

Handout 1: Journal Assignments

Journal 1

Listen to the podcast, then answer the first set of questions below:

- What did you learn about this place from the podcast?
- What questions might the historian have asked in order to discover this information?

Listen to the podcast again. Then answer the second set of questions.

- Did you find the podcast interesting? What did you like about it? What didn't you like?
- What would have made the podcast more interesting? What other questions could the historian have asked?

Journal 2

Observe your location. Write two or three paragraphs describing what you see, hear, or absorb through other senses. Use the following questions to guide you. (Keep in mind that some of the questions may not pertain to your location.)

- What is your place like? Are there buildings? A lawn? Gardens? A vacant lot? Describe the setting in terms of appearance, sounds, smells, or other senses.
- What size, shape, and color are the structures at your location?
- What materials are they made of?
- What special features does your location have? Describe them.
- Are there any hints as to the age of the place? If so, when would you guess it was built?
- Who uses your location and/or who used to use it?
- Do any structures look original, or do you think they have been renovated or rebuilt? How can you tell?
- Is there anything at the site that gives more information? What did you learn?
- Did anything at your location point to other sources of information or potential interviewees? If so, what are they?
- What other questions came to mind through your observations?

If you think it would be helpful, sketch your impressions of the place and its features or take photographs to help you remember the details of what you observed.

Journal 3

Now that you have begun to explore your source materials and answer some of your research questions, it will be helpful to refocus on the project's overarching questions. Review how much you have found out about the significance of your place to your community and its connections to American history by creating a concept map similar to the one you created as a class for the example podcast.

Write the name of your place in the center of a journal page. On the top of the page on the left-hand side, write "Community Significance." On the top right of the page, write "American History Connections." Fill in the concept map with all of the information you have discovered so far under those two categories.

Use the following questions to help you think about connections with American history:

- What was happening in the country at the time your place was created or was in its most important period?
- Were people settling the area or migrating here from elsewhere?
- Was your place associated with a new era, industry, or government policy?
- Did your place undergo any changes that paralleled changes happening in the country at the same time?

When you have finished your concept map, meet with your partner. Compare maps and combine information. Discuss how well the two of you together have answered the questions about your place's local significance and connections with American history. Identify where there are still gaps in information. These gaps are some of the areas where you should focus your remaining research.

Journal 4

Divide your page into four sections and label each as shown. Reflect on the work you have done in this unit by responding to each prompt using specific examples and details.

What I found most interesting or surprising about my site is . . .	The parts of the research process I enjoyed most were . . .
The most challenging thing about this project, and what made it challenging was . . .	The most useful thing I learned about doing research is . . .

Handout 2: Unit Overview

Podcasting the Past

What is your community's place in history? Have your family members or the families of your friends been here for generations, or is your city or town characterized by immigration and movement? Are your streets and neighborhoods relatively new, or have they been here for decades and seen many changes? Who were the people who built your town, and what is their legacy?

History is not just one story, but many different stories woven together, each person and place presenting a unique perspective. In this unit, you will act as historians in your own community, learning to ask questions, track down the answers, and make sense of your findings in the context of American history.

Audio tours are becoming popular for introducing tourists to the history of an area. For your project, you will work with a partner to write a script for a podcast of a local place. Then you and your classmates will combine your podcasts into a virtual tour for newcomers to get to know your community! As you discover history close to home, the connections you find to larger historical themes will bring a relevance to your studies throughout the year.

Here are some of the questions you'll explore in this unit:

- *What makes a place historical?*
- *From what viewpoint is history written?*
- *What methods do historians use in conducting and documenting research?*

What You Will Do in This Unit

Learn how questions launch a historical investigation. Study photographs and other artifacts and consider the questions they raise.

Delve into local historical records. Discover the secrets of a local place. Where do you look for information and who can help you?

Interview fascinating people. Talk to people with first-hand knowledge of your place, or those who know your community's history.

Write a script for a podcast about a place in your community. Bring together your research to tell the story of a favorite place.

Unit Project Description: Creating a Historical Podcast Script

For the unit project, you will work with a partner to develop a 3- to 5-minute script for an audio podcast about the history of a place in your community. Your script will address two primary questions:

1. How is the place you have chosen significant to your community?
2. How does the history of your place connect to broader events, movements, or periods in American history?

In creating your scripts, you and your partner will complete the tasks in the table below. Work with your teacher to determine due dates for each task and use the table to keep track of your progress.

Date Due	Task description	Date Completed
	Choose a place as the basis for your project.	
	Generate questions about your place.	
	Develop a list of primary and secondary sources and potential interview subjects to answer your questions.	
	Conduct and document your research.	
	Gather information from people with different perspectives about your place.	
	Outline the ideas for your podcast.	
	Write and revise a script.	
	Present your final project and reflect on your work.	

Vocabulary Used in This Unit

Archive: A place in which public records or historical documents are preserved.

Artifact: An object remaining from a particular time period or event. Examples of artifacts include the tools, implements, and clothing used by a group of people in a particular time.

Bibliography: A list of works used by a researcher in conducting an investigation or an author in creating a book, or a list of materials on a related subject.

Evidence: Information that supports ideas or conclusions or serves as proof of a theory or argument.

Oral history: Spoken memories or personal recollections of historical significance, usually obtained through recorded interviews.

Plagiarism: The act of using someone else's words, work, or ideas without giving them credit, or presenting as new and original an idea taken from an existing source.

Podcast: Multimedia files, usually in the form of a recording, distributed over the Internet to be downloaded or played back.

Primary sources: Primary sources are original materials from a time period or event, which have not been compiled or interpreted. Examples of primary sources include letters, diaries, newspaper articles, original objects or artifacts from a place or time, photographs, and live video recordings.

Secondary sources: Secondary sources are compilations or interpretations of primary sources and are written after the fact. Examples of secondary sources include textbooks, journal articles, Web sites, and biographies. Historians often use secondary sources for an overview of a topic and to find references to primary sources or people to interview.

Site: The position or physical location of something, or the area or plot of ground on which a building or other structure is, has been, or will be located.

Assessment Checklist: Historical Podcast

Use this assessment to help you develop the script for your historical podcast. Make sure to include all the requirements. Your teacher will use this assessment to evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Historical Podcast		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Sources. Uses documented information and evidence from at least 2 secondary and 2 primary sources, in addition to direct observation of the location.	20%		
Perspectives. Includes at least two different perspectives, taken from interviews, oral histories, or other sources.	20%		
Community Significance. Offers detailed information about how the place is significant to the community.	25%		
American History Connections. Shows clear connections between the place and events, movements, or periods in American history.	20%		
Structure. Has an engaging beginning, an informative middle, and a satisfying ending.	15%		
Total	100%		

Handout 3: Places

Place 1

What do you notice about this place and its surroundings?

Which questions from your list can you answer by looking at the photograph?
How would you answer them?

Which questions from your list can you make inferences about, or answer in a way that you *think* might be true, based on your observations? How would you find out if your ideas are correct?

What other questions about this place and its history come to mind as you look at the photograph?



Photograph by Russell Lee (1903-) courtesy of Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Place 2

What do you notice about this place and its surroundings?

Which questions from your list can you answer by looking at the photograph?

How would you answer them?

Which questions from your list can you make inferences about, or answer in a way that you *think* might be true, based on your observations? How would you find out if your ideas are correct?

What other questions about this place and its history come to mind as you look at the photograph?



Photograph by Danny Lyon (1942-) courtesy of National Archives at College Park, MD.

Place 3

What do you notice about this place and its surroundings?

Which questions from your list can you answer by looking at the photograph?

How would you answer them?

Which questions from your list can you make inferences about, or answer in a way that you *think* might be true, based on your observations? How would you find out if your ideas are correct?

What other questions about this place and its history come to mind as you look at the photograph?



Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott (1910-1990) courtesy of Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Handout 4: Choosing a Place

Now you are ready to choose a place as the subject for your historical podcast.

Step 1: Consider the options.

Look at the master list with your partner. Choose three or four possibilities and write them below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Discuss the choices with each other. For each possibility, ask:

- Do either of us have a special interest in any of these places? Which one(s) and what interests us?
- For which places are there specific questions we'd like to answer? What are the questions?
- Are there places either of us already know something about? Which ones? Does this add to our interest or detract from it? Why?
- Which places should be relatively easy to find information about?

Step 2: Choose your place.

Based on your responses to Step 1, decide which place will be the subject of your historical podcast.

Write the name of the place, or describe it, below:

Why did you choose this place?

Step 3: Begin your list of research questions.

Where will you begin your investigation? Consult the list Questions Historians Ask About Places, and identify those you think will be relevant to your research. Then write any additional questions that occur to you as you think about the place you have chosen. Use the back of the handout to write a complete list of the questions you will answer.

Handout 5: Conducting Local Investigations

Research Sources

You have chosen a place as the subject of your podcast and are now ready to begin your research. Your first, if not best, primary source is the place itself. If the location is still in use, you will learn much by observing what happens there and speaking to the people who use it. If your place is maintained as an historic site, there may be plaques, brochures, interpretive materials, or even guides there. These resources will provide background information and may also point you to more detailed materials elsewhere.

Once you have exhausted your location as an information source, here are a few others.

Libraries	In addition to housing books and other publications on local and regional history, public libraries frequently have archives with original documents and historic exhibits. Reference librarians are a good source to find out what is accessible in the library and possibly in other places in town. If your city or town is the home of colleges or universities, these libraries also may be open to the public under certain guidelines.
Web sites	Many of the sources listed in this table also have Web sites, some of which may offer transcriptions or images of original documents online. If you want to view the full array of materials available, or get a first-hand look at primary sources, you will need to go to the institutions themselves.
Historical Societies	Many communities have historical societies with knowledgeable staff and archives containing original documents such as maps, property records, manuscripts, newspaper articles, photographs, and even letters and diaries.
Town or City Record Offices	Towns and cities may keep such records as the activities of police and fire departments; building permits and blueprints; tax information; registrars of births, deaths, and marriages; proceedings of government meetings; and environmental and public health records.
Museums	Many communities have museums that specialize in regional history, or in some particular aspect of it. For example, historic homes, farmsteads, missions, or municipal or religious buildings may have museums associated with them. Some cities and towns have an "old town" or historic sections with museums or exhibits.
Book Stores	Most independent booksellers, and some chains, have sections with works by local authors and publications about the city or region. They may also have current and historical local maps.

Using Web Sites

Web sites can be particularly good sources of information early in the research process, as they can give you a broad overview of your topic. It is important, however, to analyze Web sites critically. Here are a few steps to the successful use of Web sites:

1. Search focus: Have you chosen the best key words?
 - Keep keyword choices focused and specific.
 - Use + signs to link keywords rather than typing in long phrases, which will restrict your results.
2. Accuracy and authority: Have you checked the information source?
 - What is the URL? (.edu is the site of an academic institution; .org is a nonprofit other than an academic institution; .gov is a government-sponsored site; .com is a business or personal site)
 - What are the author's credentials?
 - Is there contact information?
3. Appropriateness: Who is the audience for the site?
 - Is the material targeted for young children, high school or college students, or specialists in the field?
 - Does the page contain any advertising?
 - How detailed is the information?
4. Currency: When was the site last checked or updated?
 - Is there a date on the site?
 - Are there broken links?

Using Primary Sources

For a historian, nothing compares with viewing or turning the pages of an actual document from the time period he or she is studying! Handling original materials is a privilege and a responsibility—if pages tear or are dirtied, they can't be replaced. For that reason, primary sources are often protected, and those who read them are asked to use the utmost care. Here are some tips for accessing and using primary source materials:

1. Contact the source building in advance. Many archives of primary sources have limited hours, and they may have special rules about what is available and when, so be sure to write or call well in advance to arrange for your visit.
2. Handle with care! Make sure your hands are clean and dry before touching any original documents or artifacts, and handle them as little as possible.
3. Bring sharpened pencils and paper for taking notes. Find out in advance if you are able to make copies, but even if you are, you will probably want to take notes as well.
4. Keep careful records. Use separate pages or note cards for each document, and write the name, author, date, publisher, and page number on each page or card.

Handout 6: Bibliography Outline

Begin your research by finding primary and secondary sources, as well as potential interview subjects. You may want to start with secondary sources, which can provide summary information as well as ideas for locating primary sources. Another good place to start is with the place itself.

Secondary Sources (textbooks, Web sites, biographies, articles, documentary films)

Write the title, author(s), date, publisher, and city of publication (or Web address) for each source, and briefly describe its value to your research.

1.

2.

3.

Primary Sources (the building itself or any artifacts, letters, diaries, municipal records, photographs, audio or video recordings from the time period)

Write the title, author (if applicable), date, and a description of each source, as well as how it will be useful in your research.

1.

2.

3.

Potential Interview Subjects (people directly connected with the place or related to people who are; others with special knowledge because of job, situation, or expertise)

Write the name of each person, which questions you hope the person can answer or viewpoints he or she can provide, and how to contact him or her:

1.

2.

3.

Handout 7: Tips for Interviewing

Interviewing is a great way to meet people and to learn information you couldn't learn in other ways. It's also an important part of many careers including those in the arts, media, and entertainment industry. You may conduct your interviews in person, over the telephone, or with e-mail. Whichever way you choose, be sure to prepare in advance. Know what you plan to ask during the interview and be prepared for any follow-up.

The following techniques, for use before, during, and after the interview, will help you get the most out of the experience.

Preparing for the Interview

Contact the interviewee. Get in touch with the person you'd like to interview. Describe the purpose and length of your interview. Arrange a time to meet in person or to talk on the phone. If you plan to record your interview, ask for permission to do so in advance. If you plan to conduct the interview by e-mail, let the person know your timeframe for sending questions and receiving a response.

Conduct research. Do your homework! Look for information about the interviewee's connection with the place you are researching. Background information helps you focus and ask questions you might not otherwise have thought of.

Think about topics. Decide what information you want to get out of the interview. Remember, an interview is a chance to get information that you may not be able to find anywhere else. Make a list of the important points you want to cover.

List your questions. Write a list of questions to ask and ask your teacher or someone else to review them. Ask open-ended questions rather than ones that can be answered with yes or no. For example, instead of "Do you remember living next door to the old cinema?" ask, "What was it like growing up next door to a cinema?"

Order your questions. Ask your questions in a logical sequence, from basic questions (e.g., "How old were you when you first moved to this neighborhood? What are your first memories of living here?") to more specific questions (e.g., "What is your involvement with the efforts to restore the building to its original condition?").

During the Interview

Dress appropriately. If you're interviewing someone in person, dress for the situation. Always be clean and neat, and avoid clothes with logos, graphics, or sayings. To interview a business person, wear nice pants or a skirt and a button-down shirt or blouse. If your interviewee is someone in the community, dress neatly but less formally.

Arrive (or call) on time. Don't keep your interviewee waiting. If you are using e-mail, be sure to send the questions on the day you arranged.

Have the right gear. Be prepared with a notebook and a pen or a pencil. If you are using a tape recorder or video camera, learn how all the controls work before you arrive and give yourself a few extra minutes to set up the equipment.

Warm up. Be polite and friendly. Always begin by thanking the person for his or her time. If your interview is in person or on the phone, spend a few minutes to get acquainted and put your subject at ease before you ask your questions. (For example, you might ask whether the person has been interviewed about this topic before or briefly explain your project.) However, in an e-mail, after thanking the person for his or her time, it's best to get right to the point.

Let the interviewee do the talking. Don't interrupt and be sure to give the person time to answer each question. Resist the temptation to jump in if your subject doesn't answer right away. Give him or her time to think. Use pauses as a chance to take notes, rather than moving straight to the next question. You should also practice active listening—make eye contact and show your interest by nodding your head and making appropriate comments, such as "Uh-huh" and "I see."

Take notes. If you're not recording the interview, take detailed notes on your interviewee's responses, writing down key information. Be sure to note important or interesting phrases that you may want to quote. If necessary, read the quotation back to the interviewee to be sure you have it right. Also, make sure you have spelled all names correctly. Don't worry about using full sentences or writing down every word, unless you are planning to quote them. The notes are for you to remember what's important. If you are recording the interview, focus on your interviewee's responses and jot down what you will want to refer to later.

Ask follow-up questions. Your list of questions will provide the backbone for the interview, but many questions may require follow up. If an answer makes you think of another question, go ahead and ask it. Listen carefully to interviewees' responses and don't be afraid to ask for additional information or clarification, such as "Can you give me an example?" or "Does that mean that ____?" For e-mail interviews, send a second message with follow-up questions based on the interviewee's responses.

Wrap up. At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee again. Ask if it would be OK to call or e-mail if you have any further questions. Offer to send a copy of your final project—and be sure to follow through!

After the Interview

Thank your interviewee. Send an e-mail or a card thanking the person for the information he or she shared.

Review your notes. As soon as possible after the interview, read over your notes and add any information you remember from the interview but didn't write down at the time. (The sooner you do this the better, as your memory of the conversation will help you make sense of your notes.) You may want to type them and organize them. Write any additional questions that you have.

If necessary, follow up. If your interviewee has agreed, ask follow-up questions, including verifying quotations or spellings, in a phone call or an e-mail. Thank the interviewee for this additional time.

Evaluate the interview. Reflect on the interview process. What went well? What didn't go well? What will you change the next time you conduct an interview? Write down your reflections in your journal.

Handout 8: Creating Your Historical Podcast

Now you and your partner are ready to begin developing your 3- to 5-minute podcast! Follow the steps below.

1. Conduct and document research.

Begin your research using the primary and secondary sources you have identified on your Bibliography Outline. As you discover new sources, add to your bibliography.

Take notes and document information using the method prescribed by your teacher. As you research, keep your focus on the two overarching questions:

- How is the place you have chosen significant to your community?
- How does the history of your place connect to broader events, movements, or periods in American history?

After you have completed some of your research, create a concept map that illustrates your place's significance in your community and its connections to American history.

2. Gather personal perspectives.

The opinions and stories of real people associated with your place will bring your podcast to life and broaden your listener's understanding of its history. Include at least two differing perspectives about your place in the podcast. Gather at least one of those perspectives from an interview. The other perspective can be from an interview; an oral history recording or document; or a personal document such as a letter, diary, or opinion piece (editorial letter, memoir, or blog).

Once you have collected your perspectives, work with your partner to select the most interesting excerpts or quotations to include in your podcast.

3. Write an outline.

Your outline should cover everything in your podcast. Review your research notes, including excerpts from personal perspectives, and finalize your decisions about what will be in the podcast. (You will probably not be able to include all of your research.)

Make sure your outline includes your responses to the unit project's overarching questions—as well as your other research questions—and the main evidence you have gathered in support of those responses.

4. Decide how to start the script.

The beginning is what will draw listeners in and make them want to hear the rest of the story. How will you start? It is up to you to decide what kind of opening will work best for the story you want to tell.

Here are some ideas for beginnings:

- **Describe your place as it is today** to locate your listener immediately. You can use the material you developed in Journal 2. For example, "The crumbling stone façade is covered with branching ivy, but a date chiseled in the cornerstone peeks through."
- **Describe the appearance of the place as it was originally** to give your listener a sense of being immersed in history. "It was the first day of operation for the new mill and the sound of water spilling over the wheel spoke to a new era of industry."
- **Use a recollection by one of your interviewee's or another personal perspective** to help your listener identify with the building's history. "'I was just four years old when I took my first trip with Grandma to the five and dime,' says Melinda Kang."
- **Tell an amusing anecdote or fascinating fact about the building** to get your listener's attention right away. "Not many people know that the respectable National Bank on the corner of J Street and Green started its history as a prison."
- **Pose a question** that you intend to answer by the end of the podcast. "As you approach the post office, you'll see a second set of stone steps leading directly into a brick wall. Who built it and why is it there?"

5. Write the narration and integrate quotations and excerpts.

Your script will combine explanatory narration, quotations from interviews, and paraphrases or short excerpts from primary sources. If you plan to record the script, you will probably want to indicate *sound effects* as well. Remember, write for the ear. What reads well on the page does not always sound good to a listener. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Write as you would speak naturally.**
- **Write simply.** Long sentences with lots of clauses are difficult to follow.
- **Use strong verbs and well-chosen nouns and adjectives.** Use adverbs sparingly.
- **Watch out for words that sound alike.** Listeners can't see whether you mean *poor* or *pour*. Make sure meaning is clear from the context.
- **Use anecdotes and quotations to surprise and engage your reader.** Make sure personal perspectives are integrated into the story. Use narration to lead into and away from each excerpt, so your listener knows why you have included it. Be sure to mention the person or source you are quoting.
- **Use words in the narration that are also in the interviews or other excerpts.** For example, if a diary entry uses the word *carnival* to describe a traveling show, the narrator should too, and not call it a *fair* or *midway*.

6. Decide how you want the script to end.

To develop a satisfying conclusion to your podcast, it may be helpful to consider where your story began. Here are a few ideas:

- **End by coming full circle and comparing the past with the present.** For example, "The date 1817 chiseled into the cornerstone will always remind us of the day our town raised its first public building. Today, nearly two hundred years later, our local government still carries on within its sturdy walls."
- **If you began with a quotation from a primary source or an interviewee, end with a concluding**

statement from that same person, or someone with a similar or contrasting view. “The store couldn’t be more different on the inside and the outside, but Erickson’s is as popular today as ever. Says Melinda Kang, ‘For ice cream, my granddaughter won’t go anywhere else!’”

- **End by referring back to the fact or anecdote you started with.** “If someone robs the National Bank today, he may end up in the prison across town. But aside from that, the building on the corner of J Street and Green has put all traces of its former history behind it.”
- **Answer the question you posed at the beginning.** “Because the architects didn’t want to offend their original employers, they left the second staircase standing, where it remains to this day. If you need to mail a package, just make sure you go up the right steps!”

Another option is to leave your listeners with a question. Perhaps your research answered many of your questions, but not everything. Why not leave a challenge for future historians? For example, “Now you know the *complete* history of the Bellicose Market. Well, maybe not the complete history. No one has ever discovered the origins of its unusual name. Maybe someday you will!”

7. Document your evidence (add footnotes or endnotes).

Insert footnotes or endnotes in your script every time you use a piece of information that comes directly from one of your sources, including any quotations. Although you will not read the source note aloud, having it in your document adds credibility to your research and makes it easy for future historians to verify facts and find supplemental information. More importantly, careful documentation will help you avoid plagiarism.

8. Review your script with your partner.

Take turns reading your finished script sections aloud to your partner. Now is the time to listen to how well the story flows—and to see if anything you wanted to include is missing. Answer the following questions for your script:

- **Does the beginning draw you in?** If not, what ideas do you have for making it more engaging?
- **Does the script answer the two overarching questions?** If not, what more would you need to know?
- **Did the use of quotations enhance the story?** In what way? Would you like to hear more? Was it clear who was speaking and what was being referred to? If not, how do you suggest making it clearer?
- **How was the story organized?** Chronologically, geographically, or in some other way? Did the organization work? What suggestions might you have?
- **Did the writing sound like normal speech, and was it easy to follow?** If not, how would you suggest improving the flow?
- **What suggestions do you have for making the ending more satisfying or memorable?**

9. Revise your script.

Use your partner’s comments and suggestions to revise your section(s) of the script. Then combine the sections into your final script and write any necessary transitions.

Handout 9: Reviewing Outlines

Use the questions below to review your partner's' outline.

- How will the podcast be organized? Will it be in chronological order, or structured in some other way? Do you have any suggestions for restructuring?
- How will the piece open? How will it close?
- How well will it answer the overarching questions?
- How, and where in the podcast, will evidence be presented?
Where would you like to see more evidence?
- How will the podcast use the two personal perspectives?
What suggestions do you have for using personal perspectives more effectively?