



GWHI Classroom Activities Generating History Questions from Declarative Statements

Learning Goals:

- ❖ Recognize that any simple declarative statement is loaded with implicit assumptions and based on extensive prior knowledge of historic context and antecedents.
- ❖ Generate questions by engaging fisticuffs with the text.

Activity

Take any declarative sentence from a history text and ask students to generate a question from it.

Example:

Several factors contributed to Chicago's need for a larger, more centralized, and efficient stockyard. One of these was the westward expansion of railroads, causing Chicago to evolve into a major railroad center and experience massive commercial growth.¹

Sample Question's:

1. Why did the RR's expand?
2. Why was the fate of the RR so tied to Chicago or vice versa: What was their historic relationship prior to the time discussed in the statement above? Why did western RR expansion "cause" Chicago to become a major RR center?
3. What sorts of massive commercial growth resulted – what sorts of production expanded as a result of the RR hub?

¹ Chicago History Museum online: <http://www.chicagohs.org/history/stock.html>