Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?

Supporting Questions

1. What are the different perspectives of this historical event?
2. How do motives influence perspectives on historical events?
3. Why is it important to explore history from multiple perspectives?
## Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?

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<th>2.H.1.3 Compare various interpretations of the same time period using evidence such as photographs and interviews.</th>
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<td>Staging the Compelling Question</td>
<td>To stage this inquiry, teachers will begin by discussing the difference between facts and perspectives.</td>
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<td>How do motives influence perspectives on historical events?</td>
<td>Why is it important to explore history from multiple perspectives?</td>
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<td>Identify stakeholders in the first in flight and their perspectives and create a graphic organizer to show understanding.</td>
<td>Conduct a survey of three students about motivation. Close read the sources. Facilitate a class academic conversation about the motives of the Wright Brothers and Alberto Santos-Dumont.</td>
<td>Close read the sources and answer the interpretation questions.</td>
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### Summative Performance Task

**ARGUMENT**

Answer the question, "Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?", using evidence to support your response.

**EXTENSION**

Students may choose one perspective in the first in flight historical event. Write a paragraph explaining why the perspective is most compelling. They may debate their ideas with a partner.

### Taking Informed Action

**UNDERSTAND**

Students may demonstrate their ability to understand by analyzing different perspectives, motives, and how different individuals benefit in historical events and current events.

**ASSESS**

Students may show their ability to assess by utilizing skills to examine multiple perspectives in conflicts at home, at school, and in their community linking the skills to consider historical and current events.

**ACTION**

Students may act by creating a school-wide conflict resolution committee to discuss school issues, consider differing perspectives, and offer multiple solutions to current events.
Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry considers varied perspectives and uses historical information from a variety of sources in order to investigate the past. The compelling question, “Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?”, challenges students to compare perspectives, reflect on motives, and challenge the notion that there is only one truth in history by analyzing photographs, journals, interviews, etc. In addition, this inquiry encourages students to examine why it is important to determine the difference between a primary and secondary source.

• 2.H.1.3 Compare various interpretations of the same historical period using evidence such as photographs and interviews.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take 5-7 45-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame might expand if teachers think that their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their particular students.

Structure

In addressing the compelling question, “Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?”, student will work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence from diverse sources.
Staging the Compelling Question

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| **Featured Sources** | • Source A: Video Read Aloud Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld  
• Source B: Perception is subjective but it is strongly dependent upon the way things are presented. |

**Staging the compelling question**

An engaging way to start this discussion is to read aloud Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld, or if you do not have access to the text, show a video read aloud. This is a short and simple text where two children are arguing over whether they see a duck or a rabbit. Both kids make their cases and the reader decides if it is a duck or rabbit. It is a matter of perspective. Teachers may also project the cartoon about perspectives. One person sees three and the other person sees four. Who is correct? Is only one person being truthful? Is it a difference of perspective?
Excerpt

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36AqMX5uua4

Source:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36AqMX5uua4

Video read aloud Duck! Rabbit!. Book by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld. Read aloud by The StoryTime family.
Perception is subjective but it is strongly dependent upon the way things are presented.

https://www.eitdigital.eu/newsroom/blog/article/sm..
Supporting Question 1

<table>
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**Featured Sources**
- **Source A**: Telegram from Orville Wright in Kitty Hawk, N.C., to his father announcing successful flights, December 17, 1903.
- **Source B**: Photo of Wright Brothers Flight December 17, 1903 120 feet in 12 seconds, 10:35am. Used rails system for take off.
- **Source C**: Santos-Dumont flying his plane in Paris 1906, sur 14 bis, vole 220 mètres et gagne le Prix Archdeacon. He Flew publicly October 23, 1906 approx. 21 seconds more than 200 feet Unassisted take off
- **Source D**: French newspaper, La Petit Journal, front page November 25, 1906
- **Source E**: Australian Star article

**Additional Materials**
- [Tree graphic organizer blank.jpg](https://s3.amazonaws.com/idm-dev/u/b/f/9/c/5582/bf9ca1f77922efcd614d0ae0d3c8e5a59aedc483.jpg)
- [Tree graphic organizer completed.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/idm-dev/u/4/d/2/d/5582/4d2d7a5bd9779fc19032adbc058e99f84f171349.pdf)

The supporting question, "What are the different perspectives of this historical event?", leads students to consider that there are different stakeholders in the first in flight. Each stakeholder (persons, countries, or companies) involved has a unique perspective of the historical event. It is in learning these different perspectives that students can begin to understand the historical event more fully.

**Formative Performance Task**

The formative performance task invites students to closely read a telegram, photos, and newspaper articles about the Wright Brothers and Alberto Santos-Dumont with the purpose of identifying the stakeholders in the race for the first in flight. The teacher may choose to read some of the documents depending upon the needs of the students and the length of scheduled instruction. Students will complete a graphic organizer to display the stakeholders and their perspectives. A tree diagram may be a good graphic organizer for this task (see example attached). The emphasis of the task is to analyze the sources and determine who are the most important people involved in this historical event and their perspectives. The teacher may consider facilitating a class discussion to support the students’ completion of the performance task.
Telegram from Orville Wright in Kitty Hawk, N.C., to his father announcing successful flights, December 17, 1903.


Author: Orville Wright
Date Created: December 17, 1903
Place: Kitty Hawk, North Carolina
Supporting Question 1

Photo of Wright Brothers Flight December 17, 1903 120 feet in 12 seconds, 10:35am. Used rails system for take off.

Source: Library of Congress [https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/december].
Photographers: Orville Wright & John T. Daniels
Date photo taken: December 17, 1903
Where: Kitty Hawk, North Carolina
First Flight: 120 feet in 12 seconds, 10:35am
Santos-Dumont flying his plane in Paris 1906, sur 14 bis, vole 220 mètres et gagne le Prix Archdeacon. He Flew publicly October 23, 1906 approx. 21 seconds more than 200 feet Unassisted take off

| **Featured Source D** | French newspaper, *La Petit Journal*, front page November 25, 1906 |
AIRSHIP TRIALS IN PARIS

SUCCESS OF SANTOS-DUMONT

M. Santos-Dumont on November 12 made several ascents in his new aeroplane from the Bois de Boulogne in his attempt to win the Deutsch-Archdeacon prize of £2000, offered to the aeronaut who, conducting a machine heavier than air, completes a circular course of a kilometre (1100 yards) without touching ground. When the motor was started the curious-looking contrivance ran along the ground on its wheels for about 50 yards. Then it rose into the air to a height of about 12 ft. The aeroplane completed about 300 yards at a very high rate of speed, then it slowly descended to earth under full control.

On the motor being restarted the aeroplane went along the ground and then leaped into the air with a sudden bound that almost hurled Santos-Dumont from the basket-like structure in which he was stationed. This time it travelled nearly 400 yards in its aerial flight, but something went wrong with the mechanism, and the aeroplane came to earth rapidly, but no one was injured.

The subsequent ascents were much hampered by the immense crowd. The police were insufficient, so a company of infantry which happened to be manoeuvring close by was summoned to keep the people within bounds. In the fourth and last ascent Dumont at a height of about 9 ft. above the ground covered 312 yards at the rate of 28 miles an hour.

A woman bolted across the course like a hunted hare as the aeroplane got under way. Fortunately the machine cleared her, and went past just above her head. After a time Santos-Dumont, startled by the spectators just ahead of him, gave a sharp turn to his rudder, which caused the machine suddenly to pitch forward and hit the ground hard with the right wing, which was badly damaged. The crowd dashed forward towards...
Santos-Dumont, who was by no means hurt, took him out of his basket, and carried him off in triumph.

Santos-Dumont won two prizes—one of 100f. for the first aeroplane to fly 50 metres, and another of 1500f. for the first to cover not less than 100 metres without touching the earth. The latter is offered by the Aeroplane Committee of the Aero Club of France. Santos-Dumont decided to divide the money among his three assistant mechanics.
Motives can change the way people work to meet their goals and motives can influence how people tell their story. It is important to consider people’s motives and lenses when analyzing their perspectives on events.

**Formative Performance Task**

Conduct a survey of three students. Ask students, What is your motive to accomplish a goal? 1. Desire for money or a prize 2. Attract fame 3. Challenge/adventure 4. Feel good about yourself 5. Have others feel good about you. Close read the sources while thinking about the motives the Wright Brothers and Alberto Santos-Dumont may have had while they were working to achieve their goals of first in flight and how they shared their achievements. Teacher may read excerpts from journal entries to help students read cursive handwriting. Finally, participate in a whole class academic conversation about the Wright Brothers and Santos-Dumont’s motives both in their work and how they shared their stories with others.

About the author: Adelia Borges is a journalist and has worked for 45 years in printed and broadcast media. She is a curator and chairman of exhibitions of design, arts and architecture, and producer of cultural projects. She was Director of the Museum of the Brazilian House, MCB, Sao Paulo. She is interested in culture and democratic design.

Excerpt: Santos Dumont received requests to buy the beautiful little craft, which conceptually defined the future of airplanes. To great surprise, the designer declared the design to be in the public domain, he gave up all rights to it, and he published all Demoiselle no 20’s technical details in American magazine Popular Mechanics.

Following this, dozens of people in many countries copied Demoiselle’s design, made minor modifications and patented them as their own creations, including inventors such as Fokker. More than 200 similar craft were made in the following years by companies and individuals. Thus, it effectively became the first serial produced airplane.

Regarding Demoiselle, Santos Dumont told a journalist the following: ‘If you want to do me a great favor, declare in your newspaper that, eager to spread aerial locomotion, I have made the patents to my airplane available to the public. Everyone has the right to build it, and to this end they may ask me for the plans. The craft is not expensive. Including the engine, it is less than 5,000 francs’.

Santos Dumont considered his designs to be the property of mankind and he did everything publicly. Meanwhile, in Ohio, in the United States, Wilbur and Orville Wright, brothers who manufactured bicycles, were designing aircraft models in secrecy, in line with their avowed commercial interests. Following 14bis’ flight, they publicly claimed that they had been the first to invent the airplane. On December 17, 1903, they had taken off from the dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, assisted by winds of nearly 40 km an hour. In 1904 or 1905, they used a catapult to facilitate takeoff, although they still needed strong winds.

In 1908, the Wright brothers went to Paris to try to sell their airplane to the French government, flew around the Eiffel Tower and obtained considerable press coverage, stealing media attention. Although he was not financially ambitious, Santos Dumont was very vain. And now, ‘out of nowhere’, he saw his feats contested, and watched helplessly as the media’s interest was diluted. He was no longer the only celebrity of aviation.

Source:
Excerpt

For a while there were those who argued that my time ought to be calculated up to the moment of my second return to the aerodrome instead of to the moment when I first passed over it, returning from the Eiffel Tower. For a while, indeed, it seemed that it might be more difficult to have the prize awarded to me than it had been to win it. In the end, however, common-sense prevailed. The money of the prize, amounting in all to 125,000 francs, I did not desire to keep. I, therefore, divided it into unequal parts. The greater sum, of 75,000 francs, I handed over to the Prefect of Police of Paris to be used for the deserving poor. The balance I distributed among my employees, who had been so long with me and to whose devotion I was glad to pay this tribute.

At this same time I received another grand prize, as gratifying as it was unexpected. This was a sum of 100 contos (125,000 francs), voted to me by the Government of my own country, and accompanied by a gold medal of large size and great beauty, designed, engraved, and struck off in Brazil. Its obverse shows my humble self led by Victory and crowned with laurel by a flying figure of Renown. Above a rising sun there is engraved the line of Camoëns, altered by one word, as I adopted it to float on the long streamer of my air-ship: "Por ceos nunca d'antes navegados!" The reverse bears these words: "Being President of the Republic of the United States of Brazil, the Doctor Manoel Ferraz de Campos Salles has given order to engrave and strike this medal in homage to Alberto Santos-Dumont. 19th October 1901."

Just as I had not gone into air-ship constructing for the sake of winning the Deutsch prize, so now I had no reason to stop experimenting after I had won it. When I built and navigated my first air-ships neither Aéro Club nor Deutsch prize were yet in existence. The two, by their rapid rise and deserved prominence, had brought the problem of aerial navigation suddenly before the public—so suddenly, indeed, that I was really not prepared to enter into such a race with a time limit. Naturally anxious to have the honour of winning such a competition, I had been forced on rapidly in new constructions at both danger and expense. Now I would take time to perfect myself systematically as an aerial navigator.

Source:
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/42344/42344-h/42344-h.htm
Supporting Question 2

Featured Source D

Diary Entries: December 17, 1903, Orville Wright

https://www.loc.gov/resource/mwright.01007/?sp=31

Library of Congress
There is a collection of perspectives on all historical events. Critical thinking is required to consider different perspectives and each stakeholder’s motives. It is important to analyze multiple perspectives to gain a fuller understanding of the historical period and events.

**Formative Performance Task**

While reading the provided sources, the students should answer the following questions:

1. Why would the Smithsonian want the Wright Brothers to continue to be regarded as first in flight?
2. Why would Brazil want Alberto Santos-Dumont to be named first in flight?
3. Why would North Carolina want the Wright Brothers to continue to be regarded as first in flight?
Around 1904, the Smithsonian gave aviation history a black eye when it declared Samuel Pierpont Langley, one-time secretary of the museum, to be the first person to build a successful flying machine.

Oddly enough, Langley was already dead at that point, but the museum’s then director Charles W. Walcott—a close friend—attempted to bring him posthumous recognition by having his failed airplane design reconstructed (and soundly reinforced) so it could be successfully test-flown.

When the museum named Langley as the first to create a flying machine, Orville—the surviving brother—had the Wright Flyer sent to London instead, where it remained on display at the Science Museum until after his death early in 1948.

The family had the Wright Flyer moved to the Smithsonian at the end of 1948, but not before insisting that a contract be drawn up naming the brothers as the undisputed first in flight. The contract specifically states that, should the Smithsonian recognize anyone else as being first—or having built a flying machine before the brothers did—the family will promptly remove the Flyer from the museum.

[Source: https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/1..]
The Brazilians challenge the assertion that the Wrights were first to make aviation history with a true airplane since they used a launching rail. By contrast, Santos-Dumont won a competition in France on Oct. 23, 1906, when his winged aircraft flew about 200 feet and then landed safely to win the Aero-Club de France prize of 1,500 francs.

In a piece written for Brazil's Ministry of Science and Technology celebrating the 100th anniversary of Santos-Dumont's flight, physicist Henrique Lins de Barros argued that the inventor's 14-Bis, as the craft was called, satisfied all the criteria of the Federation Aeronautique International (FAI) as the world's first airplane. They stipulated the following:

A) the flight should be done before an official organization, qualified to ratify it; B) the flight should be done in calm weather and over a plain ground, and properly documented; C) the machine should be able to take off from a designated area by its own means with a man on board; D) the machine should carry on board the necessary source of energy; E) the machine should fly in a straight line; F) the machine should make a change of direction (turn and circle); G) the machine should return to the starting point.

[Link to article](https://www.cnet.com/news/were-the-wright-brothers/)
The town logo is “First in Flight” and features an emblem of the brothers flying their first aircraft. Not only is there a logo, but Kitty Hawk is home to a massive monument forever commemorating the brothers and what they did December of 1903. It was funded by government dollars, proposed by the Committee on Appropriations, and erected in 1932 (US House). This, along with a visitor center serves as the main tourist attraction in the city which is visited by a half million people every year. This town, which has largely been centered around tourism and the benefits of it can credit its development to the Wright Brothers and their decision for location. Not only does the town make money from tourism it is a city that is known by almost all boys and girls throughout America. Growing up you learn about the historic first flight at Kitty Hawk, a town which by any other means is the same as any other quiet beach town.

http://nchistory.web.unc.edu/kitty-hawk-nc/
Supporting Question 3

Featured Source D

Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center.

add later
Compelling Question: Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?

Argument: Answer the question, "Is history a series of facts or a collection of perspectives?", using evidence to support your response.

Extension: Students may choose one perspective in the first in flight historical event. Write a paragraph explaining why the perspective is most compelling. They may debate their ideas with a partner.

Argument

At this point in the inquiry, students have discussed different perspectives, motives, and the importance of exploring multiple perspectives. In making their arguments about whether history is a series of facts or collection of perspectives, students draw upon the knowledge and skills they have amassed throughout this inquiry. Before the Summative Performance Task, it may be helpful for students to review the sources provided and the formative tasks students created during the inquiry. This review should help students articulate their arguments and find the supporting evidence to reinforce their positions. It may be helpful for students to rehearse their arguments and supporting evidence orally with a partner.

Extension

Students may choose the perspective in the first to flight historical event that they believe has the most historical credibility. They will write a paragraph about why this perspective is the most compelling. They may debate their ideas with another student.
Taking Informed Action

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<td>Action</td>
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Students have the opportunity to take informed action by seeking varied perspectives when investigating historical and current events. They may demonstrate their ability to understand by analyzing different perspectives, motives, and how different individuals benefit in historical events and current events. Students may show their ability to assess by utilizing skills to examine multiple perspectives in conflicts at home, at school, and in their community linking the skills to consider historical and current events. Finally, students may act by creating a school-wide conflict resolution committee to discuss school issues, consider differing perspectives, and offer multiple solutions to current events.