

A Story in a Snapshot

Grade Level 6–8

NCTE and IRA Standards for the English Language Arts

(For use with “Photography Changes Who We Are–Photography Changes Our Life Stories”
<http://click.si.edu/Story.aspx?story=100>)

Standards (from NCTE <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm> and IRA http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/learning_standards.html)

- Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Objectives

- Students will read the online essay “Photography Changes Our Life Stories,” by guest curator Marvin Heiferman.
- Students will view the snapshots of African Americans from the “Related Images” section of the *click! photography changes everything* website, titled “Photography Changes Our Life Stories.”
- Students will explore and write about the concept of capturing the essence of a community through snapshot photography.
- Students will determine what they want to document about their own community and will have the option of submitting their photographs to the Smithsonian Photography Initiative (SPI).
- Students will use viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media (from McREL http://www.frankwbaker.com/mcrel_photography.htm).

Time Two 45–50 minute class periods

Materials

- Computers with Internet access or handouts of “Photography Changes Our Life Stories”
- Writing journals, pencils or pens
- Chart paper, markers, masking tape
- 8 ½” x 11” copies (number of sets to be determined by teacher) of Percival Bryan Collection photographs 1, 4–9 from the “Related Images” section of the *click! photography changes everything* website, titled “Photography Changes Our Life Stories”
- Four copies of the Photo Analysis Worksheet for each student

Lesson

Warm-Up: Discussion Questions

- *Does photography help us to understand who we are?*
- *Who decides what story a snapshot will tell? Who contributes to shaping the stories that snapshots tell?*
- *What does the way we choose to portray ourselves and those around us in photographs say about us?*
- *Can a snapshot tell a story? If so, who is telling the story? The person in the photograph or the person taking the photograph?*

Student Activity: Photo Analysis

- Direct the students to the section of the *click! photography changes everything* website titled “Photography Changes Our Life Stories.” (<http://click.si.edu/Story.aspx?story=100>) or distribute a handout of this essay. Give them time to read the essay. If necessary, students with developing reading skills can team up with stronger readers.
- Ask students to examine photographs 1, 4–9 in the “Related Images” section of this webpage and to select four for closer examination.
- Have students complete a worksheet for each of the four photographs they choose.

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Photo Analysis Worksheet

Student name: _____	Photograph #: Subject:
Can you find clues to the identity of the photographer?	
Can you find clues to the identity of the subjects?	
Can you find clues to the location shown?	
When was this snapshot taken? What are the clues that indicate the time period?	
Can you describe the facial expressions of the people in the photograph? What do those expressions reveal?	
What do you think was the intended purpose of this photograph? Does it still serve the purpose today?	
Why do you think this photograph was saved? Who do you think saved it?	
If you could add one more element to this photograph that would reveal more about the subject, the location, or the photographer, what would it be? Why?	
How does snapshot photography today differ from snapshot photography before the age of the digital camera?	

Student Activity: Time to Move

- Ask students to choose their favorite photograph from their original four choices.
- Designate seven distinct areas in the classroom as Photograph 1, Photograph 4, Photograph 5, Photograph 6, Photograph 7, Photograph 8, and Photograph 9 by taping up a printout of the photograph in each area. Place a sheet of chart paper with an enlargement of the Photo Analysis Worksheet and some markers in each area.
- Have students move to the area with their favorite photograph to share and discuss the information they recorded about this photograph on their worksheets. Ask them to come to a consensus about their worksheet responses and write them on the chart paper. Have each group share its findings and thoughts with the class.

Post-Activity Discussion

Use these questions to guide the discussion.

- *Think about the photographs. What do they tell us about what was important to the African American community in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, D.C., when these photographs were taken? Does your community have anything in common with the group of people shown in the photographs?*
- *What would you photograph if you were asked to create a record of life in your community? Explain your choices.*

Assessment

Show students the video clip of Lonnie Bunch, director of the African American History and Culture Museum, on the ***click! photography changes everything*** website. Ask them to write a short essay/extended constructed response (100-150 words).

Ask students to do the following:

Think about the photographs you and your classmates analyzed. Even though our knowledge of specific information about these photographs is incomplete, why are they an important addition to the historical record of African American community life in the mid-twentieth century? Your response will be graded for both content and conventions (grammar, punctuation, usage, capitalization, and spelling).

Extension

- Ask students to take four photographs that help to define themselves and aspects of their community.
- Have them write descriptive labels for their photographs. These should include information on the subject, location, date, photographer, and purpose.
- Have students write an essay (200–300 words) explaining how their photographs define themselves and their community.
- With their consent, send the students' photographs, labels, and essays to the Smithsonian Photography Initiative for use in the development of future educational programs. Please mail submissions to Smithsonian Photography Initiative/PO Box 37012, MRC-518/Washington, DC 20013-7012.

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Photographs


(<http://click.si.edu/Story.aspx?story=100>)


images 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9


Photograph #1	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=1046&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (Mrs. Percival Bryan and a friend stand by a car.)
Photographer	Unidentified photographer
Year	c. 1947
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Percival Bryan Collection
Image #	PH2004.7043.131


Photograph #4	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=1051&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (Two unidentified women on a black beach in Annapolis, Maryland.)
Photographer	Unidentified photographer
Year	c. 1951
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Percival Bryan Collection
Image #	PH2004.7043.253

Photograph #5	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=1037&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (This snapshot features Lisa Smith at a family gathering.)
Photographer	Unidentified photographer
Year	c. 1960s
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Robinson-Smith Family Collection
Image #	PH 2005.7001.026

Photograph #6	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=974&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (Percival Bryan and his wife prepare to attend a banquet.)
Photographer	R. McDougall
Year	1944
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Percival Bryan Collection
Image #	PH2004.7043.227

Photograph #7	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=1050&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (Family at Christmas)
Photographer	Unidentified photographer
Year	c. 1950
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Percival Bryan Collection
Image #	PH2004.7043.139

Photograph #8	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=1060&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (Wedding portrait)
Photographer	Unidentified photographer
Year	1959
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Percival Bryan Collection
Image #	PH2004.7043.256

Photograph #9	
URL	http://click.si.edu/Image.aspx?image=1047&story=100&back=Story
Title/Subject	Untitled (Percival Bryan proudly holds a baby.)
Photographer	Unidentified photographer
Year	c. 1951
Museum/Research Center	Anacostia Community Museum
Collection	Percival Bryan Collection
Image #	PH2004.7043.189