Saskatchewan Doctors’ Strike 1962 - Political Cartoons

Interpreting Evidence

A. Setting the Background

Prior to working with students to establish context of this event, some background knowledge about the Saskatchewan Doctors’ Strike and the Medicare debate could be provided.

- Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan: Doctors’ Strike: http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/doctors_strike.html
- Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan: Medicare: http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/medicare.html
- “Saskatchewan Doctors Go On Strike”: CBC Digital Archives: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/health/health‐care‐system/the‐birth‐of‐medicare/the‐saskatchewan‐doctors‐strike.html
- “CBC's Close-Up looks at the Saskatchewan doctors' strike, Part 1”: CBC Digital Archives: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/health/health‐care‐system/the‐birth‐of‐medicare/cbcs‐close‐up‐looks‐at‐the‐saskatchewan‐doctors‐strike‐part‐1.html
- “The Saskatchewan doctors strike is over”: CBC Digital Archives: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/health/health‐care‐system/the‐birth‐of‐medicare/the‐strike‐is‐over.html

B. Review the criteria for understanding and working with evidence.

- History is an interpretation based on inferences made from primary sources.
- Analysis includes sourcing: finding out about when and why the source was created and by whom.
- A source should be analyzed in relation to its context; the conditions and worldviews prevalent at the time
- Corroborating inferences from a single source with information from other primary or secondary sources is part of evidence analysis.

Adapted from The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013)
C. Working With The Cartoons

1. Consider the creator of the source.

Provide the students with access to the 7 political cartoons related to the Saskatchewan Doctors’ Strike in 1962, by Sebestyen of the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

(Available online at [http://www.saskarchives.com/Doctor_Strike](http://www.saskarchives.com/Doctor_Strike) and provided as part of the PDF package.)

Remind students that historians seek out the following types of information about sources before they do any work with any piece of written or visual evidence.

- Who made this source?
- What kind of source is this?
- How was it made?
- When and where was it created and for what purpose?

Biographical information is available online at [http://www.saskarchives.com/Doctor_Strike](http://www.saskarchives.com/Doctor_Strike) to help students consider the creator of these cartoons.


Look carefully at the source(s) and note what you see.

Instruct students to look carefully at the source by scanning the image up and down, left to right and corner to corner for a few minutes. Then, students can record or share what they see.

- List what you SEE in the cartoon.
- Describe the arrangement of the people in the cartoon.
- What actions are being shown in the cartoon?
- What can you INFER about the relationship between the people in this cartoon?
- What details in the cartoon enable you to make this inference?

*Initial Observations Viewing Guide* with possible prompts for making observations is provided.

Students are then asked to view the source again, this time considering the cartoonist’s decisions and choices as a second step in the analysis of the source.

- What decisions has the cartoonist made in creating this image?
- How does this cartoon make you feel about the doctors?
- How does this cartoon make you feel about the government?
- What details in the cartoon lead you to feel this way?
- What was the artist’s message?

*The Cartoonist’s Craft Viewing Guide* with possible prompts is provided.
3. Contextualize the Cartoons.

Provide students opportunities to put the cartoons in context with the larger Medicare debate going on in Saskatchewan at the time they were published.

Secondary Source Summaries:

- Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan: Doctors’ Strike:  
  http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/doctors_strike.html
- Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan: Medicare:  
  http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/medicare.html
- The Canadian Encyclopedia: Saskatchewan Doctors’ Strike:  

Primary Sources:

- Pamphlets & Newspapers:
  
  - Public Voice for Medical Care Insurance, Issue No. 1, July 7, 1962, published by the Saskatchewan Citizens for Medical Care (from Saskatchewan Archives Board [SAB], G. 261.1, Pamphlets of Saskatchewan Citizens for Medical Care).
  
  - Public Voice for Medical Care Insurance, Issue No. 2, July 14, 1962, published by the Saskatchewan Citizens for Medical Care (from SAB, G. 261.1, Pamphlets of Saskatchewan Citizens for Medical Care).
  
  - Public Voice for Medical Care Insurance, Issue No. 4, August 1, 1962, published by the Saskatchewan Citizens for Medical Care (from SAB, G. 261.1, Pamphlets of Saskatchewan Citizens for Medical Care).
  
  - “Political Medicine is Bad Medicine,” ca. 1962, (from SAB, G. 268.1, Pamphlets related to Medicare).
  
  
  - “A Pledge Had Been Broken! Prepaid Medical Insurance Must Be Acceptable Doctors and Patients,” published by the Keep Our Doctors Committee (from SAB, G.521.1, Pamphlets of the Keep Our Doctors Committee, ca. 1962).
  

- “Medicare: A People’s Issue” virtual exhibit, Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists:  
  http://scaa.sk.ca/gallery/medicare/index.php
4. **Corroborate and Cross Check Cartoons with other Evidence.**

Model out loud the thinking process of corroboration and cross checking resources with students.

Select one of the cartoons and one of the other primary sources (pamphlet or newspaper article) to use as you “think aloud” and model how you would think and respond to the following prompts:

- What is similar about these sources? How do they differ?
- Why are they similar or different?
- How does this source confirm what I already know or inferred about Medicare and the Doctors’ Strike of 1962?
- Does it extend what I know about the topic? Does it challenge what I have already examined?
- What makes this source an important piece of evidence?

Students can practice the same skills using similar prompts and other pieces of evidence posted on the website.

*Cross Checking Sources Reflection Guide* is provided for students to use as they think about how sources compare with each other during the corroboration process.

5. **Expressing Degrees of Certainty and Recognizing Limits About What They Observed**

Remind students that we cannot always find definitive answers to historical questions because there are not always enough sources, they may not tell us what we wanted to know or they may disagree with one another.

It is helpful to use terms such as probably, likely, possibly, suggests or implies to help state this uncertainty in the summaries we make after looking at historical evidence.

To bring closure to their learning they could use any of the following stems to help describe their thinking about the Doctors’ Strike and the larger Medicare debate in Saskatchewan in the early 1960’s now that they have worked with primary source evidence. Responding to a few of these would be summative assessment evidence you could use to help establish their understanding about the Medicare debate and the Doctors’ Strike.

From the evidence they have studied...

- These sources lead me to believe that....
- These sources clearly show that...
- It is highly likely based on the sources we studied that....
- These sources clearly show that.... But I am still uncertain about.....
- This source(s) does not tell us about....
- These sources have limitations as a window into the Doctors’ Strike of 1962 because....
- Source X supports what I have learned so far because....
- Source X goes even further than Source Y in showing that....because...
- Source X contradicts the evidence of Source Y by suggesting that...
- Source X is an important piece of evidence in understanding the Doctors’ Strike because....