

Reading Like A Historian: Strategy – The Historical Question
Program Transcript

Shilpa Duvoor (Interview):

So I think a really effective approach is to, like, pose a controversial question, or a question that really can have different answers.

Valerie Ziegler (Interview):

And so, when you pose that question to the class, that's, sort of, the grabber: this is why we're here today.

Ziegler:

And the question is: "Was the U.S. planning to go to war with Vietnam before the Gulf of Tonkin?"

Shilpa Duvoor (Interview):

You first need to start with an inquiry question that is—that has a rich amount of answers, and then you would give out the primary source documents that they would use to, like, gather evidence for both sides.

Colglazier:

Our question that we are focusing on is "What is the true story of the March on Washington," trying to have a complete picture of it.

Will Colglazier (Interview):

So the question hooks the students so that they have a purpose to the class. By having this focus question, they know the direction of what they have to do, and they understand that the answer's not going to come from me, but it's going to come from documents, it's going to come from the history itself.

Ziegler:

Now, again, our focus is going to be, "Was President Johnson going to go to war anyways? Was it really this event, the Gulf of Tonkin, or had he already planned to go to war?"

Valerie Ziegler (Interview):

And I would say that I've seen a change in their interest level in history, that instead of it being these facts that we memorize, it's this, "Wow, we're gonna solve a mystery," or "We're gonna answer some sort of question." And so, usually when I put up the question, you know, they'll be, like, "Oh, look at the question today," and that drives that excitement.

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