does not look like it belongs in this document?

### **Reflect**

7. Who was the audience for this document?
8. Why is this document important?
9. What did the author(s) intend to communicate with this document?
10. How might this document be biased?
11. What can you learn from examining this document?
12. Is there anything significant missing from this document?
13. Why was this document likely made?

### **Question**

14. What does this document tell you about the United States and the world at this time?
15. Where can you find further information related to topics addressed in this document?

### **Analyze**

16. How has the United States changed since this document was made?
17. How does the information depicted on this document foreshadow the future?

## Handout 1: Historical Inquiry—Answer Key (page 1 of 2)

### Observe

1. What is the time period of this document? (*1790 to 1820, specifically the years 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820*)
2. What do you first notice about this document? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: It looks old. It includes four maps. The maps do not show all of the United States. Few people live in Florida. There is a steady population increase every 10 years, with people moving westward.*)
3. Describe what you see in this document. (*Answers will vary but may include the following: The document includes four maps. The population has grown and spread westward with each Census. The population center [depicted by the star] moved straight west. Native Americans not taxed were excluded from each Census. The westward migration tended to be toward the middle of the country.*)
4. What is (are) the source(s) of the information for this document? (*The 1790 [first], 1800 [second], 1810 [third], and 1820 [fourth] Censuses of the United States*)
5. What does the legend (if there is one) tell you about this document? (*Each map has a legend labeled "SCALE." Each legend shows the five color-coded degrees, or categories, of the map and the population per square mile living in each.*)
6. Is there anything that does not look like it belongs in this document? (*Answers will vary.*)

### Reflect

7. Who was the audience for this document? (*The general public*)
8. Why is this document important? (*Answers will vary but may include that it is the first time maps of this sort had been compiled to show U.S. Census data for the United States.*)
9. What did the author(s) intend to communicate with this document? (*Answer will vary but may include the following: The author wanted to show how the nation was developing by showing where people lived and tracing their movements by mapping data from the four U.S. Censuses from 1790 to 1820.*)
10. How might this document be biased? (*Answers will vary but may include that Native Americans were not counted if they weren't taxed, showing that Native Americans were treated differently.*)
11. What can you learn from examining this document? (*Answers will vary but may include the growth and migration of the population.*)
12. Is there anything significant missing from this document? (*Answers will vary.*)

**Handout 1: Historical Inquiry—Answer Key (page 2 of 2)**

13. Why was this document likely made? (*The maps were made to provide a graphical view of population growth, which made the information easier to understand than just looking at numbers.*)

**Question**

14. What does this document tell you about the United States and the world at this time? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: There were specific Native American tribal lands and the population of the United States was growing.*)
15. Where can you find further information related to topics addressed in this document? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: They could refer to the full Statistical Atlas for additional information or the government’s Census website.*)

**Analyze**

16. How has the United States changed since this document was made? (*Answers will vary but some likely ones include the following: We now have 50 states. The population is much larger. The language we use to describe ourselves is different. We use more ethnic classifications. The size rankings of the states have changed. Indians—now called Native Americans—now have their own classification and all are counted.*)
17. How does the information depicted in this document foreshadow the future? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: It shows the language and thinking of how populations were segregated at the time this atlas was created. These divisions among African Americans, whites, and the foreign born are still felt today.*)

## Handout 2: Historical Inquiry Extension

Directions: View the "Progress of a Nation" maps for 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1860 and the "Constitutional Population" map for 1860 from *The Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870* and then answer the questions below.

### Observe

Compare the maps. What trends are visible?

### Reflect

How have the growth of the population and the movement of the population depicted in the maps influenced history?

### Question

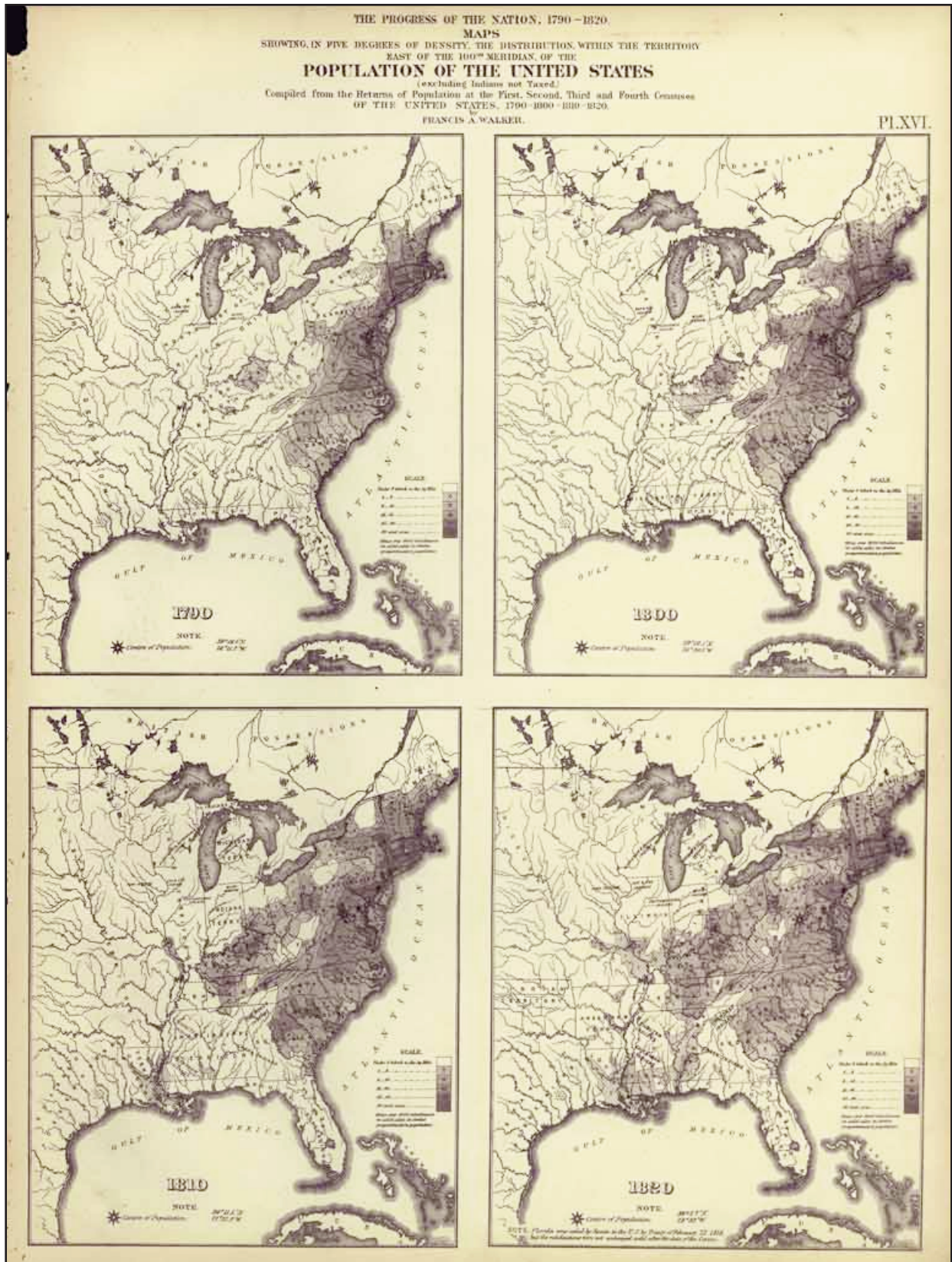
What do these maps tell you about the world in 1874, the year they were published?

### Analyze

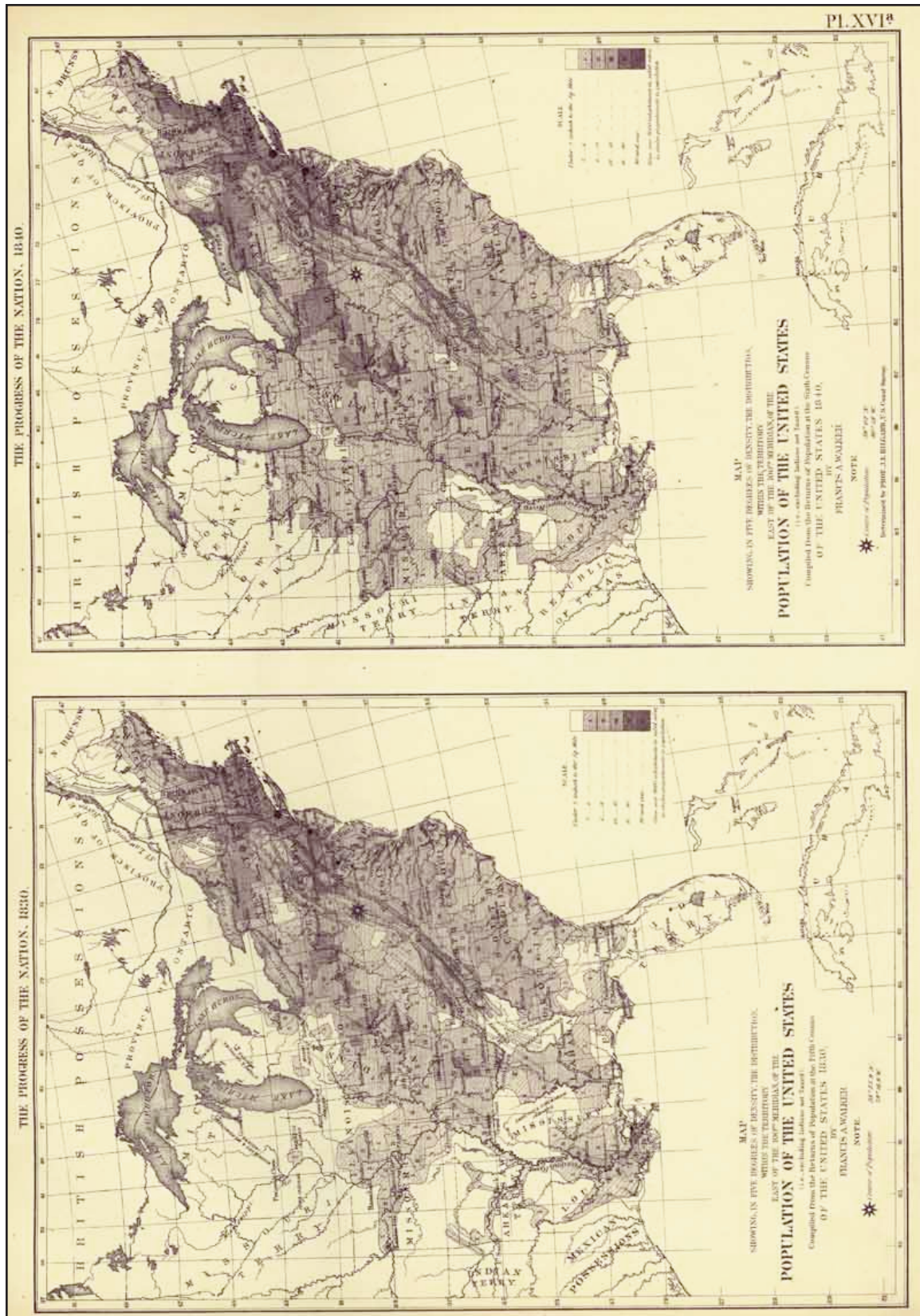
What story was Francis A. Walker telling by titling the maps, "Progress of the Nation"?



# Reference Map 1: 1790-1820



Reference Map 2: 1830 and 1840



## Standards and Benchmarks

### College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

#### Dimension 2, Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts

- **Historical Sources and Evidence, By the End of Grade 8**

D2.His.11.6-8. Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.

D2.His.12.6-8. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.

D2.His.13.6-8. Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

- **Causation and Argumentation, By the End of Grade 8**

D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

- **Historical Sources and Evidence, By the End of Grade 12**

D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

- **Causation and Argumentation, By the End of Grade 12**

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.15.9-12. Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.