

# AMERICANIZATION

## Historical Literacy Guide: *History*



Wisconsin Historical  
MUSEUM

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## **Object Literacy: *Learning from Objects***

The Wisconsin Historical Museum, as part of the Wisconsin Historical Society, has developed the following guide to assist in the teaching of standards for social studies. By focusing on objects, artifacts, maps, photographs and other primary sources from its collection, students will be able to redefine how they learn from objects and from history.

### **Object-based learning is**

- Using a variety of objects as central to the development of lesson concepts
- Utilizing objects through posing and investigating questions
- Utilizing well-thought-out initial questions to stimulate further critical thinking
- Using students' natural interest and inclination for question-posing to guide instruction in all subjects
- Leading students to their own answers by responding to open ended questions and/or returning the students' focus to the object
- Student-directed learning following paths created by the students

# Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction and Common Core State Standards Initiative

*Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction* by Nikki Mandell and Bobbie Malone is a teaching and learning framework that explains the essential elements of history and provides “how-to” examples for building historical literacy in classrooms at all grade levels. With practical examples, engaging and effective lessons and classroom activities that tie to essential questions, *Thinking Like a Historian* provides a framework to enhance and improve teaching and learning history.

## Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction

(TLH) **inquiry-based educational theory** provides a common language for educators and students. The theory allows for the educational process to be combined with categories of inquiry which promote historical literacy.

It is the intent of the Wisconsin Historical Museum that this guide serves educators and students in providing object-based lessons to be used after visiting and experiencing the museum on a field trip. Our field trips support *Common Core English Language Arts Standards* for Reading: Informational Text and Speaking & Listening standards as well as CCSS for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies.

Educators should use this guide as a post-museum visit activity. It will continue to challenge students to “Think Like a Historian” by encouraging them to think critically, make personal connections with history, and to evaluate information by asking “why”, “how”, and most importantly, “How do you know?”

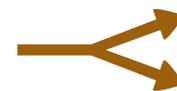
## TLH CATEGORIES



CAUSE AND EFFECT



CHANGE AND CONTINUITY



TURNING POINTS



USING THE PAST



THROUGH THEIR EYES

## Background Information

“Americanization” is a term used to denote attempts made by officials and social workers to introduce an American lifestyle to immigrants and Native Americans. Schools, settlement houses, and other service programs encouraged minority groups to adopt the values and practices of mainstream, English-speaking Americans.

## Images for the Classroom



**Americanization Pageant, 1919** (WHi Image ID: 5348). Scene from Poale Zion Chasidim, an Americanization pageant, held in a Milwaukee auditorium to welcome Milwaukee's new citizens.

## Student Activity

Resources:

***The Dictionary of Wisconsin History: Americanization***

[www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term\\_id=9110](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=9110)

***The Dictionary of Wisconsin History: Bennett Law***

[www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term\\_id=831](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=831)

Ask students to brainstorm an explanation of what they think “Americanization” means. Select students to share these definitions with the class. Then share Dictionary of Wisconsin History entries for Americanization and Bennett Law. Ask students if they would change their definition based on the information. Project or pass out a photocopy of **Americanization Pageant, 1919** (WHi Image ID: 5348) with students and share photograph background information. Give students plenty of time to consider the image and articles before introducing the discussion questions.

## Dictionary Entries

**Term: Americanization**

**Definition:** A term used to denote attempts made by officials and social workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to mainstream immigrants and Native Americans; through schools, settlement houses, and other service programs, it encouraged or attempted to compel minority groups to adopt the values and practices mainstream, English-speaking Americans.

**Term: Bennet Law**

**Definition:** An 1889 law that required all Wisconsin schools, public and parochial, to teach certain subjects only in the English language. Viewed by German Catholics and Lutherans as an attack not only on their parochial schools but also on their language and culture.

The full text of the law is given in chapter 519 of the 1889 Wisconsin session laws. Section 5, the most controversial section, reads, “Section 5. No school shall be regarded as a school, under this act, unless there shall be taught therein, as part of the elementary education of children, reading, writing, arithmetic and United States history, in the English language.” The full text is available at [Google Books](#).

## Teacher-led Student Inquiry and Analysis Questions



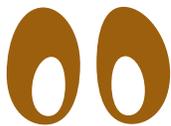
1. Why might people want to leave the country they were born in and move to America? What opportunities might be in Wisconsin that would pull newcomers to the state?



2. Who would want the immigrants pictured to become more American? Why?



3. Why might immigrants want to become more American?



4. How did the pageant express the immigrants' feelings for their new country? What symbols of America did they use to express their hopes? How do you think they might have viewed becoming citizens?

## Bibliography and Additional Resources

Images and objects shared in this document can be found on the following Wisconsin Historical Society webpages:

**Wisconsin Historical Images** [www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/)

**Curators' Favorites** [www.wisconsinhistory.org/museum/artifacts/](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/museum/artifacts/)

Additional information can be found at:

***A Short History of Wisconsin* by Erika Janik**

**Dictionary of Wisconsin History: Americanization**

**Dictionary of Wisconsin History: Bennett Law**

## Reflection

The Wisconsin Historical Museum is interested in hearing memories of favorite experiences or exhibits. Have students use the next page to illustrate and describe what they enjoyed most. Please return to:

### **Museum Education**

**Wisconsin Historical Museum**

**30 N Carroll Street**

**Madison, WI 53703**

