

Selecting stories for inquiry

using criteria to help select stories or questions for inquiry and investigation

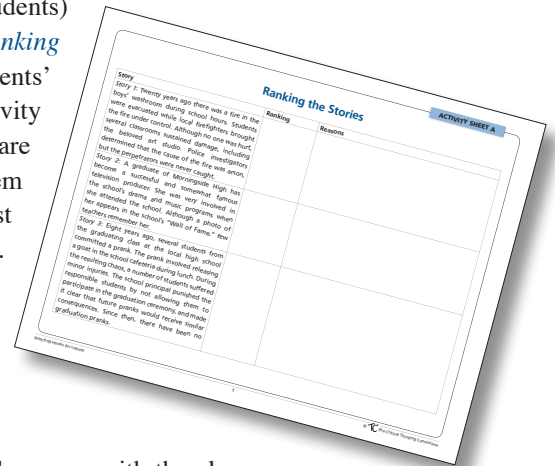
- Objectives:**
- understand how criteria can be used to help select stories or questions for inquiry and further learning
 - select worthy stories or questions when learning about local histories

What stories or events should I learn more about?

Use the following activities to develop the strategy

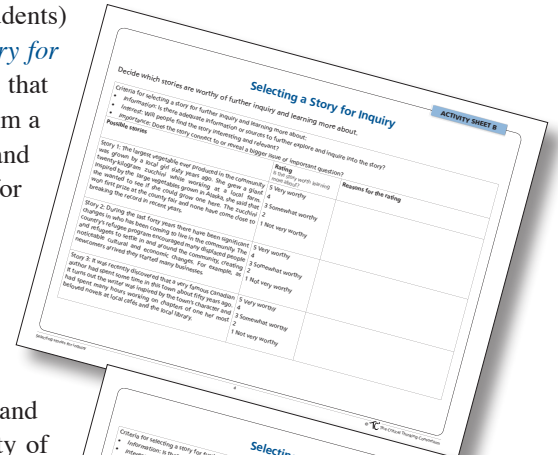
Introduce the strategy

- Organize students into small groups (2-3 students) and provide each group with a copy of *Ranking the Stories* (Activity sheet A). Draw students' attention to the left-hand column of the activity sheet, inviting them to imagine that they are reporters for a school newspaper. Inform them that their task is to decide which story is most worth investigating and learning more about. Explain that they will rank the stories from most to least worthy of investigation.
- Instruct students to decide which story is the most worthy of further investigation.
- Invite students to share their decisions and reasons with the class. Consider tallying the responses to determine which story was considered most worthy. As students share their decisions, co-develop or introduce the criteria for determining which story is worthy of inquiry and further learning:
 - *Information:* Is there adequate information or sources to further explore and inquire into the story?
 - *Interest:* Will people find the story interesting and relevant?
 - *Importance:* Does the story connect to or reveal a bigger issue or important question?
- Prompt students to reconsider their initial decision using the criteria. Invite groups to share their decision and reasons with the class.
- Suggest to students that the criteria can be helpful when determining if a story is worthy of investigation and further inquiry.
- Inform students that the goal of the lesson is to discover how to determine which stories may be worth learning more about. Invite students to suggest what occupations might use this strategy. Encourage students to share their ideas with the class.



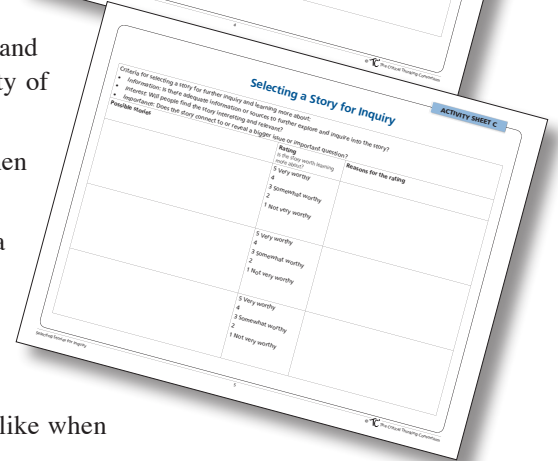
Practise the strategy

- Organize students into small groups (2-3 students) and provide each student with *Selecting a Story for Inquiry* (Activity sheet B). Explain to students that their task is to use the criteria select a story from a community history for further investigation and inquiry. Remind students to provide reasons for each rating.



Apply the strategy to learn more about a local history

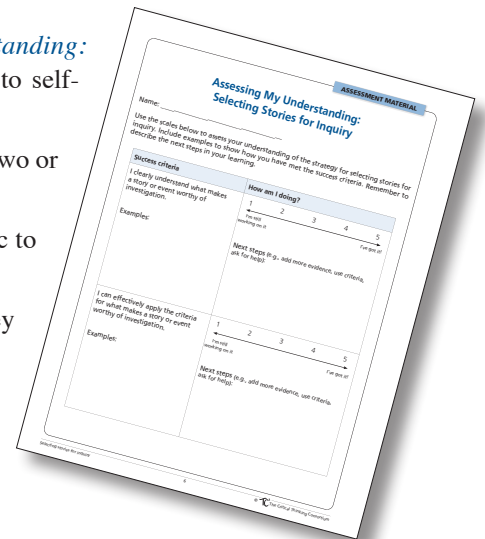
- Encourage students to share their ratings and reasons with the class.
- Provide students with a blank version of *Selecting a Story for Inquiry* (Activity sheet C) and encourage them to use the strategy in a variety of situations:



- Selecting or creating an inquiry question when investigating a local history.
- Assessing the extent to which story from a local, regional, or national newspaper or website is worthy of further inquiry and investigation.
- Inviting older family or community members to describe what the community was like when they were younger.
- Choosing a story from the history of a local community for further inquiry and investigation.

Assess use of the strategy

- Encourage students to use *Assessing My Understanding: Selecting Stories for Inquiry* (Assessment Material) to self-assess their use of this strategy.
- Allow students opportunities to apply the strategy two or three times without assessment.
- Guide students in interpreting and using the rubric to assess their own responses.
- Encourage students to use the rubric whenever they use this strategy.
- To use the rubric for teacher assessment of student work, remove the first person (student) reference from each descriptor.



Ranking the Stories

Story	Ranking	Reasons
<p><i>Story 1:</i> Twenty years ago there was a fire in the boys' washroom during school hours. Students were evacuated while local firefighters brought the fire under control. Although no one was hurt, several classrooms sustained damage, including the beloved art studio. Police investigators determined that the cause of the fire was arson, but the perpetrators were never caught.</p>		
<p><i>Story 2:</i> A graduate of Morningside High has become a successful and somewhat famous television producer. She was very involved in the school's drama and music programs when she attended the school. Although a photo of her appears in the school's "Wall of Fame," few teachers remember her.</p>		
<p><i>Story 3:</i> Eight years ago, several students from the graduating class at the local high school committed a prank. The prank involved releasing a goat in the school cafeteria during lunch. During the resulting chaos, a number of students suffered minor injuries. The school principal punished the responsible students by not allowing them to participate in the graduation ceremony, and made it clear that future pranks would receive similar consequences. Since then, there have been no graduation pranks.</p>		

Selecting a Story for Inquiry

Decide which stories are worthy of further inquiry and learning more about.

Criteria for selecting a story for further inquiry and learning more about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Information:</i> Is there adequate information or sources to further explore and inquire into the story? <i>Interest:</i> Will people find the story interesting and relevant? <i>Importance:</i> Does the story connect to or reveal a bigger issue or important question? 	Rating Is the story worth learning more about?	Reasons for the rating
Possible stories Story 1: The largest vegetable ever produced in the community was grown by a local girl sixty years ago. She grew a giant twenty-kilogram zucchini while working at a local farm. Inspired by the large vegetables grown in Alaska, she said that she wanted to see if she could grow one here. The zucchini won first prize at the county fair and none have come close to breaking the record in recent years.	5 Very worthy 4 3 Somewhat worthy 2 1 Not very worthy	
Story 2: During the last forty years there have been significant changes in who has been coming to live in the community. The country's refugee program encouraged many displaced people and refugees to settle in and around the community, creating noticeable cultural and economic changes. For example, as newcomers arrived they started many businesses.	5 Very worthy 4 3 Somewhat worthy 2 1 Not very worthy	
Story 3: It was recently discovered that a very famous Canadian author had spent some time in this town about fifty years ago. It turns out the writer was inspired by the town's character and had spent many hours working on chapters of one her most beloved novels at local cafés and the local library.	5 Very worthy 4 3 Somewhat worthy 2 1 Not very worthy	

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