

**“How did Union Station Change Transportation in Los Angeles in the
1940’s?”**

**In Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of
Union Station, Los Angeles, CA**

4th Grade US History Lesson

**Automobile Club of Southern California Archives
UCLA History Geography Project**

Created by Dominique Schwenzfeier
Avalon School
Long Beach USD

Introduction: Given images taken of busy Los Angeles intersections in the 1930's and 1940's, excerpts from the magazine *Westways*, and a map of Los Angeles from 1946 from the archives of the Automobile Club of Southern California in Los Angeles, students will be asked to draw conclusions, ask questions, and eventually respond to the Historical Investigation Question: **"How did Union Station change transportation in Los Angeles, CA during the 1940's?"**

Standards

ELA 4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

History-Social Science Content Standard 4.1.5.-Use maps, charts, and pictures to describe how communities in California vary in land use, vegetation, wildlife, climate, population density, architecture, services, and transportation.

REFERRING BACK TO: History-Social Science Content Standard 4.4.4- Understand the story and lasting influence of the...transcontinental railroad, including the contributions of Chinese workers to its construction.

History-Social Science Analysis Skills:

- Students differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
- Students pose relevant questions about events they encounter in historical documents, eyewitness accounts, oral histories, letters, diaries, artifacts, photographs, maps, artworks and architecture.

Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading:

1-Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

7-Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Preparation : Divide the students into pairs or small groups, and duplicate a set of the images, map (both in the Power Point), and handouts for each group. The images could also be posted and used in a carousel activity. Duplicate a note-taking frame (PowerPoint Slide #3) for each student. Post the unit question (see introduction)

for use throughout the lesson. Note that all images and the articles are in the PowerPoint so they can be duplicated as well as projected if you wish.

Anticipatory Set: "Think back to our study of the transcontinental railroad and the people who worked to make it a reality. Do you remember the companies that fought to acquire land in a race to build rail lines that would cross the nation? Have you ever wondered what happened to those companies, or the tracks that they laid? Well, they didn't disappear. We are going to explore how the Union Pacific, the Southern Pacific, and the Santa Fe railroad companies helped transport people in the rapidly growing city of Los Angeles, CA."

Objective: "Over the next few days we are going to look at several different photographs, a map and two articles—all primary sources taken from the archives of the Automobile Club of Southern California in Los Angeles, CA. While we are looking at these primary sources I want you to keep the question: 'How did Union Station change transportation in Los Angeles, CA during the 1940's?' in your head."

Input Part I: Ernest E. East Photographs "While you are exploring these images, remember to think like historians. Look at each image carefully; look for details that help you identify the image as either a primary or secondary source; look for clues that tell you when the image was created; and use your prior knowledge to help understand what was happening in each image."

Note to teacher: *A succinct description of primary vs. secondary sources can be found at <https://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html>.*

"While you are looking at each image keep in mind that when time is up you will be asked to answer the questions: 'Do you see any patterns? Is there a theme or big idea depicted in these photos? If so, what is it?'"

Note for teacher: *Ernest E. East was a civil engineer employed by the Automobile Club of Southern CA to document traffic and transportation issues in the Los Angeles area from the 1920's to 1957.*

Check for Understanding: Ask the students to think like historians by analyzing evidence. Clarify how the students are to move from image to image or to work through the images if you have copied packets for each group of students.

Guided Practice: "Write down your conjecture about the unit question using evidence from the images you viewed to support your thinking."

Closure: "Who would like to share their thinking with the class?" (Choose 3-5 students.)

Independent Practice: "Research more on your own by visiting sites on the internet like the Library of Congress website, or looking at books like Intersections of South Central. Print out, or copy an image from your research, or take notes on what you discovered and bring it in to class by _____."

If students' conjectures differ greatly, but all are reasonably supported by the information provided in the images, consider holding a Socratic Seminar of in which the students state their conjectures, leading to discussion, debate, and possible revision of their thinking.

Input Part II: Central Section of Los Angeles Map 12-10-1946: "Today you are going to work in groups of four to discover as many things as you can on the map titled: Central Section of Los Angeles. Remember, to think like historians. When was this map made? Why was it made? What do the symbols on the map represent? etc."

Note to teacher: *You will need to explain to students what some of the symbols on the map stand for (especially the symbol for railroad tracks) because there is no key on the map.*

"Each member of your team will be given a different colored highlighter to highlight things that you find on the map. You have 10 minutes to complete this task. Be prepared to share your findings with the class when the time is up."

"Remember, you are still thinking about the question: **How did Union Station change transportation in Los Angeles, CA during the 1940's?**"

Closure: Pull students together to discuss their findings and start to draw conclusions.

Input Part III: *Westways* articles: "Etc. By the Editor" (May 1939) and "A Day in the City/with Jack Smith: Down by the Depot" (February 1970). "Today you are

going to read excerpts from two articles that were written in a magazine called *Westways*. Remember as historians it is important to understand where things come from, why they were created, and for whom they were created. Does anyone have any questions about the *Westways* magazine articles that we will be looking at today?"

Note for teacher: *Westways* is a publication that was created for its members by the Automobile Club of Southern California, often describing places that you can drive to.

"Great questions! Now, on your own, read the excerpts from each article, take notes, write down your thoughts, ask questions. And, while you are reading, remember to keep the question, 'How did Union Station change transportation in Los Angeles, CA during the 1940's?' in your head." When students have finished, buddy students up to read and discuss the articles for a second time.

Closure: Students share their thinking and draw conclusions, either in their small groups while recording the information on their frames or as a whole class while the teacher charts the comments, and the students take notes.

Culminating Activity: Students write an essay response to answer the question: "How did Union Station change transportation in Los Angeles, CA during the 1940's?" Review the elements of informational writing (see below*). Cite all sources, use phrasing like: According to..., In the document..., Compared to..., the words "I think" can be used, but rarely. Most importantly, remind students to provide details, details, and more details to support their thinking.

Extension/Extra Credit: Have the students address the question: "Do you think that Union Station is still an important part of transportation in Los Angeles? Why or why not?" They can gather information about this from interviewing adults and from websites such as <http://www.metro.net/projects/la-union-station> and <http://metroprimaryresources.info/72-years-ago-today-union-station-is-born-the-story-and-photos-from-the-citywide-fight-over-a-central-terminal-public-transit-plan/1169>.

*"(LOS ANGELES, Jan. 30, 2009) -- *Westways* magazine celebrates its 100th birthday in February as Southern California's longest continuously published magazines. Today, it has the 10th largest circulation of all magazines in the nation. Published by the Automobile Club of Southern California for its members, *Westways* serves 8 million readers as the region's premier lifestyle magazine and is a significant voice in local and regional affairs."(Taken from:

<http://news.aacalif.com/news/Westways0109?zip=90815&stateprov=ca&city=long+beach&devicecd=PC&referrer=news.aaa-calif.com>)

***Informational/Explanatory Text**

(Adapted from: http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf)

- Conveys information accurately
- Purposes—to increase knowledge, understand a procedure or process, enhance comprehension of a concept, explain why or how
- Describes types, components, and functions using examples, facts, and details
- Often includes comparing, contrasting, and/or illustrating
- Uses—historical reports and analyses as well as many practical applications such as instructions and manuals.